



Little Library Big Dreams

Context

Bucklesham Primary School is a small school in the heart of Suffolk, with links to the archaeologist Basil Brown (of Sutton Hoo fame). The school has just under 100 children on roll. There are mixed age classes and an award-winning gardening club. The School Development Plan was explicit in its aims: "Quality of Education: Children have exposure to a rich diet of reading material to ensure depth of experience...Pupils read for pleasure and can discuss and promote a wide variety of texts, regularly visiting the library."

Research inspiration and rationale

I drew on two inspirations, one research and one personal.

1. OU/ UKLA Teachers as Readers (TaRs) findings (2, 3 and 5), developing:

2. Knowledge of children as readers.
3. A reading for pleasure pedagogy: Social reading environments.
5. Reading communities that are reciprocal and interactive.
(Cremin et al., 2014)

2. Library experience.

When I was at Middle School in 1995, the library was a safe space. With few friends and increasing anxiety, I retreated here at lunchtimes. However, I couldn't read. The copy of *Watership Down* lay looking up at me, the image ingrained in my memory, the letters moving on the page and my brain unable to decode what they meant.

What if the library could be a space for all children, regardless of reading ability? What if it became the space I had needed? What if we let the children talk? What if we encourage the older children to read picture books, play games and to draw? What if there was always an adult who shared reading differences during this time and joined in with the session? What if we work together to create a social library space open to all?



Aims

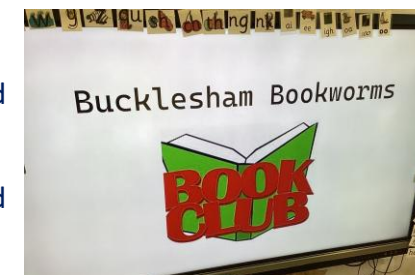
- It was my first year at Bucklesham Primary. I noticed and observed for the first several months of my arrival. I could see and hear daily interactions between staff and students about reading for pleasure, and between staff with each other. However, peer to peer informal book talk across year groups was less evident.
- The school hosts a whole room for a library that the Headteacher had carefully crafted into relevant themes, authors and genres for the children. However, it was only occasionally accessed by the children in the week, for reading for pleasure. The library was also used as a teaching space at times, meaning tables, resources and general school paraphernalia weaved into the library space.
- I wanted to create a learner led, informal and social space that had texts that tempted the children – books based on preferences and a space children wanted to be in - to read, talk and to write for pleasure.



OU LIST FRAMEWORK

Outline

- Bucklesham Bookworms was formed. Every Tuesday the library hosted a lunch time book club, open to the whole school. The Book Club was highlighted in assemblies and on visual timetables in classrooms to embed that Book Club is every Tuesday in the library.
- Children asked if they could bring their drawing resources, chess sets and card collections. I encouraged this. I was vocal with the children that they could sit anywhere, read anything and that they could talk if they wanted to.
- I recruited student Librarians to help shape the space. An application form was handed out to KS2 children, and I received 12 responses... “I love to read and want to help others read and to go in the library” Y5 Child. “Soon I’m going to write a story, and I want to share it in the library” Y4 Child. “I would be happy to not have break time and help in the library” Y4 Child. Librarians were chosen based on their love of reading but also how it may impact social leverage, particularly linked to emotional well-being. They were chosen in consultation with TAs and Teachers.
- The most avid readers in school sometimes didn’t want to come and were anxious about this – I reminded them that they should only come if they wanted to and encouraged their rights as readers.
- Alongside this children’s book club, we set up a staff book club, ran the NLT *Little Big Book Club*, EYFS had *Secret Readers* and *Snuggle with a Book* parent sessions and teachers shared their reading rivers with their class. All staff made a reading crown to share preferences for World Book Day. In the Summer term the Headteacher recruited a parent Librarian and two grandparent Librarians. Francesa, Jenny and Ian began to come in weekly, hearing children across school read and helping them find their next read. We hosted our first Booknic and the local Librarian visited to share the Summer Reading Quest.



Impact

- In the Summer term I noted that I was consistently getting 16 children attending weekly, with 8 of these being boys who are striving readers. In the last session of the year, a Y5 child asked, “can we still do this next year?” Children were coming of their own volition, peer on peer literature talk increased as I took a small step back in the sessions. Top Trumps, Pokémon cards, story writing and comics all added to this increased peer talk. The corridors became a place of informal book talk between peers. Comments about the Booknic posters and class reading posters aided this.
- A parent told me, “she’s been excited since breakfast about Book Club today, she absolutely loves it.” Another parent who attended *Little Big Book Club* and whose child also attended library sessions throughout the year said “My child was a bookworm before, but now he is absolutely sold on it for life. My husband has also started reading again.”
- I asked the children what they thought about Book Club: “I like reading to the little ones and helping them” Y5 child, “I like looking at new books” EYFS child, “I like coming so I can write my story, what do you think should happen next?” Y4 child.
- Personally – I started my MA Children’s Literature where we studied *Watership Down*, and I did read and share it with my cohort in a full circle moment.



Next Steps

- The BSA have gifted the library money, we have ordered new furniture for 2025-2026 and this will further create an informal and social space. We have been gifted good quality books by our community, and we have been through every book in the library for quality control. We are now aware of what books we don’t have that the children really want – such as the *Isadora Moon* series and the *Ultimate Football* texts. We are completing a library grant form for these books. We know our next steps and we are committed to act on them! We have booked an author visit and The Roving Bookshop for next World Book Day. We will be running our first Poetry by Heart competition – open to the whole school.
- We know that when we give the children time to show us what they want to read and do in the library, our understanding of modern childhood can grow. There is a clear shift in our young people: they want opportunities to read graphic novels and picture books, they want to play games, and they want to have blank sheets of paper to create their own texts. Moreover – they want to talk about books, cards, games, school – essentially life, and we absolutely should let them. By opening up the library space every week, it is beginning to open up a school reading community. It was there already, however, it is more visible to see and we can keep on acting on it. Opening the door to the library has opened the world of reading for pleasure pedagogy that the children own, now we can respond in gusto! Here’s to 2025 – 2026 and one Small School’s Big Dreams... to create lifelong readers.



Little Library Big Dreams

The best part of book club is seeing what is in the school library each week and now the kids borrow more and read more.



Librarian Application Form DARL
Open to Year 5 and Year 4 Children. R.D.
Please return to Mrs Green by Thursday 27th February 2025. 15

Why would you like to be a school librarian?
To Make Sure We have a X library were all books are easy to find.

What is your favourite book and why?
Big Foot Mountain because it has all emotions happy sad scary

Who is your favourite author or illustrator?
Harriet Mollenkot

Draw a cartoon of how drawing makes you feel?

Is there anything else you want me to know about why you would want this role?
I LOVE books

