



READING FOR PLEASURE AT CHEADLE CATHOLIC INFANT SCHOOL

By Claire Nelson and Claire Lees

Research shows that children who read for pleasure...

- Find it easier to empathise with others, improves wellbeing and builds more positive relationships (Reading Agency 2015).
- Have a positive attitude to reading means young people are more likely to read at/ above expected age level (Clark 2014).
- Have a richer vocabulary at their disposal and often also do better in other academic areas such as spelling and maths (Sullivan and Brown 2013).
- Are more likely to be readers throughout their adult lives (Clark and Rumbold 2006)

**WHY IS READING FOR PLEASURE SUCH
AN IMPORTANT PART OF SCHOOL LIFE?**

Pupil voice showed that if children in our school could name an author it was almost always either Julia Donaldson or Roald Dahl. While we all enjoy their books, we wanted to widen the experiences of the children and introduce them to other equally talented authors.

ADOPT AN AUTHOR

Response:

Every class in school has adopted an author. This author has a special place in the class library and their books are read and reread with the children regularly. Most of the authors are based in the UK (with the exception of Eric Carle in Nursery). The authors have been chosen to be a good representation of wider society with an equal number of male and females and three authors who are from a black or minority ethnic background. By the end of their Infant School journey the children will be able to talk about at least three authors in detail.

Parents are a child's first educators. They are the experts on their children. We know that children who see their parents and caregivers reading at home are much more likely to view it as a pleasurable activity and be more motivated to read themselves.

READING ROCKS NEWSLETTER

Response:

The 'Reading Rocks' newsletter is written by Claire Nelson and goes out to parents once a term. This newsletter shares the exciting reading opportunities that are happening in school, it reminds parents of the importance of reading at home and it points them in the direction of interesting resources which they can explore with their children.

Children who are read to regularly at home hear more words and their vocabulary expands accordingly. It is estimated that children who live in a literary rich environment may hear over a million more words by the time they are five years old than children who aren't read to. (Ohio State University, 2019).

Response:

Although most of the children in our school have books at home we wanted to encourage parents to take time to read and enjoy stories together. As a result we set up the 'Reading Suitcases'. Once a week, a child is chosen to pick a story that they love from the class book corner. They then put the book into the reading suitcase and take it home to enjoy with their family. Children are encouraged to snuggle up with a blanket, a warm drink (hot chocolate provided) and their family and enjoy a lovely book.

READING SUITCASES

New books are released every month and yet sometimes staff found themselves reaching for the same old favourites. We needed a way to make sure that as a staff we keep up to date on new releases and that we are giving our children the very best books available.

Response:

Using resources from the Cheshire Library Service, Claire Nelson organises a staff room 'Author of the month'. This showcases talented authors who have a wide back catalogue that would appeal to the full range of Nursery to Year 2. These books can be browsed and borrowed for use as class reads or even in assembly by Mrs Glynn.

STAFF ROOM AUTHOR OF THE MONTH

As a school we wanted to find a way of getting an excited buzz around school promoting books and book talk. We wanted something that would engage all the classes and make sure that everyone could get involved.

BATTLE OF THE BOOKS

Response:

Claire Nelson and the Reading Champions organised our first ever 'Battle of the Books'. The theme was 'Books to Make You Laugh'. The reading champions chose the books, created videos to engage the classes (as they were in bubbles) and helped to reveal the winner. Posters around school added to the excitement and discussions could be heard as children waited for lunch, queued up to go into the hall for PE and in the playground. All classes received a copy of the winning book for their class libraries. This will now become an annual event.

Children need to see other children enjoying books to understand that books can be fun. Children also love to get reviews from their friends and sharing a love of books with peers is another way to engage reluctant readers.

READING CHAMPIONS

Response:

Four children from each of the Year 2 classes volunteer to help spread a love of reading across the school. Their role is to recommend books to classes across the school, help organise special events such as 'Battle of the Books' and help to keep the library organised and tidy.

Part of their time is spent listening to stories and looking at books so that they have a good knowledge of books to share across the school.

See pupil voice to find out more about last year's Reading Champions and their reflections on their role in school.

The school's library had been a place to informally borrow books for class. It was at the heart of the school and children could see the beautiful books but didn't have access to them independently. It was occasionally used as a place to enjoy reading but wasn't fully utilised.

Response:

With help from the experts at the Cheshire Library Service, Mrs Nelson and some parent volunteers have organised the library so that it can be used as a lending library. All books are set up in an attractive manner, an computer program has been installed so that they are all catalogued and the first children will be able to take home library books from September 2021. We aim to have all children using the library on a weekly basis by the end of the academic year. Part of the role of being a 'Reading Champion' is also to help out in the library and help to organise it and keep it tidy.

SCHOOL LIBRARY