

How has the introduction of graphic novels influenced attitudes towards reading for pleasure within a primary school setting?

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What did you plan to do and why?

As a school, we have been working towards our Reading Schools Awards. In this endeavour, we as staff, undertook an audit of our library at the end of the last academic year. The aim of this audit was initially to ascertain the volume of books which we had within the library, which represents the breadth of diversity we had within our school and within the wider community.

In doing so, we uncovered that not only were large numbers of our pupils unrepresented within our library, we also did not possess the spread of genres that we had first anticipated. It was disappointing to discover that our library wasn't as inclusive as we had assumed and sadder still to see that some of the books held some quite outdated beliefs.

However, this was the catalyst for change. We began researching and exploring a wider range of inclusive texts centred on the theme of equality and diversity and made consistent efforts to broaden the genres we had available to pupils. The introduction of graphic novels had an almost instantaneous impact with teachers commenting that pupils who had previously been reluctant readers expressing the most notable enthusiasm. This prompted the question of, why?

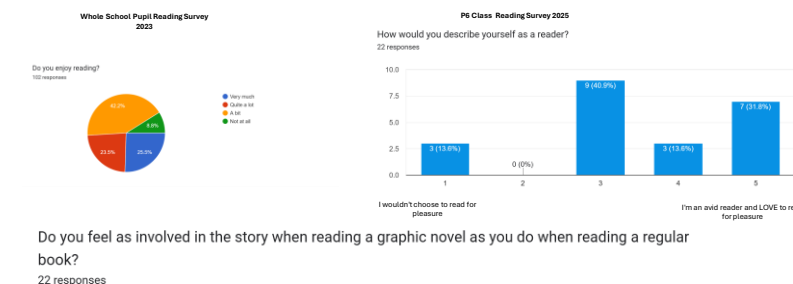
"I find the pictures make the story easier to understand."



What impact has this enquiry had?

When undertaking this enquiry, key questions underpinned the aims of the enquiry. It was hoped that research would reveal:

- Why graphic novels hold such appeal for our pupils?
- In what ways do they encourage reading for pleasure in reluctant readers?
- To what extent has the inclusion of graphic within our school library impacted pupils' enthusiasm for reading for pleasure?



"I feel like the layout helps me get into the story more quickly."



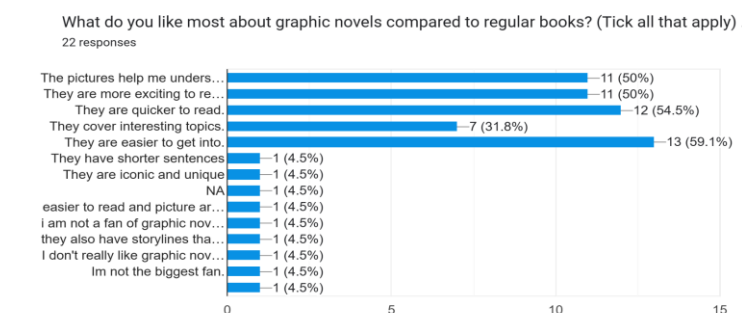
What has happened in your enquiry?

In order to gain a comprehensive understanding of the impact of the introduction of graphic novels on reading engagement, this enquiry proposes to use both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection.

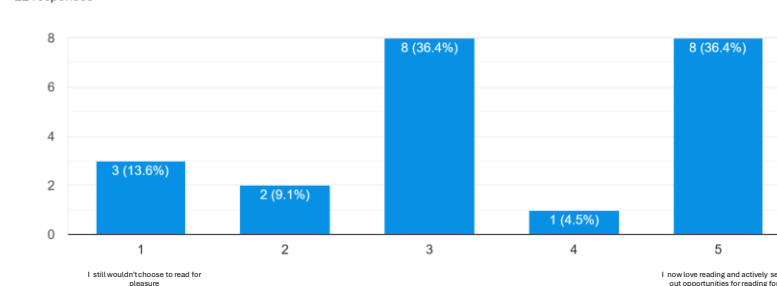
Quantitative- Data derived from a questionnaire previously undertaken prior to the introduction of graphic novels was compared and contrasted with data ascertained from the questionnaires undertaken as part of this enquiry.

Qualitative- In order to ensure that the quantitative element of this enquiry are underpinned by context-based research, participants will be asked to complete a questionnaire which would contribute an interpretivist element to the information gathered. As part of this enquiry, the impact on reading engagement is also observed through pupil participation in book discussions and independent reading choices. The use of open-ended questions within the questionnaire allowed pupils the opportunity to express their attitudes towards reading for pleasure more fully.

"I love that I can finish a graphic novel really quickly."



How has your attitude or enthusiasm for reading change since the arrival of graphic novels in our school library?



What are the implications and next steps?

Key insights from the research undertaken:

Factors regarding graphic novels which made pupils actively select them to read for pleasure, included:

- The images made the text more accessible and easier to understand.
- The layout made those who struggled with reading feel that these books weren't specifically for younger pupils, thus removing a barrier to literacy and the attached stigma.
- The ease of accessibility to the text meant that pupils could complete the books in a far quicker time duration which contributed to feelings of success.

Next Steps:

- Auditing of our library will now become an annual occurrence, in collaboration with the pupils.
- We will continue to engage in meaningful dialogue with our pupils to ensure we are invested in genres which are pertinent to their interests.
- We will actively seek to understand why pupils select certain texts and move away from considering only what those texts are (thus not becoming too author or genre specific.) In doing so we can ensure a breadth of texts for our pupils to access.
- We will continue to explore and invest in a wide range of inclusive texts which promote themes of equality and diversity.
- We will continue to work closely with our Reading Champs (pupil voice group) to ensure the reading for pleasure continues to be an intrinsic part of the everyday life and ethos within our school.

References

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