

How can RfP be embedded throughout our school Community?

Deborah McDonald, P1 Teacher.

What did you plan to do and why?

My vision for our school was to become a “reading school”, whereby all young people, families and staff have access to varying genres of reading material, through exciting and engaging activities and initiatives. I want reading to be embraced wholeheartedly by our school community, as I am passionate about the positive impact RfP can have on all walks of life. It nurtures, embraces and absorbs into our thoughts and imaginations, which is a positive force for our wellbeing and social interactions. I wanted to roll this out throughout the school and community as I did not want it limited to just the start of our children’s learning journey in P1, but to be embedded throughout their primary education and beyond. I planned to send a questionnaire to both teachers and young people to establish what the overall feeling/understanding was linked to RfP, so I could ensure I targeted the correct starting point.

This is something I plan to do over a couple of years as it is an expansive ideal, and working together as a team, which we are, it will be extremely powerful to be involved in and to see the progressions and impact it has on our young learners.

What has happened in your enquiry?

After consulting with my colleagues and our young people, following questionnaires and class talks, it transpired that our children wanted to hear different teachers reading stories, rather than just their own class teacher and there was a shared interest in how teacher’s view reading, outside of the classroom. I decided to introduce during our Assembly, that every couple of weeks, there is a Teacher Story Time. I was thrilled that all teacher’s eagerly signed up for this. This entailed the teacher coming to assembly with their favourite book, props are encouraged too! The background and reasoning behind the chosen story is shared with the our young people, so they can feel the power behind the chosen story for each teacher. All the young people, and teacher’s, were enthralled each time they are read to in Assembly and were clearly engaged and in awe of the experience. The teachers share their thoughts, experience of reading as a child, and now as an adult and the positive impact it has had and still has on them in all walks of life. Relaxing, learning and interacting with others being the key things children are taking from this.

What impact has this enquiry had?

- Following completion of questionnaires I visited each classroom to see their provision for RfP. I was approached by many colleagues stating they were happy I had brought this to their attention and they were keen and excited to reevaluate their classroom resources and engagement for RfP. All teacher’s have actively engaged and assessed their current reading material and re-developed their reading areas and how they approach RfP, within their classrooms. One colleague in particular boosted her reading material through Vinted, providing magazines and varying genres of reading material for her reading area. She then involved the children to take ownership of this new way to approaching RfP with their environment; each table is provided with a basket with their chosen literature, and every day for 10 minutes, calming music is played and all children are involved in RfP, alongside their class teacher. There is also an extreme reading challenge to run alongside this new initiative within the classroom and the children are encouraged to provide photographic evidence and this is displayed in their reading area.

- The use of questionnaires for both teachers and children was collaborative and encouraged discussion and next steps were put in place for all involved. Professional dialogue, sharing of ideas and resources is underway to endeavor each classroom has a full understanding of the importance and joy of RfP. I have been involved in discussion around how to develop RfP, not just for our young people, but for families and our community.
- Children are asking when the next “Teacher Reading Assembly” is and are trying to guess which teacher is next. I am often stopped by children in the upper school telling me what book they are currently reading at the moment, or that they have visited a book store or the library recently ... the impact and joy of RfP in pure form!
- The power of this simple but effective strategy is feeding into the classroom as class teacher’s are now actively engaging more in classroom story sessions, involving and empowering our young people through actively RfP.

What are the implications and next steps?

FINANCE

How will we fund the future initiatives?

SUPPORT

How can I ensure we maintain focus throughout the school year and within our community?

RESOURCES

Continuation of maintaining resources and keeping ideas fresh and fun.

As part of my next steps, I intend to apply for Reading Schools accreditation to further develop our reading culture within our school.

NEXT STEPS

Reading Buddies across the school P1-P4, P2-P5, P3-P6 and P7 to oversee the running of this.

Sharing Books with OAP community on a Friday PM there will be a timetable where classes will go to the local church lunch group with our elder community and share their favourite stories collectively.

References

Cremin, T. & Durning, A. (2020) Developing Reading for Pleasure across the school: research and practice in Rolls, L. and Green, M. *Unlocking Research: Intellectualising Professional Development in Primary Education*, London: Routledge

Cremin, T., Bearne, E., Mottram, M. and Goodwin P. (2008) Primary Teachers as Readers *English in Education* 42 (1): 1-16