

How does our environment encourage reading for pleasure?

What did you plan to do and why?

Improving our school environment was part of our Whole School Improvement Plan (SIP). Therefore, I decided to look at the impact our environment was having on encouraging reading for pleasure across the school.

I had observed that classes weren't using the library frequently, there was little book chatter in P4-7 but when I read to classes, or in assembly all pupils were engaged and enthralled.

This led me to three areas that I needed to explore further:

1) Physical Environment

- library, classroom and communal areas design and home environment

2) Social Environment

- role models, reading culture, teacher support

3) Psychological Environment.

- Freedom of choice, low pressure, emotional safety

The plan was to focus on improving our physical reading spaces to better engage, motivate and encourage pupils to read for pleasure in these areas. With the hope that by increasing the use of these areas pupils would develop a love of reading and books that could be transferred to other areas e.g. home, outdoors, community in the future.

In order to achieve this we needed to:

- Identify our reading areas and how much they were being used.
- Gather pupil's views about these spaces.
- Have the Reading Leader Team make some of the suggested changes/improvements.

Along with the physical environment it was also important to consider the Social and Psychological environments as these too have a significant impact on encouraging reading for pleasure.

What has happened in your enquiry?

- We started by gathering pupil views, via hands-up surveys, regarding our school library's physical environment.
- Each class had to visit the library and give opinions, via post-its, as to what they liked/disliked or would like in their library. The Reading Leader Team and I collated this and started getting to work to improve some aspects. It's still a work in progress!
- The team conducted a survey asking each class about their own classroom reading area. This was then collated and shared with staff.
- We spoke with pupils about their opinions regarding the reading areas out with the library and classrooms. Feedback was taken on board and a Book Nook for infants was created. There is still discussion around how the upper landing areas should be developed.
- Scottish Book Trust Survey was carried out digitally to gather information about home environments e.g. presence of books at home, family reading, seeing adults at home read.
- Through class discussions and individual conversations, we discovered information about the Social Environment from pupils.
- A poll was carried out regarding the Psychological Environment.
- Everything we have investigated leads to further questions and ideas.

What impact has this enquiry had?

Findings:

Reading spaces: school library, upper & infant corridor and classrooms.

- 63% of pupils enjoyed using our school library although 72% wanted to redecorate our library.
- 68% of pupils wanted more 'free time' in the library with 39% of pupils requesting a Library Club.
- 59% wanted more time to explore the library/reading areas and books.
- All classes have a reading area, however, 59% of these class spaces stay the same (physically) throughout the year.
- Almost all pupils wanted a bigger reading areas on landings and in classes.
- 46% of pupils are worried to read aloud in class, 9% in the library and 14% during literacy slots.

Actions/Impact:

- We changed the layout of the library, creating more of a flow. Little corners were made to read in. Improved organization, labelling and sharing this with all staff and pupils allowed easier access to authors, types of books, CDs, audio, Yotos etc. Refreshed wall displays and library expectations were introduced. Lighting, seating and increasing our type of books has helped increase pupil's enjoyment in our library from 63% to 91%.. It's still a work in progress.
- 68% of pupils wanted to have more 'free' time in the library. Now all our pupils visit this space weekly. Pupils are more motivated to use the library and each class attends in a timetabled slot weekly. Previously these were timetabled but not always used – this has changed as the staff are seeing the pupil's motivation and interest in this space and books.
- In classes/landings, time for exploring books/using reading areas has increased in a few classes, this is something that still requires to be developed.
- We have had to create two Library Clubs as we had 35% of the upper school sign up to join.
- Currently we have not been able to impact the class areas due to time. This is in our plans for next session.
- The pupils decided that a bigger space for our infants was a priority and they chose to develop a small office in this corridor into a 'Book Nook' for P1-3s. This is now a quiet space away from distractions and noise that's decorated to be relaxing and comfortable. They decided that the area for the uppers was "ok for now" but that this needed completely changed in the future.
- Pupils were also looking for opportunities to read outside. This was excellent to hear but as I had been focusing on the indoor spaces we hadn't really looked closely at this. However, the Reading Leaders and I have now discussed this and have a plan for taking this forward.
- Only 23% of pupils are worried about sharing their opinions on books.
- We need to reduce anxiety around reading aloud in class (particularly in uppers) to allow further enjoyment of reading.

What are the implications and next steps?

My main focus was the Physical Environment, although the Social and Psychological Environments were considered too. I need to further explore these to impact as required.

1) Physical Environment

- Pupils are more motivated to use reading areas within the school.
- All pupils look forward to their weekly library slot.
- There is increased discussion around books throughout the school, peers/peers and pupils/staff.
- Pupils are excited and looking to develop our reading areas, with some great ideas and requests.

2) Social Environment

- Pupils are looking to become role models for others.
- Staff are now using the library slot effectively as motivation and engagement from pupils is evident.
- Reading Leader Team is visible and making changes that the pupils are requesting.
- Staff are allowing children time to choose their own books and read them in a valued time.

3) Psychological Environment.

- The reading clubs are well attended and pupils are enjoying the activities/opportunities offered here.
- Majority of pupils are confident in sharing their opinions on books.
- Almost all pupils get time to choose and read a book of their choice weekly.
- Almost all pupils think that choosing their own book is important. With a very small minority still looking for staff to help.

However, we still have lots to do. **Our next steps are to:**

- Continue to develop the library, keeping it fresh, new interesting for all.
- For all classes to have a reading area that's inviting and refreshed frequently.
- Develop an outdoor reading area.
- Continue to widen our Social Environment – will all pupils becoming a member of the local library, having parents/specialists as role models, paired reading, buddy reading.
- Continue to foster the Psychological Environment across the school in all areas.
- Raise money/funding to allow for all our exciting ideas.
- Have P7s leading reading clubs so we can have more pupils attend.

It has also made me think about:

- How do we develop a reading environment out with school that encourages reading for pleasure?
- How do we use digital tools, audio books etc to engage readers?
- Is there a way to combine physical activity with reading for those pupils who don't like to sit still?

References

Mei-Ju Chou , Jui-Ching Cheng , Ya-Wen Cheng (2016). Operating Classroom Aesthetic Reading Environment to Raise Children's Reading Motivation. Universal Journal of Educational Research, 4(1), 81 - 97. DOI: 10.13189/ujer.2016.040111.

The National Literacy Trust Website.

[The Importance of Building a Reading Rich Environment in School](#)