



Creating a love of reading

Beckie Reeve, Reading Leader at Selby Community Primary School explains how the school has transformed attitudes to reading.

The beginning ... What instigated change for us

Our change began in 2016 when our reading results sank dramatically. After licking our wounds, we reflected on how we were currently teaching reading and realised that the “guided reading” texts covered in previous KS2 years had, in some cases, been unengaging, irrelevant and **always** differentiated.

Classes were working within a carousel system with levelled books for groups where questioning was rarely whole-class based and didn't contain the variation of type and vocabulary that would both challenge readers and prepare them for the high expectations that would be placed on them at the end of Y6.

Y6 were focusing predominantly on past test papers and the ability to answer previous test-type questions. We noticed quickly that key vocabulary, such as that found in the 2016 test questions, was often not taught and certainly not embedded with children and, therefore, was not able to be accessed as freely. Also, reading for pleasure and the habit of reading and **celebrating** reading outside of school was not a current driver. Many classes had a class novel but this was mostly read as an “end of the day” activity, with an informal chat about what was read – with reference to some inference and deduction – but this was not delivered or modelled in any structured manner.

The middle ... Our key steps

After doing some research, we invested in books. Many of them and everywhere!

First, we bought class sets of varied, high-quality, whole-class novels recommended by a range of sources that followed age-group reading stems. Every classroom created enticing and welcoming Reading Corners that were filled with books chosen by the teachers and children together. We introduced Reading for Pleasure time. We planned high-quality

time for children to **carefully** choose and read a book of their choice. During this time, teachers, teaching assistants, reading support agencies and volunteers listened 1:1 to vulnerable readers using an engaging book of their choice at **their** level.

We visited like-minded schools to observe best practice and researched resources that have had impact and provide high-quality questioning and investigation. We began delivering only whole-class reading sessions, with no carousel and differentiated groupings, using our class text. We used a breakdown of isolated question stems from Y6 past papers and shared with KS2 teachers to innovate for their own year group. Teachers used these as a model to create their own varied questions types for each lesson delivered within modelled, shared and meta-cognition answer sessions.



Through coaching and CPD, we instilled a consistent approach to reading sessions with teachers planning within teams and pre-reading the chapter before each session. Finally, we worked relentlessly on modelling, sharing and, therefore, instilling a real **love** of that book, with some children begging to take the book home because they couldn't bear to put it down.



The End (ish) ... Reflections on what has made the biggest difference

- Being reflective and realising we needed a fairly radical but consistently applied change – a whole-school relaunch was imperative.
- Investing in books on **every** level.
- Being consistent.
- Using carefully chosen and trialled class novels throughout both key stages.
- Not being frightened to stop and change a book if practitioners knew they were losing that love of reading with the majority of their class.
- Adopting an open-door policy to share best practice – always.
- Coaching from the Literacy Team and Drop in Sessions. This is fundamental in providing support within a safe environment where it's ok to make mistakes.
- Constantly trialling new ideas from excellent practitioners and “reading around reading”: visiting St Matthews and sharing the ideas of Doug Lemov.
- Constantly reflecting, honing and re-tuning.
- Establishing 1:1 Reading. This has been essential for speed, fluency and understanding for our more vulnerable readers – this is consistent and often.
- Being involved in whole class discussions and hearing reading modelled well by others of a text they never would have accessed historically has been invaluable for our lower attainers – no ceiling.



As part of the Literacy Team at Selby CP, I can honestly say that we are well on our way to conquering that real love of reading with our children as the quotations below suggest. They are engaged, enthused and spilling over with excitement when talking about their class novel, their reading for pleasure book or authors that they admire. Of course, it goes without saying that we continue to be on this ever-evolving reading journey with a team that work tirelessly and consistently to create an experience for our children: an experience that opens the door to a world of captivating, high quality texts for each and every child whilst ensuring that the individual needs of more vulnerable readers are still met. And, of course, the reading results have risen dramatically.

- *“I wasn’t reading at home before and I didn’t know any authors – but I started to get hooked into all the books we read. I couldn’t even pick a favourite because I was so into all of them at the time!”* – Joe, Y4
- *“I love the way we are taught; my teacher really engages us because she is so excited about our book. I have discovered so many new genres that I enjoy!”* – Lillie-Mai, Y5
- *“Our new approach to Guided Reading has brought reading to life. I absolutely love the new books we are teaching and talking about as a whole class.”* – Y5 Class teacher
- *“Teaching reading has become such a more valuable learning experience. Our expectations of both our children’s reading and writing outcomes during these sessions have been raised hugely.”* – Y6 Class Teacher
- *“Once staff admitted that the carousel approach we had to guided reading had too many flaws, we used research to find an approach that would work for all. Doug Lemov’s work was our starting point and the impact has seen all children develop a love of reading, with the weakest readers able to access and comment on challenging books.”* – Ian Clennan, Headteacher