

In 2016 Let's Talk Reading sourced funding with the aim to improve the literacy outcomes for Ipswich school pupils, focussing on reading skills. Good literacy provides access to better outcomes for young people to gain the skills they need to achieve good outcomes as an adult. This led to a highly successful partnership with The Oaks Primary School which had a vision to put books at the 'heart of the curriculum' but needed funding to implement their initiatives. The Oaks in the IP2 Chantry area of Ipswich (Gipping Ward) has 22% of children living in low income households compared to 14% across the county of Suffolk¹.

In 2017 the Government published the Social Mobility Index by the Rt Hon Alan Milburn which showed Ipswich to be in the bottom 20% of all local authority areas in England, a social mobility cold spot. Ipswich schools were ranked 8th worst out of 324 local authority areas. Meaning young people living in Ipswich needed better opportunities to acquire the education and skills they required to achieve good outcomes as an adult. To improve those outcomes Let's Talk Reading (LTR) provided a grant to The Oaks to implement its plan to raise the profile of reading and improve reading outcomes for its pupils.



The Oaks planned to change the reading culture in the school and put books at the '**Heart of the Curriculum**'.

The school had identified reading as the key area for improvement in the school. Reading outcomes were lower than the school wanted, and teachers lacked confidence in planning and assessing reading. Books were used in reading lessons but rarely used in the wider planning and teaching of English; and lacking in other curriculum subjects. Boys reading levels were well below girls and the school lacked structured reading intervention programmes for those struggling to catch up.

The Oaks Baseline indicators 2016:

KS2 49% reached expected standards in reading (66% nationally) with only 4% greater depth (19% nationally) and an average reading progress score of -1.1.

The Oaks key priorities for the 2016/17 academic year were to improve all children's reading outcomes and to develop a consistency of teaching in reading and English. The main initiative for change was **CLPE's Power of Reading Programme** which aims to put quality children's literature at the heart of all learning. Two teachers were trained in the Power of Reading teaching sequences; they then trained colleagues via in-school CPD. Then followed a structured roll-out of these teaching sequences across all year groups to ensure there was a whole school culture change towards reading. By March 2017, every teacher had used at least 1 quality text to support the teaching of English.

LTR funding of £6,000 was used to enhance the culture change programme. New quality texts bought to support teaching the Power of Reading (PoR) units and developing their 'Books at the Heart of the Curriculum' approach to create an increased book culture around the school. Previously there were no places for children to enjoy books, so The Oaks created reading spots called '**Book Nooks**' for children to enjoy reading in comfort. All 15 classrooms created an exciting reading area with age appropriate books that were organised and accessible. Pupil perceptions improved: 'I didn't used to like reading. I swear I am always reading now! My teacher recommends good books to me and there are some really good ones in our book area.' (Y6 Boy, reluctant reader).



Book Nooks were later recognised in The Oaks Outstanding Ofsted report in September 2018: 'Book Nooks, located through the school, encourage pupils to read frequently and fluently.'

Supporting initiatives included classroom book loans giving access to a range of good literature, literacy intervention training, storytelling workshops and Premier League Reading Stars intervention to motivate and create a positive reading culture for boys, as well as other Literacy CPD.

Targeted interventions were another part of creating a successful reading culture change at The Oaks:

- **Read Write Inc. Fresh Start**, which teaches pupils to read accurately and fluently with good comprehension. Fresh Start resources were purchased with LTR funding and children in Years 3 and 4 targeted for support to move forward in their learning. At the end of the first term every child had learnt more sounds than they knew before the intervention and 5 children had caught up to expected levels, no longer requiring intervention support. In the Summer Term, 12 more children started Fresh Start interventions with a positive impact evidenced in English books and spelling improvement. 'Visible progress as a result of being continuously taught PoR units and having Fresh Start as an intervention.'
- The school had purchased **Accelerated Reader (AR)** yet were not really using it as they only had enough AR books for 35% of children to read and take part in associated quizzing. With the LTR funding the Oaks purchased a range of AR books so that children in Years 3-6 had access to books to take home on a weekly basis resulting in 75% of children borrowing books and quizzing. Feedback at a Parent Forum was that the AR quizzes were having a significant impact on reading at home and motivation for reading. By the end of the year there was a significant increase in library book borrowing across the school.
- **Live Performance**: Children at the school have limited experiences with less than 50% having watched a live show or seen a live theatre performance. The funding was used to purchase a performance of Dick Whittington seen by every child in the school; they left the performance feeling inspired.

Impact of CLPE Power of Reading

By the end of the 2016/17 year The Oaks were teaching PoR sequences in all 7-year groups. All teachers were using texts regularly in planning and books were becoming the **heart of the curriculum**. A KS2 teacher said it has really improved her awareness of quality literature. The English Lead Hollie Carey said, 'As a school, our children have had so many more experiences based on quality texts, have heard so many more stories and understood them.'

The impact on teachers and pupils...

Year 1	absolutely loved the story of the Storm Whale and so did I! We really took our time with the story and the children were so gripped. We also arranged a debate around whether it was ever okay to lie and we used the language structure of arguments. We finished the last lesson on Monday and read up to the end of the book – some of the children said they wished it went on for longer!
Year 2	have loved reading a bit at a time, they can't wait for the next bit! They've got better at reading comprehension. It has massively raised the profile of reading.
Year 3	were a bit unsure about their book choice at first but have loved it! When it came to the last lesson the children begged us to finish the book, so it's become our group reading text. The book chat has been immense and there is a real reading culture. Books really are used all the time and at the heart of our curriculum.

The Oaks data indicators 2017:

KS2 74% reached expected standards in reading (72% national) with 24% at greater depth (25% national) and an average reading progress score of 3.7 putting the school into the top 25% nationally.

Hollie Carey, English Lead, 'This academic year has been a huge success for The Oaks. Our Year 6 SATs results in reading have increased from 47% of children reaching the expected standard last year, to 74% of children reaching it this year. We have beaten national in reading which is 72%. The Let's Talk Reading spending has really contributed to this and our target areas of improving outcomes and raising the profile have been well and truly met.'

Jeremy Pentreath, Joint Headteacher, 'The school has made excellent progress this year in reading under Hollie's leadership and the LTR project will, in the long term, be transformational for our pupils.

We are grateful for your support in the project and are excited about our continued involvement in the future.'

Next Steps 2017/18

Let's Talk Reading further fundraised for top-up funding and the final tranche of LTR funding to The Oaks was spent in 2017/18. Katherine Kimble took over as English Lead.

Priorities were to continue to improve and maintain reading outcomes for all children and the number of children achieving greater depth; develop a consistency in the teaching and assessment of reading; ensure the profile of reading remains a priority.

Ofsted noted, in a short inspection in February 2018, that 'the school has fundamentally changed its approach to reading. As a result, the teaching of reading has improved dramatically, and outcomes now match those for writing and mathematics in exceeding the national expected standard in Year 6.'

Initiatives for 2017/18 included:

The Premier League Reading Stars intervention to improve outcomes for boys reading and create a positive reading culture. This is a National Literacy Trust developed 10-session reading intervention for KS2 pupils who are underachieving in reading but who love and are motivated by football. The Oaks implemented the intervention with two groups of boys in KS2, personal targets were set and the boys are now using examples in group reading lessons.

Reading Festival: seed funding was used to pay for storytelling workshops and performances by authors. The Oaks organised and hosted an IP2 reading festival for local schools, called the **Chantry BookJam**. The aim of the festival is to inspire children to read, to promote a love of reading and to let families know that reading is important and fun. The first year saw over 100 author books sold, over 130 pupils and parents attend a Woodland Storytelling event, an extra 33 dads sign up for FRED (Father Read Every Day) and over 80 children and parents visit the live author show. The festival has continued to run for a further 2 years bringing more authors each year to a greater audience and involving more primary schools each year.



The first Chantry BookJam took place in the week of 13 November 2017; at The Oaks every child took part in an author workshop. EYFS and KS1 saw Steve Antony, LKS2 James Campbell and UKS2 Jane Elson with Y6 additionally seeing Andy Briggs at Chantry Academy. Children enjoyed the opportunity to ask the authors questions about the writing process and felt the authors were interesting to listen to. Interest from the children led to more books by the authors being ordered for the school library.



NLT research on the impact of writer visits in Jun 2019 showed children who had an author visit to their school reported higher levels of reading enjoyment than their peers who didn't receive a visit. They were more likely to have high levels of confidence in their reading and twice as likely to read above the expected level for their age.

The Oaks Outstanding Ofsted report in September 2018 noted outcomes for pupils: 'This high level of achievement was sustained by those pupils who reached the end of key stage 2 in 2017. Progress in reading, writing and mathematics was well above average and in the top 10% of all schools nationally. Provisional 2018 key stage 2 results suggest that pupils' progress continues to be very strong. Leaders' focus on developing reading skills is evident. Pupils who read to inspectors did so with fluency and expression; they talk passionately about their favourite books and authors.'



John Helleur, Chair of Let's Talk Reading said, 'This initiative is an exemplar of what amazing improvements can be achieved in a relatively short period of time, with a relatively small amount of additional funding, when the school leadership prioritises reading and delivers a whole-school approach with drive and determination. So many children's lives will be improved by this initiative to put **books at the heart of the curriculum**.'

Our thanks go to key funders, particularly the Suffolk County Council's Raise the Bar Fund and Ipswich Borough Council.'

To find out more about Let's Talk Reading, see website www.letstalkreading.org.uk

Visit www.theoaksprimary.co.uk to view their Training Opportunities