Our Reading Initiative
Our Story
as told by twenty-one primary schools
Introduction

‘Our Reading Initiative, Our Story’, as told by twenty-one different primary schools, shares the collective wisdom of school communities in implementing effective whole school reading initiatives.

As you read these approaches to developing pupils’ reading proficiency, it will be evident how the initiatives embody the strand unit objectives of the Primary School English Curriculum (1999) including:

» Developing concepts of language and print
» Developing reading skills and strategies
» Reading for pleasure and information
» Developing interests, attitudes and the ability to think
» Responding to text

In doing so, children acquire language skills but also learn through language, developing their

» receptiveness to language
» competence and confidence in using language
» cognitive abilities
» emotional and imaginative responses
The stories told describe some approaches to teaching reading adopted by different schools and highlight the value they place on reading development. They vary in their specific objectives, from developing pupils’ understanding of texts, both written and digital, to developing a passion for reading. Many forge links between the school and home, creating an awareness of how best parents can support their children’s learning. The organisational set-ups differ in each project, including pupils reading individually, in pairs, in small and whole class groups. While some may be more suited to certain class levels, there are many that can be used across different class levels, being modified appropriately to suit the age of the pupils. Evident also in many of the initiatives is the tailoring of learning to suit the needs and ability of each child, by providing a differentiated learning experience.

Each school has shared an account of how they organise the initiative and also the benefits experienced by their pupils. Some ‘tips and advice’ are given, based on the personal experiences of the initiatives in their school context. In many cases we see pre- and post-gathering of data, to provide evidence of the impact of the school’s actions. This allows staff to evaluate whether or not the initiatives are successful in bringing about the desired, planned improvement, be it improvements in de-coding, understanding, fluency or attitudes.

An underlying aim of each initiative is the development of pupils as independent, confident, life-long readers who can engage with the written word for functional and personal purposes. Pupils develop skills in real reading contexts, acquiring a range of strategies. The development of oral language and writing skills is integrated into the initiatives, enabling pupils to respond appropriately to text both orally and in writing.

A key aim of the Primary School English Curriculum (1999) is to promote positive attitudes to reading and an appreciation of the value of language. The ‘Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and Life’ (DES, 2011) Strategy, re-emphasises the importance of fostering an enjoyment of reading among children and young people. We see many examples of initiatives whereby the primary aim is to promote a love of reading by providing opportunities to enjoy reading and have fun reading. Crucial for this is teachers’ choice of a rich and varied array of texts that are made available for pupils to engage with.

Sincere thanks to the participating schools for sharing their stories and resources with us. We wish all of these school communities continued success with their reading interventions. We hope also that you the reader, gain from their sharing of good practice. These outlines may give you a flavour of their initiative, and when researched further by your own staff, may suit a need in your school.

The participating schools are as follows:

- Creagh N.S., N.S., Ballinasloe, Co. Galway
- St Gabriel’s National School, Dominican Campus, Ballyfermot, Dublin 10
- Gaelscoil an Bhradáin Feasa, Bóthar an Mhuilinn, Droichead, Átha, Co. na Mí
- St. Vincent’s Convent Primary School, St. Mary’s Road, Cork
- Scoil Oiliubhéir, Ballyvolane, Cork
- Scoil Bhride, Knockmay, Portlaoise, Co. Laois
- Bishop Shanahan NS, Orwell Park, Templeogue, Dublin 16
- Holy Trinity N.S., Fethard, Co. Tipperary
- Our Lady of Mercy S.N.S., Military Rd., Waterford
- Merlin Woods Primary School, Doughiska Road, Galway
- Crecona N.S., Crecona, Co. Limerick
- Scoil Mhuiire, Shankill, Dublin 18
- Stephen’s De La Salle, 25 Patrick St. Waterford
- Salesian Girls Primary School, Fernbank, Limerick
- Scoil Mhainchin, Ennistymon, Co. Clare
- O’Callaghan’s Mills N.S., O’Callaghan’s Mills, Co. Clare
- Jesus and Mary Primary School, Our Lady’s Grove, Goatstown Rd., Dublin 14
- Gaelscoil na Rithe, Domhnach Seachnaill, Co na Mí
- Holy Trinity N.S., Glencairn, The Gallops, Leopardstown, Dublin 18
- Scoil Chríost Rí, Cloughleigh, Ennis, Co. Clare
- St. Aidan’s Primary School, Nunnery Road, Enniscorthy, Wexford
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Guided Reading

“In guided reading the teacher has an explicit reading role, to point out the relevant features in text and ensure the children have the strategies to cope with them. In guided reading, the teacher can provide guidance that can meet the needs of the whole group rather than one-by-one’ (Guided Reading, Key Stage 2. Hobsbaum, A, Gamble, N & Reedy, D, 2002, p. 4).

**Guided Reading:**
- Is a differentiated reading approach
- Uses readers that are levelled (any internationally recognised levelled scheme)
- Involves children reading and responding to texts in groups at their instructional reading levels
- Involves groups changing as children progress up the levels.

**Materials Needed:**
- Graded reading materials and well-chosen texts that children can read at their instructional level. One copy of the chosen book for each child in a group.
- Activities for groups which can be worked on independently
- Marie Clay Running Records manual
- PM Benchmark Kits

**Getting ‘Guided Reading’ Started**
- Organise groups according to ability groupings averaging four-five pupils.
- Decide on texts to be used by each group, at instructional level (90-95%). This means that the child has difficulty with no more than one word in ten, to ensure comprehension is maintained. ‘Book Bands for Guided Reading’ by the UK Reading Recovery National Network, provides guidance on choosing the right books.
- Each child receives his/her own copy of the text being read by the group.
- Identify the reading strategies that need to be taught/reinforced.
- Set independent tasks for each group including reading and consolidating activities.
- Prepare early finisher activities.

**Sample Books**

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<th>PM + Pearson: Red Rockets</th>
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**‘Guided Reading’ Time**

The teacher works with each group on a rotational basis, guiding the groups by hearing reading and teaching specific reading skills and strategies e.g. Monday: work with group one and two, Tuesday: Groups three and four, Wednesday: Group five and one, Thursday: Groups two and three, Friday: Groups four and five

- With a group the teacher will engage pupils in the following 6 steps:
  - Book introduction (establish existing knowledge, predict, introduce characters and difficult words or concepts, discuss the book in general)
  - Strategy check (focus on a reading strategy or aspect of reading whilst reminding pupils to use strategies e.g. self-correction, reading-on, re-reading for meaning)
» Independent reading (taking turns to read at own pace with teacher scaffolding.
   Teacher is acting as a roving listener)
» Returning to the text (check understanding)
» Response to the text (discuss, give opinions, ask questions, do a follow-up activity)
» Re-reading guided texts at home (use a familiar book previously completed in a group
   reading session).

• The remaining groups may
  » Engage in silent reading and a task
  » Read an agreed amount of text
  » Respond to strategy questions
  » Complete a generic activity
  » Rotate roles in group on daily/weekly basis as agreed.

• Reorganise groupings as appropriate
  » May be done on a termly basis through assessment.

Staff Decisions Prior to Initiating ‘Guided Reading’

• Who will lead it?
• Which class levels will be involved in guided reading?
• What resources are available e.g. books to be used, teaching personnel?
• How often is guided reading to take place?
• What preparatory work is required?
• How will we assess impact of guided reading e.g. miscue analysis?
• What previous experience can be shared?
• How are teachers going to develop/enhance group work?

Benefits of ‘Guided Reading’

• Teacher has a clear picture of the children’s ability
• Children are reading at their instructional reading level, so can make progress
• Teacher has time/space to teach, not just listen to reading
• Children are motivated/engaged as they can see progress
• Very positive experience for children
• Children are becoming independent readers earlier
• Group work practices are established
• Children learn from each other.

On-going Issues

• Management of resources
• Up-skilling of new staff
• Monitoring reading levels across the school
• Continuing development of literacy teaching.

Sincere thanks to the Staff and Pupils of St Gabriel’s National School, Dominican Campus, Ballyfermot, Dublin 10 for sharing their reading initiative.

If you would like to hear more about this initiative from the staff and pupils of St. Gabriel’s N.S., please see www.pdst.ie
Léitheoireacht faoi Threoir

Ba cheart go gcuirfí ar chumas gach dalta, tréimhse ar leith a chaithear gach lá ag baint taitnímh agus pléisiúir as leabhairn mí a làimhseáil, a phlé agus a léamh i bpáirtí le daoine eile. Nuair atá an dalta ag dul i ngleic leis an léitheoireacht aonair, tá sé an tábhachtach tásta a thabhairt don tuiscint, seachas a bheith ag cur béime ar fhocal aonair a bheith á aíthint. Is trí obair ó bhéal agus, gan amharas, ba chóir tástáil a dhéanamh ar an tuiscint.

Bíonn raon scileanna ag teastáil ó pháistí agus iad ag dul i ngleic leis an léitheoireacht. Tá tuiscint ag na múinteoirí sa scoil seo ar na scileanna sin agus ar na céimeanna forbartha a bhaineann leo sa dóigh is go mbeidh na daltaí a thabhairt don tuiscint féin. Glactar leis, dar ndóigh nach mbeidh an caighdeán céanna ag gach dalta sa rang agus mar sin de reointearn na daltaí ina ngrúpaí de réir a gcumas léitheoireachta nuair atá an seisíún faoi stiúr a n-eagrú. Ní bhionn níos mó ná cúige é a ngrúpaí. Bíonn cúigear i ngach ngrúpa.

Bíonn cóip den leabhar ag gach páiste sa ghrúpa. Caithfear de ghnáth 15 nóiméad leis an ngrúpa faoi stiúr.

Tugtar deis do pháistí leabhair eagsúla a laimhseáil etc. ón gcead lá ar scoil. Faoi iamh gheobhaidh tú cóip de na liostaí leabhair a léitear sna bun ranganna. Bíonn grúpaí léitheoireachta i ngach rang. Sna Naíonáin bíonn dhá ghrúpa. Tá 15 cóip de gach leabhar againn. Ó rang 1 ar aghaidh bíonn 2-4 ghrúpa in ngach rang.

Ábhar Riachtanach
• Tá in-fheistiú an-mhór déanta againn le go mbeidh ar a laghad 15 cóip de gach leabhar leat ag an ngrúpa faoi stiúr.
• Gníomhaíochtaí réamh-phleanáilte éagsúla bunaithe ar na leabhairn.

Chun ‘Léitheoireacht faoi Threoir’ a Thosú
• Plean scoile/plean do gach rang
• Leabhair a cheannach
• Aithne a chur ar na leabhair
• Gníomhaíochtaí a dhéanamh bunaithe ar na leabhairn
• An rang a roinnt ina ngrúpaí
• Na páistí a thraeneáil le bheith ag obair go neamhspleách ar ghníomhaíochtaí réamh-phleanáilte.

Am ar leith don ‘Léitheoireacht faoi Threoir’
• Rang roinnte ina ngrúpaí.
• Múinteoir scoile choghlama sa rang ag cabhrú le naíonáin bheaga/mhóra - cabhríonn sé seo le dírbhreathnóireacht agus páistí a aimsiú le deacrachtaí go luath.
• Múinteoir ag obair le grúpa amhain- focal-aithint léamh/vós ard/plé faoin scéal etc.
  (Déantar an druileáil le linn tréimhse eile gach lá leis an rang go léir).
• An grúpa/ na grúpaí eile ag obair ar ghníomhaíochtaí réamh-phleanáilte ag an múinteoir-
  riomhair/ scriobhscéalta (próiseas scribhneoireachta), aithneíochthoil, leathanaigh ‘oibre’
  bunaithe ar na leabhairní eile.

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• An rang a roinnt ina ngrúpaí
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  riomhair/ scriobhscéalta (próiseas scribhneoireachta), aithneíochthoil, leathanaigh ‘oibre’
  bunaithe ar na leabhairní eile.
Our Reading Initiative. Our Story.
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Cinntí Foirne roimh Thosú

• Roghnú na leabhair do gach rang
• Líon leabhair le ceannach do gach rang
• Traeneáil na muinteoirí conas tabhairt faoi seisiún léitheoireachta faoi stiur/ an próiseas scribhneoireachta agus conas tabhairt faoi
• Gníomhaiochtaí a chumadh/a dhearadh/a aimsiú do na leabhairtí ar riomhairí nó ar pháir.
• Measúnú (am-chlár/tastálacha etc. a phleanáil)
• Dáta athbhreithnithe a shocrú.

Na Buntáistí
Is féidir le buntáistí an tionscnaimh do na daltaí a bheith curtha san áireamh san áireamh mar neart.

• Páisti ag leamh ag a gcaighdeán féin
• Suim ag na páistí ‘sna leabhair
• Réimeas leathan leabhairfhear ar fáil
• Páisti ag leamh na seánraí éagsúla – filiocht, agallaimh beirte, leabhair eolais etc.
• Nil an córas teoranta- bionn ag páisti.

Acmhainní/ ábhar úsáideach eile

• Teimpléid ón idirlín i.e seomraranga.com/anseo.net a chabhraíonn chun achoimre &rl a dhéanamh.
• Boghaisín na bhfocal
• Senteacher.org
• Foclóir pearsanta na bpáistí
• Cluichí teanga
• Clár bán idir-ghníomhach agus na cluichí léitheoireachta ar fad atá ar fáil leis.

Ár Leideanna agus ár gComhairle

D’fhéadfadh na leideanna seo cuidiú le daoine eile důshláin atá sa tionscnamh a shárú.

• Taighde a dhéanamh ar na leabhair roimh iad a úsáid
• Téamaí a roghnú a dheanfaidh comhthathú le téama na seachtaine nó/agus an seánra atá idir lámha i.e is féidir é a cheangailt le OSIE go héasca
• Grúpaí léitheoireachta a roghnú sa rang
• Billeoga oibre /gníomhaiochtaí a dhearadh a shocrú bunaíthe ar na leabhair
• Ceangail an plean léitheoireachta leis an bplean fad-téarmach
• Ceannaigh go leor cóipeanna de gach leabhar. Tá 15 cóip again de gach leabhar ionas gur féidir 2 ghrúpa a bheith sa rang.
• Ceangail na seánraí atá á gclúdú sa léitheoireacht leis an séanra atá idir lámha sa scribhneoireacht.

Mile buíochas d’fhoireann agus do pháisti Gaelscoil an Bhradáin Feasa, Bóthar an Mhuilinn, Droichead Átha, Co. na Mí as ucht an tionscnamh a roinnt linn.
Literacy Lift Off (Intensive Literacy or Power Hour)

Literacy Lift Off is an intensive intervention of Reading and Writing for a set number of weeks based on the principles of Reading Recovery. Children learn to read and write by reading and writing. This intervention gives the children lots of opportunities to read books at their own level of competency and gradually lift the complexity of what they can do in both reading and writing.

Since 2003 many Reading Recovery teachers, buoyed by their success with individual children, have been sharing the Reading Recovery approach to literacy learning with class teachers. The way in which they do this varies from school to school and has been called by many names one of which is Literacy Lift Off. Usually members of the Special Education Team, in collaboration with the class teacher, work in the classroom every day for six to eight weeks in five eight minute, rotating sessions, focusing on a range of literacy activities which mirror the activities in a Reading Recovery lesson. These activities include

- re-reading familiar books to build fluency and confidence
- being introduced to and attempting to read a new book
- composing and recording their own messages
- exploring how words work using magnetic letters and whiteboards.

Getting ‘Literacy Lift Off’ Started

This intervention is usually done in senior infants/first class. Occasionally a school might be concerned about low reading ability in an older class. The intervention can be done there too. To begin, pick a class that has a particular need and in which the class teacher is prepared to ‘have a go’.

- Do a running record on every child in the class and find out what level they are reading between 90% and 95% accuracy (i.e. instructional level).
- Put children in groups of five/six according to their level. Align the children to the group closest to their level.
- Have four/five teachers prepared to work with the class. Each will take responsibility for a different part of the lesson.
- Teachers need time to meet before the intervention begins to discuss the aims and procedures for each station.
- One person takes charge of marking the change of activity either by ringing a bell, clapping etc. every eight minutes.
- As well as running records, schools choose other entrance and exit tests so as they can measure the efficacy of the intervention.

‘Literacy Lift Off’ Time

The following is an outline of the different stations:

- The purpose of the Familiar Reading station is to promote enjoyment, fluency comprehension and speed. Children read the same story in round robin. Do not interrupt the reading. As they are reading note what is going well and one or two things you want to draw the group’s attention to e.g. a good self correction or something that didn’t sound right, look right or make sense or a good visual analysis.
- The purpose of the Word Work station is to show children how words work so that they can make a fast visual analysis of their reading. Magnetic letters are used to show children how words are composed of letters and sometimes have ‘bits that look the same and sound the same’. This is based on words that they know and are in the reading.
• The purpose of the Writing station is that the children will learn how they can write their own messages by hearing and recording sounds in words, using analogy and learning unusual words (by look, cover, write, check). Children compose a sentence and have-a-go at writing it. The teacher helps them problem solve by showing them how to hear and record sounds in words (using sound boxes) or by using analogy (if I can spell “tack” I can spell “cracking”). On the practice page they can try out words and everyday they must learn one or two new words or practice one or two words that they nearly know.

• At the New Book station, children are allowed daily practice in attempting to read new material. The child learns to use strategic activities to read new texts. The teacher prepares the children for success by giving them the plot of the story and introducing them to any new or unusual words or phrases. As the children are reading the new text she directs them to the most effective strategy to use at any given time. The strategy might be a prompt to meaning (e.g. Where were the children going?), to visual information (e.g. Cover the ‘ing’ or ‘can you see a bit you know’) or to structure (e.g. predict how the phrase might end).

• If there are more than twenty five children in the class it might be necessary to have a fifth activity especially if station teaching is being used. This could be a listening station where either an adult (e.g. a parent) reads a story or the children listen to a story on headphones.

If the child is to read for meaning he needs to read in a phrased and fluent manner and this should be encouraged at all times. The child needs to be encouraged to monitor his own reading and writing. He should know that when it doesn’t sound right, look right or make sense he needs to re-read and correct. In order to read fluently the child needs to be able to problem solve words on the run.

Staff Decisions Prior to Initiating ‘Literacy Lift Off’

A critical aspect of this approach is matching books to individual children. Every child gets a new book each day. Schools need multiple copies of books, banded along a continuum of difficulty. “Book Bands for Guided Reading, 4th edition. A Handbook to Support Foundation and Key Stage One Teachers” by Baker, Bickler and Bodman (2007), is a very useful resource for assisting schools to band their books.

Benefits of ‘Literacy Lift Off’

• The most obvious benefit is the increased literacy levels obtained by the pupils. We know this from the pre- and post-tests which we administered. The majority of pupils made progress and a large number made significant progress.

• It also promotes inclusion with increased confidence and skills development. Pupils are enabled to access other reading materials at their class level and are better able to participate in the curriculum.

• It also strengthens the link between home and school. Parents know their role in advance. At home they listen to their child’s reading, sign the reading log and make any relevant comments. The comments from parents have been very positive.

• It gives teachers the opportunity to share best practice. Over the six week period of the intervention the various tasks rotate so teachers must become familiar with all aspects of the programme. This promotes collegiality.

• Collaborative planning is also very important between the class teacher and the support teachers. Pre-planning is necessary so that the various tasks are pitched at the correct level for each class group.

• The most obvious aspect of the intervention is when pupils are working at the various stations and you can see how active they are in the learning process and how much they enjoy it.

• I know that as a staff when we sit down to evaluate this intervention we will appreciate it’s benefits and continue with it in the school and possibly extend it over the coming years.
Our Advice and Tips

1. We have two years experience with the implementation of this reading intervention in Senior Infants and First Class and we would recommend that all the teachers involved be familiar with every aspect of the programme, for example, pre- and post-testing, recording and interpreting the results, completing a template to store these results, decision making about who will be responsible for each section of the intervention, grouping the pupils, organising the classroom and resources and in evaluating the initiative. We have found that a short intensive intervention works best i.e. six weeks. We target our two First classes in the first three months of the new school year and move to Senior Infants prior to Christmas. We revisit each class for a shorter period of time (i.e. three weeks) at the end of the year which has proven to be successful.

2. Before we set up this intervention we viewed it in operation in another school which meant that the whole task was less daunting and we made informed decisions about how we wanted the intervention to proceed. Observing mini-lessons and demonstrations by a teacher familiar with this intervention was invaluable.

3. At a practical level, it is helpful to have a set time each day for the intervention, for example, 10:15 to 11:00 and morning time works best for this age group. We time each activity so the pupils get eight minutes at each station and we establish a routine for moving between stations. The following rotation works best for us: Familiar Reading, Writing, Word Work, New Reading and Sight Words. We have added this fifth station ‘Sight Words’ to accommodate a class of thirty pupils.

4. We have decided as a team that each time we move to a new classroom, teachers take responsibility for a different section of the intervention; this means that we are all familiar with every aspect of the programme and we acquire the skills necessary to implement each section. Fifteen to twenty minutes planning is required prior to each daily session. Meeting as a team throughout the intervention is also central to the success of the intervention; we reflect on what is going well and on the challenges that arise. Parents need to be informed in advance about the intervention; we give an overview of what is involved in writing and we clearly state their role during the six weeks of the intervention.

Sincere thanks to the Staff and Pupils of Creagh N.S., Ballinasloe, Co. Galway for sharing their reading initiative.

If you would like to hear more about this initiative from the staff and pupils of Creagh N.S., please see www.pdst.ie
Kidstalk

Kidstalk is a literacy initiative, delivered to Junior Infant classes, with parental involvement as a key component. The programme is delivered in each Junior Infant classroom during six half-hour sessions. The aims of the programme are to show parents how to read with their children and to enhance the children’s language skills as well as to develop their skills in the areas of vocabulary development, good listening and attention, turn-taking, storytelling and sequencing. The Kidstalk Programme, developed collaboratively in 2008/2009 by a Speech Therapist, funded by the Cork City Partnership, and the teaching staff of St. Vincent’s Convent Primary School, has been running in the school for the last three school years.

Materials Needed:

- Six storybooks, one for each theme chosen
- ‘Interest bag’ for each story containing props decided on and chosen by staff or staff/parents
- A variety of card games, picture bingo, puppets, soft toys, big books, drawing paper/crayons suitable to each story
- A folder containing a copy of the story, a prompt card for parents and a game to be given to each child to take home after each session
- Certificate of completion for each child, to be presented at celebration at end of module.

Getting ‘Kidstalk’ Started

- Teachers choose six themes, one per week e.g. clothes, myself, Halloween, animals, etc.
- A storybook is chosen for each theme e.g. The Very Hungry Caterpillar, by Eric Carle (Food)
- Props for stories are prepared for ‘interest bags’
- Activities are prepared for each story e.g. jigsaws, sorting/matching games, picture bingo etc.
- Dates and times are decided for each session
- The initiative is explained to parents at a meeting, the terms Speech and Language are defined and explained, the content of and the reasons for the programme are outlined, the topics and target vocabulary which will be included in the programme are discussed, roles and responsibilities are assigned.
‘Kidstalk’ Time

- Parents assemble at appointed time in Parents’ Room (or other venue) and are invited to classroom when session is about to start.
- Teacher introduces interest bag (See above).
- Teacher models reading the story to the children and parents observe.
- Group work, with parent participation follows. The children work in groups of four/five, e.g. on activities as follows:
  1. Group one children draw a picture of the story/discuss this with parents;
  2. Group two children discuss the story/retell/answer simple questions, assisted by parents;
  3. Group three children play game related to theme, e.g. animal snap, picture bingo;
  4. Group four children play game e.g. shopping game for food theme etc.
- Parents remain at one station while children move between activities.
- After thirty minutes session ends. Parents and children are thanked.

Staff Decisions Prior to Initiating ‘Kidstalk’

- Which topics will be chosen as themes for the programme?
- Who will research and organise the resources needed to start the programme?
- How will the necessary resources be financed?
- Who will take responsibility for replacing and storing resources?
- Which class group would benefit from the programme?
- How will parents be encouraged to become involved in the project?
- How will we evaluate the programme and measure outcomes?

Benefits of ‘Kidstalk’

- Teachers indicated in a questionnaire that the programme was very suited to the age of the children. It assisted development of vocabulary and sequencing skills, good listening and turn-taking. The topics chosen were very relevant to the experience of the children and the children learned some very useful new vocabulary. Through parent questionnaires, it was found that the experience taught parents about suitable children’s literature and helped parents realise the importance of language development in early years and how crucial this is in the teaching of reading.
- Pre- and post-testing results in 2008/2009 indicated that the vocabulary of the children improved over the six weeks of the programme implementation. At both pre- and post-testing, the children were asked to list animals, foods and items of clothing. The lists were recorded in a given time of 60 seconds per topic.
  » The average number of foods listed by the children increased at post-testing from 6.11 to 7.88.
  » The average number of items of clothing listed increased from 5.05 to 7.89.
  » The average number of animals listed increased from 5.35 to 8.29.
Our Advice and Tips

1. Plan well in advance as there are many resources which must be sourced, prepared and organised.

2. Clearly define and explain respective roles and responsibilities.

3. Familiarise parents with resources, at a brief meeting before each session begins.

4. Small classes work best – twenty maximum if possible.

5. Make all sessions joyful and enjoyable!

6. Welcome babies and toddlers if parents bring them to the sessions. You will be sowing the seeds of a love of reading.

7. Don’t forget to celebrate at the end of the programme – have a party and award certs!

Sincere thanks to the Staff and Pupils of St. Vincent’s Convent Primary School, St. Mary’s Road, Cork for sharing their reading initiative.
Reader’s Theatre

Reader’s theatre is an oral performance of a script. It is the perfect forum for readers to practice fluency through the reading of a text as the focus is on interpreting the script rather than memorising it. Pupils must convey their understanding of the author’s message through intonation, facial expression, reading accurately and changing their voice for different characters.

Materials Needed:
- Suitable script
- Corresponding big books.

Getting ‘Reader’s Theatre’ Started

- Choose a script, suitable for Reader’s Theatre. (Appendix 4)

This may be an extract from the class novel with a number of character dialogues and narrator parts. Older children can really enjoy adapting favourite stories from the junior classes e.g. ‘Farmer Duck’, ‘Owl Babies’. They can then ‘perform’ their reader’s theatre to the audience of the junior classes. Free downloadable scripts are available on-line that can be adapted for classroom use, for example, www.aaronshep.com/rt/RTE.html

‘Reader’s Theatre’ Time

- Teacher introduces pupils to a piece of ‘reader’s theatre’ text (a piece of text divided into different parts). Children can identify different parts using highlighters if this is not already done, for example, in a class novel extract.
- Teacher can model how to read one character’s part, with and without intonation, eye-contact and expression, demonstrating that these make reading more enjoyable.
- Key focuses include:
  - **Poise and Focus**: The actor must stay “in character” at all times.
  - **Characterization and Acting**: The actor should demonstrate understanding of his/her role through his/her vocal inflection, facial expressions etc.
  - **Eye Contact**: The audience should always be able to see the actor’s eyes. This means that the actor must look down quickly to remind him of the line but must have eyes up when speaking the line.
  - **Projection and Diction**: With practice every pupil is able to be heard clearly from the back of the classroom.
  - **Pace**: While an actor is performing, the pace should never be too fast.
  - **Ensemble**: All actors in a scene should be working together to create their performance.
- The teacher can continue to model reading and the children can engage in choral reading for every second part of the text.
- The teacher divides the class into four groups and the text is read with each group taking every fourth part.
- Finally the teacher assigns each group a different part and the children can ‘become’ this character, changing their voice/intonation accordingly.
- Pupils can form small groups, each taking a separate part, and rehearse, read and perform a script.
• Groups can perform for each other or for other classes. The emphasis is on quality of reading and not on memorising or dramatising the text.
• Pupils can give constructive positive feedback to each other in terms of expression, intonation, making eye contact etc. This feedback may refer to ‘what went well’ (WWW) and ‘even better if’ (EBI).
• As pupils become familiar with Reader’s Theatre, the class/groups of pupils can find a piece of literature and adapt it into a Reader’s Theatre script. Following rehearsal pupils can perform their scripts for similar/other class levels at assembly time. Pupils can record their performances for inclusion on the school website.

Staff Decisions Prior to Initiating ‘Reader’s Theatre’

• What classes will engage in Reader’s Theatre?
• What scripts are suitable for different class levels?
• Will pupils engage in creating their own Reader’s Theatre?
• What audience will pupils have for their performance? When will this happen?

Benefits of ‘Reader’s Theatre’

This reading initiative really benefitted our school for many reasons and I would be sure to use it again with other classes. The children loved the intertwining of both drama and reading and it made it easier for the teacher to integrate the two subjects together. The children really enjoyed acting out the story and it helped them to practice reading with expression. As the pupils are in first class, a lot of them are not fluent readers yet and thus, expression when reading may be lacking. The children have great comprehension of the story and can empathise with the characters in the story, allowing the characters to become more believable to them. This can be difficult for children of this age to do, which again leads into more believable drama sessions for the children and an improvement in confidence for the children who are usually too shy to participate in drama games.

The children can record themselves acting out the script and evaluate their own performance exploring what they did really well or what they could have done better. They really enjoy self-evaluating and it can be a much more effective way for the children to be given feedback on their reading.

Our Advice and Tips

• Ensure that the children are very familiar with the story that you are attempting to do with regards to Readers’ Theatre, as they will be more fluent when trying to read the script, even the weak readers.
• Allow for many scripts to be made available for each class level as some of the titles may be for younger audiences and I’m sure that older classes would love this also.
• Allow the children to practice the script often in order for them to gain confidence when reading.
• Allow the children to record themselves reading through the script as they are usually excellent at evaluating their own performance.

Sincere thanks to the Staff and Pupils of Scoil Bhride, Knockmay, Portlaoise, Co. Laois for sharing their reading initiative.
Story Sacks

A story sack is a great resource for exploring books with children allowing the children to interact with the book. Typically it is a large cloth bag containing a children’s book and supporting materials for activities related to the book. Supporting materials relating to the book may include craft ideas, games, fun activities, puppets and costumes, allowing children to experience interactive, fun, theatrical activities while making reading a memorable and enjoyable experience.

Story sacks can be used by a class teacher to stimulate language development. Also story sacks can be borrowed by pupils and taken home, making reading with parents/guardians fun and interactive also.

Materials Needed:
These will depend on the supporting materials that relate to the chosen book.

- Copy of the selected book (Big Book version if possible)
- A bag (inexpensive canvas sack that can be decorated)
- Contents of story sack (different for each book)

Getting ‘Story Sacks’ Started

- Decide on a suitable book to base the story sack on. This will depend on the age group of children and may be their favourite story or a topic that the children have a particular interest in.
- Read the story and carefully decide on what objectives you want the activities to achieve. Consider the theme, the characters, the setting, the sounds, the smells and the language used. These activities can be outlined on an ‘activity card’ which is laminated and stored in the bag, and may be useful for the user of the story sack.
- Some general activities may include:
  » Talking about the story and using the props to retell the story
  » Asking children questions about the characters and the plot
  » Finding out more about the people and places in the story by looking at non-fiction books
  » Drawing a story map of the plot to help with re-telling the story.
- List the materials that will be needed to support your activities. These may include:
  » soft toys/puppets of the main characters
  » costumes/props to support the story
  » pictures/photos of related events
  » an audio tape/CD of the story being told
  » a language based game or activity
  » a related non-fiction book
  » craft and activity ideas.

Example

**Story: Noah’s Ark**

- Book, backdrop, Noah’s Ark, teddies representing Noah, Mrs. Noah, 2 elephants, 2 giraffes, 2 turtles, 2 penguins, 2 lions, 2 sheep, 2 mice, a raven, a dove, an olive branch, a jigsaw, a weather book

- Source the bag and other required resources.
- Decide who will make the resources or who will buy the story sacks. A group of interested parents may volunteer to meet together in the school for a certain number of afternoons to make the contents of the story sack.
- Include a list of the bag’s content in the story sack.
‘Story Sack’ Time

- Model the use of the story sack with the children.
- Use the story sack props to engage children in the telling of the story and in related language activities.
- As pupils become familiar with the story and the resources, they may use the story sack independently.

Staff Decisions Prior to Initiating Use of ‘Story Sacks’

- Which class levels will story sacks be made for?
- For which books are story sacks to be made?
- Who will devise suggested activities?
- Who will make the story sacks? How will this be organised?
- Will pupils be allowed to borrow story sacks to take home?

Benefits of ‘Story Sacks’

- The use of story sacks makes the story more real to the children
- The sequence of events is clear and the kinaesthetic element is emphasised
- The visual memory of the children is enhanced
- Dramatisation and role play are facilitated
- Integration with other subjects takes place e.g. Geography (journey, bird’s eye view), History (sequence e.g. ugly duckling – swan), Language/Drama (exploration of characters, feelings, viewpoints)
- The whole experience is one of fun.

Our Advice and Tips

- Consensus on which stories will be used at each level and which text will be used
- You will need a team of people who have great craft skills if you decide to make the story sacks yourselves
- Start small – 2 or 3 books a year
- Annual audit/replacement of contents as required
- Variation of textures used in tactile materials.

Some Knitting Patterns used:

Jean Greenhowe’s, Double Knitting Yarn
- Novelty Eggs, Christmas Treasures, Christmas Special, Toy Collection, Jiffyknits,

Snowflake
- The Snowman, Troy Ceratops, Springtime in Brambly Hedge

Sincere thanks to the Staff and Pupils of Bishop Shanahan N.S., Orwell Park, Templeogue, Dublin 16 for sharing their reading initiative.
Building Bridges of Understanding

Theory and Actual Classroom Practices in Multiple Comprehension Strategy Instruction

Name of College/School(s): Mary Immaculate College, Limerick

In conjunction with:

- Scoil Oilibhéir, Ballyvolane, Cork
- Scoil Aiséiri Chriost, Farranree, Cork
- Scoil Mhuire na nGráis, Greenmount, Cork
- Scatleigh, N. S., Midleton, Co. Cork
- Gaelscoil Mhuscáir, An Bhlárna, Co. Chorcáí

Building Bridges of Understanding promotes a whole-school strategic approach to comprehension instruction. Research has consistently indicated that explicitly teaching children strategies for understanding what they read improves their comprehension of a range of text genres (National Reading Panel, 2000; Duke and Pearson, 2002; Block and Duffy, 2008; Raphael et al., 2009). Through thinking aloud while reading authentic high quality children’s literature, the teacher models and scaffolds use of the following key strategies:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Comprehension Strategies</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prediction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making Connections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visualisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questioning</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clarifying</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determining importance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Synthesising</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the early stages much of the instruction and practice is provided by the teacher. However, as pupil expertise increases the responsibility for strategy use is gradually released to the pupils, with the teacher providing guidance and support as required. The overall aim of the approach is to develop active and purposeful readers who are able to apply a collection of strategies to construct personal interpretations of the text, evaluating and questioning as they read. To this extent collaborative group work in the form of Transactional Strategies Instruction (TSI) is used to allow children learn from and support the strategy use of their peers. The use of Anchor Charts and Comprehension Process Motions support the children in their application of strategies.

Further details on the implementation of the approach at each class level are available in the Building Bridges of Understanding manual (available through www.cdu.mic.ul.ie).

Materials Needed:

Central to the success of Building Bridges of Understanding is the use of high-quality children’s literature, allowing teachers and pupils opportunities to engage with text in an authentic manner. It has been our experience that picture books provide the stimulus when introducing a new strategy as they generally provide multiple opportunities to demonstrate the use of a particular strategy. Once the pupils are familiar with a strategy this can then be transferred to novels and other curricular areas. A recommended list for each strategy is provided in the Building Bridges of Understanding manual. While many of the titles for junior classes are readily available in Irish shops and libraries, the project member conducted extensive research to locate the best titles for senior classes and these can be easily purchased through on-line retailers.
Getting Started

As with any whole school approach, the professional development of the staff is a crucial factor in its success. While the manual supports and guides the teacher, it is no replacement for seeing comprehension strategy instruction in action or talking to others who have implemented the approach. Summer courses, both on-line and face-to-face have been offered to support teachers in this process.

Our own experiences have shown that the implementation of any such initiative is most effective when the CPD is school-based and sustained over time. To this extent we adopted the Train the Trainer model, with one teacher from each school up-skilling themselves in this area and piloting the strategies in their classrooms. In turn they could provide support and guidance to their colleagues through activities such as modelling lessons and acting as a coach/mentor.

In the pilot schools listed above we adopted a three year dissemination model:

- **Year One**: Coach implements programme in his/her own class
- **Year Two**: Whole school Implementation of *Predication, Making Connections, Visualising and Questioning*
- **Year Three**: Whole school implementation of the remaining strategies: *Monitoring, Comprehension, Determining Importance, Inference, Synthesis and Collaborative group work through TSI*

Building Bridges Sessions

A step by step approach to Building Bridges lessons is outlined in the manual, detailing the process of:

- **Text Selection**
- **Pre-planning / Preparation of text**
- **Introducing strategy to class in clear and explicit language**
- **Modelling strategy using Think Aloud**
- **Scaffolding and guiding children’s responses**
- **Debriefing**

The manual also contains transcripts illustrating the interaction of teacher and pupils with the text. In addition the accompanying videos provide examples of instruction in each strategy across a variety of levels and school types. Characteristic of all of these lessons is the:

- Active and engaged nature of the children
- Higher-order thinking skills of the pupils
- Involvement of pupils of all abilities
- Role of teacher as a facilitator of discussion

Teachers engaged in this approach have found it most effective to watch a skilled teacher model a lesson with their own class, where possible.
Reflections of a School Implementing Building Bridges of Understanding

Scoil Oilibhéir, Ballyvolane, Cork

Scoil Oilibhéir first became involved with Building Bridges in 2008. The school has many initiatives such as CAPER to support children's literacy development and was interested in finding a structured approach to comprehension to complement other language and reading programmes. Prior to implementing the programme we experienced challenges common to most schools such as:

- Supporting children to read for meaning rather than reading to finish
- Developing the higher order thinking skills of pupils
- Sustaining interest and motivation
- Differentiating material to include all pupils
- Sourcing relevant material
- Time

As a large school with approximately 800 pupils, one of the greatest challenges was providing professional development for all teachers and supporting the teachers through this change in practice. To do so we adopted a three year implementation cycle, with all members of staff being included in the second and third year. The coach provided ’in-house’ expertise and support and was constantly available to provide advice, suggestions and to model lessons. Our teachers found this method of CPD to be invaluable. Seeing the instruction modelled with our own pupils strengthened teachers’ belief in the process with many teachers reflecting that for visual learners it was integral to the successful implementation.

Over the three year dissemination we have noticed many positive implications for our pupils:

- The ability of pupils of all ages and abilities to engage in higher order thinking, regularly providing insights beyond the ability of adults present.
- The children automatically applied the strategies across other curricular areas, taking an active and engaged role in their learning in these subjects. Pupils do not regard these strategies solely as tools for reading, but apply them strategically to deepen their understanding and create personal interpretations of text across the curriculum.
- Children became increasingly conscious of challenging vocabulary, enjoyed learning about new words and using them in other areas.
- Children enjoyed the instruction and were actively involved in the lessons. Rather than trying to motivate the pupils to engage with the text, teachers were now challenged to deal with the number of responses the children wanted to make!
- Teachers noted significant changes in motivation and pupils’ perception of themselves as readers, particularly among struggling readers who realised that reading consists of more than decoding and were surprised and delighted to observe their own proficiency in making predictions, connections and inferences in comparison with more able readers.
- The approach promotes enthusiasm for children’s literature and knowledge of children’s authors. Children regularly expressed preferences for different genres and made connections between author’s styles and techniques that were used in books they encountered.
- Teachers reflected that children were not only reacting to a text but they were also interacting with it, becoming more involved as they were relating it to their own experiences.

For teachers benefits also include:

- Comprehension is now an integrated and integral part of teaching all subjects
- It has created an effective and positive comprehension environment which the pupils seem to love
- A deeper knowledge and understanding of the comprehension process.

Sincere thanks to the Staff of Scoil Oilibhéir, Ballyvolane, Cork and to Martin Gleeson of Mary Immaculate College.

Contact person: Treasa Ni Bhuaigh, treasanibhuaigh@gmail.com
Peer Tutoring

Peer Tutoring involves two children, one stronger reader (tutor or A) and one weaker reader (tutee or B), working together for thirty minutes a day (four or five days a week) over a six week period. It can be run for up to a period of eight weeks with positive impact.

Materials Needed:
- A graded reading scheme, non-fiction and fiction
- Reading Test (to establish pre-test and post-test reading ages)
- Merit stickers
- For each pair of children:
  » Plastic press fastener folder with two pockets if possible (if not a press fastener folder and a plastic CD pocket with two sections)
  » Red and green card to place into the pockets to create a “red pocket” and a “green pocket”
  » White card to make flashcards
  » A tracking card
  » Marker
  » Dictionary
  » Word sheet to record unknown words
  » Expanding file to store flashcards
  » Bookmark with relevant prompts
  » Card for merit awards
  » Notebook to make personal dictionary of unknown words
- Each pupil also can have a page to record the name of the book being read.

Getting ‘Peer Tutoring’ Started
- Up-skilling of participating teachers (contact I.N.T.O. or local education centre for details)
- Buy resources as above. A graded reading scheme can in some cases be borrowed from the local library.
- Administer reading test
- Plan with LS/Resource teacher(s) or support team
- Pair each child with another child, with whom he/ she will work well – a better reader and a weaker reader (but not best with weakest)
- Train the children. Model the procedures with another adult.
- Make a list of the steps to be followed by the children in working out a word.
‘Peer Tutoring’ Time

Peer tutoring lasts for thirty minutes each day.

- First five minutes – if it is a new book the children discuss the cover and predict what they know about the topic and what they think it may be about, otherwise they discuss what they read the previous day.
- Tutor (A) reads for five minutes. Tutee records any words that the tutor does not know.
- Tutee (B) begins where the tutor (A) started and reads for five minutes. On the Word Sheet the tutor writes down any words that the tutee does not know.
- Sight Word Practice (fifteen mins):
  » any newly recorded words are looked up in the dictionary where meaning is unknown
  » flash cards are made of any newly recorded words
  » pupils work together through the steps of working out unknown words – picture cues may be added also
  » newly recorded words are practised and put orally into sentences
  » newly recorded words are put into the tutee’s /tutor’s personalized dictionary and put into a written sentence in the personalized dictionary to support memory of the word
  » previous sight word flashcards in the green pocket i.e. with one or two circles on them are revised for recognition, pronunciation, meaning, putting into oral sentences, counting syllables etc.
  » tutee is asked to recognize all flashcards and a circle is added where words are recognized, pronounced correctly and meaning is known
  » flashcards with three accumulated circles are placed in the red pocket, flashcards with one or two circles remain in the green pocket.
- On Friday the pupils check all the words in the red pocket. Any words known are transferred to the first section of the expanding file. Any words not known are returned to the green pocket for the next week. Every Friday all the words in the expanding file are checked. If they are known they remain in the expanding file, if not, they are returned to the green pocket to begin the process over again.
- Each pair of children may earn a merit sticker every day, for working quietly, co-operating, taking turns, being kind /helpful, etc. Ten stickers earn a reward – maybe a homework pass.

Staff Decisions Prior to Initiating ‘Peer Tutoring’

- Which classes will participate?
- Which teachers will be co-teaching?
- Changes to Special Education timetable if necessary.
- Which reading test(s) should be used?

Benefits of ‘Peer Tutoring’

In working together the children improved their social skills. Other areas to improve were their organisational skills, dictionary use (and thesaurus use in older classes), word attack skills, general knowledge and vocabulary.

It helped the weaker readers gain confidence by reading aloud daily without feeling under pressure. It gave the children a central role in their own learning where they had to take responsibility for themselves. The initiative gave the teacher the opportunity to observe the children at work.
Our Advice and Tips

1. The teachers should be up-skilled in the initiative. Model the procedures for the children.

2. Test the children before and after the initiative so that progress can be checked. We used the Young reading test with second and third classes and Daniels and Diack with fourth to sixth classes.

3. Ensure that all the resources required are in place. Care should be taken when choosing pairs of children to ensure that they work well together.

4. Have a wide variety of books to hold the children’s interest. Display chart giving step-by-step instructions which will allow the children to work independently.

Sincere thanks to the Staff and Pupils of Holy Trinity N.S., Fethard, Co. Tipperary for sharing their reading initiative.

The peer tutoring procedure introduced here is adapted from
Peer Assisted Learning Strategies (PALS) and Partner Reading (Butler, 1999; Vaughn et al., 2000) with further pieces added by King, (2006).


King, F. 2006. Special Education in Irish Classrooms: A Practical Guide. Dublin: PrimaryABC
‘Reading Partners’ comprises of reading sessions run for six – eight weeks.

- Groups are ability differentiated with maximum of eight/ten tutors and eight/ten partners in each group. Weak or reluctant readers in the younger classes are matched with weak readers in the higher classes and similarly more able pupils in lower classes are matched with more competent readers in higher classes. In the weaker groups, the older girls develop significant confidence as they ‘help’ the younger pupils and the younger girls really enjoy the structure and access to readers which they can manage. More able pupils get an opportunity to engage in higher order discussion and access more advanced reading material.

- Three half hour sessions per week (strictly adhered to – no distractions).

- Gap of at least two class years between groups e.g. third pair with fifth/fourth with sixth.

- Groups roll over after six-eight week sessions which means that all pupils in the two classes involved get to engage in a session.

Materials Needed:

- Good quality readers. We use PM Readers
- Learning Logs (to be completed after each session) (Appendix 5)
- Results of Standardised Test Scores
- Reading Room/Area. We use GPA where we also have art/ drama classes.

Getting ‘Reading Partners’ Started

- Appoint initiative co-ordinator from within the support care team.
- Pre-initiative meeting with teachers and co-ordinator to discuss participants, materials, timetables and expected outcomes.
- Training for tutors is very important. Emphasise the significance of the three P’s (pause, prompt and praise) and how important their role is in relation to their partner. Tutors also manage the materials for each session (collection, set up and storage).

- Suitable venue for reading groups.
- Group children based on Standardised Test scores. Pupils at or below the 12th percentile are grouped first – then between 12th - 20th percentile, 20th - 40th, 40th - 60th and finally all those above. Allocate groups accordingly, remembering to keep the groups to a maximum of ten. This pertains to both tutors and partners.

- Establish guidelines for initiative and discuss with Tutors.
- Organise graded reading scheme such as PM Readers which have a great range of readers for different abilities and interests. This is crucial as not all schemes will suit every school. Spend time choosing your scheme.
‘Reading Partners’ Time

- A room is prepared by the initiative co-ordinator with eight tables and two chairs at each table. Tables should be kept a good distance apart. Books are displayed on worktops in room. Guidelines are displayed in a prominent place on the wall.
- Collect children and escort to reading room. All other children remain with their class teacher. This is very valuable time as the class teacher can move on with reading activities tailored to suit the remaining pupils.
- Children choose books. They very quickly find their comfort zone/ level. If the partner is very hesitant and the content is obviously too difficult, the tutor encourages her partner to choose from a lower grade box. Fluency and accuracy are the key indicators. Equally, if the book is too easy, the tutor encourages her partner to aim higher. Pupils find their level very quickly after the first session.
- Reading begins. Tutor follows the three P’s but does not tell the partner formally about them. Throughout the session, the tutor may Pause, Prompt and Praise as required.
- Logs are completed by tutor (Appendix 5).

Staff Decisions Prior to Initiating ‘Reading Partners’

- Which classes will begin the process and why?
- Analysis of Standardised Test Scores to determine groups.
- Discussion on what outcomes are expected/ hoped for and what post initiative assessment/review will take place.
- Is the venue suitable/accessible for special needs pupils?
- Who is the initiative co-ordinator?
- Where are materials stored?
- What reading materials are most suitable for target groups?
- Are there any potential conflict situations within groups that should be avoided?
- Are guidelines suitable and sustainable?
- Is the reading time timetabled as uninterrupted?

Note: In some schools, all pupils from two classes engage in similar shared reading at the same time. In this case, half of the pupils from the older class move to the classroom of the younger pupils, while half of the pupils from the younger class move to the older pupils’ classroom. The teacher remains in his/ her own classroom and supervises the shared reading.

Benefits of ‘Reading Partners’

As a DEIS school we have a significant mix of abilities in every class and added to this, many pupils from different cultural backgrounds. Following in-depth discussion, we agreed to group the children according to ability and this works really well. Reluctant readers become more confident and enjoy reading, while more able pupils get an opportunity to challenge themselves. The girls were noticeably more confident and as the initiative is pupil directed they were more organised and focused. The use of the Standardised Test Results to inform group selection was a very practical use of this data.

Children love reading partners and enjoy the responsibility and the opportunity to select their reading material. There is no time wasted as everything is set up and ready to go. The peer support element of the initiative has a knock on effect in how pupils engage in other areas of school life such as playground where they actively seek one another out and play together.
Our Advice and Tips

1. Having high quality, suitable reading material is essential. There must be a decent quantity of books available also. The pre- and post-initiative meeting with teachers is essential and it is vitally important that the tutors are well trained before they begin. Having a nominated person as co-ordinator is very important as this means everything will run smoothly and there is accountability for materials!

2. Analysing Standardised Test Results before determining group composition is essential to get the balance right. Decide on what type of post-initiative evaluation/assessment you propose to do. We found that teacher observation and class tests are most effective here as it informed outcomes very accurately. The end of year Standardised Tests are also analysed to determine how the pupils who participate score. We do not over test – this is counterproductive and poor practice.

3. The enthusiasm and progress made by pupils will inspire any reluctant staff member to engage in the initiative. It exudes a tangible feel-good factor while promoting good reading habits.

Sincere thanks to the Staff and Pupils of Our Lady of Mercy S.N.S., Military Rd., Waterford, for sharing their reading initiative.
C.A.P.E.R.
Children and Parents Enjoying Reading

In the critical early stages of learning to read children require much support and very carefully selected reading material to ensure a positive reading experience. Inevitably given their level of literacy experience prior to formal instruction and their response to initial instruction, children will vary greatly in their early reading capacities. Consequently it is important to have a wide range of reading material available to provide an appropriately structured approach to the developmental needs of a range of reading groups within each class.

Aims of ‘C.A.P.E.R.’ Programme

1. To promote the reading levels of children in school through appropriate book provision
2. To increase awareness of the essential parental contribution to children’s early reading development
3. To develop positive parental attitudes towards school and to strengthen links between home and school
4. To foster positive attitudes towards reading
5. To extend parents’ and teachers’ knowledge of good children’s literature

C.A.P.E.R. involves parents reading along with their children to promote reading as a part of children’s everyday habits. The programme provides a three-way partnership between pupil, parent and teacher.

Materials Needed:

- Readers/banded: We used lots of reading lists while choosing suitable books including: C.A.P.E.R. series of books from Mary Immaculate College, catalogues from Reading Publishers and Inis Magazine (CBI)
- Bookmark/prompt for parents (Appendix 6A)
- C.A.P.E.R. DVD.

Getting ‘C.A.P.E.R.’ Started

- Select suitable books for children. A useful resource to inform your choice of books is ‘Book Bands for Guided Reading: A Handbook to Support Foundation and Key Stage 1 Teachers’ (Institute of Education, University of London). Here in Crecora, we often use publishers’ catalogues to help us band the books. Teachers of infant and junior classes are a huge help in banding also. Naturally you progress from picture books to pictures with captions to repetitive language patterns etc. The print size is very important and good illustrations are a great help for younger and more reluctant readers. We were hugely guided by advice given to us from Dr. Martin Gleeson. Good structured series are essential (Appendix 6B).
- Communicate with parents of children in the class, explaining what paired reading involves, how often it will take place and how they can support their child during paired reading. At the beginning of the school year, it is a good idea to use your newsletter to convene a meeting of parents involved. This provides an opportunity to explain the benefits of C.A.P.E.R. along with an explanation of how it works. Some parents already familiar with the process may have words of advice to offer. It is important to emphasise the enjoyment aspects of C.A.P.E.R. and to ensure that it is a positive experience for children. Parents are asked to contribute to the nightly comment on the C.A.P.E.R. diary in order to ensure that the child is placed in the correct reading group (Appendix 6C).
• Organise a folder for each book to include the child's book, reading log and prompt/tips for parents. Include a C.A.P.E.R. diary in each child's plastic pocket. One side of the diary records the name of the book, the day and date received and has a space for the parents to write a comment on that night's C.A.P.E.R. experience, along with a space for the teacher to sign to indicate that he/she has read the comment. The other side of the diary lists some prompts and tips for parents to aid the process. The diary is changed every six weeks.

‘C.A.P.E.R.’ Time

• Try to have a designated time each day so that it becomes an automatic part of the day’s routine. We have three baskets of books per class based on reading levels. Each child lines up at his/her basket and changes his/her book each day. This book is put into the child’s plastic pocket along with the diary. The system operates Monday to Thursday. No books are given to the children on Friday. Each child reads the book for an adult in the classroom from Tuesday to Friday. To facilitate this, the class teacher is helped by one SNA and one member of the SEN team.

• At home, the parent chooses a suitable time and listens to, reads or shares this book with the child for ten to fifteen minutes and then signs the record sheet/C.A.P.E.R. Diary.

• Next morning, the teacher listens to the child reading the book, signs the record sheet, and provides encouragement and praise for the pupil, thus completing the three-way partnership. During the course of a week each child may be heard reading by the teacher on at least one occasion.

School Decisions Prior to Initiating ‘C.A.P.E.R.’

• With what classes will C.A.P.E.R. operate?
• How will parents be informed of how to operate C.A.P.E.R. (meeting, note, DVD)?
• How often will C.A.P.E.R. take place?
• What books will be used? Who will band these books?
• What recording system will be used for books read by children?

Benefits of ‘C.A.P.E.R.’

C.A.P.E.R. was introduced to our school in 1999. At the beginning of the same year a shared learning support service had begun in the school. While selecting pupils to attend learning support it was noted that the reading percentiles on the standardised tests were not as high as one would have hoped for. One of the strategies chosen to address the problem was a shared reading programme. Since its introduction, anecdotal evidence from parents and teachers has suggested that levels of reading among the children have greatly improved and reading percentiles in the standardised tests have supported this belief. Added to that, other benefits have included a greater level of interest and involvement of the parents in encouraging their children’s reading. This has been a source of motivation to the children. Many parents have commented that the strategies they use in C.A.P.E.R. have given them confidence in helping their children with reading. This has strengthened links between school and home as C.A.P.E.R. is an accepted part of the prescribed homework. Other benefits include exposure of children to a wide variety of reading genres in a structured way. Children really enjoy their C.A.P.E.R. books and because the books are pitched at the children’s individual level, each child experiences success and therefore wants to read more. Here in Creconara, we have added an extra component in that with the help of SEN teachers and SNAs, each child in Senior Infants reads his/her C.A.P.E.R. book each day during the first half hour of the day which is a designated C.A.P.E.R. time. Not only does this reinforce reading skills, it also encourages the skills of listening and turn-taking. It also means that children who normally experience difficulties reading have had the added bonus of having heard the book before they tackle it themselves.
Our Advice and Tips

1. Firstly I would encourage the school to apply to various bodies for funding. We successfully applied to the National Reading Initiative and that really helped get us on the road. Use the book commission earned through book fairs to augment your supply of readers. Secondly I would encourage the school to secure a speaker to address the parents on the merits of C.A.P.E.R. We were fortunate enough to have Dr. Martin Gleeson from Mary Immaculate College to address the parents. He had been the person who had adopted C.A.P.E.R. from Wales and introduced it to Ireland. Another year Joan Crowley O’ Sullivan, Director of the SESS, addressed parents and gave many tips regarding shared reading.

2. Start with Senior Infants the first year before introducing it to First Class and then Second Class. A gradual approach ensures a solid structured reading programme. Have three baskets of books in each class and every basket should correspond to a different level. Start with caption books, proceed to repetitive language patterns, then more complex language patterns, more detailed stories etc. Make sure to include fact books, poetry books, plays etc. Avoid fact books in the first term for the weak reader. Use the knowledge of your Infant Teachers and SEN Teachers to choose suitable reading material. Be aware of print size, illustrations, and repetition of words and phrases. Sometimes the books in Second class can be quite long. Allow children a second night to complete these books and send home a note to that effect to avoid undue stress!

3. Meet the new parents at the beginning of each year to explain how to engage in C.A.P.E.R. with their children. Stress the principle of enjoyment. Encourage parents to complete the daily comment. Modify your choice of books or choice of groups based on observations of all the adults involved. Finish C.A.P.E.R. at the end of May as June is a difficult month to sustain a structured time for C.A.P.E.R.. It also minimizes the number of books lost through early holidays.

Sincere thanks to the Staff and Pupils of Crecora N.S., Crecora, Co. Limerick for sharing their reading initiative and to Martin Gleeson, Mary Immaculate College.

The following is a list of books that we use. Each of these series has books designed for all class levels and are therefore easy to book band.

- Oxford Tree
- Storyworlds (Heinemann)
- Ginn 360
- Blue Bananas
- All Aboard (Heinemann)
- Yellow Bananas
- Sails (Heinemann)
- Rigby
- O’Brien Pandas
- Flying Boot (Nelson)
- O’Brien Flyers
- PM Traditional Tales and Plays
- Literacy Links
- Superphonics Storybooks (Ruth Miskin)
Bed Time Story Night

All of Junior and Senior Infants (the whole school at this stage of school’s development) attended Bed Time Stories on one evening occasion as a way of promoting reading with parents and celebrating World Book Day. All the children came into school with their parents and a favourite book at 7pm, dressed in their pyjamas. Little brothers and sisters were also welcome. We decorated one classroom with lots of cushions, bed-side lamps, a rocking chair and fairy lights, to create a quiet, soft atmosphere with dimmed lights. Teachers also dressed in pyjamas and dressing gowns. We had carefully chosen which stories to read, e.g. in Big Book format or fairy tales, so all children could join in.

Materials Needed:
- Suitable books (big books, children’s favourites or fairy tales)
- Items to create a cosy atmosphere (lamps, cushions, etc.)
- Mugs and items for hot chocolate break.

Getting ‘Bed Time Story Night’ Started
- Note to parents to inform them about evening and to invite them to bring a favourite book
- Choose books to read to the group
- Buy hot chocolate etc., organise mugs/buy disposable cups.

‘Bed Time Story Night’ Time

Running Time: Approx. 45 mins - 1 hour
1. Teacher read big book with children all around her.
2. We asked one parent to read/tell a story to the group (we had checked with the parent beforehand).
3. Child then returned to sit on Mum’s/Dad’s/Guardian’s lap. Parents read to their own child in their own language which they either brought themselves or we gave to them (we ensured we had dual language books available).
4. We took a break to have hot chocolate, cookies and marshmallows.
5. Children returned to sit together around teacher for one last story. We chose ‘Owl Babies’ big book.

Staff Decisions Prior to Initiating ‘Bed Time Story Night’
- That we would all (Principal included!) dress in pyjamas
- Who would read which story/prepare the hot chocolate?

Benefits of ‘Bed Time Story Night’

This initiative really helped to involve parents in a very relaxed way, and highlighted the importance of reading to their child every day, with bed time stories being a great opportunity.

It also showed parents that education is more than sending their child to school every day and that their participation is so important. As we are a new school in a developing community, it also gave the parents a chance to meet each other and it was simply a great evening!
Our Advice and Tips

These tips may help others to overcome challenges presented by the initiative.

A very small number of children didn’t come to the event. The parents said this was because it was on too late. Next year we will start at 6.45pm instead of 7pm, to finish by 7.45pm, allowing families to be home by 8pm. We want it to remain close enough to bed time, and also be a little dark outside in order to create a cosy atmosphere inside with fairy lights and lamps.

Sincere thanks to the Staff and Pupils of Merlin Woods Primary School, Doughiska Road, Galway for sharing their reading initiative.
Shared Reading in School Pupils and Parents

*Shared Reading* is a six week block of shared reading, run by parents who come into the school three mornings a week, for one hour (9-10a.m.). Each parent reads one to one with six children every day for ten minutes each. The Reading Recovery teacher participates.

**Materials Needed:**
- Books
- Reading records (a competition to design one is usually run) (Appendix 7)
- Folder for each class group
- Certificates
- Photocopier

**Getting ‘Shared Reading’ Started**
- Recruit parents. Posters can be displayed in school or volunteers can be encouraged through word of mouth from existing recruits.
- Select children. Six children from each class are selected using different criteria every six weeks e.g. strongest readers or pupils lacking confidence in reading. Junior infants are included in the initiative in the last term.
- Organise seating in the library area, with two seats for each pair, one for child and one for adult. We usually have ten volunteers on any given day.
- Provide a wide range of suitable texts, from which the child can choose a book.
- Administer a pre-test with all pupils e.g. Duncan Word Test (optional).

**‘Shared Reading’ Time**
- The volunteer collects the first child from their classroom. The ten volunteers are each assigned to different class levels.
- In the library, the child selects a book from the library to read.
- The child and adult read together for ten minutes.
- After ten minutes, the child returns to their classroom and the next child goes to the library for their Shared Reading Time.
- Each child will have a Shared Reading opportunity, three times a week, for six weeks.
- Following this six week intervention, new groups are formed with six children selected from each class and adult volunteers being assigned to classes again. The project runs throughout the year.
Staff Decisions Prior to Initiating ‘Shared Reading’

This initiative has been running since 1993. One needs to have a lot of books of all genres available. We would suggest the library as the venue for shared reading and not the classroom.

Benefits of ‘Shared Reading’

- Improvement in reading levels and raising the profile of reading
- Enjoyment
- Involvement of parents/guardians/grandparents and wider community
- The fact that any text can be used
- Nurturing the relationship between the child and the adult
- Because it’s done in a group in the library, it creates a great atmosphere, good camaraderie and it’s non-threatening as opposed to the classroom
- It is critical to have a teacher taking a group as well to model good practice.

Our Advice and Tips

1. Plan initiative. Administer pre- and post-testing. Use a good bank of books.
2. Implement consistently.
3. Provide training for the adults. Invite new recruits (parents/guardians/grandparents) in to a demonstration of shared reading and show how easy it would be for them to take part.
4. Possibly prepare a leaflet for parents on how the programme works.
5. Ask parents to commit to helping on any or all of the three mornings.
6. Each parent to have the same group of children for the six week period.
7. Keep a record of books read by each child (record goes home at the end with their certificate).
8. Children make ‘thank you’ cards at end of six weeks and we have ‘presentation’ morning where children are presented with certificates and parents are presented with cards. It’s a lovely occasion.

Sincere thanks to the Staff and Pupils of Scoil Mhuire, Shankill, Dublin 18, for sharing their reading initiative.
The idea behind the ‘One Book, One Community’ project is to publicly encourage the reading of a particular book in a particular community during a particular period of time, promoting the joy of reading. This allows community members to read and talk about the same book at the same time, promoting the importance of literacy and bringing the community together with one common goal.

Materials Needed:
- Copies of ‘Titanic Tragedy’ by Vincent McDonnell
- Optional: Film of book, documentary relating to book, live performance
- Visit from the author of the book
- Resource pack of activities to develop the theme of book (may include a quiz)

Getting ‘One Book, One Community’ Started
- Form a committee to initiate the project. In Waterford, the Home School Liaison Co-ordinators used local committees (which comprise of Home School Liaison Co-ordinators, parents, pupils, community members of ten local primary and post-primary schools) to generate discussion on a joint reading project. It was decided to amalgamate and to run the project, ‘One Book, One Waterford’. The Waterford City librarian also joined the organising committee.
- Decide on the book to be used. Examples may include
  - ‘Tom Crean: Ice Man’ by Michael Smith
  - ‘Secret of Kells’ by Tom Moore
- We chose ‘Titanic Tragedy’ by Vincent McDonnell as we thought it would be enjoyed by both girls and boys.
- Decide on how many books will be purchased and financing of same. In our case the Waterford City Library provided all copies of the book.
- Decide on length of time to run the project. Our project ran for seven weeks.

‘One Book, One Community’ Time
- Each pupil in sixth class read a copy of ‘Titanic Tragedy’ by Vincent McDonnell. The boys’ families were also encouraged to read the book. All copies were provided free of charge by the Waterford City Librarian.
- Representatives of the class were invited to attend the launch of the initiative and to meet the author, Vincent McDonnell and the Mayor of Waterford.
- The classes involved went to the City Library for a talk given by the author and the boys were given time to ask him questions about the writing process.
- The Mayor launched the book along with a writing competition for the schools involved, titled “A Day to Remember”. Essays and poetry of a high standard were written by the pupils involved.
- Follow-up activities included a table quiz on the theme of ‘Titanic Tragedy’ with questions taken from the book.
Staff Decisions Prior to Initiating ‘One Book, One Community’

- What are the benefits of being involved in this project?
- How will it be co-ordinated? Who will play a role?
- What book will be used? How many will be bought?
- What classes will be involved?

Benefits of ‘One Book, One Community’

- All the boys enjoyed reading the novel. Meeting the author was the highlight of the process and some boys said that his talk made the book come alive for them.
- Renewed interest among the families in the story of ‘The Titanic’ and grandparents got involved, recounting their memories of the event. Videos of the story were watched with interest and project research was approached with much gusto and enthusiasm.
- Creates links with other primary and post-primary schools – boys and girls from the other nine schools had the opportunity to come and discuss the book together.
- Creates home school community links as parents and grandparents are invited to read the book and to attend the launch etc.
- Allowed opportunities for development of literacy across the curriculum with art projects, history projects etc.
- So successful that we have engaged in it over a few years. Last year this initiative was run on a smaller scale, using poetry, and involved 5 local schools. “One Poet, One Community”, intended to increase the awareness and appreciation of the poetry of the late Waterford poet, Sean Dunne who had a substantial body of work, including three books of poems and his acclaimed autobiography, “In My Father’s House”. Sean was a past pupil of two of the schools involved in the project. This exposed pupils to another form of the written word. Past teachers of the poet Sean Dunne spoke about his time in school. Local playwright Jim Nolan, read from his poetry and told stories about sitting beside the poet in school etc. Again, we had a launch attended by members of the poet’s family, the Mayor, pupils, parents, teachers and committee members involved in the initiative. Poems were chosen according to their suitability for primary and secondary schools and two separate booklets of poems were prepared for the pupils.
Our Advice and Tips

1. Choose the book with great care – check whether the author is able/willing to attend the launch and to speak about the writing process with his readers.

2. Get the community involved from the outset. We had great support from Waterford City Library who provided funding for the novels. They also contacted the author and funded his travel expenses etc.

3. Publicise the initiative to generate widespread interest. We were interviewed on Waterford Local Radio about the initiative and there was a two page spread with photographs in the local paper.

4. Make resource packs available to the pupils as a follow-up exercise. The parents on our local committee assisted home school liaison co-ordinators to make these packs. Packs included word searches, colouring pictures, crosswords etc.

5. Follow-up activities such as a table quiz between participating schools are very popular and give all schools a chance to get together to discuss the book etc. Prizes for the winning teams consisted of book vouchers. We also ordered special pens and bookmarks with pictures of the Titanic and the date of the initiative to be given as spot prizes. We got financial assistance from Waterford Area Partnership for the prizes.

Sincere thanks to the Staff and Pupils of Stephen’s De La Salle, 25 Patrick St. Waterford, for sharing their reading initiative.

Schools involved in ‘One Book, One Waterford’ include:

- St. Stephen’s De La Salle,
- Mount Sion Primary
- Mount Sion Secondary
- Mercy Primary
- St. Paul’s Primary
- St. Paul’s Community College
- St. Saviour’s N.S.
- Presentation Primary School
- Presentation Secondary School

The initiative was spearheaded by the Home School Liaison Co-ordinators from each of the above schools.
Our School Library

The school library provides an opportunity for pupils to engage in reading for pleasure, promoting a culture of reading among pupils. It should allow children access to a wide range of genres and authors at an age appropriate level. Used regularly, it can help children to develop a love of reading.

Getting the ‘School Library’ Started

Choosing a Room

- Choose a room which is accessible and situated in as peaceful an area as possible. It may be painted in colours that convey a restful and comfortable atmosphere.
- Choose main shelving that is height appropriate to the relevant ages of pupils and free standing units can be placed on floor space at different intervals. The school caretaker may play a role here. Free-standing units may be used for younger pupils while wall shelving may be used for the senior pupils.
- Provide soft furnishing, i.e. large cushions, padded stools and chairs of various sizes that will enhance the relaxed ambience.

Organising Books

- Organise a meeting comprising of representatives from the Staff and Parents Association with the City Librarian, to discuss the availability of City Library books and identification of other means of sourcing books. From this meeting a committee may be established to further the project.
- Consult the pupils as to their reading preferences.
- Organise a lending system for books by various authors, which are age appropriate, from the City Library.
- Parents’ Association may liaise with the pupils to encourage them to donate books previously read which are in good condition and are ready to be passed on.
- Acquire ‘tickets’ for books from the City Library and buy stationery suitable for making pockets for each book.

Organising the Lending System

- Sort the relevant books, according to age and colour-code them according to reading level. This may be done by the library committee members.
- Put pouches inside covers of each book and insert a ticket into the pouch with a serial number unique to that book. Put the name of the book in the pouch.
- Each child receives their own individual pouch with their name on it, where the book ticket is stored while on loan.
- Each class teacher has a ‘Class ticket box’ for relevant pouches.
- A reference book can also be used recording the child’s name, date of lending and book reference number.
- Place books on shelves appropriate to age and authors.
‘School Library’ Time

- Create a timetable giving each class a regular slot for library visitation.
- Child chooses book from appropriate section and proceeds to Parent/Teacher in role as librarian. She presents ticket and the transaction is recorded in Reference Book. The book’s ticket is then placed in the child’s pouch and put in Class Ticket Box.
- Child then finds a comfortable spot to begin reading her story.
- Children return to class and are generally given fifteen minutes silent reading time.
- The following week, children return their book and the book’s ticket is replaced in the book before it is returned to the correct shelf by the librarian.

Multipurpose Library

- Visiting Authors: As a result of children becoming familiar with certain authors, some of the authors can be invited to visit the school.
- Reference Section: Despite the popularity of the internet, children can still regularly use the reference section for Project Work.
- Teachers also can have their own reference section which can be invaluable.
- Storage of Important Data: Completed projects can be stored in the school library for future perusal e.g. a Time Capsule.

Benefits of Having a School Library

In our school, Maria Auxiliatrix NS, Fernbank we have operated our school library since 1996 and it has stood the test of time. For us,

- It provides a time and space where children can relax in a comfortable environment while enjoying reading their chosen book.
- It helps to foster independence where children can choose their book in a structured setting.
- It requires discipline. Each child becomes aware of the needs of others while reading in a quiet atmosphere.
- It helps them see the positive side of organisation.
- Children must return book on time and in good condition.
- In our school, designated children have accepted the responsibility that on a daily basis:
  - They ensure that the library is kept in good running order
  - They check that books are in the correct colour coded area with tickets enclosed
  - They ensure that the teachers know if there are shabby books which need to be replaced
- We have organised authors of children’s books which the children have enjoyed to come and meet with the children and discuss their particular genre. Authors have included Judy Curtin and Róisín Meaney.
- We have a time capsule project stored in our library, dating from 1996, depicting lifestyles and trends of that era, which will be opened on 20th February 2020.

The goal when setting up our school Library was to give our pupils a love of reading and hopefully we have achieved this. A wise person once said that the gift of a book is a gift for life!
Our Advice and Tips

Times have changed so teachers have found that:

1. Books need to be constantly upgraded. At the end of the year books are replaced, taking into consideration children's preferences, work of visiting authors etc.

2. Mobile Library has been a vital part of the continuum of the Library initiative.

3. Unfortunately, due to changed economic times, fewer parents are available as helpers at Library Times so teachers have taken over the role.

4. On a positive note, children are now familiar with the procedure and are willing and able to help out when necessary.

Ideally there should be an annual review of the library operation performed by a designated interested person. This is an ideal time to tease out any issues that need to be resolved. It is very important that the running order of the school library is familiar to all staff, including new staff members. New children also need to be inducted into how the library operates.

Sincere thanks to the Staff and Pupils of Salesian Girls Primary School, Fernbank, North Circular Road, Limerick, for sharing their reading initiative.
Pupils’ Questionnaires

(A) Theme and Findings of our Questionnaire

We had identified comprehension as an area of concern by analysing our Standardised Test results for English. By asking children from second to sixth to answer questions in a questionnaire we hoped to gather more specific data and clarify/focus our general idea into a specific plan of action.

The replies showed us that the majority of pupils have no understanding or knowledge of what reading and comprehension are. None of the children could explain what comprehension is. They liked books but not the actual oral reading “out loud”.

As a result we decided to focus on the direct teaching of comprehension strategies and all teachers explained why and what we were doing to the children. We had a specific plan of action for our particular area of concern. By introducing the structured “Building Bridges of Understanding” programme it focused our teaching.

The questionnaire confirmed our initial suspicions and focused our actions in a very specific direction. We are using the ‘Building Bridges of Understanding’ programme in the school from Junior Infants to sixth Class. We intend conducting another questionnaire towards the end of the school year again to get feedback from the pupils on the programme.

Reading Questionnaire

1. Do you like reading? Not at all [ ] A little [ ] A lot [ ]

2. What is reading?

3. Are you a good reader? Why? / Why not?

4. What helps you when you are reading?

5. What is a good reader?

6. Do you know what comprehension is? Yes [ ] No [ ]
   If yes, can you tell me what it is?

7. What parts of reading do you like?

8. What kind of books do you like to read?

Thank you for answering the questions.

Sincere thanks to the Staff and Pupils of O’Callaghan’s Mills N.S., O’Callaghan’s Mills, Co. Clare for sharing their reading questionnaire.
(B) Theme and Findings of our Questionnaire

The theme of our literacy project was to create a reading culture in our school whereby children would read for pleasure and enjoyment. We decided to devise a pupil questionnaire on reading habits from second-sixth class as a starting point. The questionnaire would give us insights into children's attitudes towards reading, their perception of what makes a good reader, the reading materials they engage with outside school, as well as their attitude towards the class library. We also wanted to elicit a list of authors/books they would like to see in the class library. The information gleaned from the questionnaire would inform our action plan.

The results revealed that nearly half of our pupils did not enjoy reading. By third class some children had developed negative attitudes to reading and how they perceived themselves as readers. At this stage, reading habits or lack of, appear to be well established with some children only reading when required to do so by their teacher.

The staff subsequently devised a series of actions designed to give pupils positive experiences of reading. For example a children's author was invited to the school and a buddy reading system between senior and junior pupils was set up. Teachers modeled reading aloud in class and frequently referred to 'what good readers do'. The pupil questionnaire also provided us with a ‘shopping list’ of books/authors to be purchased for each class library.

The results of the questionnaire gave an insight into children's attitudes to reading and their perceptions about readers which was very revealing and not what we were expecting. By basing our action plan on the findings of the questionnaire it meant that actions were pertinent and focused.

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Questionnaire about Reading Habits of Pupils (Scoil Mhainchín, 2011)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class Level:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

1. Are you a boy or a girl?  
Boy ✗   Girl ✗

2. How good a reader do you think you are? (Tick one box only)  
I have difficulty reading ✗   Managing comfortably ✗   I am a very good reader ✗

3. Do you enjoy reading? (Tick one box only)  
Very much ✗   Not very much ✗   Not at all ✗

4. Which of the following do you read outside of class more than once a month? (Tick as many boxes as you like)  
Websites e.g. face book /emails ✗   Newspapers /Magazines ✗   Comics ✗   Fiction books ✗   Poetry ✗   Factual book ✗   Other ✗

5. How often do you read outside of school? (Tick one box only)  
Every day or almost every day ✗   Once or twice a week ✗   Once or twice a month ✗   Never or almost never ✗

6. What is a good reader?  
A good reader is  

7. Do you enjoy the books in your class library?  
Yes ✗   No ✗

8. What books/authors would you like to see in your class library?  

Sincere thanks to the Staff and Pupils of Scoil Mhainchín, Ennistymon, Co. Clare for sharing their reading questionnaire with us.
MS READaTHON

MS READaTHON encourages young people to read while raising much needed funds for services to those living with Multiple Sclerosis. The children get to stretch their imagination and enter the weird and wonderful worlds created in books. They learn the value of helping people in our society who need a little extra help and support. All children participating in the MS READaTHON receive a certificate of thanks and there are other prizes including school trophies and book vouchers. Schools can use the MS READaTHON to motivate children to further develop their reading skills. It is also an opportunity to teach children about MS and how it affects families throughout Ireland.

Materials Needed:
- Books – School library, Class Library, Local Library
- Co-ordinator to collate the forms and organise the initiative with MS READaTHON and the teachers of the classes taking part.

Getting ‘MS READaTHON’ Started
- Contact MS READaTHON who will send the school a teacher pack for the initiative.
- Organise a co-ordinator to collate the forms and to help fellow class teachers taking part to run the initiative. After the first year MS READaTHON automatically sends information to the teachers who took part the year before.
- Decide how pupils will record their reading. This may also be done on computer.
- Communicate with parents that the school is participating in the initiative.

‘MS READaTHON’ Time
- D.E.A.R. Time (Drop Everything And Read). Quiet uninterrupted time to read.
- Paired reading
- Book Club where groups of children read books, discuss books and make peer recommendations.
- Discussion of genre and type of novel with children sitting in a circle, in groups, at their own desk, on cushions etc. Each child has a form to fill in outlining the title etc. of the books they read.
- Use one of the novels read by the class and watch the DVD.

Staff Decisions Prior to Initiating ‘MS READaTHON’
- What motivation will it bring to the children to read?
- Is it right to collect money for reading a book?
- How much class time should be given to this initiative?
- Do the children decide on books?
- What strategies presently used may be used for this initiative?
- Will this initiative be optional to all classes?

Benefits of ‘MS READaTHON’

We encourage our children to read for enjoyment. The teacher will also read at the allocated time as a role model for the children. We motivate our children to develop their reading skills. All children are involved as the novels chosen suit the reader. We would hope that the ‘reluctant’ reader will be helped to gain a positive attitude about reading. Reading is not always an exercise that the children will be questioned about.
Our Advice and Tips

This initiative is coordinated very successfully by MS READaTHON. It complements the reading strategies already implemented in a school. It is a motivation for the children to know they can help a charitable organisation by enjoying reading. The children motivate each other by discussing the books read and by sharing their books. It also prepares children for the ‘Write a Book’ initiative. Do it for one year and analyse how successful/unsuccessful it was.

Sincere thanks to the Staff and Pupils of Jesus and Mary Primary School, Our Lady’s Grove, Goatstown Rd., Dublin 14 for sharing their reading initiative.
Blag na Scoile

Tá suíomh iomhacht gniomhach againn. Cuirtear fáilte roimh thuairiscí, ghrianghraif agus a leithéid ó ranganna uile na scoile go laethúil. Cuirtear na nithe éagsúla in airde ar an suíomh go dathangeach.
Bíonn an suíomh mar ‘Leathanach Baile’ i ngach rang agus baintear feidhm as mar áis don labhairt (plé sríl.) don léitheoireacht. Agus dar ndóigh don scribhneoireacht chomh maith. Táimid ag súil le níos mó fiseáin a chur in airde ach tá fadhbanna ó thaobh leibhéal an NCTE (ní theastaíonn uainn youtube agus a leithéid a cheadh). Tá tionscadal idir an scoil seo agus scoil san Astrál – rang amháin atá i gceist againne.

Ábhar Riachtanach

• Suim ón bhfoireann teagaisc agus ó na páistí - furasta go leor toisc gur ‘leo’ an blag.
• Suíomh blagála – NCTE (oiliúint ar fáil – simplí agus éifeachtach)
• Ríomhairí
• Ceamaraí físe
• Polasaí Meáin (cead ó thuistí sríl.)
• Scoil eile mar ‘charad’ – cuidionn sé ó thaobh suime agus spreagadh
• Polasaí litearthachta scoil-uile a thugann aitheantas dá leithéid.

Chun a Thosú

• Ábhar comónta – eachtra nó eolas le roinnt
• ‘Scáthú’ – cumadóireacht mar rang-ghrúpa ar dtús
• Obair ghrúpa nó obair aonair a shocrú
• Maoirseacht a shocrú.

Am ar Leith do Bhlag na Scoile

• An suíomh scoile mar Leathanach Baile sa Seomra – bíonn sé in airde ar an gclár idirghníomhach a luaithe is a osclaitear an tIdirlíon
• Léitheoireacht agus plé ábhair na ranganna eile
• Plé ar ábhar an ranga nó plé i ngrúpaí
• An léitheoireacht mar thús don scribhneoireacht/chumadóireacht.

Cinntí Foirne roimh Thosú

• Suíomh blagála – aontú ina leith
• Oiliúint a chur ar fáil – grúpa oilit (Beirt ar a laghad – cúrsa NCTE- uaireanta Pháirc an Chrócaigh?) de dhíth a thabharfaidh cabhair, cúnamh agus spreagadh do gach éinne eile
• Oiliúint don fhioireann ar fad?
• Aontú i leith ‘Leathanach Baile’ gniomhach – mar áis léitheoireachta, labhartha (plé)...
• Comhpháirtíocht na ranganna uile
• Freagraacht – cé atá freagraacht as?
Our Reading Initiative. Our Story.
As told by twenty-one primary schools

Na Buntáistí

- Ceangailte le saol laethúil na scoile
- Dearcadh dearfach na bpáistí i leith na teicneolaithe
- Giotaí gearra ó thaobh na léitheoireachta i gceist
- Oireann an TEC don próiseas – athdhréachtú...
- Éagsúlacht idir ranganna éascaithe.

Acmhainní/ ábhar úsáideach eile

- Cúrsaí NCTE
- Ríomhairí, ceamaraí digiteacha, cláir idirghníomhacha
- Foireann oscailte.

Ar leideanna agus ar gComhairle

- Go bhfreastlóidh an fhoireann ar an gcúrsa NCTE ar 'bhlagáil'
- Ceangal le scoil eile ar an tsaol teanga leo
- Plé a dhéanamh ar an 'lucht léitheoireachta'
- Obair chomhpháirtícheach a thriail chomh maith.

Mile buíochas d’fhoiréadann agus do pháistí Gaelscoil na Ríthe, Domhnach Seachnaill, Co na Mí as ucht an tionscanamh a roinnt linn.
Using ICT in Literacy Development

Our school has been using the online video book review site ‘Fís Bookclub’ to develop our reading culture in an attractive, easy to manage, child-friendly way. An important offshoot of this initiative is the opportunity it affords our pupils to improve their general ICT skills, in a meaningful context.

The idea of this password-protected site is simple; pupils can record a video book review for other registered schools to view and they can also access the reviews uploaded by other schools.

The process is very straightforward:

- Pupils read at home or at school
- Pupils think about what they would like to/need to say about the book to review it for others
- Some pupils make notes or write out their review
- The pupils are recorded giving their review
- This video recording, when considered satisfactory, is uploaded to the Fís Bookclub site.

Initially, our recordings were made using the Resource Teacher’s computer and web cam. Pupils were invited to be considered for filming, by filling in a ‘Review Form’ on the book they’d read. This listed points for consideration e.g. Title/Author/Main character/Plot outline/Satisfaction level/Recommendation and ensured some degree of reflection by the pupils rather than a rush to become a star of the small screen! No pressure was put on teachers or pupils but all were encouraged to use the Fís Bookclub site (www.fisbookclub.com) to share their thoughts on books and also, to learn more about other books through the reviews submitted by other schools. A Friday afternoon spot was selected for filming, since it was felt this would impact least on class work.

In the last year, we have begun using Apple iPods with built-in video camera facility. This has improved the process immeasurably in many respects:

- Pupils can now record (but not upload) without teacher input
- Access to Resource Room equipment is no longer necessary
- Recording can be carried out at a time convenient for class teachers
- Greater peer co-operation is required for filming sessions.
Benefits of the Fís Bookclub

Involvement in the Fís Bookclub has had many beneficial effects on our school community. It has

- Helped us foster our school ‘reading culture’
- Highlighted the importance of key communication skills in this age of ICT
- Encouraged pupils to respectfully appraise the contributions of others
- Provided strong motivation for reading for pleasure
- Provided a focus for developing pupil comprehension
- Facilitated pupils whose written skills were not as good as their oral skills
- Allowed for a differentiated approach to literacy response activities
- Introduced a ‘real’ audience and purpose to reading and writing tasks
- Extended the focus on literacy skills, outside of English class and outside of the classroom.

Parents have taken pride in seeing their children’s video reviews; a viewing session of our school reviews was arranged for Book Week and many parents are taking a greater interest in what their children are reading and on what book they might submit a review.

As educators, we are currently facing huge challenges to improve pupils’ literacy skills. We are conscious of the limited range of our influence and of the many obstacles to our success. As we struggle to find ways to create better readers, we should not overlook the opportunities provided by children’s natural ease with technology, coupled with their innate interest in ‘acting up’ for the camera.

Fís Bookclub is just such an opportunity.

Sincere thanks to the Staff and Pupils of Holy Trinity N.S., Glencairn, The Gallops, Leopardstown, Dublin 18 for sharing their reading initiative.
In St. Aidan’s P.S. we have introduced iPod touch devices and iPads into our classes as part of our I.C.T. programme. These electronic multimedia devices have greatly increased our pupil’s exposure to digital literacy in all its forms. In doing so the schools feels that we are mirroring 21st century literacy and are also future-proofing our pupils.

Classroom Organization

Each child in the class has access to his/her own iPod and the class has a laptop to sync and charge the devices. All classes have internet access with the addition of an ‘Airport’ in the classroom to boost the connectivity speed. The iPod Touch internet access goes through the school filtering system so the children can surf the internet safely. On each iPod Touch we have downloaded a number of educational apps (software applications) that cover all areas of the curriculum including ones with a focus on literacy.

A class set of iPads has been introduced into our first classes and into our special needs classes. Pupils with specific learning difficulties have access to an iPad for their full day in school so as to scaffold their learning.

Digital literacy

The iPods give the pupils internet access in their hands. The pupils use the internet to source data about given topics. They have learned very quickly to filter their searches to find information appropriate to their own level. They are learning to critically evaluate the information gathered and through collaborating with other pupils they reproduce the information in a digital form which they can save to their iPod. These are skills that are incredibly difficult to teach independently but which children are learning with ease by using the iPod Touches.

Oral Language

One area of significant progress is in the level of children’s oral language development. The children’s oral language skills are not only improving due to the use of apps explicitly aimed at language development but, also because, the children are finding more and more opportunities to talk about and explain their learning to their peers. This capacity for peer learning and peer support is proving to be incredibly effective in developing not only the children’s communication skills but also their collaborative working skills such as group work/jig-sawing/project learning and their social/emotional skills. The children are so engaged in the use of the iPods that their drive to excel themselves, leads them to seek help from their peers on the one hand and give help on the other. The children become active participants and drivers of their own learning.

Apps such as *Rory’s Story Cubes* can also be used for language development. In this app children are presented with nine random pictures from which they may create a story.

Reading

The devices allow teachers to download books and reading apps e.g. *Read me Stories 30* and *Story Kit* from the iTunes store. The pupils are greatly motivated by using the devices and even the most reluctant reader is more than happy to read using their iPod. The pupils are truly differentiated as each have their own device and so experience success at their own level. The iPods encourage on task behaviour so the amount that the pupils read is increased and this has the knock on effect of improving fluency. Some reading apps such as *Time Reader* come with an inbuilt timer which brings an element of competition into their fluency. Pupils really enjoy beating their previous or friends scores. The *Speak it* app allows pupils to type in a word they have difficulty with and the device speaks it for them so allowing them to continue with their reading and not have to sit there waiting for the teacher.
Apps such as, *Sentence Builder* and *Magic Sentences*, help and encourage the early reader with their graphic rich content. The App store also contains many Dolch apps such as *Dolch Frys List* which help pupils improve their sight vocabulary through drill and practice.

Through their ability to access digital texts on their devices the pupils experience independent, shared and small group reading. Through the use of these devices to research topics particularly in the senior end of the school children are learning vital reading skills such as; connecting, scanning, paraphrasing and self questioning.

Apps such as *Dictionary* allow children to totally engage with their reading material. They no longer have to wait for the teacher to explain a word as they can readily find the meaning of a word and move on. This facility serves to increase their comprehension, vocabulary and reading enjoyment.

There are many different apps that repeat what is said to them, such as *Talking Gina, Talking Karl* and *Talking Tom*. These apps are invaluable in increasing a child’s confidence and promoting fluency in their reading. The voice memos facility built into the iPod’s and iPad’s also allow for reader to have an opportunity to record and hear their own reading and that of their peers. This allows for self correction and peer tutoring both of which are very important in the effective teaching of reading.

**Writing**

As pupils use the devices in project based learning they learn over time to critically evaluate the digital material they find online or through an information app such as *Countries Lite*. Pupils then learn to reproduce this information in written form either digitally on their devices or in their exercise copies.

Mind mapping apps such as *Simple Mind* enable the pupils to gather their ideas and knowledge together as preparation for a writing task.

The app *Wordventure!* allows the children to explore the layout of a narrative story. It reinforces the structure of a narrative and the basic grammatical features of writing such as, nouns, adjectives and verbs.

Using an app such as *Quick Voice* allows the pupil to record their writing and listen back to the recording. This enables individual and group evaluation of the written work.

*Keynote* allows the user to download digital content such as text, video and images and to create their own digital content which can be displayed on their own device or the classroom interactive board.

For younger children, apps such as *Doodle Buddy* and *Pocket Sand*, allow children to practice letter and word formation. This is especially effective on the iPad with its larger screen.

**Phonics**

There are a vast array of phonics Apps in the iTunes App Store. Many of these can be used to support the school phonics programme. Apps such as *Phonics Genius, ABC Writing, Magnetic Letters* and *Letter Find* allow for one on one interaction with instant rewards and feedback for the pupils. *Pocket Rhymer* is especially suited for the P.A.T. programme. As a result, phonics becomes fun.

**Spelling**

Apps such as *Chickionary, Jumblen2, Spelling Magic* and *Hangman* are used to improve spelling ability. Pupils enjoy the games element of these apps and are greatly motivated by them.
Memory and Visual Discrimination

Again the App Store has a large selection of apps aimed at improving pupils visual discrimination, "Spot the Difference", "Hidden Pix", "Pickin Stix" and "Brain Go" are just some of the examples. "Ruby Repeat", "Crack the Code", "Whizzy Kids" are very good for memory development.

Apps

Most of the apps we have downloaded are free or only a few cents. However, teachers have to be cautious when downloading apps from the iTunes Store as they are not evaluated for their educational content. Teachers need to do this themselves or can visit the many app review sites such as iear.org online.

Sincere thanks to the Staff and Pupils of St. Aidan’s Primary School, Nunnery Road, Enniscorthy, Wexford, for sharing their reading initiative.
Accelerated Reader

Accelerated Reader (AR) is a computer program that helps teachers manage and monitor children’s independent reading practice. Each pupil chooses a book at his/her own level and reads it at his/her own pace. When finished, the pupil takes a short quiz on the computer - passing the quiz is an indication that the pupil has understood what has been read. AR gives both children and teachers feedback based on the quiz results which the teacher then uses to help the child set targets and plan ongoing reading practice.

Getting ‘Accelerated Reader’ Started

In our school, children from third to sixth classes take part in AR. Each teacher receives training on how the program works and how to implement it in the classroom. Teachers help each pupil choose books that are appropriate to his/her reading level. These will be challenging without being frustrating and will also be at a level at which the pupil can pass the quiz and experience success.

‘Accelerated Reader’ Time

Children have daily independent reading on their Accelerated Reader book for twenty minutes before the start of the literacy lesson. The program works in 3 basic steps:

1. Children choose a book within their level
2. Read it at their own pace
3. Take a quiz and score some points.

Benefits of ‘Accelerated Reader’

The main benefits we have noticed in our school are that pupils have a genuine excitement about books, there is accelerated reading achievement - even amongst reluctant readers and improved results in Standardised Tests are evident among our children.

Our Advice and Tips

Research the program on the company website www.renlearn.co.uk and also check your existing school library to see what books you have that match the Accelerated Reader Program www.arbookfind.co.uk.

Sincere thanks to the Staff and Pupils of Scoil Chríost Rí, Cloughleigh, Ennis, Co. Clare for sharing their reading initiative.
Assessment of Reading

Schools measure the effectiveness of reading initiatives in many different ways. In order to do this, it is crucial that we gather and analyse information before we begin an initiative, so that on conclusion we can repeat a similar assessment in order to measure the success of the initiative. In this section, we outline some sources of evidence that we can use to monitor pupils’ reading development and the impact of our reading initiatives.

“Assessment is the process of generating, gathering, recording, interpreting, using and reporting evidence of learning in individuals, groups or systems, which relies upon a number of instruments, one of which may be a test. Educational assessment provides information about progress in learning”

(Assessment in the Primary School Curriculum, Guidelines for School. NCCA, 2007, p. 4)
## Reading Assessment Continuum

| **Self-Assessment** | Questionnaire (see account from Scoil Mhainichín and O’Callaghan’s Mills N.S.)  
Reading Logs (Appendix 5: Reading Partners Reading Record and Appendix 6C: C.A.P.R. Reading Record)  
Tools to allow pupils to reflect on positive aspects of their work and to focus on an area for improvement e.g.  
- WWW (What Went Well) and EBI (Even Better If)  
- Two Stars (identifying the positives) and a wish (identify area for improvement) (Appendix 1)  
- Ladders (See p. 85 ‘Assessment in the Primary School Curriculum, Guidelines for Schools’ (NCCA, 2007))  
- Thumbs up/thumbs down (p. 85 also, NCCA, 2007)  
Rule of Thumb – when at the library the children choose books independently. If on the first page the children come to a word they cannot read they raise their little finger. They continue this with each difficult word they meet and if they get to their thumb on the first page then the text is too difficult for them.  
Prompts – the most important thing I learnt was... what I found difficult was... what helped me best...  
KWL – What I know already, What I Want to Know, What I have Learned (p. 92, NCCA, 2007)  
*See Appendix 1 for samples* |
| **Conferencing** | Guided reading (child/teacher, child/child, child/parent reading) |
| **Portfolio Assessment** | Running Records. An explanation of running records can be found in:  
- Drumcondra English Profiles (ERC, 2000, pp. 101-106)  
- http://fdf.readingrecovery.org/index.php/assessing-through-observation  
Record pupils reading  
(e.g. using an interactive white board or Dictaphone) |
| **Concept Mapping** | Graphic Organisers  
*See Appendix 2 for samples* |
| **Questioning** | Bloom’s Taxonomy of Questioning  
See ‘Assessment in the Primary School Curriculum, Guidelines for Schools’ (NCCA, 2007, pp. 86-88) |
| **Evaluation** | check, critique, hypothesise, judge, debate |
| **Synthesis** | create, compose, plan, design, propose, formulate, invent, predict, construct, imagine, devise, combine |
| **Analysis** | Analyse, compare, investigate, identify, order, connect; distinguish, contrast, categorise, separate, explain, infer |
| **Application** | Solve, use, construct, examine, apply, calculate, show, illustrate, complete, classify, demonstrate, modify |
**Understanding**
Retell, summarise, describe, explain, discuss, interpret, outline, predict, restate, compare, estimate, contrast

**Knowledge**
tell, list, define, name, when, where, identify, show, state, locate, relate, who

**Building Bridges of Understanding – Comprehension Development**
(see account for ‘Building Bridges of Understanding’)

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**Teacher Observation**
- Checklist
- Running Records
- Drumcondra English Profiles (ERC, 2000)

*See Appendix 3 for sample*

**Teacher-Designed Tasks and Tests**
Teacher-designed tasks and tests can be administered as
- Oral assignments
- Individual tasks
- Group tasks
- Cloze tests

These may look at a variety of areas of reading development such as identification of sight words, phonological awareness ability and comprehension.
Standardised Testing

Interpreting Standardised Test Results

Standardised Test results may be interpreted in different ways and at different levels. Individual pupils results can be analysed, tests can be examined from a whole class perspective and both of these analyses can then be utilised to feed into the building of a whole school picture. This whole-school picture allows us to identify trends, emerging patterns or whole school strengths and areas for improvement. This ‘big picture’ will inevitably prove invaluable when used as a basis for whole school planning in English.

Interpreting and Reporting on Individual Pupils’ Performance:

See ‘Assessment in the Primary School Curriculum, Guidelines for Schools’ (NCCA, 2007)

- pp. 62-63 ‘Interpreting Standardised Test Results in English Reading’ and
- p. 65 ‘Reporting Standardised Test Results in English Reading’

Whole School Analysis of Standardised Tests:

Excel is a simple tool that can be used to compile and analyse whole school results in English and support a school in analysing standardised test results. See www.pdst.ie for excel files, seen below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Name N.S. - English Test Results (MICRA-T) Date:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>At or below 2nd PR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st Class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd Class</td>
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<tr>
<td>4th Class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th Class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6th Class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Test Results Compared with Normal Distribution

Diagnostic Tests

- Neale Analysis
- Jackson Phonics
- Running Records / Miscue Analysis
- Aston Index
- CHIPS

See www.pdst.ie and www.sess.ie for more
Appendix 1: Self Assessment Tools for Reading

Two Stars and a Wish

From First Steps, Reading Map of Development

Reading Response Sentence Starters

• I began to think of ........

• I love the way ........

• I can’t believe ........

• I wonder why ........

• My favourite character is ........

• That reminded me of ........
My Reading Response Journal

Title: ________________________________

My favourite part of the story is: ____________________________________________________________

My favourite character is: ________________________ because: _________________________________

From First Steps, Reading Map of Development

Reading Attitude Questionnaire

*Place a cross on the line that shows how you feel about reading*

1. Do you like to read books at home?
   Yes, a lot ________________________________, No, not at all

2. Do you like to get books for presents?
   Yes, a lot ________________________________, No, not at all

3. Do you like someone reading books to you?
   Yes, a lot ________________________________, No, not at all

4. Do you like to read in free time at school?
   Yes, a lot ________________________________, No, not at all
# Reading Survey for Students

## Section A

1. When I am reading, I think about what will happen next and I guess from the author's clues.
   - [ ] Always
   - [ ] Sometimes
   - [ ] Never

2. When I am reading I make pictures of the story in my head.
   - [ ] Always
   - [ ] Sometimes
   - [ ] Never

3. When I am reading I think about things the story reminds me of e.g. something from my own life, something from another story or something from the world.
   - [ ] Always
   - [ ] Sometimes
   - [ ] Never

## Section B

4. What do you do when you are reading and you come to a word that you don’t know?

5. What do you do when you can sound out words in your reading but you don’t understand what the reading means?

## Section C

6. I like being a good reader
   - [ ] Agree
   - [ ] Don’t know
   - [ ] Disagree

7. I read at home with my family
   - [ ] Agree
   - [ ] Don’t know
   - [ ] Disagree

8. I go to the library
   - [ ] Agree
   - [ ] Don’t know
   - [ ] Disagree

9. I learn a lot of things from reading
   - [ ] Agree
   - [ ] Don’t know
   - [ ] Disagree

10. I read about my hobbies
    - [ ] Agree
    - [ ] Don’t know
    - [ ] Disagree
Appendix 2: Concept Mapping
Graphic Organisers

When developing pupils’ vocabulary, graphic organisers can be used to help pupils to learn. The following activities can be done individually, in groups or in a whole class setting.

**Visual Verbal Square:** New word: ____________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Related words</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The word in a sentence</th>
<th>The word looks like this</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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</table>

**Word Scroll:** New word: ____________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>I will probably find this word...</th>
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<tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What it is</th>
<th>Examples</th>
<th>I will remember this word by connecting it...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What it isn’t</th>
<th>Non-examples</th>
<th>Practice sentence</th>
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<tbody>
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</table>
## Appendix 3: Teacher Observation Checklist for Comprehension Strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Bill</th>
<th>Annie</th>
<th>Sandra</th>
<th>John</th>
<th>Keela</th>
<th>Rory</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Make a prediction</td>
<td>△</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>△</td>
<td>△</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ask a question</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clarify something</td>
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<td>Make a comment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Make a connection</td>
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<tr>
<td>Figure out if they need to reread</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ask themselves if I understand what I’ve read</td>
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<tr>
<td>Make mental pictures (visualize)</td>
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Appendix 4: Reader’s Theatre
Sample Reader’s Theatre Script

Readers’ Theater Script: Click, Clack, Moo, Cows That Type by Doreen Cronin
Parts (7): Narrator 1, Narrator 2, Narrator 3, Cows, Farmer Brown, Ducks, Audience

Narrator 1: Farmer Brown has a problem. His cows like to type. All day long he hears . . .
Audience: Click, clack, moo. Click, clack, moo. Clickety clack, moo.
Narrator 2: At first, he couldn’t believe his ears. Cows that type? Impossible!
Audience: Click, clack, moo. Click, clack, moo. Clickety clack, moo.
Narrator 3: Then he couldn’t believe his eyes. He got a note from the cows.
Cows: Dear Farmer Brown, The barn is very cold at night. We’d like some electric blankets. Sincerely, The Cows
Narrator 1: It was bad enough the cows had found the old typewriter in the barn, now they wanted electric blankets!
Farmer Brown: “No way. No electric blankets.”
Narrator 2: So the cows went on strike. They left a note on the barn door.
Cows: Sorry. We’re closed. No milk today.
Farmer Brown: “No milk today!”
Narrator 3: The next day, he heard the cows busy at work:
Audience: Click, clack, moo. Click, clack, moo. Clickety clack, moo.
Narrator 2: The next day, he got another note.
Cows: Dear Farmer Brown, The hens are cold too. They’d like electric blankets. Sincerely, The Cows
Narrator 3: The cows were growing impatient with the farmer. They left a new note on the barn door.
Farmer Brown: CLOSED, no milk, no eggs.
Narrator 1: In the background he heard them.
Audience: Click, clack, moo. Click, clack, moo. Clickety clack, moo.
Farmer Brown: “Cows that type. Hens on strike! Whoever heard of such a thing? How can I run a farm with no milk and no eggs!”
Narrator 2: Farmer Brown was furious. Farmer Brown got out his own typewriter.
Farmer Brown: Dear Cows and Hens: There will be no electric blankets. You are cows and hens. I demand milk and eggs. Sincerely, Farmer Brown
Narrator 3: Duck was a neutral party, so he brought the ultimatum to the cows.
Narrator 1: The cows held an emergency meeting. All the animals gathered around the barn to snoop, but none of them could understand moo.
Narrator 2: All night long Farmer Brown waited for an answer.
Narrator 3: Duck knocked on the door early the next morning. He handed Farmer Brown a note.
(Duck waddles over to Farmer Brown carrying a note in his beak.)
Cows: Dear Farmer Brown, We will exchange our typewriter for electric blankets. Leave them outside the barn door and we will send Duck over with the typewriter. Sincerely, The Cows
Narrator 1: Farmer Brown decided this was a good deal. He left the blankets next to the barn door and waited for Duck to come with the typewriter.
Narrator 2: The next morning he got a note.
Ducks: Dear Farmer Brown, The pond is quite boring. We’d like a diving board. Sincerely, The Ducks
Audience: Click, clack, quack. Click, clack, quack. Clickety clack, quack.
Appendix 5: Reading Partners
Reading Partner Record Form -
Our Lady of Mercy S.N.S.

For week beginning Monday ________________________________

Names _____________________________________ and _____________________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day/Date</th>
<th>Book/Page</th>
<th>Comment</th>
<th>Today was…</th>
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Help words:
good very tried lovely hard worked enjoyed
funny boring effort excellent reading

Your reading partner is:
_____________________________________________

You will be meeting in:
_____________________________________________

Your meeting times are:
_____________________________________________
Appendix 6A: C.A.P.E.R.
Letter to Parent

C.A.P.E.R. Children And Parents Enjoying Reading

A Step-by-step guide for parents
1. You and your child talk about the pictures to predict vocabulary.
2. You read the book for the child and allow your child to join in with you if he/she wishes to do so.
3. Adjust your reading speed to the reading speed of your child.
5. With a problem word you say the word immediately and your child repeats it
6. 10-15 minutes a session is best.
7. Remember to encourage your child.

A few other simple guidelines
» Choose a nice comfortable place with no interruptions, no T.V. etc.
» This is not homework in the normal sense.
» Keep shared reading separate from homework.
» If your child does not know the word, you should simply say the word without analysing it or breaking it into sounds. The flow of reading should not be interrupted.
» Chat about and enjoy the pictures. Developing your child’s oral language also helps his/her reading.
» Please ensure your child looks after their plastic folder and record sheet.
» Any helpful comments are appreciated.
» Remember that C.A.P.E.R. is fun not work!
Appendix 6B: C.A.P.E.R. Reading Texts

TEXT GRADIENTS

Caption Books
• Consistent placement of text;
• Strong support from illustrations;
• Themes familiar to reader;
• Print is regular, clear and easy to see;
• Repetition of captions or sentence patterns;
• Introduction of high frequency words.

Repetitive Language Pattern
• Usually have one or two lines of text;
• Sentences are repetitive with one or two word changes from sentence to sentence;
• Slightly wider range of frequently used vocabulary
• Text well supported by appropriate illustrations.

More Complex Repetitive Language Pattern
• Two to three lines of text on a page.
• More of the story is carried by the text but there is still a direct correspondence between text and pictures;
• Oral language structures are included and often repeated;
• High frequency words are used more often.

Short Story Lines with Natural Language and Picture Cues
• Variation in language patterns requires the reader to attend more closely to the print;
• Stories are slightly more complex but still easy for children to understand;
• Concepts are within children’s experience;
• Illustrations are supportive;
• Placement of text and spacing is consistent throughout.
More Detailed Story Lines With Natural Language and Helpful Illustrations

- Gradual increase in amount of text;
- Text placement varies;
- Where repeated language patterns are used, they vary within the text;
- Storylines require more interpretation;
- Illustrations support the story but also contain several other ideas;
- The text carries the storyline.

Books With a Greater Complexity of Content And Language

- Stories contain more challenging ideas and vocabulary;
- Literacy language is mixed with typical oral language structures;
- Stories are longer;
- Text appears smaller;
- Storylines include more events;
- Characters are more fully developed;
- Dialogue is presented in a variety of ways;
- Punctuation supports phrasing and meaning;
- Illustrations provide low to moderate support.
Appendix 6C: C.A.P.E.R. Reading Record

Name: ___________________________  Class: ___________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wk</th>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Title of Book</th>
<th>Parent’s Comment</th>
<th>Teacher’s Initials</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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</tbody>
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Appendix 7: Shared Reading – Certificate of Pupil Participation

Scoil Mhuire

Congratulations to:

For taking part in our 6 Week Shared Reading Programme

Leader: __________________ Date: __________
Appendix 8: Literacy Dates for your Diary!

These are some dates for your diary in relation to annual literacy events. In addition, there are many other locally organized initiatives in place, many organized through local libraries. Most of the events outlined below are held at the same time each year, but the specific dates change from year-to-year. See the associated website for more details regarding specific dates and closing dates.

September

8th: **International Literacy Day**

26th: **European Day of Languages**
http://edl.ecml.at/

October

**MS READaTHON**
www.msreadathon.ie
(1 month duration)

**Dear Grace, Letter Competition**
http://www.gracenolan.com

February

**ESB and INTO Handwriting Competition**
http://www.ebs.ie/site/all/INTO%20handwriting%20competition?opendocument

**Write a Book Competition**
(Organised through local education centres, closing date may vary)

March

**World Book Day**
www.worldbookday.com

**World Spelling Day**
http://blog.worldmathsday.com/?page_id=1225

June

**Fís Film**
www.fisfestival.com

July – August

Many local libraries organise reading challenges for children during the summer months. For example ‘The Summer Reading Trees’ in Tipperary Libraries, ‘Summer Reading Challenge’ in Offaly libraries, ‘Circus Stars, Summer Reading Challenge’ in Galway Libraries.
Our Reading Initiative. Our Story. As told by twenty-one primary schools.