



**Winner of the Farshore Reading for Pleasure Award**  
**In partnership with the OU and UKLA 2021**  
**Whole School**



**Lapal Primary School**  
**Laura Atkinson**  
**Developing Reading Communities**

## **Context**

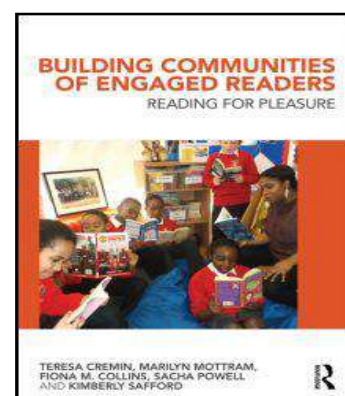
Lapal Primary School is a larger than average primary school located in Dudley, West Midlands with 363 pupils on role. We are predominantly a 1.5 form entry, taking 45 children in each year group, with the exception of 60 in 3 of our cohorts. Most of our pupils are White British with English as their first language, 4% of pupils have English as an additional language. We have a well below average number of disadvantaged pupils and 7% of pupils with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities.

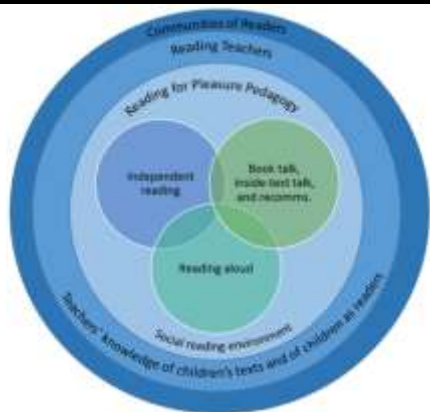
In 2018, our end of KS2 attainment was above national with 85% of our pupils reaching the expected standard in reading but progress from KS1 to KS2 was negative. After refining our approach to the teaching element of reading, we then felt it was essential that we ensure our curriculum and our 'reading offer' at Lapal promoted reading for pleasure. As a result, we began our RfP journey back in September 2019 after I attended an initial training session with my local OU/UKLA Teacher Reading Group.

## **OU Research Inspiration and Rationale**

During my initial TRG meeting, I was introduced to the 'Teachers as Readers' (TaRs) research, which inspired me to read further. I explored the Open University website and Teresa Cremin's 'Building Communities of Engaged Readers' book and found that it really resonated with me. Upon reflection, I felt that I needed to transfer my focus from a purpose-driven approach to reading, towards one that fostered and nurtured the joy and pleasure that comes from reading.

Further reading indicated that when teachers widen their own knowledge and pleasure in reading, knowledge of children's literature and become more aware of different reading practices, they can then begin to change the way they think about reading, and therefore build a strong reading community within schools that are based on RfP pedagogy (Cremin et al., 2014).





*Image reflecting Research insights regarding the effective development of reading for pleasure (based on Cremin et al. 2014)*

I led a CPD session for staff to initially provide an opportunity for further professional discussion linked to the pedagogy and research around Reading for Pleasure, particularly sharing the image of 'Effective development of reading for pleasure'. Prior to the session, I had generated some initial conclusions to share with staff as a result of my own reflection upon the research, but then provided time for staff to also reflect on this themselves, considering our current practice and offer of Reading for Pleasure.

I provided parents, staff and pupils (from EYFS to Year 6) with a copy of the survey from the RfP website to gain a wider insight, from all stakeholders, into what this currently looked like in our school.



*(My presentation of research shared with staff)*



The outcomes of the professional discussion and surveys were:

- Not all classes had the opportunity to read for pleasure on a daily basis
- There were minimal opportunities for children's 'choice' in what they were reading.
- Children were typically reading 'celebrity' authors
- Staff knowledge around children's literature was limited
- At times, reading was not a social activity
- Some children did not read for pleasure, they read for purpose
- Some of our current reading practices were considered more 'tokenistic' rather than an embedded approach
- RfP needed to feature on our school improvement plan.

After identifying and understanding the research, one of our main barriers to developing RfP was, as a staff, our knowledge of children's literature. The RfP research clearly outlines that without a rich and ever-developing knowledge of children's literature, teachers cannot begin to develop reciprocal reading relationships with their children. This therefore provided me with a rationale for our next steps.

## Aims

Following my professional discussion and analysis of survey results, we decided to focus on the following key aspects of reading for pleasure:

- To develop teacher knowledge of children's literature
- Develop reading environments around school
- Broaden the range of books/texts our pupils are reading
- Strike an appropriate balance between reading for challenge and reading for pleasure
- Develop the breath of authors our children are reading
- Embed reading for pleasure practice, rather than this being 'tokenistic'
- Ensure more children enjoy reading
- Provide daily opportunities for RfP in school

As English leader, I put together a comprehensive action plan, with clear strategies that we were going to introduce and success criteria to provide measureable impact.

## Outline

### TRG Group

I found the meetings with my local OU/UKLA Teacher Reading Group of real benefit throughout the implementation of the project. My lead provided opportunities for me to really study the pedagogy and to reflect on this within my own school setting. There were also activities to complete linked to the research, which gave me first-hand experience of the impact that these strategies can have. Additionally, my TRG lead would always follow up each session with a review of the content, but would also provide further reading suggestions, websites to subscribe to, such as the UKLA, which my school are now fully subscribed to, or recommendations of books to use with pupils. This was an invaluable resource, which I might not have had access to, had I not joined my local TRG group.

### Involved Stakeholders



All Lapsi are delighted to be part of a research project group which will focus on developing reading for pleasure in conjunction with the Open University and UK Literacy Association.

As part of the project, we will be exploring the engaging resources provided by the Open University (OU) Research-Rich Pedagogies and supporting staff in developing our Reading for Pleasure (RfP) pedagogy, knowledge of children's literature and the children as readers and enabling us to build reading communities within and beyond school.

Last night we launched our first CRD session for the staff of Lapsi and we now starting our own journey to develop a real love of reading, ensuring that our children have opportunities for choice, independence, collaboration and most importantly, enjoyment when it comes to reading for pleasure.

We will keep you posted on how our project is progressing.

As part of our launch of RfP at Lapsi, I wanted to engage all stakeholders with the project to ensure that our partnership helped to embed our RfP practices in school and at home.

Our engagement with the project was continually shared via:

- our school website,
- our school social media,
- letters to parents and carers
- school newsletters
- through governors meetings.

## Launch of RfP at Lapal



To launch our RfP journey, I wanted to inspire excitement and wonder around books, but providing each class with a mystery parcel, which was wrapped displaying an extract from the book, providing a snapshot into what the book might be about, who the characters might be or a hint about the story plot. The children made predictions and had lots of discussion about the extract. Later that week, our pupils finally got to reveal and read their new book by a new author.



To help bring these books to life, we also used the Authorfy website (a recommendation from my TRG leader), which we found to be an excellent resource that provides masterclasses with authors, who talk about their inspiration behind their books, discussions around certain characters and explanations about how they became author. This is a resource that we have continued to use on many occasions to introduce a wider range of authors to our pupils to inspire them to read a broader range of books.





## New KS1 Library



To further inspire our reading for pleasure, we invested money creating a new library for our EYFS and KS1 pupils. We also asked our librarians to complete an audit with classes across the school to see which authors, genres, topic books and different types of reading materials they would like to read. Using this information and after researching lots of recommended reading lists for each year group (including those for reluctant readers, boys, challenging reads etc.) we purchased a wide range of books for our pupils across the school.

Supplying pupils with access to newspapers, magazines, comics and other different texts had a positive impact on the attitude of reading and the children were making conscious attempts to step beyond their comfort zones to try new things (Cremin, 2009).



Our new library was used by our reading buddies where our older pupils developed relationships with our younger children in school to support and develop their confidence and fluency in early reading.

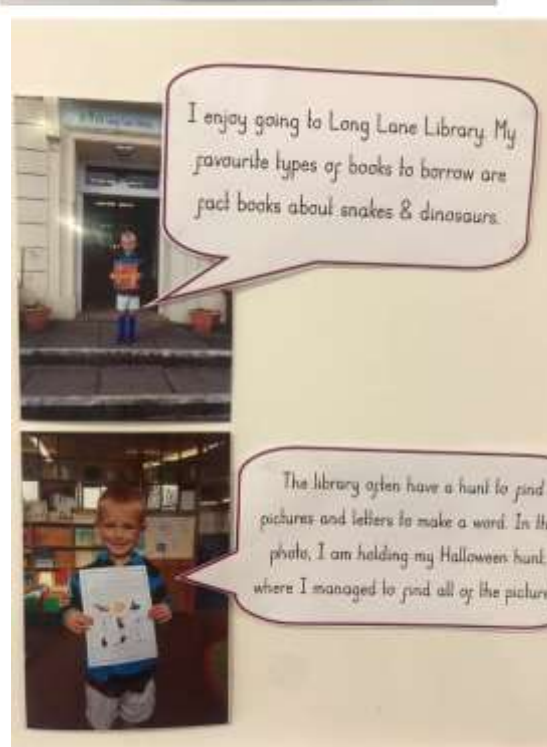
Our librarians successfully took a leading role to oversee the daily running of our new library, enabling pupils to borrow and take books home as part of our lending library.

Our librarians also supported our pupils to develop their love and enjoyment of reading by sharing a book with some of our younger pupils during their lunch hour.



## Local Libraries

I set up links with the local libraries within Lapal's surrounding area to promote the events and encourage families to visit. I then created a display in the entrance area of our school to share information about the four libraries in our local area, showing the location and opening times and upcoming events such as author visits. I also asked our pupils to share experiences of their recent visits to their local library and to share the book(s) that they borrowed and why.



## Parental Reading for Pleasure Opportunities



I set up a parent 'Book Swap' in the main entrance of the school to extend our work around the love of reading to parents and carers to encourage them to engage with our wider reading community and act as role models to their children.

## EYFS Book Vote



To support and encourage early reading, we provided opportunities for children to develop their own reading for pleasure by promoting choice. The children were given the option of two books to be read at the end of the day and the children must vote using counting cubes to see which books would be chosen and why.





## Reading for Pleasure Ambassadors – RfP Book Talk

I set up a daily allocated slot on every class timetable for a reading for pleasure opportunity, sharing books, independent reading and time for informal book talk.

Our pupils really enjoyed this time and many were inspired by the informal discussions that took place. So much so, that some of our children brought in books from home that they had read to share with their peers and also gave recommendations of a new series or an author that others may not have read before.. This strategy is said to be successful by Cremin (2009) as it promotes book blether amongst children and they are therefore, more likely to read something that has been recommended by a peer or friend.

The informal book talk sessions also inspired pupils and staff to set up displays to share books, authors and recommendations, inspiring wider reading across the school.





## Author of the Month

In the school entrance and the main corridor, I set up a display of our 'Author of the Month' which was another opportunity for us to inspire our pupils and parents to read wider authors, particularly from award winning writers. We also purchased some of the author's books so the children could borrow these to read.



## World Book Day

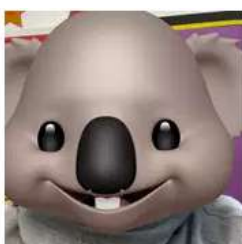
When reflecting on our practice at the start of our RfP journey, we discussed that some national events can appear to be 'tokenistic', so whilst we still mark these focus days, we ensure that they build on our RfP practices and principles rather than just being stand alone events.

Some of our World Book Day events include:

- Book reveal – The Day the War Came – where the children then visited the school's old air raid shelters that are still on our school site to see what people had to do during these times. The children then produced a book review with a 5-star rating. This enabled our pupils to see how books can come to life and to make tangible links to real-life experiences.



- World Book Day Masked Reader – Embracing lockdown engaging pupils to read before returning to school, members of staff gave clues about their favourite books, which they read extracts from that gave clues to their identity. This inspired many of our children to engage with books upon returning to school.



- Book Author & Illustrator Masterclasses – Using videos from the Authorfy and World Bok Day website, pupils engaged with a number of exciting tasks (in school and at home during the most recent lockdown), which were set by authors and illustrators of books we read in school. One of our year 1 pupils even received a tweet from the illustrator of ‘What the Ladybird Heard’ Lydia Monks for his wonderful picture books theatre. This was a wonderful opportunity for our pupils to see the person behind the book and make links between text and author.





# Using RfP Website during lockdown

To support reading at home during lockdown, we purchased an online reading package so pupils could access books at home and shared information about how families can support their children with RfP during this time.

## Supporting Reading at Home

Following our research project around reading for pleasure this year, we wanted to continue keep the profile of developing a love of reading as a high priority during this period of home learning. So to keep things simple, we wanted to share three core ways to foster readers through:

- Reading aloud
- Time to read as a family
- Book chat

So 'just relax and read'. Time and space to hear stories, read and talk informally about what we're all reading is key to developing and sustaining a love of reading.

We want to share these resources with you as we feel that due to the current circumstances, this is an opportunity to help build stronger family reading cultures and making more of a difference to young people's life chances. We welcome you to use these ideas to support your child when reading at home.



Authorfy is an award-winning platform, recommended by the Department for Education (DfE) that we highly regard and use regularly at Lapsal to inspire writing and to help develop a love of reading. Please take a look at the wide range of engaging activities for your children including 10 minute challenges and bookish activities by visiting the website address below simply clicking on the image below.

**AN AWARD-WINNING EDUCATION PLATFORM  
RECOMMENDED BY THE DEPARTMENT FOR  
EDUCATION FOR HOME LEARNING  
DURING THE COVID-19 CRISIS**

**FREE AUTHOR MASTERCLASSES**

With more than 800 videos from 60+ authors, Authorfy Masterclasses are the perfect way to advance children's writing skills in a fun and interactive way. Be inspired by the likes of Michael Morpurgo, Michael Rosen and Katherine Rundell! Just browse the list of authors at [authorfy.com/masterclasses](https://authorfy.com/masterclasses) or use the search function to find a particular author.

**FREE 10 MINUTE CHALLENGES**

Authorfy are sharing a new writing or illustration challenge with bestselling authors and illustrators every day while schools are closed. Challenges are added at 9am every weekday and remain on the website ([authorfy.com/10minutechallenges](https://authorfy.com/10minutechallenges)) indefinitely. Anyone of any age can join in.

**FREE BOOKISH ACTIVITY PACKS**

Download free bookish activity packs at [authorfy.com/creative](https://authorfy.com/creative). From arts and crafts to puzzles, quizzes, book club questions and more, there's something there for everyone. Each activity pack is based around a children's book such as 'Brambly Hedge', 'How To Train Your Dragon' and 'Mog The Forgetful Cat'.

## Top Ten Storytimes to Enjoy!

Do check out our favourite storytime read alouds for 3-7-year olds. Let your children choose...

### Snuggle up together and enjoy...

	Vivian Schwarz reading her book, <i>A Day in the Zoo</i>		David Loefer reading his book, <i>Grendel</i> & <i>Chickadee</i> by David Loefer
	Tom McLaughlin reading his book, <i>The Story Machine</i>		Emily Gravett reading her story, <i>Cuddly and Patsy</i>
	Denise Kiroian reading <i>Astro Girl</i> by Denise Kiroian		Mike Grey reading his book, <i>The Book of David</i>
	Mike Grey reading his book, <i>The Book of David</i>		Mike Grey reading his book, <i>The Book of David</i>
	Mike Grey reading his book, <i>The Book of David</i>		Mike Grey reading his book, <i>The Book of David</i>
	Mike Grey reading his book, <i>The Book of David</i>		Mike Grey reading his book, <i>The Book of David</i>

There are many more stories shared on the Book Chat Story Time website.

Visit the Cbeebies Bedtime Stories site to watch many more brilliant stories being read aloud.

## Book Chat

Developing a Love of Reading

Research indicates that parents who regularly read with their children at home lay solid foundations for language and literacy development. It's a precious time for you both to relax, share your thoughts and feelings, have fun and chat together. Whilst sharing books, your child has your undivided attention, and the conversation, connection and enjoyment they experience is invaluable.

To promote children's pleasure in reading and foster the habit, we need to read to children and with them and to talk to them about books. These conversations are crucial as they help children to engage and think deeply.



Book Chat encourages readers. Open questions, comments and prompts get the Book Chat going. Invite your child to make connections and share views. Join in with your thoughts too! Book Chat develops language, comprehension and pleasure.



Children who read, and are supported as readers, develop strong reading skills and do better at school.

# Knowledge Organisers

Recommended Reads were placed on our school Knowledge organisers that were age-appropriate and linked to the theme or topic within Science, History and Geography.

This enabled us to:

- Provide opportunities to broaden children's vocabulary development
- Opportunities to read around the topic
- Make links with learning
- Provide a balance between fiction and non-fiction

Year 2 Science Knowledge Organiser – Living in Habitats (Biology)			
National Curriculum Focus	Living things and their habitats	Builds on knowledge and skills	Year one – identifying plants and animals
<b>What should I already know?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>That a specific habitat provides for the needs of things living there</li> <li>Identify and name plants and animals in a range of habitats</li> <li>Know how animals find their food and name some different sources of food for animals</li> <li>Explore and compare the differences between things that are living, dead and things that have never been alive</li> <li>Identify and name a variety of plants and animals in their habitats</li> </ul>		<b>Recommended Reads</b> 	
<b>Subject specific vocabulary</b>			
<b>Species</b>	A group of animals, plants or other living things that all share common characteristics	<b>Habitat</b>	A habitat is the natural place that something lives. A habitat provides living things with everything they need to survive such as food, shelter and water.
<b>Organisms</b>	An organism is another word for a living thing, for example plants and animals. Some organisms can not found in lots of habitats while others can only survive in just one type of habitat.	<b>Microhabitats</b>	Microhabitats are the small-scale physical requirements of a particular organism or a community of organisms.
<b>Adapt</b>	Living things are adapted to their habitats. This means that they have special features that help them to survive for example camouflage can adapt.	<b>Consumers</b>	Animals are classed as consumers because they eat plants and other animals. They do not make their own food.
<b>Unseen features</b>	Unseen features are not found in roots and stems. Unseen features include parts and got control. Roots can be found in unseen features.	<b>Producers</b>	Plants get their energy from the sun. They are classed as producers because they make their own food/energy.
<b>Food chain</b>	Energy flows from one animal that eats another that eats the plant. This is why many habitats do this (such as all, dirt, trees, stones, sand and things like that).	<b>Food chain</b>	A food chain shows how each animal gets its food/energy within a food chain. Some living things create the energy (producers) and some use the energy (consumers).
<b>Sticky knowledge</b>			
<b>What is the difference between plants/animals that are living, dead or never have been alive?</b>	<p>There are living things. Dogs, cats, fish, insects, bees and people are also living things. Dry leaves on the ground are dead but they were once part of a living tree. Bones were once part of a living animal that is now dead. Anything made, plastic or stone has never been alive. We know something is alive if it reacts to its surroundings, needs air, feeds, grows, reproduces and gets rid of waste.</p>		
<b>What is a habitat?</b>	<p>The place that a plant or animal lives is called a habitat. A habitat has everything the living thing needs in order to survive such as food, water and shelter.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some plants and animals live in the desert. These plants and animals do not need as much water as the other types of plants and animals.</li> <li>Some animals and plants live in a forest or cave habitat because they prefer cooler areas.</li> <li>Other plants and animals choose to live in coastal habitats because they prefer a wet environment but they are also able to live on land. Animals that live along the shoreline need to have strong bodies and protection against the waves, this is why many animals have shells to cover their bodies.</li> </ul>		
<b>Why do different plants/animals live in different habitats?</b>	<p>A habitat must provide everything that an organism (living thing) needs to survive. The organism must be able to find food, water and shelter in its habitat. Animals need different things in order to survive so they need to live in different habitats.</p>		
<b>How are plants/animals suited to live in a particular habitat?</b>	<p>Over many years animals have changed in order to survive in the habitats that they live. This is called adaptation. There are a number of ways that animals can adapt. These can be inside or outside their bodies, how they act or how they work with other animals in their habitat. Camouflage is one way that animals adapt to their environment. For example, animals that live in the Arctic often have white fur which matches the colour of the snow and helps them to hide from predators.</p>		
<b>What is a micro-habitat?</b>	<p>A micro-habitat is a small-scale, specific habitat which supports the survival of certain animals or plants, for example a rockpool or a rotting log. A micro-habitat will differ from the environment around it as it is better suited to one or more species. For example, the damp ground beneath a stone could provide shelter for a woodlouse and a decaying leaf could give the woodlouse food to eat. This micro-habitat is better for the woodlouse than the exposed undergrowth of the forest floor.</p>		
<b>What is a food chain and how does it work in a habitat?</b>	<p>All living things including humans, animals and plants all need energy to live. All living things get their energy and water. Animals and humans don't produce their own food. They need to eat plants or other animals to get energy to survive. They are all part of a food chain. A food chain shows how plants and animals depend on each other as their source of food. For example:</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div>		



## Monthly Recommended Reads - Newsletter



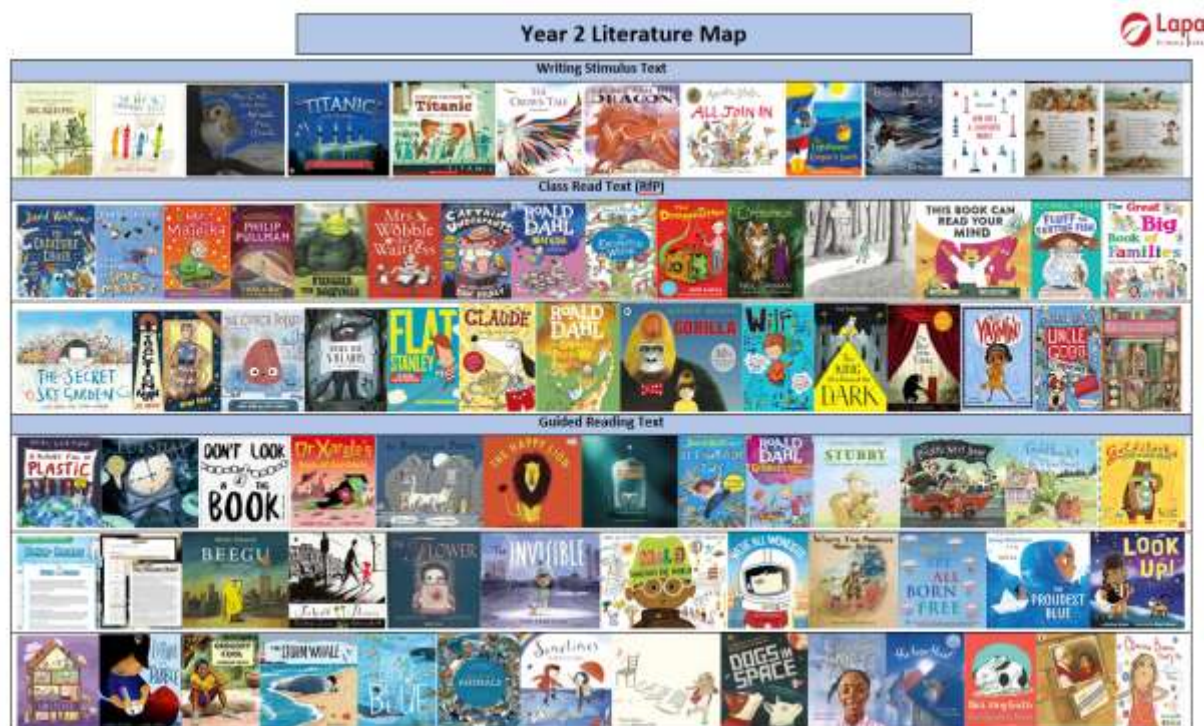
Recommended reads for different year groups and the author of the month were posted on the school's monthly newsletter to continue to share a breadth of different authors and literature beyond the classroom.



## Literature Maps

As part of one of our initial aims of this project we wanted to ensure that our pupils read a wider range of literature. Analysis of the survey's conducted at the beginning of the project indicated that our children and staff considered Roald Dahl as their favourite author and was read most frequently within our setting, and there was also an overreliance on 'celebrity' authors to engage readers, which was supported by the RfP research (Cremin et al, 2008). This demonstrated that the range and breadth of authors being introduced to our pupils were largely dependent upon a limited repertoire of children's literature.

To further support with this, I created year group specific literature maps to show staff, pupils and parents the breadth of literature their child will be exposed to during each year group throughout school. This also incorporated engaging authors, topical books, books around themes such as challenging stereotypes, our local area and books that engage certain pupils like reluctant readers and greater depth readers.



Due to many strategies implemented, including the literature maps above, one of the most significant changes as a result of this project is the wide range of authors, texts and themes that our children are now reading, far reaching those from the start of the project.



## Impact

The impact of our participation in the RfP project has been profound on our pupils', our teachers' and my own growing knowledge of children's literature. Reading has become more enjoyable at Lapal, through opportunities to engage in positive and stimulating conversations beyond reading lessons.

- Staff and pupils have a wider and deeper knowledge about children's literature
- Staff have a better knowledge of different reading practices of their pupils and know how to challenge and engage them as an individual.
- Reading environments are engaging and inviting
- Reading is at the heart of the school
- 1 ½ hours per week are spent solely on reading for pleasure - independently, with friends, being read to by adults and informal book talk (the teaching of reading is timetabled separately).
- Staff and Parental feedback indicated that pupils are more motivated to read and are more positive about books now and many have been inspired by the literature that we have promoted in school.
- Recommendation from the lead of my OU/UKLA Teachers Reading Group to share my practice within the group and also of the Reading for Pleasure website.
- Our practice was shared with other schools in our trust and locality
- Being a member of the OU and UKLA has provided further opportunities for us, as a school, to participate in different events. Our most recent has been the UKLA Book Awards 2022 Teacher Judging Panel for Birmingham and the Black Country, where myself and 2 colleagues at Lapal have registered to be part of this judging panel for different categories within the award. We know this will be an opportunity for us to broaden our knowledge of children's literature, be exposed to new material and to also bring different authors and books into our reading community.
- Progress and attainment are improving
- OFSTED Inspection recognised our work around reading and commented on the impact

### KS2 Reading Attainment

KS2 2018 Attainment Results	KS2 2019 Attainment Results	Improvement
85%	93%	+8%

KS2 2018 Greater Depth	KS2 2019 Greater Depth	Improvement
32%	42%	+10%

KS2 2018 Reading Progress	KS2 2019 Reading Progress
-0.9	+1.3

### OFSTED Report Feb 2020



Leaders have placed reading at the heart of the school. It is taught very well. Staff are determined that all pupils will not only become proficient readers but will enjoy reading. They are successful in this aim. Pupils quickly develop excellent phonics knowledge. Those who fall behind are quickly helped to catch up. Teachers introduce pupils to a wide variety of authors and genres. Pupils are keen to experiment with authors who are new to them. Many pupils are enthusiastic readers.

## Reflections on impact the TaRs research had on practice

Without question, our engagement with the OU/UKLA group and the research that has been shared has transformed our practice as a school with regards to reading for pleasure and subsequently impacted on our pupil engagement with reading, staff knowledge of literature, attainment in reading and most importantly reading for pleasure.

## What Next?

- Maintain and continue to embed our excellent practice, continually reviewing practice to seek additional ways to further develop RfP
- Engage further with the wider community and parents.
- Grow pupil voice in our plans for RfP.
- Develop our KS2 library
- Target certain groups of children who are disengaged, reluctant or non-readers to see how we can promote RfP further
- Arrange author visits
- Visits to the local library
- Librarians to display reading records
- Focus on early reading within EYFS to ensure we are immersing our children in language-rich texts
- More parental events: book tasting, reading rivers
- Book clubs
- Ensure we have a school, annual action plan for RfP (next year's ideas are already stacking up...)

