

Elmhurst Primary: creating a culture of reading for pleasure



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For consideration within the Egmont RfP Awards – Whole School Award

Context

Elmhurst Primary is a large school in Newham, London. We are an English Hub and model school for RWI Phonics. Our school is located in a deprived area of East London and has a very high proportion of EAL pupils. Early language development, learning to read fluently and fostering a love of reading are therefore of the utmost importance for us.



OU Research inspiration and rationale

In March 2017 10 members of staff, including the Headteacher, two AHTs and the literacy co-ordinator attended the UKLA RfP Conference which launched the Research Rich Pedagogies website. This was followed by an inspiring visit from Professor Teresa Cremin to our staff meeting and to discuss next steps with the literacy coordinator. After this input, it became clear that there was a need for more strategic approach to developing RfP, not just through 'activities', one-off events and 'quick-fixes'. As a school we decided to develop our practice in each strand of the TaRs findings. It was clear that staff needed to develop their collective knowledge of children's literature so that up-to-date recommendations could be made to pupils; even the most effective Reading Teachers had a limited knowledge of individual pupils as readers and had too small a repertoire of children's literature to be able to make use of this information. Although book talk was present, it was often too structured and formal, focusing on lesson content rather than enjoyment; not only this but parental involvement in reading and inside-class reading communities were neglected. It was from this starting point that we addressed the key issues highlighted by the TaR findings.

Aims

To increase the number of pupils reading for pleasure through:

1. Developing teachers' knowledge of RfP pedagogy and children's literature
2. Raising the profile of reading through events and competitions
3. Increasing access to quality books
4. Developing reciprocal reading relationships

Outline

1. Developing teachers' knowledge of RfP pedagogy and children's literature:

- Teresa Cremin advised Literacy Coordinator and delivered INSET session
- UKLA Saturday Conference in March 2017, Cambridge University:



- In two years over 18 hours of INSET CPD time dedicated to developing aspects of RfP including time to read and to share/recommend books. Members of staff attended the UKLA/OU TRG group hosted at Elmhurst in 2017-18.
- Weekly 'Teacher tips' on staff noticeboard provided ideas developed during RfP working lunches for teachers to implement in their classes.

Creating a Reading for Pleasure Classroom



Top Tip No.1

Do a bit of 'Book PR'. Show a book that you know and tell the class how much you love it and why. Perhaps they'll want to borrow it from you!



Creating a Reading for Pleasure Classroom




Top Tip No.2

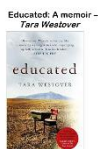
Create a 'teacher's book shelf' where you keep books that you have read and that you can share with pupils.



- Staff book club set up June 2017, 10th meeting took place in January. [Example of Practice](#) shared on the RRP website.

Staff Book Club – get reading!


Venue: The Erstwhile Parrot Coffee House, Green Street
Date: Friday 11th May
Time: from 4.30pm
All welcome!
Read both or either of these books: one for adults, and one for children.





- Literacy Office has become a focal point for book recommendations/borrowing by teachers.

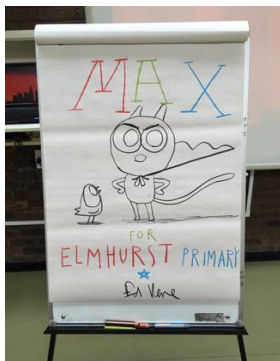


2. Raising the profile of reading through events and competitions

- Annual 'Bedtime Story' session after school: pupils dress in PJs and teachers read to them.



- Author visits: 10 in last two years





- World Book Day: in addition to dress up and book focus, all pupils visit a local bookshop to spend their WBD book token.



- Competitions

- Story Explorers Competition: Year 4 pupil is one of 25 National winners.
- ReadingZone Picture Book Competition: entries 'Highly Commended'
- Extreme Reading Competition
- Shelfie Competition: an insight into the value placed on home reading



3. Increasing access to quality books

- London Book Project: a free book for every child to take home from our own 'Elmhurst Bookshop'.



- 'Book Swaps'



- Book corner Competition each year; prize is a £50 book token:













































- School library re-opened in 2016: £10,000+ spent sourcing quality texts for the new library.



- Christmas presents: all teachers given a budget to buy a book per child as a gift



- Eight copies of 50 titles purchased to provide excellent reading material for pupils to use alongside online blogging tool called My Book Blog. Creates a canon as a starting point for informal book blether!

Year 5 Book List					Year 6 Book List				
									
									
									
									
									
									
									
									
									
									

- All year groups visit a local bookshop to spend their WBD book token. Year 6 visit central London Foyles and Waterstones.
- All pupils registered with local library service and 110+ pupils completed Summer Reading Challenge in 2017 and 2018.



- Parents' Evening book sales:



- Library manned at lunchtime: pupils choose to read during their break.



4. Developing reciprocal reading relationships between pupils and teachers

- Termly pupil reading survey. Includes 1:1 conversation with teacher, setting 'soft' target for reading.



Pupil Reading Survey



1. Do you enjoy reading? Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 I love reading!
Why?

2. What are you reading at the moment? What do you like about it?

3. What kinds of books do you mostly like reading? Do you have a current favourite author?

4. Where and when do you read at home? How often?

5. How good are you at reading and understanding books?

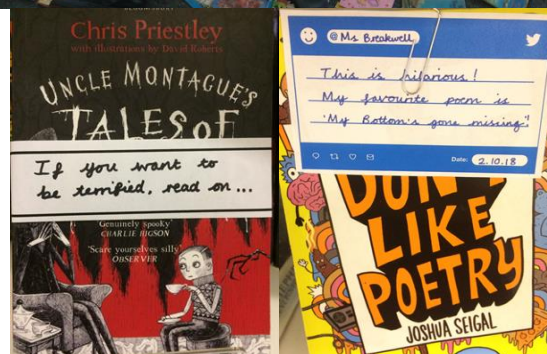
Not very good 1 2 3 4 5 Great!

6. a) I read because _____

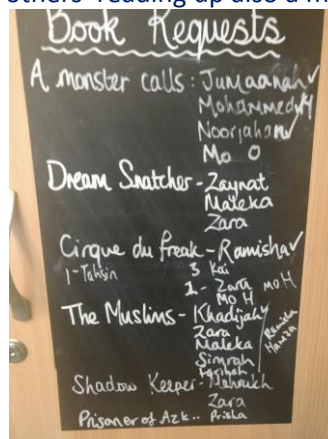
b) I would read more if _____

My next steps are: (Leave blank until you have spoken to your teacher)

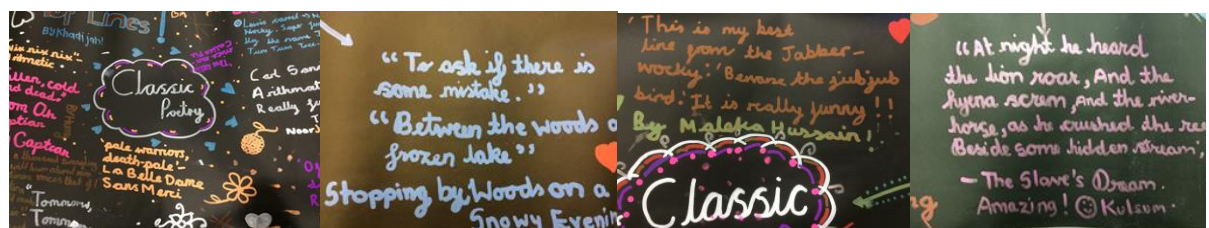
- Informal book talk: teachers encouraged to talk to children about reading. This is also done more formally through Twitter reviews, book bands, book blankets.



- Waiting lists: creates talk about books and anticipation for children to read particular books: pressure of not wanting to hold others' reading up also a motivator!



- Graffiti walls: informal recommendations



- Year 5&6 weekly Reading Afternoons: informal time with pupils reading, teacher reading class book to pupils or getting to know more about reading preferences.

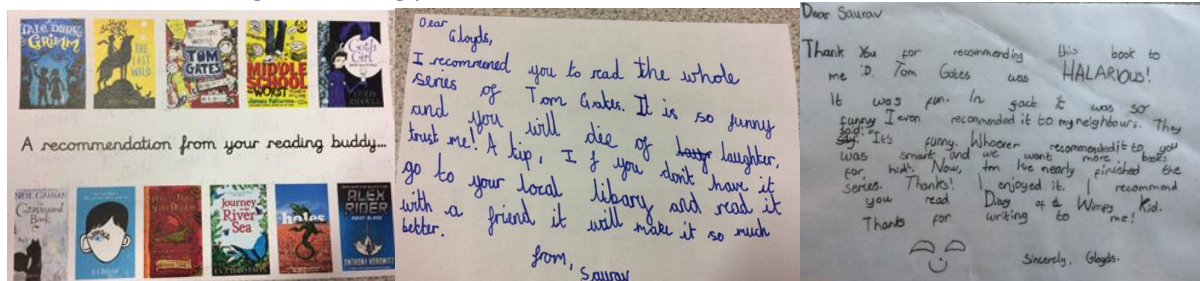
- ❖ A reading picnic outside in the summer and a reading 'Afternoon Tea' with scones and tea!



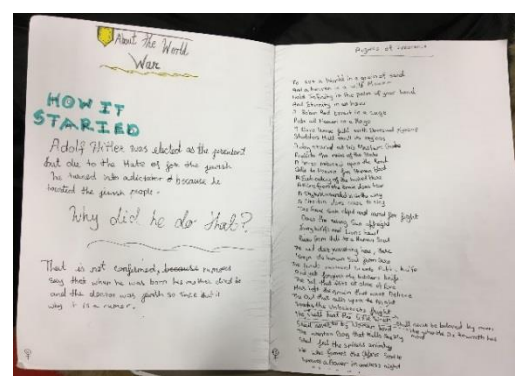
- ❖ Reading together and to one another.

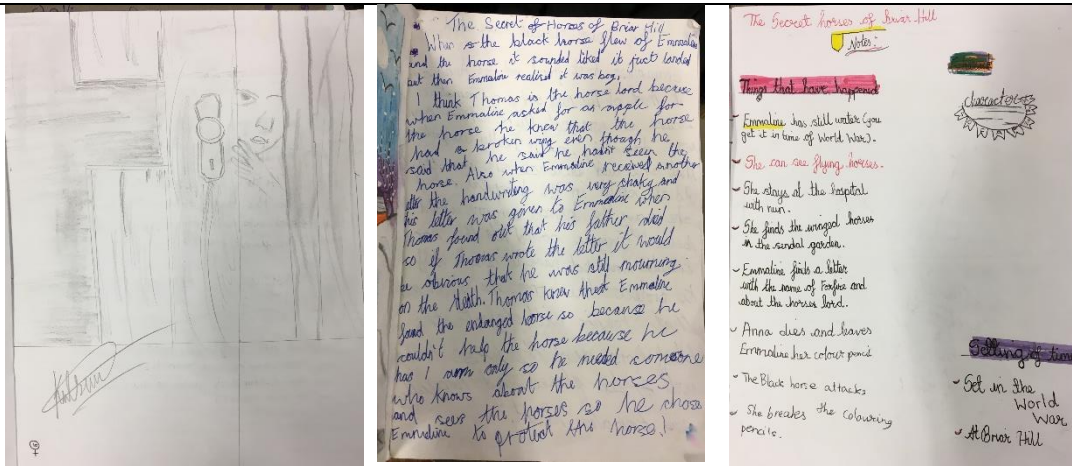


- ❖ Pupils 'buddied up' with pupils at another school. Children matched according to teachers' knowledge of reading preferences.



- Reading Gladiators Club for 16 year 6 pupils helps pupils to access challenging texts and love reading. The texts which they read are then available for the rest of the year group to borrow. Pupils keep a log of their reading and thoughts:





- Parent reading workshops share research on impact of RfP and encourage free choice of reading materials.

Choice

- Invite and encourage children to read, don't force them!
- Free choice of reading materials
- Reading is not just books!
- Appropriate difficulty

An important factor in developing reading for pleasure is choice; choice and interest are highly related.
(Schraw et al, 1998)

**SUMMER
READING
CHALLENGE**

Newham Libraries

LIBRARY OPEN
to parents/carers and their children at the following times:

Monday 3.30pm – 4.00pm
Tuesday 3.30pm – 4.00pm
Wednesday 3.30pm – 4.00pm

PLEASE NOTE: NO FOOD OR DRINK IN THE LIBRARY

school library

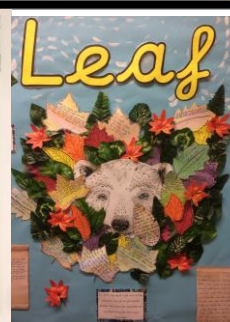
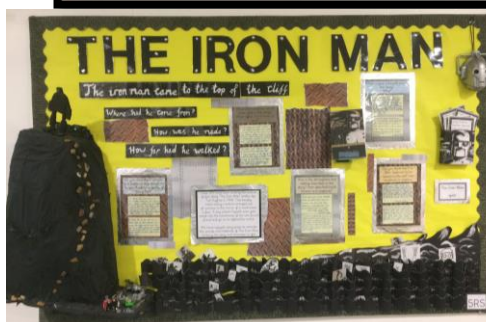
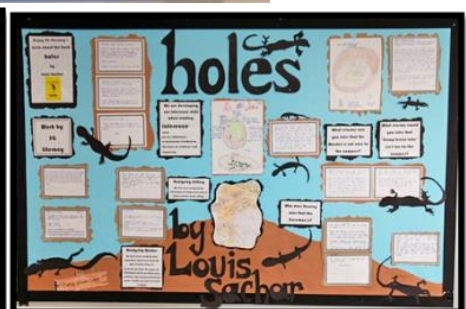
- Weekly Parent reading EYFS and KS1 always well attended



- Weekly reading assemblies
- Reading advent calendars: wrapping up books increased excitement.



- Reading displays

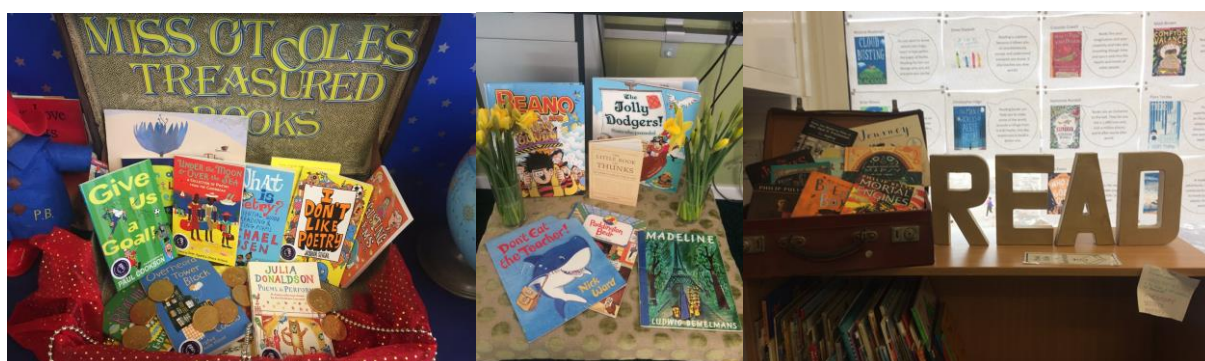


Impact

Staff

This RfP initiative has had a huge impact on staff knowledge of children's literature and their understanding of RfP pedagogy.

- Successful and sustainable distributed ownership of RfP agenda demonstrated by large proportion of staff involved in bookclub, RfP conferences and Newham TRG
- 15+ teachers attend Staff Book Club: engaging in book talk around school, sharing books and making recommendations.
- Teachers have increased repertoire of children's literature, enabling tailored recommendations and informal book talk with pupils.
- Many teachers have developed their own children's book collections: they understand the importance of being a Reading Teacher.



Teachers' reflections:

Reading for pleasure and creating a shared culture and love of books has helped me build much deeper relationships with my children. Even my class from last year still come back every lunch time to borrow and talk about books. This has been very meaningful for me and them.

Children now have the confidence to choose any book they like. They know that even if they're in KS2, picture books are okay to read.

Year on year, we have seen children reaching year 6 with an embedded reading culture. Informal reading-related conversations between the kids take place unprompted at all hours of the day that would have been unthinkable 3 or 4 years ago!

Children have increased stamina for reading as we have allocated protected time for the children to read for longer periods of time.

Not only has the RFP initiative really helped my own practice, but it has benefitted my pupils enormously. Many pupils in my Literacy class have commented that they are 'reading addicts' and are even so desperate to read they are doing so under the table!

Reading for pleasure

A whole class interest and excitement towards reading. ~~Enthusiasm~~ My 43 children are increasing their stamina and trying to finish books before starting a new one!

children reading at every possible occasion, seeking in a paragraph or two even during main teaching point of ~~the~~ lessons.

Reading for pleasure

It has encouraged me as a teacher to read more adult and children's book. This in turn has broadened my knowledge of children's books and enabled me to ~~disc~~ further my discussions and recommendations.

Reading for pleasure has helped to create a true sense of community within my classroom. Despite the differences we all may have, we all share the books we read together.

Children really look forward to story time every day and are really expanding their creative language as a result.

Reading for pleasure
inspires us to write
our own stories!

'Diary of a footie kid.'

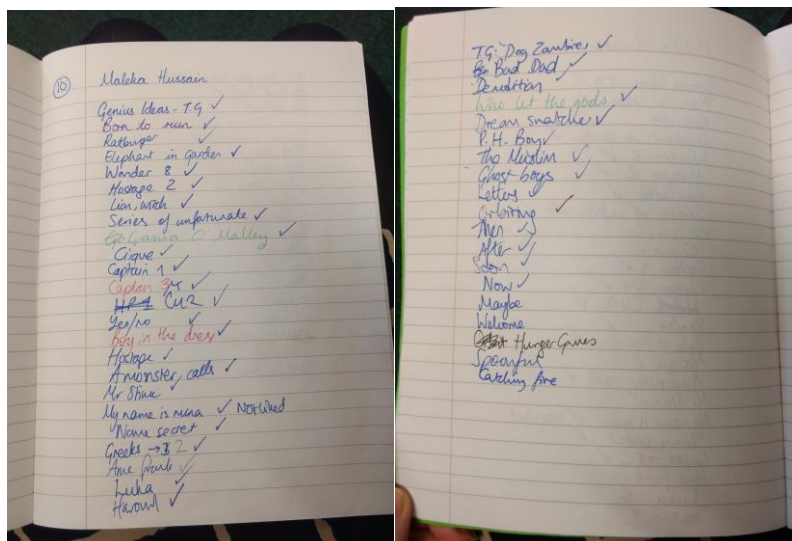
Pupils

There has been a significant impact on pupils as a result of this project. Overall, pupils read more and more widely, have access to high-quality texts and **know** that the school values reading highly.

- Parents report during parents' evening that pupils read more and that they have to tell them off for staying up late. One pupil recently confessed that they had stayed up until 3am reading by torch-light because they 'couldn't put the book down!'
- Pupils beginning to read during any free moment : in assemblies, in lessons, in the corridors, even on residential trips.



- Pupils borrow books from teachers regularly (below: all borrowed since September for one child)





- Ex-pupils return to borrow from their teachers.

Dear Miss Young,
I just wanted to ask you if I could
continue borrowing books. I asked
because like you said on our last
lesson that we can continue to
borrow books unless we return them.
So may you please say 'Yes' or 'No'
to my younger sister so she can
tell me.
from Yashfa. 6V (ex class)

- Pupils value reading: Year 6 pupils on a residential created displays of their books in their rooms, entirely unprompted!



- Reading survey: attitudes towards reading changed

 Pupil Reading Survey 

1. Do you enjoy reading? Not at all 1 2 3 ④ 5 I love reading!
Why?
I enjoy reading because it makes me feel as if I am one of the characters.

2. What are you reading at the moment? What do you like about it?
I am reading 'There may be a castle' I like that it is really adventures, adventurous.



3. What kinds of books do you mostly like reading? Do you have a current favourite author?
I like reading mystery books because it makes me curious. My favourite author is Pamela Butchart.

4. Where and when do you read at home? How often?
I read every day before going to sleep so it leaves me to imagine the rest.

5. How good are you at reading and understanding books?
Not very good 1 2 3 ④ 5 Great!

6. a) I read because it is a good way to use up time if you are not doing anything.
b) I would read more if I had more time in my day and I am trying not to waste any time.

My next steps are: (Leave blank until you have spoken to your teacher)
My teacher gave me a suggestion to read Pers today. 'The Last Wild'.

 Pupil Reading Survey 

1. Do you enjoy reading? Not at all 1 2 3 4 ⑤ I love reading!
Why?
I know that I love reading because whenever I started reading I never keep the book down, I just keep flipping the pages.

2. What are you reading at the moment? What do you like about it?
I am reading 'Spooks and Scooters' and I love the mysteries and how the author creates suspense in the story.



3. What kinds of books do you mostly like reading? Do you have a current favourite author?
I mostly like suspense, adventures and mystery books. My current favourite author is 'Elen Caldecott' who wrote 'Spooks and Scooters'. My second favourite author is Pamela Butchart.

4. Where and when do you read at home? How often?
I don't really count how many times I read a day I just read whenever I can like on a train or a bus or before I go to sleep and after mosque.

5. How good are you at reading and understanding books?
Not very good 1 2 3 ④ 5 Great!

6. a) I read because I enjoy it but sometimes I might not like all books but I still give it a go.
b) I would read more if I had time in the day to read a lot or go to the library more.

My next steps are: (Leave blank until you have spoken to your teacher)
to read different kind of books more like different authors and non-fiction books.

 Pupil Reading Survey 

1. Do you enjoy reading? Not at all 1 2 ③ 4 5 I love reading!
Why?
I enjoy reading because after a long day it's a relaxing thing to do.

2. What are you reading at the moment? What do you like about it?
I'm currently reading 'The Dark Wild' and I think it's an interesting book.



3. What kinds of books do you mostly like reading? Do you have a current favourite author?
I like Michael Morpurgo books because sometimes it includes adventure, at points the story is sad and I like the twist.

4. Where and when do you read at home? How often?
I read every night in my bed before going to sleep.

5. How good are you at reading and understanding books?
Not very good 1 2 3 ④ 5 Great!

6. a) I read because it makes me feel calm and relaxed.
b) I would read more if I wasn't going to school then mosque and if I wasn't so busy.

My next steps are: (Leave blank until you have spoken to your teacher)
I want to finish the Last Wild trilogy.

 Pupil Reading Survey 

1. Do you enjoy reading? Not at all 1 2 3 4 ⑤ I love reading!
Why?
I love reading because it is really calming and when I start a book, I cannot put it down.

2. What are you reading at the moment? What do you like about it?
I am reading 'Strange Star' I like it because I am really scared about what is going to happen to Lizzie and Lizzie's mum after they got struck by the lightning.

3. What kinds of books do you mostly like reading? Do you have a current favourite author?
I really like the Darren Shan books and my current favourite author is Darren Shan. I like fiction adventure books.

4. Where and when do you read at home? How often?
I read in bed for about an hour or more before sleeping.

5. How good are you at reading and understanding books?
Not very good 1 2 3 ④ 5 Great!

6. a) I read because books are sooooo interesting and it helps me with my reasoning tests in school.
b) I would read more if I wasn't so slow at reading so therefore it takes me forever to read at least 5 small chapters.

My next steps are: (Leave blank until you have spoken to your teacher)
Finish saga of Darren Shan first and then start the Demonata series by Darren Shan.

- ## Mohammed's favourite blogs

Mr Fullerman's Posters: Mr Fullerman asks everyone to make posters saying the best things about their school. What are the best things about your school?

★★★★★

★★★★★

Reflections from Year 6 pupils who are part of 'Reading Gladiators' club:

Elmhurst has helped me to love reading because the teachers don't just pick any book off the shelf they actually spend the time and effort to find a book just right for you. Before I didn't really value picture books but how teachers read it to us they show us how picture ~~books~~ ^{books} are not just for young children. To me reading is a part of me I don't know how to describe it but reading gives me a sensational feeling and the teachers definately helped with that. When I read it takes me into the book like I am actually there watching the characters, never wanting to stop. Reading helps me in my every day life with grammar, spellings, ~~and~~ general knowledge and boosts my imagination which helps me to write my own books. Reading is a part of me and I don't what I would do without it!

Elmhurst has helped me love reading because they always have the right book for me. I've never had trouble picking out a book because we have a giant library that the pupils love. I love reading because there's always a book for your emotion. Our school encourages pupils ^{so much} that we have a club (Reading Gladiators) and we also use My Book Blog to help us understand the book better. The kids read so much that sometimes we recommend books to our teachers. At Elmhurst we are encouraged so much that we do read for pleasure and we only have the teachers to thank for that.

My school has inspired me to read by getting fascinating books. The teachers encourage us to read a range of books. Reading is a part of me; I love it. Reading Gladiators has helped me socialize and express how I feel about reading to others. I'm in a different world when I read. I even stay up late to read in the holidays.

Reading For Pleasure!

Elmhurst have helped me love reading because they have inspired me to read different type of books. They have made a club called reading gladiators in this club they give us books and activities which makes the reading very fun. We call our selves the reading VIP's. Reading is also very peaceful and it calms me down. Elmhurst have also thankfully made us a wonderful library to incourage us to read even more. This library is filled with adventure fantasy and Horror and much more. SO if you want to read or want any type of book,

Elmhurst is the Place!

† Elmhurst has helped me reading because they give us books and inspire us to read books. They also create clubs such as Reading Gladiators that gives us books and takes us to fun trips. I love reading because it takes me to another dimension. Also, it takes my mind off stuff. ~~if I am~~ Furthermore, the teachers encourage us to read all genres of books.

To me, reading is really fun. It opens up another dimension and another world. I love fantasy stories. My school, Elmhurst, have helped me boost my reading more. They have helped me because they have given us My book blog, which is you get to read books and review them online. They give us a huge library and there are now so many new books. We even have our own reading gladiators, which, is lead by the wonderful Ms Breakwell, and only some children can go. We get to read exciting books which is so fun! I love reading and I love how it is like a whole new world just for you. Reading is cool on how everyone has different opinions and you get to share it all.

Elmhurst have help me love reading because there are clubs dedicated to reading and sharing what we think about books. The teachers always make sure the books we read are appropriate ~~for~~ and the genre we love. ~~the~~ We have library ^{for us} new books and the teachers take time to put the new books in the shelf. Through books and school I discovered my love for Harry Potter and I still love reading it because the school ~~offered~~ teachers recommended the books.

Reflections on impact the TaRs research had on practice

Our approach to driving culture change has been informed by the TaRs research, beginning with teachers attending the OU conference, arranging CPD delivered by Teresa Cremin and regularly using the Research Rich pedagogies website to plan INSET sessions and support staff with developing RfP pedagogy and their knowledge of children's literature and children's reading practices.

The TaRs research found that children chose to read more if they had 'more choice or control over both what they read and when, and having more or more preferable resources and more time to read.' Choice, resources and time to read have been at the heart of our approach to getting children to read more and to love reading. We have shown how we ensure our children are exposed to lots of different text types so they can make informed choices about what they want to read. We have invested heavily in high-quality reading material. We have given children more time to read in school, and fostered a love of reading which means that they choose to read more at home.

Next steps:

- **Choice:** increase pupil involvement in choosing books.
- **Resources:** PTA book sale to raise money for library.
- **Time to read:** Launching My Book Blog in Years 3&4 and implement school-wide policy of reading between 3:00-3:15pm.
- **Teachers as readers:** Eight teachers attending OU RfP conference held at Elmhurst. Ongoing RfP CPD focus.
- **Knowledge of children's reading practices:** NLT Survey conducted in 2016. Will be conducted in February to compare.