



NPEP 2023-2024

How does the provision of reading resources in a variety of languages, cultural and social backgrounds affect enthusiasm and engagement in literacy in a diverse primary class?

## **Acknowledgements:**

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National Literacy Trust - Children and young people's reading in 2023

[www.literacytrust.org.uk/research-services/research-reports/children-and-young-peoples-reading-in-2023/](https://www.literacytrust.org.uk/research-services/research-reports/children-and-young-peoples-reading-in-2023/)

- Based on 71,351 responses (Annual Literacy Survey) from children aged 5-18 in 2023.
- **Just 2 in 5 (43.4%)** aged 8-18 said they enjoyed reading in their free time. This is the lowest since 2005.

Other factors: reading role models, rise in modern technology, cost of living and cost of books.

**What can we do in schools?**



## Supporting literature

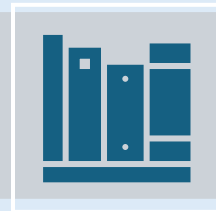
Recent report "Reading for Pleasure: What We Know Works" (2024), from the Centre for Literacy in Primary Education:

- emphasises the **importance of creating reading communities** in schools.
- to cultivate a love for reading, **children should be encouraged to share and discuss their reading preferences.**
- be **provided opportunities to choose books** that enhance their experience of literature, aligning with their interests and life experiences.

Cremin, T., Mukherjee, S.J., Aerila, J., Kauppinen, M., Siipola, M. and Lähteelä, J. (2024).



*‘International evidence indicates that those young people who choose to read, and do so frequently, are likely to benefit academically, personally, and socially. Recreational reading is strongly associated with enhanced vocabulary, reading comprehension, and psychological well-being’. p.1*



Who is best placed to choose a selection of books that children will want to read?

*'If as teachers we hold the reading reins too tightly and don't ensure that our reading for pleasure pedagogy is reader-led, reader-directed and reader-owned, we will never create communities of engaged readers.'* p.6

*'Honouring children's choice of texts is key, as is allowing them to exercise their rights as readers.'* p.6

If you want children to become readers, they have to *want* to read.



Tisdall, E., Kay M., Clarkson, E., and McNair, L.J (2024)



*‘Children are better placed to identify, problematise and suggest ways to enquire and moving forward in regards to research that impacts on their lives.’ p.3*

Bradbury-Jones, C., & Taylor, J. (2015)



*‘Children as researchers are a powerful conduit for other children’s voices.’ p.161*

# Methodology

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Framed through child-led and participatory research methods and action through this lens.

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Research including the children as researchers, rather than subjects of research (*with* rather than *on*).

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Methodology became an integral part of the entire research journey.

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Consent from parents/guardians – also assent from children (agency and autonomy over the research).

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Some academics critique the idea of child-led research – perception that children do not have competent research skills necessary.



# Interview reflections

Interview reflections (from child research team):

- Would prefer more detailed answers – difficult to prompt on the spot.
- Less ‘messaging around’ from some of the children.
- Suggested by one researcher: boys could interview boys and girls could interview girls in the younger classes, as it would be less scary for them.
- It was interesting and surprising – for example, ‘I expected someone I know to want marvel books, but actually they wanted more history books. So it shows you shouldn’t have expectations’ (assumptions).

Five steps to  
successful child-led  
and child-  
participatory  
research:

*‘1. relevance,*

*2. creativity,*

*3. participation,*

*4. flexibility,*

*5. empowerment’*

# The research team:

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Discussed what a 'research question' was - in this context - with whole class.

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Using MyShout. (Designed by Dr. Cindy Kerawalla and a group of young researchers, The Open University, 2018)

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Invited year 6's to lead the research.

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Ten year 6 children joined the team voluntarily.

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Right to withdraw – 1 left during first stage and 1 joined at the beginning of the second stage.

# Stage 1: finding out what children would like to read / books they would choose



## Child-led semi structured interviews

1. do you like the books at school?
2. what kinds of books do you like?
3. can you relate to the characters in the books in school?
4. what languages can you speak/ read/ write in?



## Stage 1: Key Findings

- Questionnaires:
  - Nearly half (**49%**) of the children asked, **didn't like the books** we had in school reading areas.

**"It would be nice to have more books in school that apply to my intrestes [interests] in school in the near future."**

**"in the library some of the books are not my type and there a bit boring."**

can you relate to the characters in the books in school?

A word cloud of responses to the question "can you relate to the characters in the books in school?". The words are arranged in a circular pattern around a central "no". The words are in various shades of blue and green. Some words are partially obscured by a light blue brushstroke.

times  
lot to be honest  
old people  
spider man  
school  
absolutely not kinda  
Yes  
no  
dunno  
people and animals  
good  
inreal  
sometimes not a lot  
firand wieth  
avery one and  
books

## Relatability

**58%** of children said they **couldn't relate to the characters** in the books in school.

**The relationship between relatability and enjoyment**



# Child-led interviews:

I=interviewer (teacher) | **CI1/CI2/CI3** = Child interviewer (1/2/3) **CA/CB** etc = Child A, Child B etc  
| **MC**=multiple children responding

*I: Do you like the books that we have [in school]?*

*CA: ummmm, some of them...*

*CB: Some of them. Not that much...*

*I: Why don't you like the books at school?*

*CB: They don't really relate to me, and I don't like the characters.*

*Cl3: Can you relate to the characters in the books in school like, can you like, do you have anything in common with the characters in the books?*

*CA: Not usually.*

*CD: No, not really.*

*CB: I can't fly bro [laughter].*

*Cl2: Do you think you have anything in common?*

*CB: hmm, I think like... no.*

*CA: Like Pokémon book, like red gets angry and I do the same thing I get Angry.*

## **Home and first languages spoken in our school:**

English, Welsh, Tamil, Italian, Sinhalese, Polish, Malayalam, Efik, Yoruba, Spanish, Mandarin, Pidgin.

## **Languages children read and/or write in:**

English, Welsh, Tamil, Polish, Malayalam, Yoruba, Efik.

*CB: When I speak in Polish it feels really weird [in school]. I like speaking with other Polish people- or Yeah, or like, just reading on my own in Polish.*







Stage 2: finding  
out the impact  
the reading  
materials had on  
reading  
enjoyment

questionnaires

interviews

sticky notes - name,  
name of book and  
stars, then you would  
be able to see if it was  
a topic you like and  
whether it was a good  
book - have to review  
even if you don't  
finish/like it

we want to  
find out  
whether they  
like them

REPEATING  
THE  
PROCESS

How will we find out  
how our actions have  
impacted?

Stage 2: what was the impact? Findings from the questionnaires.

- **77%** of children said they were **enjoying the new selection of reading materials**.
- **54%** said they **enjoyed the new books more**.
- **34%** said they were **‘unsure’**.
- **11%** said they **did not enjoy the new books more**.



‘Sulwe’ by Lupita Nyong’o

"Because in Africa I was in an albino school. and three more people like me. we were called things like shadow and dark and other stuff.so I tried to rub white chocolate on my arm to look like an Albino. Then I prayed to look like Everyone else. then I saw this book on my moms tablet. then I had more faith. I became friends with people like me."

"I love reading tamil books"

"I like the comic books and I like how they are funny and sometimes they make me laugh "

"It's has different languages to read in"

"I like that there are different types of books so you can [read] a book that is completely different to one you read last"

"There's lots more books that I like"

"Nothing"



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## **Stage 2: what was the impact? Findings from interviews**

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“I like that there are new books rather than old books”

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“I like that all of my favourite books are in the shelf”

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“I don’t have to share as much”

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“There’s more choices to pick from, so if you want to read something else – you can”

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“They’re more real-life and now [current]”

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“There’s more options”

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“Pictures help tell the story”

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“The pictures help me understand the words in the books and magazines”

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“Easier to read”

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“I don’t like them”

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“They’re in different languages like, Polish”

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“I like the colour of the people on them”

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**Has it encouraged you to read more?**

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“YES” – reluctant readers.

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“sort-of” – readers already (they said they read even more now).

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“It’s more enjoyable”

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“I can read in my country language”

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“Because they include things that someone else might not understand but you can [relatable]”

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“I relate”

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“Because they are actually books that we want”

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## **Online reading accounts:**

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“You can read them at home”

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“I like that they have different languages”

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“You don’t lose the books (or your place in the books)”

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“You can’t choose your books”

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## **Going forward:**

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“more reading time”

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“a reading hour”

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“more copies of some books”

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“Audio books to learn other languages”

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“Bookmarks to keep the books tidy and new”

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“More comics!”

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## **‘Show and tell’ to parents, by children on the research team**

- **Parent feedback:**

“We were really impressed at both the concept and the way the research had been carried out. For [child’s name redacted], it was a really interesting exercise combining her love of reading and desire to get others to enjoy it too with her interest in gathering and collating data. She also really enjoyed working as a team with a common focus.

It was great to see the range of books that had been purchased and to hear from [redacted] that the books had encouraged reluctant readers as they had found books that they could relate to. We were interested to see books in English, Welsh and Polish and books covering lots of topics.

We're really pleased that [redacted] got to be part of the research team and I know she feels very proud to have taken part and to have improved the reading experience of children in her class.”

## Challenges and limitations:

- Sourcing books:

Difficult to source some books and languages.

The online reading software we subscribed to offers a variety of translations in many languages, but these did not cover all the languages spoken in school.

- Insider research:

Knowing when to offer more guidance to the child-led research team and when to pull back – constant reflexive process

(Berger, 2015).

***Conclusion:***

**How does the provision of reading resources in a variety of languages, cultural and social backgrounds affect enthusiasm and engagement in literacy in a diverse primary class?**

- Enthusiasm for and engagement in reading improved.
- Difficult to tell if there is a direct correlation, but we observed that their writing improved, and overall literacy enjoyment increased.
- Interest in other languages increased.
- Their sense of agency over their reading in school developed through their ownership over their reading resources and choosing what to read.
- Suggestions – listen to children’s views on reading and include them in decision making, choosing of literature in their classrooms and schools (don’t be afraid of graphic novels and magazines!).
- It can be argued that there is a place for scheme books, but it is their choices that will develop a love of reading, and appreciation of literature.



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