

# READING FOR PLEASURE

## What we know works

Centre for Literacy in Primary Education

Research from the Power of Reading Project



CENTRE FOR LITERACY  
IN PRIMARY EDUCATION



**Power of Reading**

A CLPE RESOURCE



**Poetryline**

A CLPE RESOURCE



**Power of Pictures**

A CLPE RESOURCE

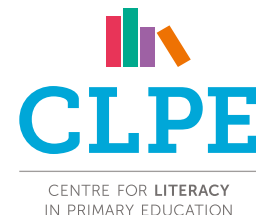


**Corebooks**

A CLPE RESOURCE



# READING FOR PLEASURE



## What works?

The Centre for Literacy in Primary Education is a charity working to improve literacy in primary schools. Our work raises the achievement of children by helping schools to teach literacy creatively and effectively, showing teachers how quality children's literature can be placed at the heart of all learning.

We exist to promote high standards in the teaching of literacy through our high quality, trusted teacher professional development and our renowned classroom based research. We particularly emphasise the importance of books and literature in enabling children to become confident, happy and enthusiastic readers and writers, with all the benefits this brings.

Since 2004 we have run the 'Power of Reading' project. This is a whole school development project where teachers attend high quality training, have access to a wide range of quality children's literature and work with their colleagues to develop practice around the teaching of reading in their school. Every year we collect data about children's achievement and progress and we ask teachers to share examples of how they have changed whole school practice. The practical examples are all collected on the project website.

Our work with teachers, children and authors, illustrators and poets over the last forty years has given us a wealth of knowledge and understanding about teaching literacy in primary schools. The Power of Reading project has given us a unique perspective on the



successful teaching of reading. Every year we construct the professional development sessions using the most up to date published research as well as insights from our rigorous evaluation of each project.

We spend time carefully selecting the project texts which are given to teachers on the course and along with the 200+ texts on the Power Reading website they reflect the very best of current children's literature. We also collect examples of effective reading practice from Power of Reading schools, these are uploaded to the project site. Teachers have the benefit of face to face training and remote support with examples from real classrooms.

This pamphlet brings together ten things the Power of Reading has taught us need to be considered and developed in schools that are successful in encouraging a lifelong love of reading and literacy learning. We hope that you find it useful.

Louise Johns-Shepherd, **Chief Executive**, CLPE

**To download the other papers in the What we know works series visit**

**[www.clpe.org.uk/library-and-resources/research](http://www.clpe.org.uk/library-and-resources/research)**

**To subscribe to the Power of Reading website visit**

**[www.clpe.org.uk/powerofreading/subscription](http://www.clpe.org.uk/powerofreading/subscription)**

**For more information about CLPE visit**

**[www.clpe.org.uk](http://www.clpe.org.uk)**

**For more information about Power of Reading visit**

**[www.clpe.org.uk/powerofreading](http://www.clpe.org.uk/powerofreading)**

All the quotations in this booklet are taken from the evaluations of practice completed by Power of Reading Project Teachers.



# 1 Developing an ethos and an environment that excites, enthuses, inspires and values

The way in which reading provision is set up and accessed is key to the engagement of children in the reading process. The role and attitudes of the teachers are key to creating an environment that promotes reading as a socially engaging activity that is valued and encouraged. Book areas where books and information about books are displayed attractively and where browsing, choosing and reading can take place are a visible way of establishing and promoting a positive ethos for reading for pleasure.

Carefully consider the texts that are available to the children in individual classes and across the school community as a whole. The range of texts made accessible to children should cover a breadth and variety of genres and formats; ensuring children can experience a full and rich range of reading throughout their primary years.

Consider the ways in which books are shared, shown and displayed in classrooms and in spaces throughout the school. Plan and allow for regular times and routines for children to access and enjoy the texts available to them. Raising the profile of literature and reading in this way explicitly communicates its value, as well as encouraging children to select texts for themselves.

**Learn more:** .....

Power of Reading  
[clpe.org.uk/powerofreading](http://clpe.org.uk/powerofreading)

Power of Reading in the Early Years  
[clpe.org.uk/POREY](http://clpe.org.uk/POREY)

*“ Most children access the book area and share books with their friends. The range of books and magazines entice the children and they are motivated to read ”*

*“ We have totally reviewed our reading environments improving both book areas and the school library. We looked at the quality of books, how the books were displayed and the seating arrangements. Children are choosing to read a book any time of the day. They are reading and returning their books from home and asking for other stories written by the same author. They look forward to us sharing a book at the end of the day ”*



## 2 High quality texts with depth and interest in story, character, illustration, vocabulary, structure and subject matter

There are books which lend themselves to being talked about, thought through, returned to and which are engaging for children for a variety of reasons. They tend to be texts with powerful stories which engage children, stir ideas and feelings and excite the reader's interest and imagination. They are books that children will want to re-read, to savour and will remember. Texts such as these can take many forms – poetry, picture books (with or without words), information texts, chapter books, modern stories or famous classics. It is important that schools have a range of quality reading material and that they plan to enable children to engage with the texts on a meaningful level.

Choose books that lend themselves to sustained study in a primary classroom. These kinds of texts will offer in depth and real writing experiences, meaningful study of literary styles and rhythms, opportunities for response that are creative and open-ended, all whilst keeping children engaged with the characters and the story as a whole. These kinds of sustained study texts will need to balance with independent readers and the range of titles that will form the basis of a wider reading curriculum.

**Learn more:** .....

Planning Creatively Around a Texts in EYFS, KS1 and KS2

[clpe.org.uk/planningEY](https://clpe.org.uk/planningEY)

[clpe.org.uk/planningks1](https://clpe.org.uk/planningks1)

[clpe.org.uk/planningks2](https://clpe.org.uk/planningks2)

Core Books

[clpe.org.uk/corebooks](https://clpe.org.uk/corebooks)

“ Across the school teachers have told me how much the children have loved the class readers, with many children not wanting to stop reading the class book when you have to pause. Many children have since bought the book that is the class book, or have bought books by the same author. In general, there is more of a buzz around reading .....

“ Many of my non-reader boys went out and bought the book to read themselves. Children cried when a character died as they were so engaged and children came dressed as the characters on World Book Day. They read class texts by choice in free time ”



### 3 A read aloud programme

Reading aloud is probably the most important thing that teachers can do and needs to be a frequent and regular part of each school day. Reading aloud slows written language down and enables children to hear and take in tunes and patterns. It enables children to experience and enjoy stories that they might not otherwise meet.

By reading well-chosen books aloud, teachers help classes to become communities of readers – ensuring that they can share in experiences of a wide repertoire of books they enjoy and get to know well.

Reading aloud is most effective when routines are prioritised, established and planned for across the school.

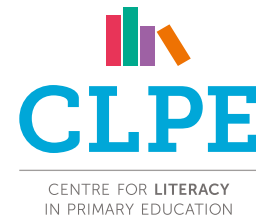
Learn more: .....

Group Reading KS1 and KS2  
[clpe.org.uk/guidedreadingsks1](https://clpe.org.uk/guidedreadingsks1)  
[clpe.org.uk/guidedreadingsks2](https://clpe.org.uk/guidedreadingsks2)

Power of Reading  
[clpe.org.uk/powerofreading](https://clpe.org.uk/powerofreading)

Power of Reading in the Early Years  
[clpe.org.uk/POREY](https://clpe.org.uk/POREY)

CLPE Reading and Writing Scales  
[clpe.org.uk/readingandwritingscales](https://clpe.org.uk/readingandwritingscales)



“ Pupils have commented on how much they loved being read to by the teacher as it helped them to ‘imagine the story better’ ”

“ All the children love being read to daily. They are all able to talk meaningfully and discuss reading better ”

“ I even had Y6 asking for bedtime reading on our residential trip! ”



## 4 Teachers who are knowledgeable about children's literature

When teachers develop their own experience, preferences and enthusiasms in reading, their personal engagement and reflective involvement as adult readers helps them to be very clear about the nature of reading and the experience of being a reader. This has an impact on teaching practice.

Teachers who read widely are able to source and recommend books to suit the interests, tastes and needs of children and draw on this knowledge to inform book choices and planning.

Learn more: .....

Core Books

[clpe.org.uk/corebooks](https://clpe.org.uk/corebooks)

Choosing and Using Quality Texts

[clpe.org.uk/choosingandusing](https://clpe.org.uk/choosingandusing)

Developing Reading Skills and Strategies in the Primary Years

[clpe.org.uk/readingprogress](https://clpe.org.uk/readingprogress)

Reading for Pleasure – Open University Research Rich Pedagogies

<https://researchrichpedagogies.org/research/reading-for-pleasure>

CLPE Booklists

[clpe.org.uk/library/booklists](https://clpe.org.uk/library/booklists)

“ Children are asking for books, sharing books and discussing books more. Having a wider range of books shared with teachers through the project has increased teachers' knowledge of children's literature and teachers now feel more confident to recommend books to children ”

“ Since being on the project, I have found I have made time to read for myself as it made me realise how much I missed reading for pleasure ”



## 5 Planning for talking about books and stories, providing structures within which to do this

Children need frequent, regular and sustained opportunities to talk together about the books that they are reading as a whole class. The more experience they have of talking together like this, the better they get at making explicit the meanings that a text holds for them, helping the class as a whole to reach shared understanding of ideas and issues. Talking about books is supportive to all readers and writers but is especially empowering for children who find literacy difficult. Put rich texts at the heart of the curriculum that allow children to meaningfully engage, share preferences, make personal connections and ask questions. Plan plentiful opportunities to facilitate reader response in whole class, small group and individual contexts. Facilitate these sessions to support children to develop confidence in clarifying unknown vocabulary, inferring and deducing ideas beyond the text and linking ideas and themes within and across texts.

### Learn more:

Inspiring Writers KS1 and KS2

[clpe.org.uk/writingks1](https://clpe.org.uk/writingks1)

[clpe.org.uk/writingks2](https://clpe.org.uk/writingks2) .....

Group Reading KS1 and KS2

[clpe.org.uk/groupreadings1](https://clpe.org.uk/groupreadings1)

[clpe.org.uk/groupreadings2](https://clpe.org.uk/groupreadings2)

Power of Reading

[clpe.org.uk/powerofreading](https://clpe.org.uk/powerofreading)

CLPE Booklists

[clpe.org.uk/library/booklists](https://clpe.org.uk/library/booklists)

“Pupils are eager to write and their written responses are demonstrating sophistication and maturity, dealing with a range of topical and sometimes sensitive themes. Pupils are able to use ambitious vocabulary and are writing for a range of purposes, constructing more meaningful responses, with a deeper understanding of characters and themes through the use of regular book talk opportunities/role on the wall/readers’ theatre etc.”

“Building much more book talk into the planning, before even opening the book, has stimulated the children’s thoughts and questions”





## 6 Understanding the importance of illustration in reading both in terms of creating a text and responding to a text

Illustrated and picture books are tremendously important resources for all readers. Understanding how pictures and illustrations work with the text to create meaning for the reader is a high level reading skill. Opportunities to draw in response to texts can help and encourage children to move into an imaginary world or understand a character. Drawing helps children to begin to articulate their response to what they read and can help them to analyse the ways in which the writer has used language and images.

Source and ensure access to a wide range of high quality age appropriate picture books across the primary years. Spend time reading the book to children and discussing the pictures and the way they combine with the text to tell the story. When using picture books in the classroom unfold texts slowly, allowing time for reflection and response. Plan time, particularly older children to linger over pictures, developing inference and critical thinking skills. Give licence to children to articulate responses to texts through drawing and use this to plan and compose ideas for their own writing.

**Learn more:** .....

Power of Pictures

[clpe.org.uk/powerofpictures](http://clpe.org.uk/powerofpictures)

CLPE Reading and Writing Scales

[clpe.org.uk/readingandwritingscales](http://clpe.org.uk/readingandwritingscales)

“ My children were more engaged by exploring the pictures, as well as the text. They discussed colour and spoke more deeply about characters when they were reading ”

“ Children will spend much longer than we think looking for clues in pictures and they make some very interesting links that inspire writing ”



# 7 Using drama and role-play to help children to understand and access texts

Drama and role-play provide immediate effective routes into the world of a story allowing children to explore texts actively. Dramatic approaches enables children to put themselves into a particular character's shoes and imagine how things would look from that point of view. Through drama and role-play children can deepen their understanding and imagining of characters and events. They can then extend this understanding to their reading and into their writing. Enable children to respond to texts through role-play. Revisit and re-enact using small world play, puppets or story props. Use real or imagined stimulus for oral rehearsal, enabling children to assume authentic voice in more strongly imagined roles; writing for information, instruction, storytelling, recount, persuasion, debate and discussion.

**Learn more:** .....

Power of Reading  
[clpe.org.uk/powerofreading](http://clpe.org.uk/powerofreading)

Planning Creatively Around a Texts in EYFS  
[clpe.org.uk/planningEY](http://clpe.org.uk/planningEY)

Planning Creatively Around Texts KS1  
[clpe.org.uk/planningks1](http://clpe.org.uk/planningks1)

Planning Creatively Around Texts KS2  
[clpe.org.uk/planningks2](http://clpe.org.uk/planningks2)

CLPE Reading and Writing Scales  
[clpe.org.uk/readingandwritingscales](http://clpe.org.uk/readingandwritingscales)

“ Children became so immersed in their Power of Reading text that they were desperate to start writing. Using the drama sessions ensured all children felt equipped to fully access the writing task; we had far less children stuck for ideas ”

“ Drama techniques have allowed the children to find the voice of characters, and our work on the texts has enabled them to have something to say and the necessary vocabulary to use ”



# 8 Using literature beyond the literacy lesson – cross-curricular planning with quality literature as the starting point

Teachers have told us again and again how successful they have been when they use a text as the centre of their planning. Many schools are now taking a cross-curricular approach starting with a quality text and using it to link other subjects. This puts reading at the heart of the curriculum and shows the importance and value of learning to read. Provide stimulating texts that represent children's interests as well as those that are curriculum related. Start with a text that enthuses you rather than shoehorning in books to fit a topic. Look at where authentic cross-curricular links can be incorporated. Choose books and plan experiences that enable children to meet vocabulary in different contexts, introduce new knowledge and to develop, explore and extend their thinking around key topics and themes.

Learn more: .....

Power of Reading

[clpe.org.uk/powerofreading](http://clpe.org.uk/powerofreading)

Planning Creatively Around a Texts in EYFS

[clpe.org.uk/planningEY](http://clpe.org.uk/planningEY)

Planning Creatively Around Texts KS1

[clpe.org.uk/planningks1](http://clpe.org.uk/planningks1)

Planning Creatively Around Texts KS2

[clpe.org.uk/planningks2](http://clpe.org.uk/planningks2)

CLPE Reading and Writing Scales

[clpe.org.uk/readingandwritingscales](http://clpe.org.uk/readingandwritingscales)

“ Children sigh when we put the book down. Children who were not engaged in reading are now highly engaged – it helps linking books with our topic ”

“ A greater use of cross-curricular teaching – incorporating art and music into literacy lessons. Children have become so vocal and expressive ”

“ Reading is now taught throughout subjects, with more cross-curricular links to create a deeper understanding of texts ”



## 9 Working with authors and author/illustrators to understand the process of creating books

In our work we have found how important it is for children to hear from, to work with or to watch professional writers and illustrators. Seeing a writer bring their own work to life and beginning to understand what that means in terms of the creation of their own writing helps them to see themselves as writers. Teachers too have benefited from working alongside writers and illustrators as they have found their teaching is improved by understanding the creative process. Most writers immerse themselves in writing and enjoy the pleasures of reading; replicate this in the classroom. Listen to writers talk about their writing process; what inspires them, how they work, how they draft, edit and redraft – all this yields a wealth of information to consider the freedoms and support we give children in their own writing. A visit from a writer or illustrator brings this experience directly to the children and can be hugely enriching and inspiring.

“ Having an author visit us in the school really encouraged the children to have a go at writing themselves. The children were so motivated by the idea of meeting a real life author and the enthusiasm amongst the students, particularly boys was noticeable. All the children were inspired by the books shared and couldn't put his stories down. The resulting pieces of writing were of a better quality for ALL the children. Our leadership realises the importance of such visits and more will be planned in the future ”



Learn more: .....

Power of Pictures  
[clpe.org.uk/powerofpictures](https://clpe.org.uk/powerofpictures)

Poetryline website  
[clpe.org.uk/poetryline](https://clpe.org.uk/poetryline)

# 10 Creating a community of readers with opportunities to share responses and opinions

Reading is fundamentally a social phenomenon. Early shared experiences are internalised and become the basis of what children can do independently and what they understand reading to be. It is really important that the invitations to be part of the school reading community involve as many people as possible and include all staff as well as parents and families.

Book groups, book shops, interactive displays, reading competitions, reading volunteers and book related fundraising activities are all ways of involving the wider community and helping to create a community of readers. Encourage a routine of reading aloud at home. Use observations, records and conferences with families and children to establish and build upon perceptions, reading preferences and engagement. Develop a culture of formal and informal book groups throughout the school community to promote engagement in reading, wider discussion skills and inferential understanding.

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## Learn more:

Guide to running a book group  
[clpe.org.uk/bookgroup](https://clpe.org.uk/bookgroup)

CLPE Reading and Writing Scales  
[clpe.org.uk/readingandwritingscales](https://clpe.org.uk/readingandwritingscales)

Core Books  
[clpe.org.uk/corebooks](https://clpe.org.uk/corebooks)

“ I run an afternoon book club which is very popular and promotes books to other children in the school. The children are engaged and keen to read the next book ”

“ The biggest change is that in every class you will see quality reading books that children have brought from home as they have asked parents for books instead of toys for gifts ”

“ Children were choosing to read independently at home, several parents told us they were being asked by their children to buy other books in the series ”



# READING FOR PLEASURE WHAT WE KNOW WORKS



CENTRE FOR LITERACY  
IN PRIMARY EDUCATION

- 1. Developing an ethos and an environment that excites, enthuses, inspires and values**
- 2. High quality texts with depth and interest in story, character, illustration, vocabulary, structure and subject matter**
- 3. A read aloud programme**
- 4. Teachers who are knowledgeable about children's literature**
- 5. Creating a community of readers with opportunities to share responses and opinions**
- 6. Planning for talking about books and stories, providing structures within which to do this**
- 7. Understanding the importance of illustration in reading both in terms of creating a text and responding to a text**
- 8. Using drama and role-play to help children to understand and access texts**
- 9. Working with authors and author/illustrators to understand the process of creating books**
- 10. Using literature beyond the literacy lesson – cross-curricular planning with quality literature as the starting point**





**Power of Reading**

A CLPE RESOURCE



**CLPE**

CENTRE FOR LITERACY  
IN PRIMARY EDUCATION

# Power of Reading

**Reading for pleasure,  
achievement for life**

*"At a time of teacher crisis and with difficulties in recruiting and retaining staff, CLPE bring back what teaching is about. My teachers are bursting with enthusiasm and creativity which they've passed on to the children and other teachers."*

Head Teacher, Power of Reading School

[www.clpe.org.uk/powerofreading](http://www.clpe.org.uk/powerofreading)



# Keep in touch



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