

# Closing the Gap Project in Comprehension across all year groups

## Background to the "Big Read" project

- Year 6 SAT's data from 2017-18 identified a decrease in the attainment in Comprehension across the school's Year 6 cohort.
- Children needed to be introduced to as many text types as possible in order to be able to access them in a test environment. In particular, poetry seemed to be an area for development.
- The school wanted to promote a love for reading, whilst also enabling a child to pick up a book they wanted to read and share the story with an adult through questioning (simple to complex, enabling them to articulate their understanding.)

## Relevant research

- 6 areas of reading; decoding, fluency, vocabulary, sentence construction and cohesion, reasoning and background knowledge and working memory and attention.
- <http://www.readingrockets.org/article/what-research-tells-us-about-reading-comprehension-and-comprehension-instruction>
- <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/evidence-summaries/teaching-learning-toolkit/reading-comprehension-strategies/>
- <https://www.innerdrive.co.uk/improve-metacognition/>

## Key project activities

- The school introduced a 'Big Read' lesson, which consisted of un-differentiated texts and questions for the children to answer.
- Introduction on key focus areas of question types – key symbols used each lesson to understand what has been asked.
- Metacognition – Chn are made aware of what they learning about in the lesson and the skills that they are working on.
- Pupils taught a range of techniques such as inferring meaning; summarising/ identifying; developing questioning strategies; and monitoring their own comprehension to identify difficulties.

### Year 1

- In Year 1 we introduced a pre-read session to allow the children the opportunity to explore the text before being asked to answer questions about it to allow a greater understanding of what they were reading.
- LA chn are encouraged to write short answers/the relevant information from the text.
- HA chn are encouraged to write in full sentences and hone their comprehension skills by explaining their answers.

### Year 5

- Pre-read was rolled out across the school, allowing LA chn to talk through the text with an adult, enabling them to have more access to a text and to keep up with pace within the lesson.
- We wanted to develop an enjoyment of 'Big Read' and them being able to access a variety of text types.
- Enabling us to identify weaker 'skills' which may need more development within an English lesson.

## Impact of the "Big Read" project

- Children could explain the reason for the lesson – there has been a big focus on children being able to verbalise the intent of the lesson.
- Enjoyed the positive encouragement that came with the fast-paced lesson – house points and rewards.
- Children are able to decode questions and what they are (the markers) looking for, either through marks or content i.e. inference question will require them to 'read between the lines'.

### Year 1

- We found that allowing the opportunity for a pre-read has helped greatly with the lower ability groups as they are more able to verbally answer the questions posed.
- LA chn are able to more accurately find the relevant text and record this in their books with less pressure to form complete sentences.
- HA chn can challenge themselves to answer the questions more in depth as well as ensuring that they access the challenge questions.

### Year 5

- Overall, there has been an improvement in confidently and independently, being able to identify information in the text to answer a question.
- At the beginning of the year, the LA children in class were not interested in the lesson, they wanted to know the purpose of the lesson and what its benefits would be. They can now join in with discussing how to achieve marks, accessing the text better/ identifying the common features.
- Discussions develop through identifying accurate answers; children are able to discuss why those answers achieve 'full marks'. They then use this to develop their own answers.

## Going forward...

- It has been identified that specific areas of questioning should be timetabled. Therefore, set periods can be dedicated to teaching those set of skills specific to those question types. This would then allow the teacher to assess whether these question types had been understood or whether further revisiting and consolidation may be needed at a later date.