



Best practice guide

Closing the gender gap in reading enjoyment at age 11

The Read On. Get On. (ROGO) coalition has created this best practice guide to help primary schools address the gender gap in children's reading enjoyment.

The guide has been developed in response to the findings of the ROGO Index 2018, which shows that girls continue to outperform boys in all areas of reading that the ROGO coalition believe are essential for children to be able to read well at age 11:

- **Reading enjoyment:** 76.4% of girls enjoy reading compared with 70.4% of boys
- **Daily reading frequency:** 57% of girls read outside school on a daily basis compared with 44.7% of boys
- **Cognitive reading skills:** 89.1% of girls have the reading skills expected for their age compared with 83.2% of boys

This guide includes programmes, activities and initiatives that foster an enjoyment of reading from ROGO coalition members including **Achievement for All**, **Beanstalk**, **BookTrust**, the **National Literacy Trust** and **The Reading Agency**, as well as supporters including **Renaissance**.

For more information, visit readongeton.org.uk.



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T: 020 7587 1842 W: www.literacytrust.org.uk Twitter: @Literacy_Trust Facebook: nationalliteracytrust

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Achievement for All

100 Million Minutes Reading Challenge

millionminutes.afaeducation.org

“Even our reluctant readers have taken part in this challenge and as a result their reading skills have improved and continue to do so.” – Headteacher



About 100 Million Minutes Reading Challenge

100 Million Minutes Reading Challenge aims to build brighter futures for children and young people, from the early years to post-16, by encouraging them to read more regularly and by highlighting the worlds and possibilities that literacy can unlock.

This year, children and young people in early years settings, schools, colleges, home, libraries and community groups across the UK had from 1 March – World Book Day – until 29 March to collectively read for 100 million minutes. This built upon the 2017 campaign which saw children in primary schools reach the 10 million minutes target.

The campaign had a prize element with the setting that achieved the highest average number of reading minutes winning up to £10,000 RRP worth of book titles from the lead sponsor, The Book People.

The 2019 campaign will launch soon, raising the challenge to 200 million minutes reading!

The impact of 100 Million Minutes Reading Challenge on children’s reading

- 1,743 schools and settings registered for the challenge
- Over 421,200 children and young people took part in the challenge
- A total of 100,019,560 minutes were read between 1-29 March

“I love reading more than ever now!”

Participating pupil

“My daughter is three and can now recognise sight words and knows almost all of her basic phonics. Reading together has helped prepare my daughter for pre-school and further enhanced my son’s enjoyment of books.”

Parent

Beanstalk

Reading 321

beanstalkcharity.org.uk/register-now

“As a recent volunteer with Beanstalk it was rewarding to be told by ‘one of my children’ that they were now helping their younger brother with his reading. Encouragement with progress is infectious!” – Volunteer



About Reading 321

Beanstalk’s Reading 321 programme aims to encourage a love of reading, close the attainment gap in reading and improve the reading skills and confidence of primary school children aged 5-11.

Beanstalk recruits, trains and supports volunteers to improve children’s reading skills. One volunteer works with three children twice a week for one academic year through one-to-one reading sessions directly in the child’s educational setting.

How Reading 321 helps to improve children’s reading and address the gender gap

- 54% of children supported by Beanstalk reading helpers are boys
- At the beginning of the intervention 26% children were below the expected reading age, at the end, only 11% were still recorded as being below
- 30% of the boys supported by reading helpers were at or above the expected level for reading for their age

“During primary school, I was not a competent reader and struggled reading aloud in class. When I was in Year 6, I was still lacking confidence which was worrying as secondary school was around the corner.

“Mrs Goddard was a reading helper who visited me each week and helped develop my love for literacy. I used to look forward to her visits. She used to aid and support me to become more confident, whilst making reading more fun. I would choose a book out her box and read to her. She was never too pushy and never made me feel uncomfortable if I didn’t get a word right. We would discuss the book together at the end of the session, and then I’d walk back into class feeling happier and content. Mrs Goddard heavily impacted my reading ability, which has motivated me to become a reading helper today. Her impact was so significant I still remember her over 10 years later.”

Boy who participated in Reading 321 over 10 years ago

BookTrust

Time to Read

booktrust.org.uk/what-we-do/programmes-and-campaigns/time-to-read/

“When my son told me about his present from school we opened it together and I read it with him straight away. This was outside of our normal bedtime story and was really nice to do.” – Parent



About Time to Read

Time to Read encourages families of primary school children (aged 4-11) to keep reading with their children and make the most of their time together, even when they have learned to read.

730,000 reception-aged children receive a specially selected book, activities and games to enjoy at home each year, along with ideas and guidance for parents. 1,500 libraries receive a large copy of the book and promotional materials.

How Time to Read helps address the gender gap in children's reading

If boys are going to enjoy reading they need to see the people around them doing it and they need to see it as fun. Because if reading's fun, children will want to do it. This approach is at the heart of Time to Read. Boys need to see their parents or carers value reading. Continuing to read to their children – even when they've started school or learned to read on their own – is a great way to do that.

The Time to Read book is selected because it appeals to both girls and boys. 79% of 104 teachers surveyed in 2017 agreed that Time to Read increased children's enjoyment of reading. Parents found that it helped their child to enjoy reading more. And the book proved really popular with boys. One parent said, "I have two boys, a 3- and a 4-year-old, who have serious trouble concentrating but they actually sit still whilst you read the *Bumblebear* book."

69% of 104 teachers surveyed in 2017 agreed that Time to Read increased the frequency of shared reading at home. And 65% of 376 parents surveyed said they spent quality time with their child as a result of receiving their Time to Read pack.

How can teachers make the most of Time to Read for the boys they teach?

- Spreading the word with parents and carers is key
- Many teachers talk about Time to Read and reading at home in parent information sessions; they invite parents into school for a special event to receive their book pack
- 55% of teachers surveyed read the book with their class before giving out the packs and many teachers kept the "buzz" going by doing fun activities linked to the book

National Literacy Trust

Premier League Reading Stars

literacytrust.org.uk/plprimarystars

“Premier League Reading Stars created a fantastic sense of excitement about reading among participating pupils. They were all so excited about the lessons and couldn’t wait to complete all of the challenges! Fixture two was all about choosing books and pupils were all desperate to take their favourite books home.”

– Sarah Bromly, Assistant Headteacher, Christ’s School in Richmond upon Thames



About Premier League Reading Stars

For 20 years, the National Literacy Trust has developed programmes that use the power of sport to inspire children to read, particular boys and reluctant readers.

In partnership with the Premier League, the National Literacy Trust created Premier League Reading Stars – a 10-week reading intervention for reluctant or less able readers in Years 5 and 6. The programme includes a range of fun activities, a recommended reading list, take-home challenges and a ‘tactics’ book to help teachers plan a successful programme.

The programme is now part of Premier League Primary Stars, which uses the appeal of the Premier League and professional football clubs to inspire children aged 5-11 to learn, be active and develop important life skills. By signing up to Premier League Primary Stars for free, schools can access Premier League Reading Stars at no cost.

How Premier League Reading Stars helps to close the gender gap in children’s reading

After taking part in Premier League Reading Stars, boys’ reading ages improved by an average of 6 months in just 10 weeks.

“Two pupils made two years’ progress, one pupil made three years’ progress, two pupils made four years’ progress and one pupil made a staggering five years’ progress in just 10 weeks!”

“I think the fact that the programme is football-based is key to its success. It offers exciting material and grabs the attention of pupils who enjoy football but have built up barriers to reading. As we choose a small number of pupils to participate, they feel privileged to be part of the group. We will definitely be running Premier League Reading Stars again next year.”

Sarah Bromly, Assistant Headteacher, Christ’s School in Richmond upon Thames

The Reading Agency and libraries

Summer Reading Challenge

summerreadingchallenge.org.uk

“My youngest was a very reluctant reader, but seeing his older brother engage he decided we could read together. By the end of the challenge he decided he wanted to read the books himself quite happily. We didn't pressure this, we just took him to the library. My eldest says it encourages children to read and it encouraged his dad to go with them to the library regularly.” – Parent in Barnsley



About the Summer Reading Challenge

Research shows that children's reading interest can dip during holiday time if they don't have regular access to books and encouragement to read. The Summer Reading Challenge, run in partnership between The Reading Agency, Libraries Connected and ASCEL, gets hundreds of thousands of children into those libraries every summer.

With a different theme each year – 2018 was a celebration of The Beano – and rewards on offer for completing books including a certificate on completion, the Summer Reading Challenge upholds the primacy of libraries in getting – and keeping – children reading.

How the Summer Reading Challenge helps to close the gender gap in children's reading

The Summer Reading Challenge consistently sees a higher percentage of boys taking part than many other reading initiatives. In 2018, the percentage of boys taking part in the Summer Reading Challenge was 45% – up 1% from the previous year.

Winter Mini Challenge 2018

The Summer Reading Challenge has teamed up with Nosy Crow to bring children a winter reading challenge inspired by the new book by Pamela Butchart and Thomas Flintham, *There's a Yeti in the Playground!*

All children have to do to complete the challenge is read three books during this period.

The challenge starts on **Saturday 1 December 2018** and ends on **Friday 11 January 2019**. For more information, visit: summerreadingchallenge.org.uk

Renaissance®

Renaissance Accelerated Reader™

renlearn.co.uk/reading

“Our reading sessions have been transformed. Lower down the school, reading sessions are a hive of activity due to the quick cycle of reading, recording and quizzing on shorter books. In older years, the atmosphere is that of complete focus as children get their teeth stuck into long chapter books. It has been an exciting journey and one that is sure to continue – our children have already read over 40 million words this year!” – Head of School at Redriff Primary Academy



About Renaissance Accelerated Reader

At its heart, Renaissance Accelerated Reader is simple. A student reads a book, takes an online quiz, and gets immediate feedback. Students respond to regular feedback and are motivated by their success to read regularly and thus improve their reading skills.

The programme is naturally differentiated as students are guided towards books within a zone of proximal development, identified by a short, standardised computer-adaptive Renaissance Star Reading™ assessment. Through the reading for pleasure process, students expand their vocabulary and improve their cultural capital by reading books that are of an appropriate level of challenge.

How Accelerated Reader helped to close the gender gap in children’s reading at Redriff Primary Academy in London

In 2015, Redriff Primary Academy decided to upheave their traditional guided reading sessions and bring Accelerated Reader to the forefront of their efforts to inspire children’s reading.

After analysing their library stock and running a pupil questionnaire, the school updated their library with books that were both interesting and appropriate for different reading levels. These included fact books and graphic novels, which appealed in particular to boys who read at a lower level.

The school held a training day with all staff to ensure buy-in. Staff then raised the profile of reading across the school by sharing information provided by Accelerated Reader – such as reading achievements, challenges and the total number of words read.

Many boys who were reluctant readers were drawn to the competitive aspect of the programme to begin with. Then, after reading books that appealed to them and matched their reading ability, these same pupils had started to develop an enjoyment of reading.

Teachers are able to track pupils’ reading engagement through the programme and ensure they are accessing appropriate reading materials. After the first year of the programme, teachers could see that the average time a pupil spent engaged with reading leapt from 8 to 32 minutes per day, with children’s reading comprehension improving similarly.

The programme had a particularly positive impact on pupils who are traditionally less engaged with reading, including boys and those eligible for Pupil Premium:

- In 2015, boys at Redriff Primary Academy had an average Percentile Rank of 44. By the end of the 2017/18 school year, this had risen to an average Percentile Rank of 67 – an incredible 23 point increase.
- By the end of the 2017/18 school year, the progress of Year 6 pupils eligible for Pupil Premium funding was well above the national benchmark.