

Changing the Story Reading Programme

2022 evaluation

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“It is very rewarding to see children who, in autumn, were struggling to read a sentence, working at the above level now. The books are very accessible, and most children are familiar with the online library; some log in and read daily. A particular area of interest has been Reading for pleasure, which gave children the opportunity to explore different genres and writing styles. I am proud to say that Changing the Story reading programme has been a success in Old Palace Primary School.”

The Changing the Story Reading Programme is a new programme for pupils in Key Stage 1 created in partnership with Hachette UK. The programme brings together Hodder Education’s Rising Stars Reading Planet scheme, additional Hachette children’s reading-for-pleasure books, and the National Literacy Trust’s expertise and trusted reputation to support the schools and pupils in most need.

The programme engaged 25 schools with high percentages of children in receipt of free school meals in places identified as literacy-vulnerability areas. Year 1 pupils at risk of falling behind in their reading development following the negative impact of the Covid-19 pandemic were identified to take part in the programme. Initial training for teachers and teaching assistants took place in June 2021, with baseline assessments and Changing the Story Reading Sessions commencing in September 2021. Continuing support through email communication, school visits, network meetings and additional reading for pleasure training took place throughout the 2021-22 school year.

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Key Findings

Pupils' improvement in reading ability:

Data from New Progress in Reading Assessment (New PiRA) tests indicated significant improvements in pupils' reading ability over the course of the Changing the Story programme:

- Before taking part in the programme, on average, children's standardised score was 87.95. After taking part in the programme, this had increased to 97.90 for these children
- Reading age on average improved by 11 months across a nine-month period
- The percentage of children whose reading skills were below the national average decreased from 43.8% at the start of the programme to 16.3% at the end
- At the same time, the percentage of children reading at the average level increased from 55.0% to 72.5%
- The percentage of children reading above the national average increased almost 10-fold, from 1.3% to 11.3%

Data collected from teachers reflects the positive changes in pupils' reading skill:

- 4 in 5 (78.3%; n = 18) teachers felt that participating pupils made more progress than pupils who did not take part in Changing the Story using the Reading Planet scheme
- 9 in 10 (91.3%; n = 21) teachers agreed that all children show greater resilience when it comes to applying their phonic skills and decoding after taking part
- 4 in 5 (82.5%; n = 19) teachers agreed that children's use of vocabulary has improved, while 3 in 4 (73.9%; n = 17) agreed that reading comprehension has improved

Pupils' reading enjoyment and self-perception of skills:

Attitudinal data from pupils shows positive changes in their reading enjoyment and self-perception of reading skills as a result of taking part in the programme:

- The percentage of pupils who said they enjoyed reading very much increased from 1 in 4 (23.1%) before taking part to 1 in 3 (35.9%) after taking part
- The percentage of pupils who said they did not enjoy reading at all decreased from 12.8% before taking part to 2.6% after taking part
- The number of children who rated themselves as very good readers more than doubled over the course of the programme, from 17.9% before to 51.3% at the end
- Following taking part in Changing the Story, no children referred to themselves as not very good readers

Again, these changes are also evident from data collected from teachers:

- All teachers agreed that children's level of engagement with reading improved, and that children are more interested in reading and books
- 9 in 10 (91.3%; n = 21) agreed that children enjoy reading more, while 2 in 3 (69.6%; n = 16) agreed that children are more confident in their reading

Benefits for the school

Data from teachers also show a positive impact of Changing the Story on the wider school ethos:

- 4 in 5 (78.3%; n = 18) teachers agreed that their school has put more emphasis on developing higher-order reading skills since taking part in Changing the Story
- 2 in 3 (65.2%; n = 15) agreed that they have been able to make links between Changing the Story resources and their wider curriculum
- Half (52.2%; n = 12) agreed that children with SEN have engaged in reading more since taking part in Changing the Story
- 2 in 5 (39.1%; n = 9) agreed that parental engagement has improved since taking part in Changing the Story

Feedback from the programme

Nearly all (94.7%) pupils said they liked the reading sessions they took part in for a wide variety of reasons, including enjoying the books and stories, finding the sessions fun, or noticing that the sessions supported them with their learning and reading skills.

- All 23 teachers who completed the post-programme survey rated the programme as 'excellent' or 'good'
- Over 9 in 10 (91.3%; n = 21) teachers rated the Hachette children's books as 'excellent' (n = 17) or 'good' (n = 4)
- All but three teachers (87.0%; n = 20) rated the Rising Stars Reading Planet Scheme as 'excellent' or 'good'
- All teachers (100%; n = 23) agreed that the books provided had a range of illustrations depicting different cultures and ethnicities
- 9 in 10 (91.3%; n = 21) agreed that the book banding made it easy to match children to text at the right level of challenge
- Almost 9 in 10 (87.0%; n = 20) agreed that it was easy to incorporate the books into phonic sessions
- Teachers rated the training as either 'excellent' (25.0%; n = 3) or 'good' (75.0%; n = 9) and felt the session met their expectations 'completely' (33.3%; n = 4) or 'mostly' (66.7%; n = 8)

Aims of the programme

The programme was designed to achieve the following aims in schools where high numbers of children experience socioeconomic disadvantage:

- Children improve their reading skills and catch up
- Children improve their attitude to and enjoyment of reading through seeing themselves represented in books and stories
- Children improve their behaviours around reading by reading more frequently and more widely from a variety of genres

- Teachers and teaching assistants improve their knowledge and expertise around teaching early reading skills and how to help children make accelerated progress and catch up
- Teachers and teaching assistants increase their knowledge of the Reading Planet resources and the importance of diversity and representation in children’s books
- Parents gain confidence in supporting their children’s reading at home

Initial training

Teachers and teaching assistants from 25 schools across areas of disadvantage in the North East, Manchester, Leicester, Doncaster, Stoke, Peterborough, Bletchley, Ramsgate and London attended online training in two parts, jointly delivered by National Literacy Trust and Hodder staff. The training introduced the Reading Planet resources, including the online library, showcasing books that celebrate diversity and individuality through stories, characters and themes that reflect the world we live in today. Participants explored what makes a successful reader and learnt how to develop a range



of reading strategies with young children, with an understanding that phonics comes first. Support for the programme and ongoing reading assessment were explained, including access to the online assessment and reporting tool where schools could access their free test credits for New PiRA (Progress in Reading Assessments). Resources for engaging parents in supporting their child’s reading were shared, and ideas for whole-school reading-for-pleasure events introduced.

The Changing the Story Reading Session

The core of the programme is the three-part Changing the Story reading session. Each one-to-one session lasts around 20 minutes and takes place three times a week.

<p>Part one (5 mins)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome the child. • Talk about the Reading Planet book that they have in their book bag, which should be the book that they read in the last session. Look to see if there are any comments from home. Ask: what did you think about this book? Did you enjoy it? Why/why not? • If the child did enjoy it, ask them to re-read the book or some of the book, then ask some open-ended comprehension questions. If the child struggles, model your thinking by explaining how you reached your answer.
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<p>Part two</p> <p>(10 mins)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce the new Reading Planet book that they will be taking home. • Discuss what type of book it is, as well as who the characters are or what the book will be about. • Give the child time to read the book, supporting them where necessary. • Ask some open-ended questions to assess comprehension and enjoyment. • Ensure that the child takes the book home to read.
<p>Part three</p> <p>(5-10 mins)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From a selection of reading-for-pleasure books that may be of interest to the child, ask them to choose a book they want to look at. Talk to the child about it and begin reading it to them. Continue with the book in the third part of the next session, unless the child wants to choose another book.

Schools received the full package of books included in Hodder Education’s Rising Stars Reading Planet scheme, plus a free online library subscription. Over 22,000 Reading Planet books were gifted in total, with each school also receiving 200 reading-for-pleasure books donated by Hachette Children’s Group.



Further support and training

Throughout the academic year, opportunities for further support and training were offered. In October 2021 during Black History Month, Hachette UK donated 125 copies of Dr Pragya Agarwal’s *Wish We Knew What to Say: Talking with Children about Race* (Dialogue Books) to the 25 schools. These were well-received with feedback such as:

“I shared the books during a staff meeting and have encouraged all staff to read it as part of their professional development as I believe strongly in the messages it shares. The ECTs are reading it first as part of their training.” (St Margaret Mary’s Primary School, Manchester)



“The book was really informative. I loved how it is broken down into sections by age and has testimony of people’s experiences with race. I love the checklists and their suggestions to tackle race issues as children grow and develop their thought processes.” (Long Toft Primary School, Doncaster)

In February 2022, a network meeting was held to enable participating schools to share successes and challenges, and to discuss what further support, training or resources would be helpful. As a result of this, additional training was delivered by the National Literacy Trust at the end of March 2022 to support participating staff further in developing reading for pleasure in their schools. The training explored the features of a reading community, ideas for reading initiatives and celebrations, and how to make the most of the new books and support children in choosing their own reading-for-pleasure book.

Parental engagement

Covid-19 restrictions severely impacted schools’ plans for inviting parents into school to explore the new resources and take part in planned workshops to engage in supporting their child’s reading development. However, some schools were able to provide online workshops for parents, and the Reading Planet online library proved to be invaluable in engaging parents in this way. Feedback from two parents who had used the online library with their child indicated that the library had made them feel more confident to support their child’s reading¹. Similarly, feedback from one of the schools via a regular progress report indicated that the online library had been engaging for both children and parents:



“The online library has been great as an incentive to get children ‘reading’ in different ways. I know parents have enjoyed it with children as well, especially parents of EAL children.”

Data used in this report

We used several approaches to evaluate the outcomes of Changing the Story. Firstly, we collected pupil data from Hodder’s standardised reading test called New Progress in Reading

¹ A feedback survey for parents using the online library was designed in summer 2021 but only two parents completed it, so it was not possible to draw further conclusions based on the survey.

Assessment (New [PiRA](#)). This curriculum-linked test provided us with their reading age as well as their standardised scores. The test was administered with pupils by teachers each term of the academic year and assessed various aspects of reading, including decoding and comprehension skills. Overall, we were able to match test results for 80 pupils between the autumn and summer term.

We also gathered pupils' views on reading using pre- and post-attitudinal surveys. The post survey also included questions that asked them to provide feedback on the programme. 228 pupils completed the pre-Changing the Story survey, while 50 completed the post survey. We were able to match 38 pupils' pre- and post-survey results aged 5-6², which is the subset we will include for this evaluation.

To complement the findings from the surveys, we also spoke to a group of pupils in a London school about how they feel about reading and the programme. Eight pupils took part in this session.

Finally, 23 teachers completed a post-programme survey providing insight into their perceptions of the benefits of the programme for their pupils as well as benefits for their school. In addition, a feedback survey was designed to capture teachers' insights into the training they received. A total of 12 teachers filled in the survey after the training session.

Changes in pupils' reading ability

Our analyses explored the standardised scores for 80 participating pupils before and after they took part in the programme by comparing their average scores. The findings show that before taking part in the programme, on average, the children's standardised score was 87.95 (SD = 12.15). After taking part in the programme, this had increased to 97.90 (SD = 13.25) for these children. The difference in scores was statistically significant³.

Additionally, on average, children's reading age improved from five years and three months (SD = 4.46) before taking part to six years and two months (SD = 1.23) afterwards, indicating an improvement of around 11 months across a nine-month period. Thus, the programme enabled slightly accelerated progress in reading age. Having categorised these improvements, the table below (Table 1) indicates the range of improvement in reading age of the participants (from -16 months⁴ to +55 months) across a nine-month period.

² Age at the start of the programme

³ $t(79) = -5.286, p < .001$

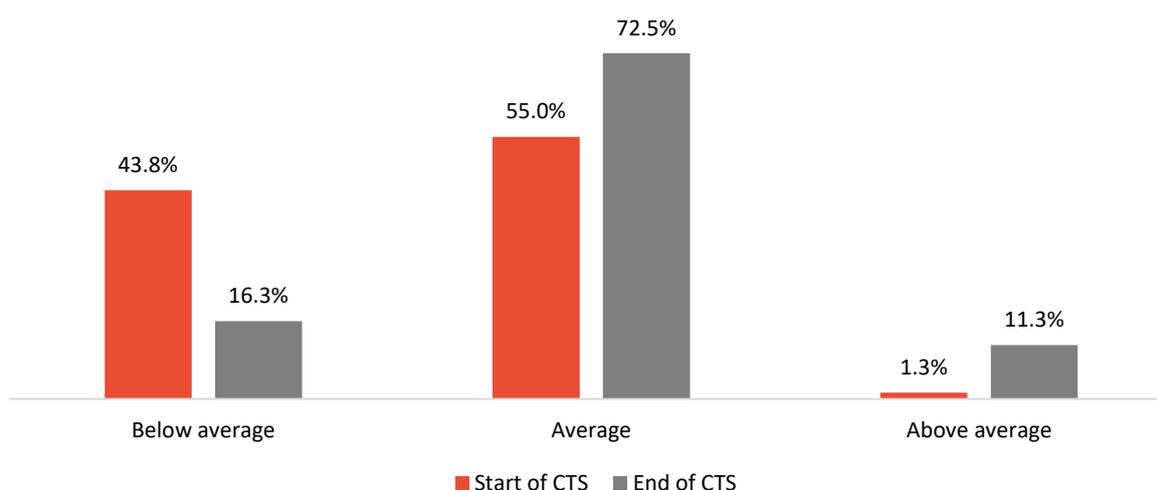
⁴ Table 1 includes improvements only, thus does not include the participants who saw a drop in their reading age (n = 2)

Table 1: Children’s improvement across the nine months of Changing the Story

Improvement in months	Number of children
1-6 months	8
7-12 months	39
13-18 months	5
19-24 months	14
25-30 months	6
31-36 months	3
37 months+	2

We were also able to use this information to determine whether there had been improvements in the percentage of children whose reading skills were below, at or above the national average⁵. Indeed, as shown in Figure 1, at the start of the programme, 43.8% of children were reading below the national average. This percentage more than halved to 16.3% at the end of the programme. At the same time, the percentage of children reading at the average level increased from over half (55.0%) to almost 3 in 4 (72.5%). Finally, the percentage of children who were reading above the national average saw an almost 10-fold increase, rising from 1.3% to 11.3% at the end of the programme.

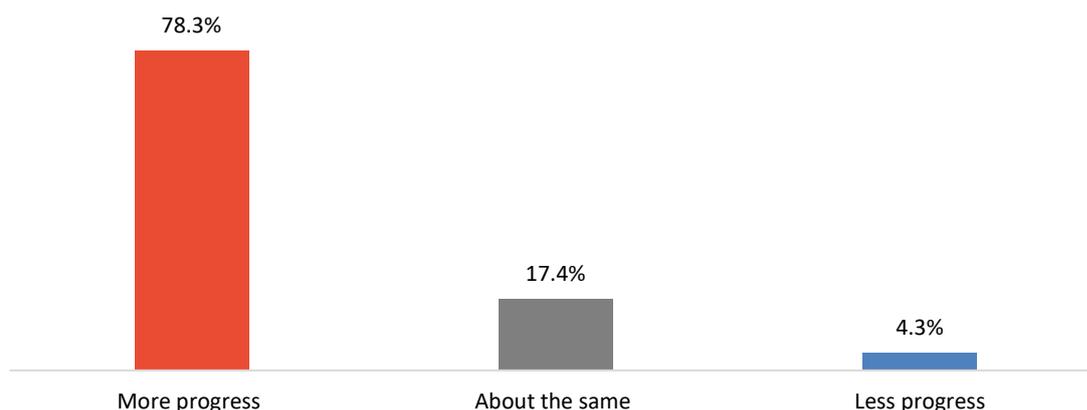
Figure 1: Children’s reading level before and after taking part in Changing the Story



⁵ As the test scores are standardised to an average score of 100, with a standard deviation of 15, those who score below 85 can be considered to be below the national average, while those whose scores are between 85 and 115 can be considered average and those with scores above 115 as above average.

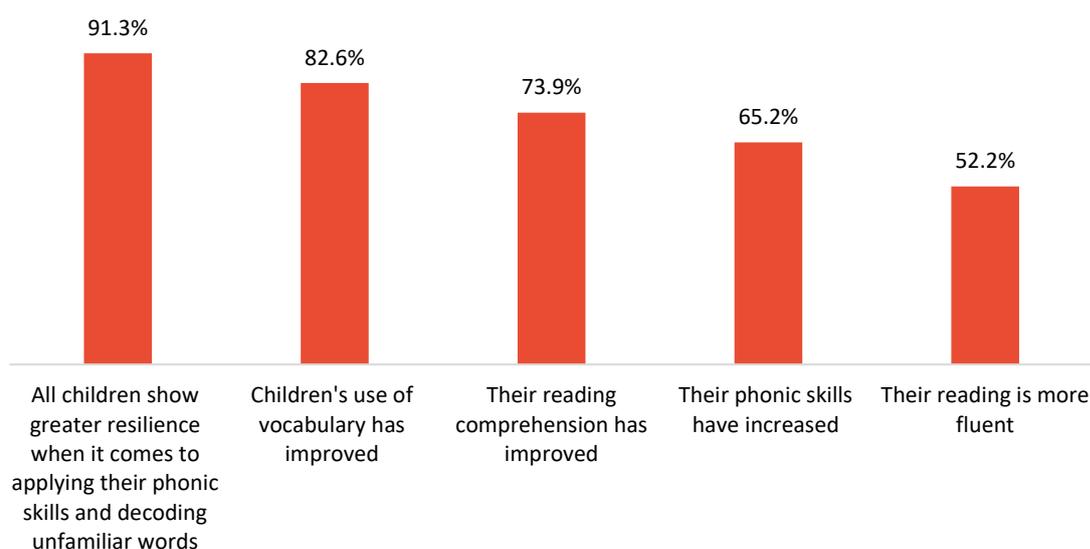
Teachers were also asked to compare the progress of participating pupils to pupils of the same reading level who did not take part (See Figure 2). Almost 4 in 5 (78.3%; n = 18) teachers felt that participating pupils made more progress than non-participating pupils, while only 17.4% (n = 4) felt that they made about the same progress.

Figure 2: Teachers’ responses to ‘Compared with pupils who started the year at the same level, would you say that pupils who participated in Changing the Story made...’



Looking at improvements in reading skill more specifically (see Figure 3), 9 in 10 (91.3%; n = 21) teachers agreed that after taking part in the programme, all children show greater resilience when it comes to applying their phonic skills and decoding unfamiliar words, while 2 in 3 (65.2%; n = 15) felt that pupils’ phonic skills improved in general. 4 in 5 (82.6%; n = 19) teachers agreed that children’s use of vocabulary improved, while 3 in 4 (73.9%; n = 17) agreed that reading comprehension improved. Finally, just over half (52.2%; n = 12) agreed that reading fluency had improved.

Figure 3: Teachers’ agreement about changes in pupils’ reading skills



The benefits of the programme for pupils' reading skills are also evident from teachers' comments in the survey:

“One girl has made two years progress in reading and has passed her phonics test, from starting Year 1 in the bottom 20% of readers.”

“The programme has really helped children make accelerated progress in reading.”

“[A] very well resourced, well thought out programme that has helped our children improve their reading skills and understanding significantly.”

“Children who were below the expected level seemed to engage more with the programme.”

“Three girls have progressed massively beyond what I expected.”

“The children who started this at the beginning of last year struggled with reading but by the end of the summer term they were confident readers and enjoyed reading more.”

Changes in pupils' reading enjoyment and self-perception of skills

In the pre- and post-programme surveys, we asked children how much they enjoyed reading. As shown in Figure 4, the percentage of children who said they enjoy reading very much increased from almost 1 in 4 (23.1%) to more than 1 in 3 (35.9%) over the course of the programme. At the same time, the percentage who said they do not enjoy reading at all decreased from more than 1 in 8 (12.8%) to almost 1 in 50 (2.6%).

The enjoyment of reading was also evident from the group discussion with eight pupils in a London school after they had completed the programme, where many described reading in positive ways:

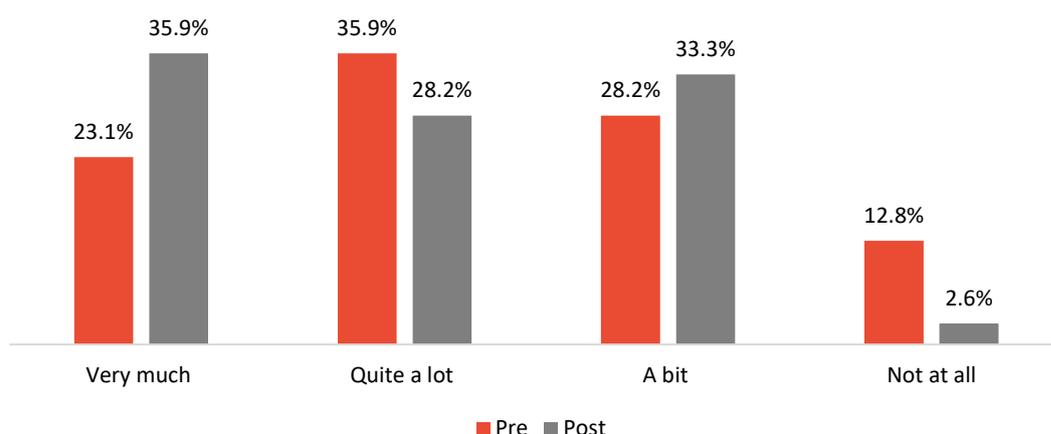
“Reading makes me happy.”

“Reading makes me excited.”

“[I like reading] Because it makes your brain feel full up of stuff.”

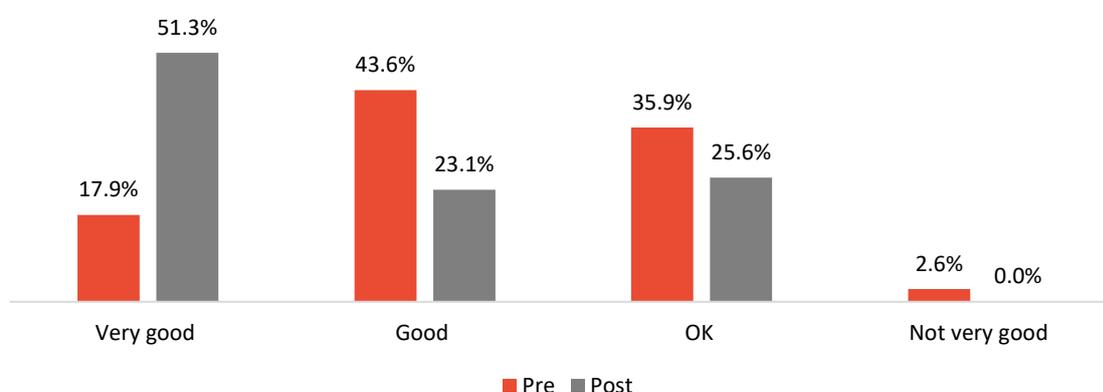
“Books are great and make your brain better.”

Figure 4: Pupils' reading enjoyment before and after the programme



We also saw large improvements in how pupils perceive themselves as readers over the course of the programme (see Figure 5). Indeed, the number of children who rated themselves as very good readers more than doubled over the course of the programme, increasing from 17.9% at the beginning to 51.3% at the end of the programme. At the same time, the percentage of those who rated themselves as okay or not very good at reading decreased from 38.5% to 25.6%. Following taking part in Changing the Story, no children referred to themselves as not very good readers.

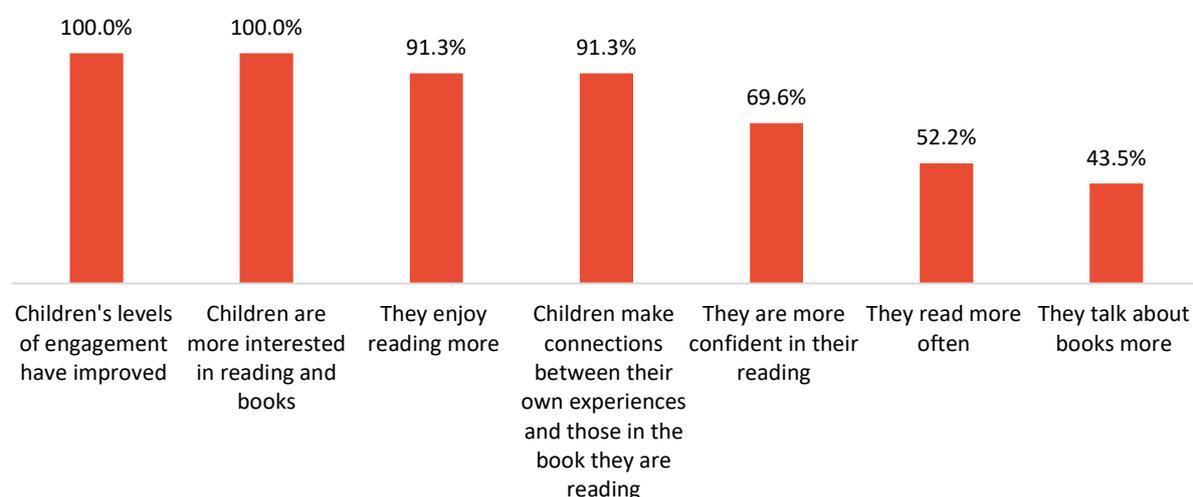
Figure 5: How pupils perceived themselves as readers before and after the programme



We also asked teachers how they perceived changes in pupil reading enjoyment, behaviour and confidence. As shown in Figure 6, all teachers agreed that children's level of engagement improved, and that children are more interested in reading and books. 9 in 10 (91.3%, n = 21) teachers agreed that pupils enjoy reading more and make connections between their own experiences and those in the book they are reading. 7 in 10 (69.6%, n = 16) teachers agreed that pupils are now more confident in their reading. Finally, half (52.2%, n = 12) of teachers felt that their pupils read more often since taking part, while more than 2 in 5 (43.5%; n = 10)

noticed that their pupils talk about books more now, suggesting that reading is of more focus and interest for the pupils.

Figure 6: Teachers' agreement about changes in pupils' reading enjoyment, behaviour and confidence



Teachers' comments similarly reflect their perceived benefit on pupils' reading enjoyment and confidence. Many of them highlighted increased reading enjoyment in particular when asked about a particular pupil who has benefited from the programme:

"The boys have realised they can read and it is not a chore. They are beginning to compete with each other."

"...And one boy participated who at the start hated reading and would refuse, now reads one book a week to me, which is huge for him."

"I read after school with a Year 2 girl and she enjoys selecting a title that has one of her favourite characters in. She looks a bit like the little girl so she feels like she is having the adventure too!"

"One boy lacked confidence and found it a struggle. Since doing the programme he has developed a love for reading and asks to read every day."

"One child who is very shy and quiet enjoyed the 1-1 time away from the class. This allowed them the opportunity to talk freely as their lack of confidence often held them back. This child has progressed to become a fluent reader and the additional sessions and opportunities to read and discuss what has been read has been invaluable."

"One child, who did not like reading, talks to me about books and reading when I see her in the corridor."

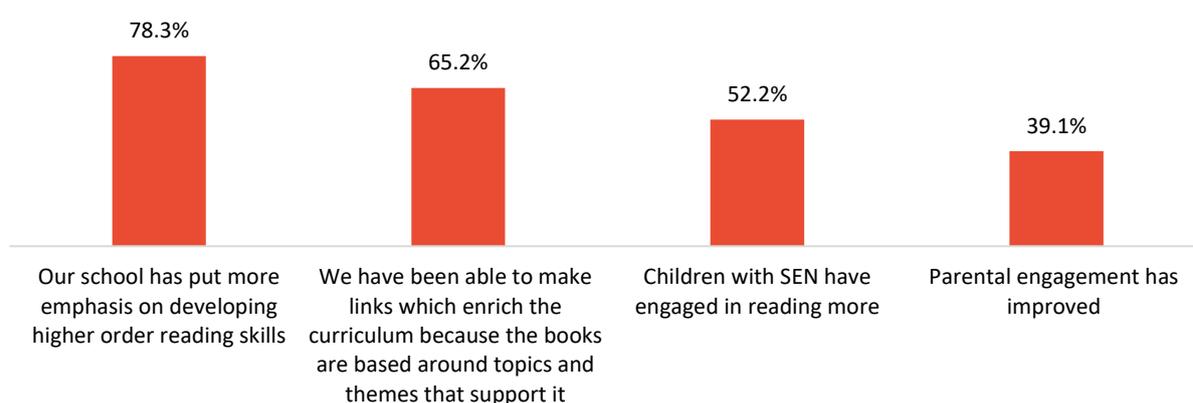
One of the teaching assistants delivering the programme in a London school provided further feedback on the impact of the programme and described the benefits for children’s confidence and enjoyment as:

“The Rising Stars decodable books have made a positive impact on our children’s reading skills. We have seen significant improvement in the children’s confidence. The Phased books have scaffolded children’s learning by targeting the specific phonics sounds that children are learning in class. All children look forward to reading sessions and are enjoying the variety of books we have received. The children have developed a liking for the main four characters that had been seen throughout the stories. The reading-for-pleasure element is very popular with our children because they select books based on their interests.”

Benefits for the schools

In addition to benefits for the pupils, the teacher survey also indicates that the programme has supported the schools overall with the ethos of reading. As shown in Figure 7, since taking part in Changing the Story, almost 4 in 5 (78.3%; n = 18) teachers agreed that their school puts greater emphasis on developing higher-order reading skills, while almost 2 in 3 (65.2%; n = 15) said they have been able to make links that enrich their curriculum from the resources of the programme. More than half (52.2%; n = 12) of teachers agreed that children with SEN have engaged in reading more since the programme, while 2 in 5 (39.1%; n = 9) agreed that parental engagement has improved as a result of the programme.

Figure 7: Impact of Changing the Story on school ethos



In addition to 2 in 5 teachers indicating the programme improved parental engagement in the school, many shared ways how they have engaged parents through the programme:

“We engaged seven parents who were able to discuss their progress at any time with the person running the project.”

“[we engaged through] parent workshops and checking in with parents by the use of conversations throughout the year.”

“[we engaged through] letters, parent workshops, school Facebook and website. All parents in the class [were contacted], plus more details were given for the focus seven children.”

“All parents of children on the programme were notified and given information and then informed about progress in parent-teacher meetings and reports sent home.”

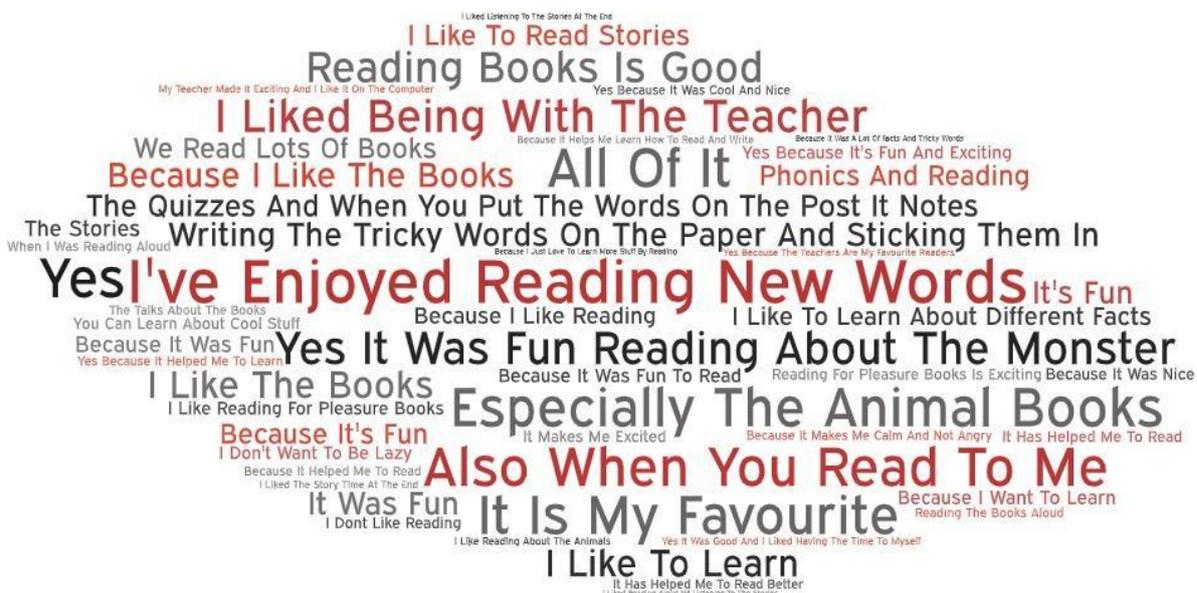
“We spoke to them each personally and told them why their child was doing the programme. Spoke to 10 parents.”

“We sent letters and explained what the programme was about and liaised with them regularly through their child’s reading record.”

Pupil feedback on the programme

Changing the Story was well received by pupils, with nearly all of them (97.4%) saying they liked the reading sessions they took part in. When asked why they liked the sessions, children mentioned a variety of reasons, including because they liked the books and stories, because it was fun, or because it helped them with their learning and reading (see Figure 8).

Figure 8: ‘What did you enjoy about the session?’



Their enjoyment also echoed in the discussion about reading with pupils in a London school. All the eight pupils indicated with green smiley faces that they enjoyed the programme. The reasons they gave for enjoying the programme all related to learning:

“[I liked the programme because] It makes you clever.”

“[I liked the programme] Because it makes me laugh.”

“[I liked the programme because it helps us] To learn what digraphs in the book we don’t know.”

“[I liked the programme because] It helps us learn new words.”

Teacher feedback on the programme

The overall feedback from the teacher surveys indicates that teachers had a positive experience with the programme. Indeed, all teachers rated the programme overall as excellent or good and all but one of them would recommend the programme to other schools⁶. When asked to share what they would say when recommending the programme to another school, teachers shared:

“Child friendly, accessible, visible results.”

“Excellent programme to support children with their learning.”

“It’s a very good programme to use – the children enjoyed and learnt a lot from doing this.”

“The children enjoyed the structure of the programme, particularly the story books at the end of the session. It allowed you to have discussions with the children about reading.”

“This is a great programme to focus on those children in Year 1 who need that little bit of extra support with their reading. You receive many books to support the teaching of early reading and to promote reading for pleasure in school. During our recent Ofsted inspection the inspector really liked that we had taken part in this programme.”

“The books are engaging and the children love the fact that they can read them online. They also loved doing the quizzes. Having questions at the back of the books is a real bonus.”

In addition to the changes in pupils’ reading skill, enjoyment and confidence, teachers also shared their thoughts on the benefits of the programme that were not initially expected. These included improvements in overall confidence, communication skills and attitudes towards school in general:

“Comprehension, retention of information, communication skills have improved.”

“More confident in general.”

“Some children are more positive about school in general.”

⁶ One individual responded “Not sure”

“The children have more confidence and are more outspoken.”

Finally, teachers were asked to share any improvements they would suggest for the programme overall. Responses included additional staff training, capacity for more children to take part, and an easier way for collecting assessment data that does not necessitate online connection:

“Additional training for staff throughout the programme would be useful. It would also be beneficial to support staff in using MARK to ensure that they fully understand what is expected of them and how they upload data.”

“For more children to be able to benefit from the intervention.”

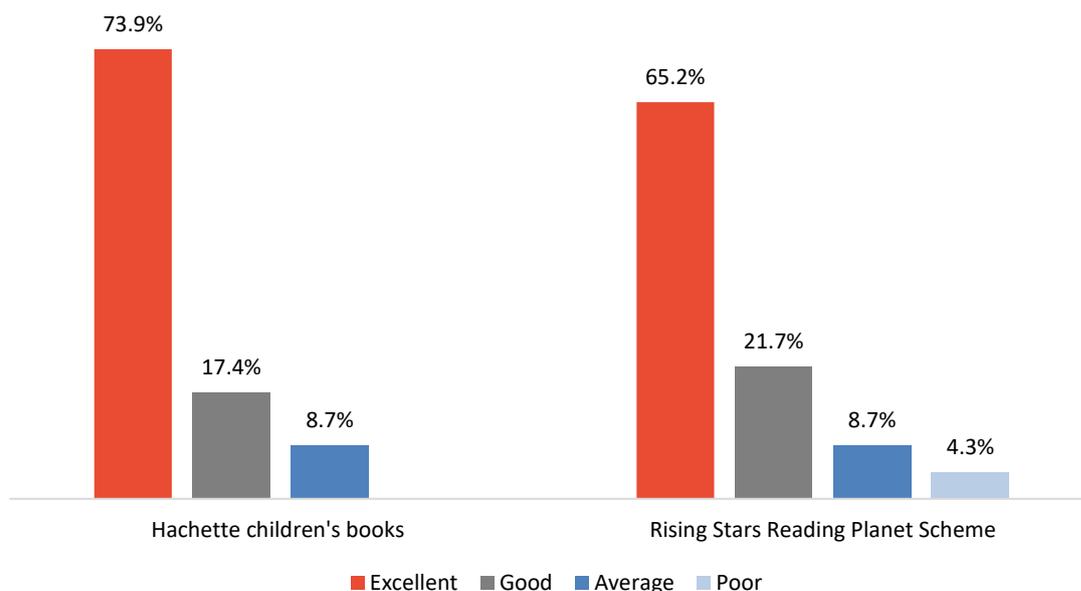
“I found accessing the assessments quite tricky, so a simpler link to assessment would help.”

“It would be beneficial to train more than one member of staff to run the intervention as we had a lot of staffing issues due to Covid, which has impacted on the delivery of the programme this year.”

Teacher feedback on the books and resources

We also asked teachers to share their views on the books and resources provided as part of the programme. As shown in Figure 9, 3 in 4 (73.9%; n = 17) teachers rated the Hachette children’s books as excellent, while almost 1 in 5 (17.4%; n = 4) rated them as good. Only two participants (8.7%) rated them as average. Similarly, 65.3% (n = 15) rated the Rising Stars Planet as excellent while 21.7% (n = 5) rated it good. Only 8.7% (n = 2) rated it as average and only teacher (4.3%) rated it as poor.

Figure 9: Teacher ratings for different aspects of the programmes



The three teachers who rated the Rising Stars Reading Planet scheme as average or poor shared their challenges with us. Open-ended comments indicated that these difficulties related to using the website, as well as successfully implementing the resources alongside other phonics programmes:

“We have had some difficulty navigating the Rising Stars website (this may be a training issue for staff).”

“We had to use the Rising Stars books alongside our phonic reading programme books, but this was fine.”

“Unfortunately, the Govt changed the phonics requirements at the inception of the project, so we had to be careful with resources used.”

Finally, all teachers agreed that the books provided had a range of illustrations depicting different cultures and ethnicities (see Figure 10). 9 in 10 (91.3%, n = 21) agreed that the book banding made it easy to match children to texts with the right level of challenge, and the organisation of the scheme provided variety and breadth, while just less than 9 in 10 (87.0%, n = 20) agreed that it was easy to incorporate books into phonic sessions. Just over 4 in 5 (82.6%, n = 19) agreed that the assessment guide made it easy to track progress, while the teacher guide saved time on planning. Finally, 3 in 4 (73.9, n = 17) agreed that the online library provided additional features and tools that enhanced the reading experience.

The resources and books provided were also highlighted positively in teachers’ comments:

“The online reading library is an excellent resource for use both in and out of school. It’s great that appropriate levels can be set for certain children for them to access at home. It’s great that the children were able to receive such a large amount of new books too, which has benefited the whole school as other year groups have also made use of them.”

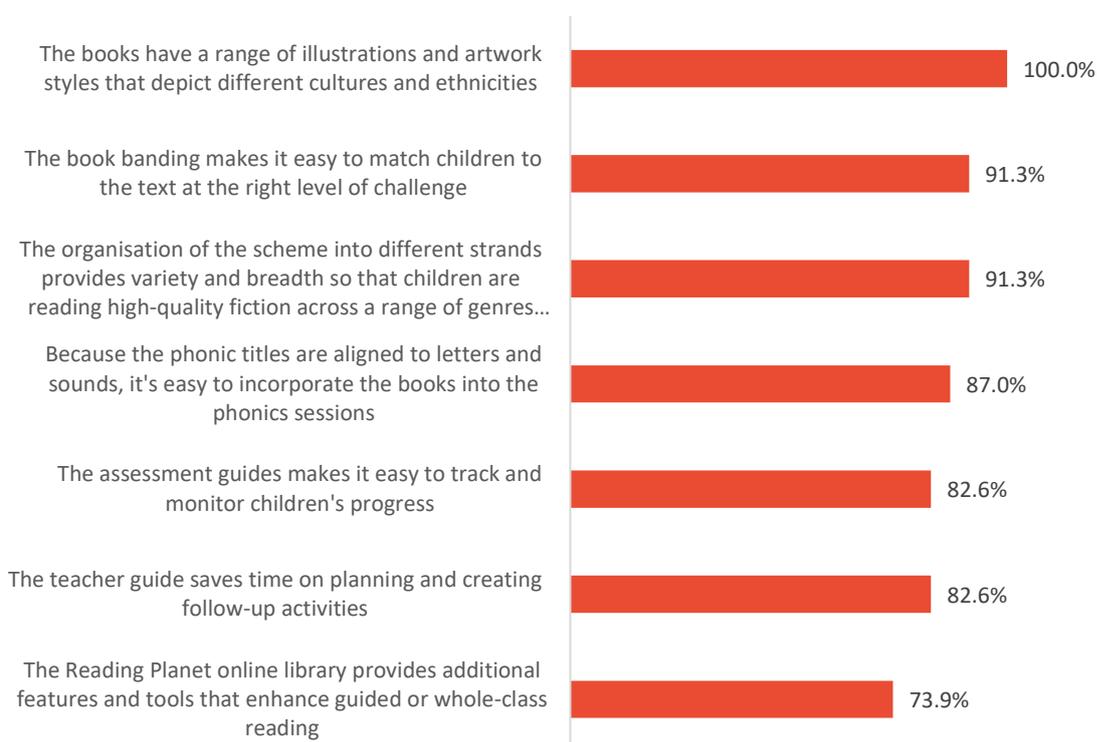
“It’s great to be able to work with children 1:1, with some great resources on offer. Also the online reading tool is great to adapt for 1:1, small group and whole class.”

“The books are very engaging and there is such a great variety of text types. The questions at the back are extremely helpful too. Having the same books online is fantastic for the children to engage their parents too! The system to track progress is time efficient and the whole programme is fantastic!”

“The reading-for-pleasure books were of great quality and [covered] a wide range of topics.”

“The resources were excellent, the books supplied were very well chosen and the children really looked forward to receiving them.”

Figure 10: Percentage agreement with statements relating to the programme



Feedback on the teacher training

“A very useful training session and resources are excellent. I am looking forward to using them in September. Thank you.”

We also received feedback on the training from 12 teachers. Overall, teachers rated the training as either excellent (25.0%, n = 3) or good (75.0%, n = 9), and felt the session met their expectations completely (33.3%, n = 4) or mostly (66.7%, n = 8). Teachers felt that the trainer met the needs of the group very well (58.3%, n = 7) or well (41.7%, n = 5). 83.3% (n = 10) of teachers said they would recommend the training to colleagues⁷.

All but one of the teachers felt that the time allowed for the session was about right. When asked to share why they rated the training as they did, teachers shared:

“Detailed and informative training that covered all aspects of the programme.”

“Really liked thinking about the different strategies for reading in today’s session.”

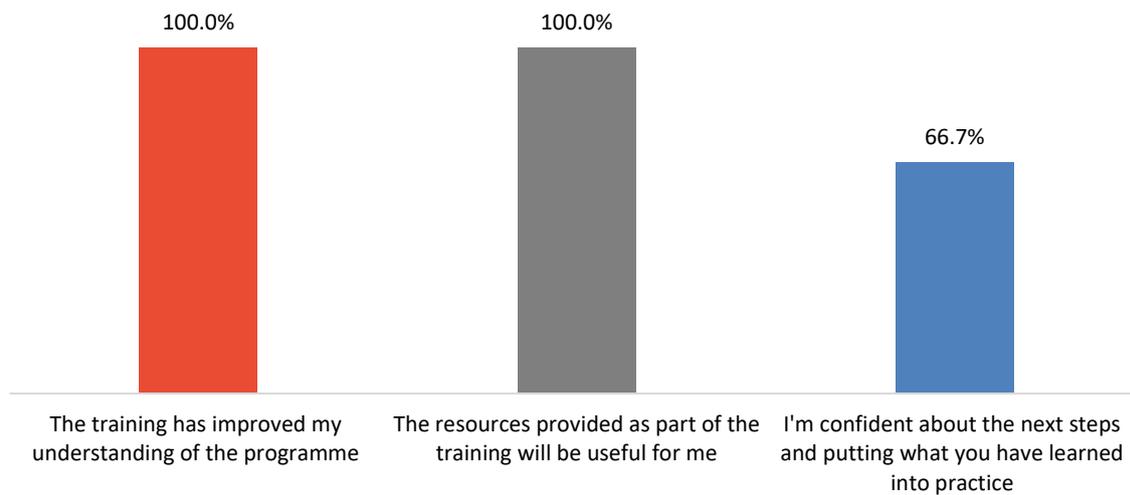
“Found the comprehension training really helpful and clear explanation of the project.”

“Clear research sign-posted.”

⁷ N = 2 selected “Maybe” (16.7%). None selected “No”.

As shown in Figure 11, all teachers agreed that the training improved their understanding of the programme, and that the resources provided as part of the training would be useful to them. 66.7% (n = 8) agreed that they felt confident about next steps and putting what they have learned into practice. When probed, their lack of confidence related to anxieties around using technology, such as with uploading the pupils' test results.

Figure 11: Teacher agreement with statements about the training



Teachers were asked which parts of the sessions they found most useful and why. Responses included access to the materials, the videos, and the opportunity to discuss and share ideas with other teachers.

“Accessing reading materials. Sharing reading strategies.”

“I enjoyed the video of the online books where we could have a little insight as to how this works.”

“I like the discussions around pedagogy as I like the way the research underpins the training and intervention programme.”

“Opportunity to share ideas with other colleagues.”

“Practical steps on what the programme entails.”

“The trainer organised information that covered all aspects of the programme and allowed time for questions and sharing of ideas.”

Conclusion

This report has shown that Changing the Story has been beneficial for the pupils who took part. Indeed, we saw improvement in children's reading skills and reading age as well as enjoyment and self-perception of reading skill. These improvements were also reflected in teachers' responses. Pupils also indicated that they enjoyed taking part in the programme and they felt that the programme helped them with their reading skill.

Additionally, the data indicate that teachers had a positive experience with the programme, and felt that children were encouraged to be more interested in reading. The programme was described as accessible, well resourced, and providing visible results. The training offered was seen as good by the teachers and met their expectations. Teachers improved their knowledge of the importance of diversity and representation in children's books through the programme and their engagement with the Reading Planet scheme.

Learnings from year one of the programme will inform the delivery going forward. Challenges around using technology, administering PiRA and sharing data through MARK were common, and more training will be put in place to support staff to feel confident with this aspect. Schools' concerns around fidelity to phonics programmes and alignment of the Reading Planet books are being taken into account as schools are recruited and on-boarded for the new academic year. Individual and tailored support for schools to implement all the elements of the programme is essential, with support visits and session observations proving invaluable to continuing engagement in the programme, with the quality assurance involved leading to successful delivery and improved outcomes for children. With this in mind, a reduced number of 15 schools will be recruited to the programme for the 2022-23 academic year.

We would like to thank Hachette UK and Hodder Education for their generous support in funding this programme, gifting over 22,000 books to the most disadvantaged children and schools and providing support in kind from their brilliant team to co-create and co-deliver the training and provide technical support. We look forward to the continuing success of the Changing the Story Reading Programme next year and working in partnership to ensure more young children improve their early reading skills and develop a love of reading.