OXFORDSHIRE READING CAMPAIGN

National Literacy Trust

FINAL EVALUATION REPORT
September 2012 – September 2014

CONTENTS

ABOUT THE NATIONAL LITERACY TRUST

We are a national charity dedicated to raising literacy levels in the UK. Our research and analysis make us the leading authority on literacy. We run projects in the poorest communities, campaign to make literacy a priority for politicians and parents, and support schools.

Visit **www.literacytrust.org.uk** to find out more, donate or sign up for free email updates. You can also find us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter.

Phone us on 020 7587 1842 or email contact@literacytrust.org.uk

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① EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2012, Oxfordshire County Council commissioned the National Literacy Trust to deliver a two-year campaign, the Oxfordshire Reading Campaign, to address falling Key Stage 1 literacy levels in the county's primary schools, which were amongst the worst in the country. The aims of the campaign were to increase the proportion of children reaching the expected level of 2b in national reading assessment tests (and preferably to surpass this), as well as to help instil a love of reading in children and create communities where reading for enjoyment is supported. While all schools in the county were welcome to participate, 81 target schools were identified, through analysis of national reading assessment test results and other data, as those that would most benefit from the campaign, and were therefore strongly encouraged to join. The majority of the schools that participated in the campaign came from this target group.

This report shows how the campaign successfully achieved its goals by helping schools and pupils to make substantial gains in their literacy attainment, as well as positively affecting reading behaviour both within and beyond the classroom. Headline figures from both years show that:

LEVEL 2B+

75% 2011-12   **83%** 2013-14
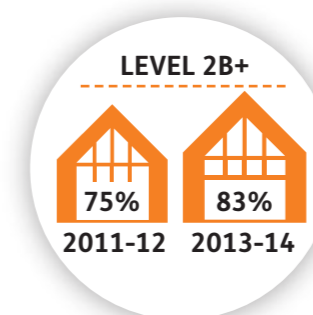
All participating schools campaign increased the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level of 2b+ in national reading assessments by 8 percentage points, from **75%** in 2011/12 to **83%** in 2013/14
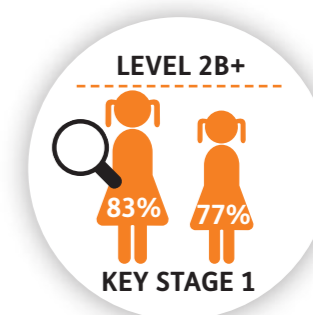
LEVEL 2B+

83% **77%**

KEY STAGE 1

In 2014, **83%** of Key Stage 1 pupils in schools who took part in the campaign for one or two years achieved a level 2b+ in reading, compared with **77%** of pupils at target schools who did not take part

READING AGE GAIN

AVG. 13 MTHS
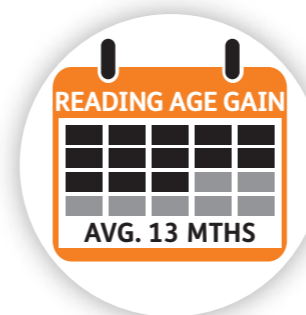
In both years, the average reading-age gain of pupils taking part in the Project X Code reading intervention was **13 months**, with some schools achieving nearly **20 months**

100% **READ REGULARLY**

100% of pupils who took part in the campaign now read regularly, with **50%** of pupils reading at least once a day and **50%** reading at least several times a week

73% **ENJOY READING**

73% of pupils enjoy reading much more as a result of the campaign

74% **FEEL STRONGLY THEY READ BETTER NOW**

74% of pupils feel strongly that they are better at reading now as a result of taking part in the campaign

68% **75%**

68% of pupils read on their own, while **75%** read with parents and/or teachers

100%

of teaching assistants agreed that their confidence in supporting early literacy had improved as a result of attending their sessions

84%

of senior managers believed that literacy teaching is now more effective in their school than before

Teaching and support staff also benefited from the specialist training they received as a result of the campaign. 100% of teaching assistants agreed that their confidence in supporting early literacy had improved as a result of attending their sessions, while 84% of senior managers believed that literacy teaching is now more effective in their school than before. Ofsted has also recognised the impact of the campaign in their school inspection reports, with one saying that it *"...has had a positive impact on improving standards in reading"* [1].

This report will look in further detail at how the campaign was designed and delivered and will reveal how these successes were achieved. It will also indicate the challenges faced during the two years and how they were addressed, before discussing the campaign's legacy and the support offered to enable schools to continue building on their success.

② WHO WE ARE

The National Literacy Trust is a national charity dedicated to raising literacy levels in the UK. Our research and analysis make us the leading authority on literacy. We run projects in the poorest communities, campaign to make literacy a priority for politicians and parents, and support schools.

Over the past 20 years, we have made a significant contribution to raising literacy levels in the UK. We engage with schools in a number of ways, including through our network, programmes and training. The National Literacy Trust's programmes include Premier League Reading Stars, the Young Readers Programme and Words for Work.

We understand school systems and how to achieve deep change through training, leadership and dissemination. Driven by our core charitable mission, we are focused on long-term change and improvement in literacy, not just short-term interventions.

The National Literacy Trust's experience in delivering effective programmes that improve literacy attainment, attitudes and behaviours meant that it was well placed to deliver the Oxfordshire Reading Campaign.

The Continuing Professional Development (CPD) programme for schools was delivered through an extension of the Every Child Counts Programme at Edge Hill University. The management and delivery team are leading national experts in the provision of highly effective Professional Development for teachers and teaching assistants focused on intervention support for underachieving children in primary schools, described as "the best ever seen" by an independent DfE evaluation in 2011.

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1. Quoted from Requires Improvement: Monitoring Visit to Bampton CofE Primary School Letter, published 22 May 2013, page 3: http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/ELS/123114

3.1 WHY WAS THE OXFORDSHIRE READING CAMPAIGN NEEDED?

In July 2012, the National Literacy Trust was commissioned by Oxfordshire County Council to deliver the Oxfordshire Reading Campaign, a two-year initiative targeting Oxfordshire primary schools and the wider community in order to help raise pupils' ability in and enjoyment of reading by the end of Key Stage 1. This came about as a result of Oxford City schools having the lowest results in Key Stage 1 reading tests in the country, alongside a recent history of poor attainment in literacy more broadly. The County Council and local councillors wanted to do more to support schools in Oxfordshire, recognising that literacy is a vital foundation for all learning.

FIVE KEY OUTCOMES WERE IDENTIFIED FOR THE CAMPAIGN:

1 To improve reading standards as measured at level 2b+ in Key Stage 1 tests

2 To contribute to wider improvements in education outcomes

3 To raise the aspirations of children and families

4 To foster a culture of reading and a love of books

5 To engage the whole community in this pursuit of high standards of literacy

BOTH OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL AND THE NATIONAL LITERACY TRUST SET OUT AMBITIOUS TARGETS FOR THE CAMPAIGN COUNTYWIDE:

80% of year 2 children would achieve level 2b+ in 2013 end of Key Stage 1 reading assessments

86% of year 2 children would achieve level 2b+ in 2014 end of Key Stage 1 reading assessments

THE OXFORDSHIRE READING CAMPAIGN ALSO SOUGHT, MORE GENERALLY, TO IMPROVE PUPILS':

- Attitudes towards reading
- Reading confidence and enjoyment
- Knowledge of their own reading preferences
- Reading behaviour (including frequency and social interactions)
- Perceptions of their own reading ability

3.2 PROGRAMME DESIGN

In order to meet the five outcomes identified by Oxfordshire County Council, the National Literacy Trust designed a programme with three complementary strands:

STRAND ONE

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

The School Improvement strand was designed and run by Edge Hill University in partnership with National Literacy Trust.

It provided the following elements:

- Training for teaching and support staff, delivered by Edge Hill University and consisting of:
  - Half-day training sessions for teaching assistants on how to run the Project X Code reading intervention (developed by Oxford University Press), which embeds decoding (phonics) and understanding what is read (comprehension) within a fictitious adventure series
  - Whole-day CPD events for Key Stage 1 teachers
  - Two conferences for headteachers and subject leaders
- School improvement support and challenge visits, delivered by National Literacy Trust and Edge Hill University school improvement consultants. Support was tailored to the individual needs of each school, ranging from progress reviews to providing specialist literacy training sessions for school staff.

Before commencing the Project X Code intervention, schools assessed each pupil using the Phonics and Early Reading Assessment (PERA),[2] a standardised assessment tool used to test children's phonic knowledge and use of phonics for reading, as well as reading accuracy and comprehension. Pupils were then re-tested at the end of the intervention to assess their progress.

STRAND TWO

VOLUNTEERING PROGRAMME

This was designed specifically for the campaign to:

- Provide pupils with trained volunteer support to promote a love of reading and improve their attitudes and confidence in relation to reading
- Engage volunteers in promoting the importance of literacy, and empower local people within their communities.

Each school recruited a volunteer coordinator to lead on this strand, who received training, support and resources to manage their volunteers. With help from the National Literacy Trust, volunteers were recruited from the local community, including parents and other family members.

The volunteers worked on a one-to-one basis with a child twice a week for 30 minutes over a ten-week period. Each volunteer received a handbook with session plans, resources and suggested activities as well as access to recommended books. They used the games and talking tips provided to engage the children with reading and supported the children to become confident in their own literacy abilities.

The children who took part in this strand were not always the same as those who participated in the Project X Code intervention. The different focus for this strand meant that children were selected for different reasons to those for strand one, e.g. they might not have access to books at home or were not read to at home, and some pupils were from English as an Additional Language (EAL) backgrounds.

2. McCarthy C & Ruttle K (2012) Phonics and Early Reading Assessment (PERA), London: Hodder Education

PUBLIC-FACING CAMPAIGN

This strand supported the other two strands by:

• Profiling the initiative regionally, nationally and in government and education settings

• Marketing and communications activity designed to engage and inform local families

• Recruiting residents and local employees to act as reading volunteers.

The campaigning strand was strongly supported by a partnership with the *Oxford Mail* newspaper, which provided coverage of the major conferences and milestones, promoted recruitment of local volunteers and the campaign's progress.

BBC Radio Oxford also collaborated with the campaign on several occasions, including a Christmas Read-Along in December 2013. The Read-Along involved well-known public figures such as Prime Minister David Cameron and comedian Alexander Armstrong reading excerpts from Christmas tales and poems whilst pupils from Oxfordshire Reading Campaign schools read along in special booklets.

An Oxfordshire Reading Campaign microsite, **www.oxfordshirereading.co.uk**, was developed as a single point for campaign information and news to inform the community, engage parents and facilitate volunteer recruitment.

Oxfordshire Reading Campaign media partner the *Oxford Mail* profiles one of the first participating target schools to sign up for the campaign

The home page of the campaign's website: **www.oxfordshirereading.co.uk**

3.3 SCHOOL RECRUITMENT

The National Literacy Trust invited all Oxfordshire primary schools to an official launch event in October 2012. The aim was to explain what the Oxfordshire Reading Campaign was about and sign up schools to begin training the following month. While all schools were welcome to join, priority was given to 81 target schools, which had been identified as those that would most benefit from the campaign. These schools were chosen after close analysis of:

• County-wide Key Stage 1 results from 2009 to 2012

• Early Years Foundation Stage profile results in communication, language and literacy from 2011 to 2012

• Year 1 phonics screening check results from 2012

• Ofsted reports

• Cohort size – schools that could potentially have larger cohorts were sought to help reach the attainment targets set for the duration of the project.

Oxfordshire County Council provided each participating target school with £1,000 to cover staffing costs for attendance at training days. Schools only had to pay for the Project X Code intervention materials for pupils and staff from their own budget, and Oxford University Press supplied the Project X Code materials at a 50% discount.

As a result of the conference, 45 schools signed up to take part in the campaign. Since this was below the original target of 81, National Literacy Trust staff and Oxfordshire County Council worked hard to attract more schools. In February 2013, a further 11 schools were recruited after a second launch event, bringing the first year's total to 56. A third and final group of seven schools joined the campaign in autumn 2013, bringing the total number of schools to 63.

Oxford Mail's coverage of the first training day

81 schools were targeted to take part in the campaign
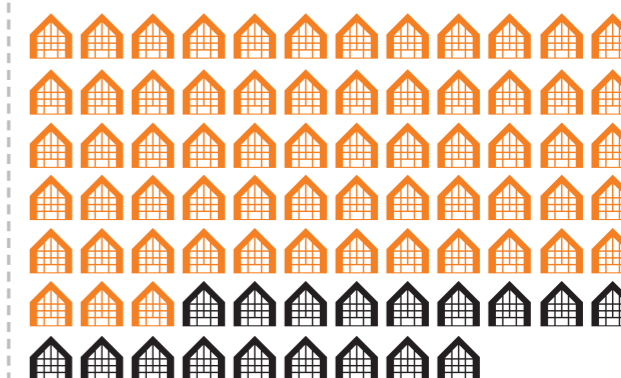
63 schools in total joined the campaign

④ OVERVIEW OF YEARS 1 AND 2

Key figures for years 1 and 2:

800+
PROJECT X CODE INTERVENTION

Over **800** pupils took part in the Project X Code intervention

269
WORKED WITH A VOLUNTEER

269 pupils worked with a volunteer

63
SIGNED UP

63 schools signed up

85 ASSISTANTS
126 TEACHERS
TRAINED

85 teaching assistants and **126** teachers trained

209
VOLUNTEERS RECRUITED

209 volunteers recruited (25% through the National Literacy Trust's campaigning strand)

MEDIA REACH 5,499,906

More than **401** media stories created, with a reach of **5,499,906** and a value of **£330,500**

MICROSITE 3,000+ VISITS

More than **3,000** visits made to the Oxfordshire Reading Campaign microsite

4.1 YEAR 1

**A total of 56 schools joined the Oxfordshire Reading Campaign in its first year. This was lower than the projected target of 81 schools, despite a concerted effort to recruit them by both the County Council and the National Literacy Trust. Reasons for not signing up included:**

- Participating in an alternative reading intervention, KRM, supported by Oxford City Council
- Lack of resources (particularly an issue for smaller schools)
- 'Intervention fatigue' - many schools felt they could not manage another intervention.

The campaign quickly gathered momentum and became embedded into schools' literacy provision as a result of the training, regular support and contact from both the trainers and campaign staff. A newsletter was sent once a term to help keep schools informed of developments, remind them of training and PERA submission dates, and to share examples of good practice and success stories. By the end of the first year, participating schools were reporting positive feedback and evidence of pupil progress. The year 1 data only includes the 45 schools that signed up at the beginning of the campaign, as there was not enough time for activity to have an impact on results in the schools that signed up to participate in February 2013.

Year 1 results
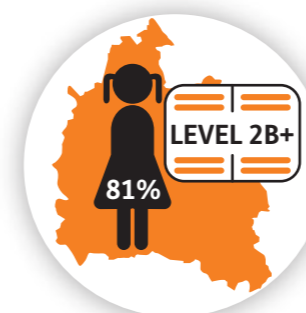
LEVEL 2B+
81%

All schools in Oxfordshire increased the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level of 2b+ in national reading assessments by 3 percentage points, from **78%** in 2011/12 to **81%** in 2012/13

LEVEL 2B+
75% **80%**
2012 **2013**
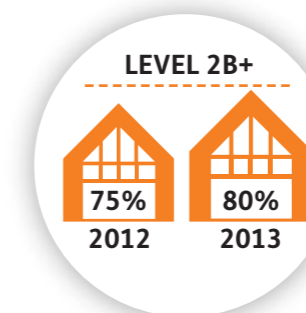
Schools that participated in Year 1 of the campaign increased the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level of 2b+ in national reading assessments by 5 percentage points, from **75%** in 2011/12 to **80%** in 2012/13
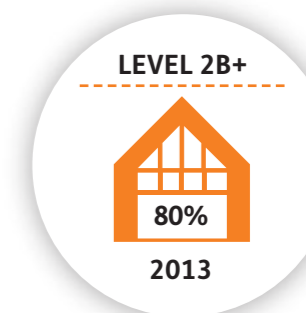
LEVEL 2B+
80%
2013

In 2013, **80%** of Key Stage 1 pupils in schools that took part in the campaign achieved a level 2b+ in reading, compared to **78%** of pupils at target schools that did not take part in the first year

READING AGE GAIN
13 MONTHS

13 months was the average reading-age gain for pupils after spending four months on the Project X Code intervention

95%
NOW LIKE READING MORE THAN BEFORE

95% of children reported that they liked reading more than before participating in the project and **93%** said that they read more as a result of their experience with their volunteer

4.2 YEAR 2

An additional seven schools joined the campaign in September 2013 bringing the total number of schools to 63.

The objectives for year 2 were: welcoming new schools onto the training programme; consolidating the knowledge, progress, commitment and excellent work from year 1; and developing an exit strategy so that the campaign's work could be sustained after the project ended. The campaign team also addressed issues and problems that arose during the first year to inform how the campaign would evolve in Year 2 (please see the Challenges section for further information).

Towards the end of the second year, nine celebration events were held to recognise the hard work and achievement of everyone involved in the campaign. Around 555 children from more than 20 schools attended, and received special graduation certificates and literacy 'party bags'. Teaching assistants and volunteers also received certificates and book tokens as a thank you for all their hard work. Each event had a storyteller, author or illustrator attend, including Gareth Jones, author of **Ninja Meerkats**, John Dougherty, author of **Stinkbomb and Ketchup Face**, and Alan Durant, author of **Burger Boy**.

Year 2 results

LEVEL 2B+
82%
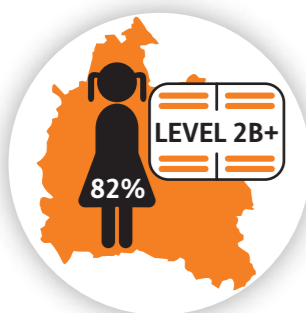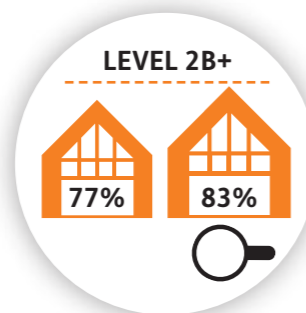
All schools in Oxfordshire increased the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level of 2b+ in national reading assessments by 1 percentage point, from **81%** in 2012/13 to **82%** in 2013/14

LEVEL 2B+
77% **83%**

In 2014, **83%** of Key Stage 1 pupils in schools that took part in the campaign for one or two years achieved a level 2b+ in reading, compared with **77%** of pupils at schools that did not take part
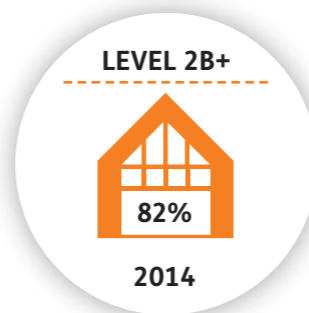
LEVEL 2B+
82%
2014

In 2014, **82%** of Key Stage 1 pupils in schools that took part in the campaign for two years achieved a level 2b+ in reading

LEVEL 2B+
85%
KEY STAGE 1
2014
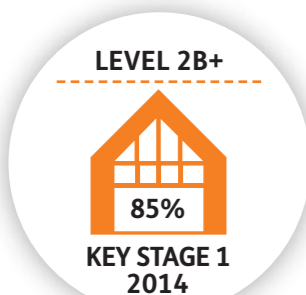
In 2014, **85%** of Key Stage 1 pupils in schools that took part in the campaign for one year achieved a level 2b+ in reading

61% AGREE
PUPILS' READING IMPROVED & PUPILS READING MORE FOR PLEASURE

61% of teachers agree that pupils' reading has improved and that pupils are now reading more for pleasure

READING AGE GAIN
13 MONTHS

13 months was the average reading-age gain for pupils after spending four months on the Project X Code intervention

⑤ FINDINGS

This section discusses the final findings for the Oxfordshire Reading Campaign as a whole as of September 2014.

5.1 METHODOLOGY

In order to compile this final report, a number of sources were used:

- Oxfordshire Reading Campaign: Interim Evaluation Report (2012–2013), National Literacy Trust: **http://www.literacytrust.org. uk/research nlt_research/5662_oxfordshire_ reading_campaign_interim_evaluation_ report**

- PERA entry and exit data from 2012 to 2014, analysed by Edge Hill University

- Key Stage 1 literacy national reading assessment test results – for all Oxfordshire schools

- Year 1 Phonics Screening Test, both in 2012/2013 and 2013/2014

- Focus groups of pupils and staff – these were held in six participating schools between April and June 2014

- Evaluation surveys targeted at each stakeholder of the campaign: teaching assistants; teachers; senior management (literacy leaders, subject coordinators, headteachers); volunteer coordinators; volunteers; parents; pupils

- Interviews with key staff and volunteers

- Ongoing case studies with school practitioners and pupils

- Evaluation and management reports made by Edge Hill University for the National Literacy Trust.

Pupils at Faringdon Infant School's celebration event, with author Gareth Jones

Analysis of the two years of quantitative data for pupil progress considered:

- The performance of all Oxfordshire schools

- Whether the Key Stage 1 performance of the schools involved in the campaign improved or declined over time

- Whether the performance improved or declined relative to the national average and all Oxfordshire schools

- Whether performance improved or declined relative to the non-participating target schools

- The significance of the rate of change

- Any indication of past trends ending or reversing.

Consideration was given to:

- Factors that might cause these patterns

- What supports schools where achievement is good

- Barriers that may be preventing schools from making expected progress.

After compiling both the qualitative and quantitative data from these sources, the report was written and the following results gathered.

5.2 CHILDREN AS READERS

TO IMPROVE READING STANDARDS

Over the two years of the campaign, more than 1,000 pupils participated in either the Project X Code reading intervention or the volunteering programme or both. Significant gains were seen in both pupils' reading ability and their enjoyment of reading.

The key objective of the Oxfordshire Reading Campaign was to improve the reading attainment of Year 2 pupils across the county, with pupils achieving a level 2b+ in their Key Stage 1 reading assessment.

The statistics show that at the end of the first year, 81% of Year 2 pupils in Oxfordshire reached the expected level of 2b+ in national reading assessments, meeting the target set for the campaign. At the end of the second year, this figure was 82%. While this did not meet the target set for the campaign, results continue on an upward trajectory. It is also worth noting that 83% of Year 2 pupils who attend schools that participated in the campaign attained level 2b+ in 2014, above Oxfordshire average.

Schools that participated also did considerably

better than target schools who chose not to take part in the campaign. In 2014, 77% of Year 2 pupils from schools who were part of the target group but did not take part attained level 2b+ in national reading assessments.

As well as attainment data, self-reported data from participants highlights the effectiveness of the campaign, and the positive impact it has had on pupils. Teaching staff reported a definite improvement in pupils' ability, with 85% of teachers and teaching assistants commenting that the children are more confident in class. Meanwhile, 78% of teachers strongly agree that the children enjoyed taking part in Project X Code, and 60% have clearly noticed an improvement in pupils' reading ability.

> " Some progress has been amazing – minimum one year in six months and in other cases two years and above. "

> " ...they see themselves as successful, sharing their successes regularly with teaching staff. "

> " Pupils are more engaged in class, more confident in both reading and writing activities, and bring the rich language used in the books to their work. "

> " Most pupils have made eight months' to two years' progress. All pupils love Project X Code, the characters, the plot and pictures enthral them. "

Children at Caldecott Primary School, pointing to the Project X Code Microworld map

Improvement has also been noticed in areas other than reading; many practitioners commented on how pupils' behaviour has improved as a result of the campaign:

> " The pupils are very well behaved in the sessions and I feel that they have taken this discipline back to the class, improving their behaviour in school. "

> " Behavioural issues with some children have improved considerably. "

Better behaviour means that pupils can concentrate more in class and therefore achieve more. This improvement could be attributed to:

- Pupils' increased self-confidence because of their greater reading and decoding ability
- Better reading skills enabling pupils to participate more effectively and contribute more in all areas of academic life
- Pride in the fact that they were chosen for something 'special', which many of their classmates wanted to join as well. As one teaching assistant explained: *"[they] enjoyed being picked for something".*

Children at Carterton Primary School in front of their Microworld entrance

NOT JUST ANOTHER INTERVENTION

One major reason why the intervention has been so successful with children is the way in which it has been presented to them: as a special club, not an intervention. Upon joining, pupils become part of the Project X Code team, often adopting a role as one of the characters in the books, and crawling through a Microworld entrance to shrink down into their reading adventure.

This role play detracts from any suggestion that this is an intervention to improve poor reading skills; instead they view it as an adventure, team or club that they are proud and excited to feel part of. The comments from teaching assistants support this:

> " I think the project has been delivered to selected children making them feel proud to have been chosen and they have no idea it is because they need a little extra help. "

> " The children simply love it. I feel they are learning reading skills without realising and as time has gone on it has become more and more embedded as a key intervention. "

> " It has really improved the confidence and engagement of all my pupils. All have not wanted to stop. "

> " The pupils are very passionate about Team X and its characters. It has shown them the joy of reading. "

FOSTER A CULTURE OF READING AND A LOVE OF BOOKS

Headline figures:[3]

63% READ A LOT MORE
73% ENJOY READING MUCH MORE

74% **FEEL STRONGLY THEY READ BETTER NOW**

50% **READ AT LEAST ONCE A DAY**

68% **75%**

74% **STRONGLY AGREE THEY ARE NOW GOOD AT READING**

63% of pupils read a lot more, and **73%** enjoy reading much more, as a result of the campaign

74% of pupils feel strongly that they are better at reading now

50% of pupils read at least once a day; the remaining **50%** read at least several times a week
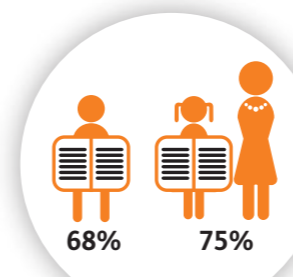
68% of pupils read on their own, while **75%** read with parents and/or teachers

74% of pupils strongly agree that they are now good at reading

3. Pupils referred to here took part in either Project X Code, the volunteering programme or both

a. Improve confidence and promote reading for pleasure

Research shows that children who enjoy reading also have better literacy skills – not just in reading, but also in speaking and writing[3].

> ❝ Young people who enjoy reading very much are nearly four times as likely to read above the level expected for their age compared with young people who do not enjoy reading at all.[4] ❞

73% of the children surveyed as part of the campaign stated that they now enjoy reading a lot more, and 63% of children now read a lot more – with 100% of children reading at least several times a week and 50% of children reading everyday.

40% of volunteers stated the child they were reading with was chosen to take part because they were shy and/or lacked confidence in their reading. At the end of the project 74% of the children surveyed stated that they are good at reading.

61% of teachers agree that pupils' reading has improved and that pupils are now reading more for pleasure.

> ❝ Children experience high-quality texts by being read to and sharing books. They develop important skills for reading such as book talk, confidence and ability to choose texts and develop a love of reading. ❞
>
> **Anna, Faringdon School**

b. Improve attitudes towards reading (more frequent, social interaction around reading)

Particularly encouraging was the discovery that most children are reading more now than before, and are happy to read by themselves, without pressure from adults at school or at home. Staff have commented on this: 85% of teachers and 74% of teaching assistants say that children are reading more for pleasure now than before. Volunteers are similarly positive in their comments about the children with whom they work: three-quarters think that their child has improved their book-choosing skills, while nine out of ten reported that their child particularly enjoyed and benefited from having one-to-one time with an adult.

This final element is perhaps the key benefit of the volunteering strand for many children, offering some a rare opportunity to enjoy high-quality one-to-one time with an adult, not only to read books but also to express opinions and ideas. The cognitive benefits and emotional reassurance that it can bring makes this an important element of learning and personal development.

Children talked confidently about why they liked to read. The following were the most popular answers:
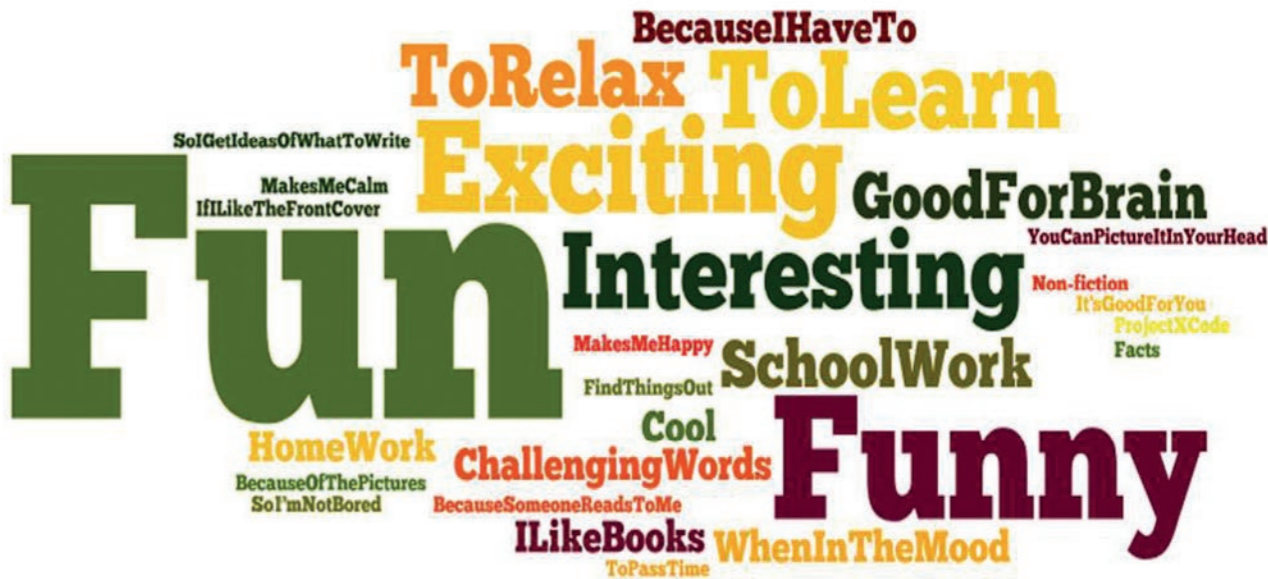
4. Clark, C. (2014). Children's and Young People's Reading in 2013. Findings from the 2013 National Literacy Trust's annual survey. London: National Literacy Trust, p. 8

c. Increase knowledge of own reading preference

An impressive 89% of children can now identify what sort of books they like to read, either by title or by genre. Many named one of the picture books from the volunteering programme as their favourite book: **Traction Man, You Choose** and **Pumpkin Soup**. The rest showed a wide range of reading preferences, from traditional classics such as **The Tiger Who Came to Tea** and **The Cat in the Hat** to more modern favourites, such as **Diary of a Wimpy Kid** and **Hello Kitty**.

Children were also able to list a wide range of genres, from poetry to non-fiction, comics and adventure stories, thus indicating a broad exposure to reading materials through the project. Although reading for enjoyment was not the main focus of Project X Code, the children's enthusiasm and love of the books is clear as they featured amongst the top choices. This could indicate that these were the first books that the children could engage with and read fairly proficiently.

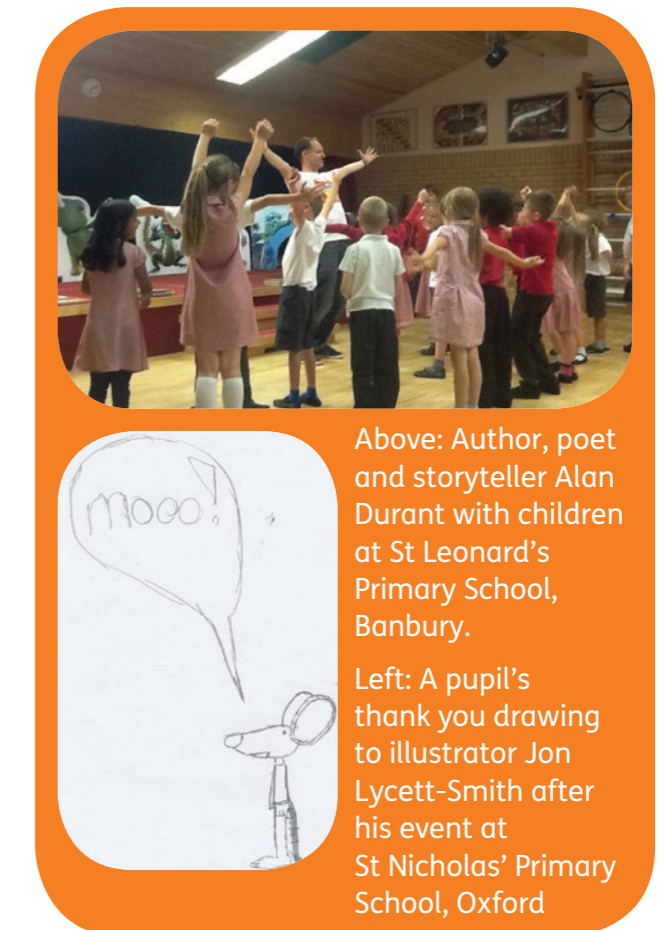**Children could also explain why they had chosen a particular book, series or genre as their favourite. Often, for example, the appearance of familiar people, animals or emotions that they experienced when reading influenced their choice:**

Because it is funny when his trousers come down.

The characters make me laugh.

Because it will help you.

It is nice. It has songs.

You can choose to be whatever you like.

Because they are my favourite band.

I like it because he is funny and cheeky.

They played football.

You find out about the footballers.

I like it because it has funny pictures.

It is interesting.

It is about a cat.

Love animals and dinosaurs.

Gives me a challenge.

You can use your imagination.

Because it has fighting.

I like that they have lots of adventures in them.

Popular book genres, characters and titles chosen by pupils

The focus groups held in the final term of the campaign sought to explore how confidently children could talk about their reading choices and preferences. The pupils were asked to complete a reading record, in the shape of a flower, to comment on when, where, how, why and with whom they read. Most took this on board eagerly, producing records of which they were proud.

Meeting authors was also a great incentive for children to want to read particular books, as seen in this pupil's comment on why he chose his favourite book: *"Because it's a picture book, and I met the author this week."*

Alex and Finley's reading flower records

Above: Author, poet and storyteller Alan Durant with children at St Leonard's Primary School, Banbury.

Left: A pupil's thank you drawing to illustrator Jon Lycett-Smith after his event at St Nicholas' Primary School, Oxford

RAISING ASPIRATIONS OF CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES

A large contributing factor to the success of Project X Code has been the way in which it has been introduced to pupils. It is not another intervention that they are being removed from regular class time to undertake; instead they see themselves as part of an exciting adventure, of which their friends are often jealous, as one teacher commented:

"The children have enjoyed their roles as code 'agents' and this has given them a special role in the reading 'class dynamic'."

This special role has meant that children have improved their reading skills without being aware of the purpose of Project X Code. Many of the children interviewed in the focus groups talked eagerly about their experience, how much they loved the stories and how they did not want to stop at the end. One boy confided: *"I cried when it was all over."*

Fortunately, the educational and emotional benefits have continued to be seen in the classroom past the end of Project X Code, as one teacher confirmed: *"Increased self-confidence, increased motivation, they see themselves as successful, sharing their successes regularly with teaching staff."*

These children are now not only more confident about their abilities as readers, they also feel competent and inspired to participate in the classroom rather than taking a back seat, as had previously been the case.

CASE STUDY

Developing skills, confidence and motivation

"I am writing to say a huge thank you for the help and support that you have given Tabitha through the Project X Code programme. Tabitha was really struggling with her reading when she started and as a consequence was losing her confidence and enjoyment of stories. The focused support and guidance your group provided, not to mention the thrilling storylines and your infectious enthusiasm, have really helped Taby progress with her reading and build on key skills. This has boosted her confidence, motivated her to read more and appreciate her skills as a natural storyteller!"

Claire, mother to Tabitha

5.3 READING SCHOOLS

SCHOOL OUTCOME: TO CONTRIBUTE TO WIDER IMPROVEMENTS IN EDUCATION OUTCOMES

The ultimate aim of the Oxfordshire Reading Campaign was to improve pupil attainment and promote a love of reading, both within schools and in the wider community. These outcomes could not be achieved without the support and dedication of school practitioners – teachers, teaching assistants and senior management. Therefore, a programme of training was essential to ensure that they had the skills, knowledge and confidence to help children progress both in their ability in and enjoyment of reading during and beyond the lifespan of the project.

COMMENDED BY OFSTED

"School leaders enthusiastically embrace local authority initiatives such as the 'Oxfordshire Reading Campaign' and these have helped to improve pupils' learning." [5]

"The school has taken part in the Oxfordshire Reading Campaign and this has had a positive impact on improving standards in reading." [6]

5.3.1 Teaching assistants as reading champions

Teaching assistants were the backbone of the campaign, assisting children to develop through Project X Code and liaising with teachers to ensure that messages about pupils' abilities, strengths and weaknesses were acknowledged. Edge Hill University research shows that children whose Project X Code sessions were led by a trained teaching assistant made significantly greater gains in reading age than those whose sessions were led by a teaching assistant who had not attended training.[7] Therefore equipping teaching assistants with the necessary skills and confidence was essential to the success of the intervention. Additionally, schools were advised to select teaching assistants who could confidently and enthusiastically support children throughout the intervention.

Training was delivered by Edge Hill University and based on the University's Reading Support model, where teaching assistants access nine half-day training sessions at regular intervals. All sessions included opportunities for reflection, celebration of successes and problem solving, as well as:

- Training on delivering Project X Code

- Improving communication between staff members, e.g. with class teachers

- Phonics subject knowledge, phonics into spelling and reading into writing

- Development of comprehension skills

- Teaching spoken language skills and vocabulary development

- Encouraging reading for pleasure.

5. Caldecott Primary School Inspection Report, published 17 June 2013, page 6:http://www.ofsted govukinspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/ELS/123087

6. Requires Improvement: Monitoring Visit to Bampton CofE Primary School Letter, published 22 May 2013, page 3: http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/ELS/123114

7. This is based on the progress of 158 children in 31 schools, who had an average of 39 sessions over 4 months (usually four half-hour sessions per week), delivered by trained teaching assistants. They made an average reading-age gain of 13.4 months during this time – at least 70% more than children whose teaching assistants had not received training, for whom the average reading-age gain was 7.8 months.

Senior leaders unanimously praised the benefits the campaign brought to their teaching assistants. At least 93% stated that the most useful aspect of the entire CPD programme was the teaching assistant training, while 97% acknowledged that the campaign improved teaching assistants' skills and confidence:

Caldecott Primary School teaching assistants with their Project X Code pupils

> " Teaching assistants are able to provide support because their understanding is greater... [and they] feel more confident... and can often use their own initiative now. "

> " Teaching assistants are applying what they have done in Project X Code into guided reading sessions and 1:1 reading very successfully, also through informal chats with other teaching assistants not involved in the project. "

When surveyed, teaching assistants either agreed or strongly agreed that the training they had received had increased their:

CONFIDENCE SUPPORTING EARLY LITERACY
100%

Confidence in supporting early literacy – **100%**

UNDERSTANDING OF IMPORTANCE OF PHONICS AND LITERACY
91%

Understanding of the importance of phonics and literacy – **91%**

ABILITY SUPPORTING CHILDREN TO READ FOR PLEASURE
100%

Ability in supporting children to read for pleasure – **100%**

KNOWLEDGE OF PRACTICAL WAYS TO SUPPORT EARLY READING
100%

Knowledge of practical ways to support early reading – **100%**

The benefits also extended beyond their work with pupils and into their roles more generally within the school. Most teaching assistants revealed that they now:

- Liaise more with other school staff
- Are more involved with the school community
- Enjoy sharing their ideas, experiences and best practice with teaching assistants from other schools
- Feel more valued and respected in school.

Teaching assistants stated that, in contrast to other work they were doing outside the classroom, the campaign brought a sense of structure and support to their work with pupils – it was a project they could take ownership of and in turn also receive praise for. This framework was appreciated by teaching assistants in all schools, regardless of their level of experience.

While teachers and senior management in schools often have the opportunity to engage with colleagues from other schools at training events and conferences, teaching assistants do not enjoy this same exposure. Therefore, the opportunity to engage with colleagues from other schools at the regular training sessions was one of the most highly valued aspects of the campaign for teaching assistants.

> " I love the fact that we can get together and talk about what other groups do, it's so helpful to get ideas from other groups/schools. "

> " I feel the training we have had has been brilliant. The group sessions have been a great way to brainstorm and get new ideas to feed back to school. "

Seeing Project X Code work in St Michael's CE Primary School, Oxford

"After seeing the animation, the children couldn't wait to get started and this enthusiasm is sustained throughout by the engaging texts: they especially love all the gadgets, the rides and the fun characters. All their friends want to do Project X Code too! The lesson plans have been excellent: easy to follow yet very detailed. Parents and others working with the children have commented already on how the children are applying their phonic knowledge automatically.

The children love coming out of class for it and run up to me in the playground, corridors, classrooms or anywhere in the school asking me when the next session is. Watching their reading improve and seeing their increased confidence is very satisfying, as is the encouragement and praise they give each other when we decode hard texts as a team.

Training has been excellent, with valuable background on language acquisition as well as information about comprehension and recapping phonics. Another plus is the chance to share ideas with other teachers and teaching assistants doing Project X Code in a variety of settings."

Kim Evans, Teaching Assistant

> " The training has been very comprehensive and the ability to share with other teaching assistants and find solutions has been amazing. "

5.3.2 Reading classrooms

Another key element of CPD provision for school staff focused on improving teachers' skills and knowledge of early literacy. The **Making a Difference at Key Stage 1** CPD programme was designed to equip Year 1 and 2 teachers with the expertise to understand current expectations and approaches to the teaching of early reading and to encourage a whole-school review of provision and practice.

Subjects covered included:

- The simple view of reading
- Key characteristics of effective shared and guided reading sessions
- Teaching systematic synthetic phonics
- Developing comprehension skills
- Teaching spoken language skills and vocabulary development
- Phonics into spelling and reading into writing
- Promoting reading for pleasure.

Improvement in Phonics Screening Check outcomes

The results of the Phonics Screening Check for 2013/2014 were analysed and compared as phonics constituted part of the CPD training programme.

In 2013/14, 75% of Year 1 children in schools that participated in the campaign met the expected standard in the Phonics Screening Check. In target schools that did not participate, this figure was 67%.

The statistic for participating schools compares favourably with the national figure of 74% and Oxfordshire figure of 73%.

One volunteer reader commented that a teacher had told her that the child she read with *"...had passed recent phonics tests with flying colours, recognising 36 words, when previously he only recognised four."*

Teachers from schools taking part in both years of the campaign benefited from six full-day training sessions, while those just taking part in the second year attended three or four sessions.

When surveyed, teachers spoke very favourably about how their CPD sessions had impacted on their classroom practice.

85% RATED THE TRAINING AS VALUABLE

85% rated the training as valuable

74% IMPROVED THEIR TEACHING AS A RESULT

74% had improved their teaching of early reading as a result

92% APPRECIATED MEETING COLLEAGUES REGULARLY

92% appreciated the opportunity to meet regularly with colleagues from other schools

87% APPLIED NEW IDEAS IN THE CLASSROOM

87% had taken new ideas from the training and applied them in the classroom

In particular, teachers were complimentary about the new ideas they had taken from their sessions, for example:

- Group/guided reading (especially concerning comprehension)
- Reading for pleasure (including interactive sessions to promote a love of reading)
- Redesigning reading areas
- Using big books for shared reading
- Book talk
- Story-boxing method[8]
- Phonics displays, e.g. sounds and spellings
- Vocabulary development, e.g. WOW words and Goldilocks word bank[9]

Applying CPD learning to classroom teaching

"From attending those sessions and observing what is happening in the Project X Code intervention, I have changed the way I approach my literacy lessons; instead of separating phonics from guided reading, I often include them both. Encouragingly, the children are seeing links between the phonics and how they are used in a wider context."

Year 2 teacher

"The CPD programme has developed teachers' knowledge, the campaign helped to focus the school on reading at Key Stage 1… [and] staff are now using a greater range of resources."

Headteacher

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8. Story-boxing is a strategy to support independent writing through identifying five basic story structure sections: opening, build-up, problem, resolution, ending. Once children can unpick these, they can use this to support their own story writing.

9. Goldilocks words are words that are 'not too easy, not too hard, but just right'. Teachers use words from texts that they read aloud to children to extend their vocabulary. Children are encouraged to internalise new words and will start using them independently in a range of contexts.

5.3.3 Literacy leadership

The National Literacy Trust emphasised the importance of strong leadership in schools from the start, to ensure that all aspects were fully and effectively implemented so that the campaign would have the greatest possible benefit for staff and pupils. A committed headteacher or senior leader would ensure their staff received the necessary support and fully informed of their training and how pupils were progressing.
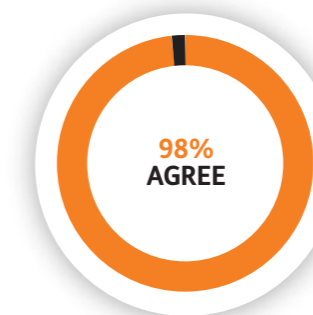
Senior management have commented favourably on the impact of the campaign on their school:
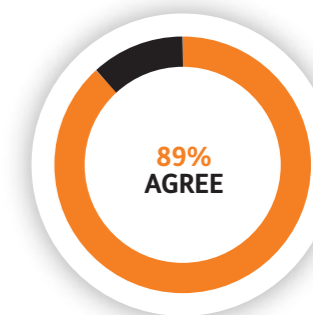
84% AGREE

84% agree that teaching of early literacy has become more effective as a result of CPD
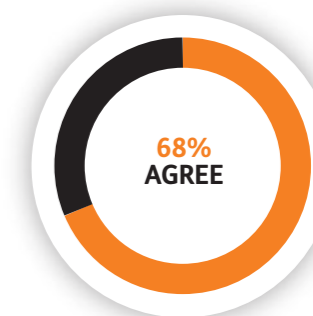
68% AGREE

68% agree that best practice in literacy is now being shared more frequently

98% AGREE

98% agree that training of teaching assistants has improved their skills and confidence in supporting children

89% AGREE

89% agree that the project was good value for money

Two senior leadership conferences were held – one during each year of the campaign – to provide a forum for discussion of the Oxfordshire Reading Campaign and to help inform senior leadership about developments in literacy teaching.

- Marilyn Mottram, HMI Deputy National lead for English and Literacy, who talked about the implications of the new Inspection Framework and what to expect in terms of the inspection of English

- Professor Charles Desforges OBE, who gave a talk entitled *Parents Matter: Making the most of support for their children's reading*

- Nikki Gamble, who spoke about building an outstanding reading school

- Jean Gross CBE, on creating places to talk (which was sponsored by the Oxford University Press)

An encouraging 72% of attendees believed the conferences had increased their subject knowledge in school.

CASE STUDY

Headteachers talk about the campaign

"It has made a large impact and has been enthusiastically received by children. We are over the moon. The project has been inspirational – other children want to be on it. It has raised our reading profile and we have a reading champion. We have met and exceeded our targets. Staff are now involved and we can do it across the primary phase with kids who have not got into the joy of reading. This makes a real impact educationally."

"There has been greater focus on reading skills being developed through appropriate materials... We now have a cohesive scheme going throughout the school."

"[Our long-term strategy is] to use books to teach all aspects of literacy and build a love of books, which is the philosophy behind the campaign."

"[The campaign] has been part of our School Development Plan – our literacy focus is to raise standards in writing. The support from our school improvement consultant, especially with regard to developing strategies to support pupils, exiting strategies, was of particular value."

5.4 GETTING OXFORDSHIRE READING

COMMUNITY OUTCOME: TO ENGAGE THE WHOLE COMMUNITY IN THIS PURSUIT OF HIGH STANDARDS OF LITERACY

The main aim of the volunteering programme was to increase children's love of reading and expose them to more books and different genres. The children taking part in this strand were chosen for various reasons, with some of the children moving on from Project X Code to reading with a volunteer. However the main reasons for children's participation given by volunteers in the survey were that the child either lacked confidence or lacked exposure to reading at home. For many of the children taking part in this strand, it was a chance to be read to, to talk about books and to explore different types of books and genres.

Over the course of the two-year campaign, 209 volunteers were trained, the majority of them parents, grandparents and other family members, with around 50 recruited with support from the National Literacy Trust; and the *Oxford Mail*. The volunteers were from a wide range of backgrounds and top reasons listed for volunteering were: to make a difference (73%), to engage with their children's school (69%) and to engage with their local community (31%). Volunteers attended training before they started their reading sessions and were given a booklet with ideas and materials to support their sessions. More than 260 children were supported by these volunteers. Many of the volunteers will continue to read at their schools in the next academic year, and two volunteers have decided to use their experience to pursue a degree in education.

The campaign brought benefits to the volunteers as well as to the children with whom they worked:

69% ENJOYED THEIR EXPERIENCE

69% stated that they enjoyed their experience a lot

51% FEEL MORE ENGAGED

51% now feel more engaged with their children's school

43% FEEL MORE KNOWLEDGEABLE

43% feel more knowledgeable about early reading

The volunteer programme concentrated on sharing and enjoying books, with volunteers reading and talking to the children, as well as playing games. Volunteers were also offered an additional training session, run in partnership with the Oxford Children's Library, which focused on practical activities to support early reading with children and in particular how to help children choose books that are right for them. These sessions were organised in response to comments from volunteers who were struggling to find books that matched their pupil's interests, and gave tips on how to engage children with a new text and how to encourage children to talk about books. Feedback on these sessions was overwhelmingly positive, with volunteers reporting back on how they used the activities in their sessions.

> " I really enjoyed reading there, and in three out of the four children I read with, there was noticeable improvement, and pleasure in following the stories. I'll be training to teach secondary English from September. Thanks for putting me in touch with the school. "
>
> **Volunteer at Our Lady of Lourdes School**

> " The training was very good and the whole idea fits in with the work I did for my MA dissertation. So it will be good to be doing something I really think is important for all children but especially the ones who haven't found it so easy to enjoy books. "
>
> **Volunteer at Stanford in the Vale School**

Over the moon

*"I just need to let you know how over the moon I am after today, this is a child who had never met me before Monday, and yet he beamed as soon as he saw me and jumped up when I fetched him from the classroom, he was ecstatic when he learned that I actually had remembered to bring him back the quirky 'toy eye' from my 'ice breaker bag' last Monday, he really tucked into playing Snap with me and was delighted to have beaten me. We spent a long time on the pop-up dinosaur book I brought in from home, he was reading some names of dinosaurs and exploring it happily and carefully. We then had a look at **Haunted House** by Jan Pienkowski and that's when I wanted to finish and tried to get him to tick the miles, but he spotted another book he wanted to do, so we did (**Monster Island** again from Monday). He wanted more so we chose 2 books for next week! Fun, fun, fun - so glad he is enjoying this and it seems to bear fruit already!"*

Heidrun, volunteer at St Nicholas' Primary School, Oxford

Senior managers and teachers were complimentary about the effect of the volunteering programme in their schools, with 54% agreeing that community cohesion had improved as a result, as one teacher at Chalgrove Primary School observed: *"Volunteer reading has been a great success."*

6 CONCLUSION AND LEGACY

The findings in this report conclusively show that the Oxfordshire Reading Campaign had a profound effect on the reading ability and behaviours of children in participating schools, and on those responsible for supporting them in the classroom and beyond.

6.1 KEY SUCCESSES

Improved attainment

- In 2014, 83% of Key Stage 1 pupils in schools who took part part in the campaign for one or two years achieved a level 2b+ in reading, compared to 77% of pupils at target schools who did not take part.
- Pupils at some schools achieved a considerable reading-age gain of over 20 months in just four months.
- Phonics screening checks show improvement in schools that have received the CPD training.

> " Project X Code has been fantastic for my lower ability and less confident readers – they have made great progress. "

> " Some progress has been amazing – minimum one year in six months and in other cases two years and above. "

Increased enjoyment of reading

- 93% of teachers said that pupils have enjoyed reading in Project X Code and/or with a volunteer.
- 95% of teachers agreed that pupils' reading progress had increased.
- 85% of teachers agreed that their pupils are now reading more for pleasure, and that pupils are now more confident in class.
- 78% said that parents have commented on the progress their children have made since taking part either in Project X Code or in the volunteering strand.

> " The children have completely fallen in love with Project X Code and are desperate to read in the group. "

> " Project X Code books have helped me enjoy reading more, and I am always in the front of the queue when it's time to go out! "
>
> **Kera, aged 7**

> " I cried when I finished Project X Code. "
>
> **Christopher, 7**

Improved practice

- Feedback from schools shows they value the campaign and the impact it has had in schools.

- Teachers have added to their literacy practices and are implementing new activities in their classrooms.

- Teaching assistants feel more confident, valued and skilled in their practice. Communication with other members of staff in the school, as well as with colleagues in other schools, has improved.

- Headteachers reported positively on the impact of the campaign in their schools and are using it to inform their long-term literacy strategy. Many have committed to continue using Project X Code with further Key Stage 1 groups after the campaign has officially ended.

- Volunteers have benefited from the training and their experience, reporting that they feel they have made a difference, improved their own skills in supporting early literacy and feel part of their local school community.

Improved contact with parents

Parental engagement has increased during the campaign in some schools, with one teaching assistant remarking that: *"Close liaison with parents has been invaluable in enhancing the effectiveness of the programme, and it seems parents have appreciated this aspect too."*

A successful partnership

The Oxfordshire Reading Campaign led to a very successful partnership between Edge Hill University and the National Literacy Trust. This partnership brought together Edge Hill University's expertise in developing best practice in the teaching of early reading and the National Literacy Trust's experience of working with schools on targeted projects. We would also like to thank Oxford University Press for their support of the campaign through contributing to our events and conferences, and by offering discounted resources to participating schools.

Improved communication and practice within schools

The involvement of both teaching assistants and Key Stage 1 teachers has meant that, in many schools, there has been an improvement in communication between the two professionals with regard to pupil development, progress and needs, as one deputy head commented: *"The teaching assistants have good links with the class teachers and both can easily and immediately pick up if a child is either struggling with a particular issue or if they have enjoyed success that should be celebrated."*

Government and Ofsted recognition

Former education secretary Michael Gove pledged his support for the Oxfordshire Reading Campaign, calling it a *"brilliant initiative"*, while Prime Minister David Cameron, unable to attend a celebration event in his Witney constituency sent his very best wishes to all the participants.

The campaign has also been recognised by Ofsted in several school reports, which commented on the enthusiasm of schools in embracing the initiative and the positive impact it has had on improving reading standards.

Media recognition

The Oxfordshire Reading Campaign was championed from the start by the *Oxford Mail* in its 'Get Oxfordshire Reading Campaign'. Over the course of the two-year programme, the *Oxford Mail* supported the campaign by documenting its highlights and helping with such matters as recruiting volunteer readers. Additionally, BBC Radio Oxford featured the campaign four times, to talk about and celebrate the importance of reading for children and young people.

BBC Radio Read-Along

In December 2013, BBC Radio Oxford launched a 'Joy of Reading' Campaign, and worked with the Oxfordshire Reading Campaign team to promote a Read-Along to Oxfordshire schools. Each day, for five days, the Malcolm Boyden morning programme broadcast a celebrity reading an extract from a book or a poem; children in participating schools could follow in class with a specially made booklet. Well-known readers included Prime Minister David Cameron, comedian Alexander Armstrong and author and actress Fiona Fullerton. The week culminated in a live broadcast from Windmill Primary School, a campaign school, and several other schools were featured on broadcasts during the other days.

Winning awards

In just two years, the Oxfordshire Reading Campaign was recognised in two separate awards ceremonies:

- The campaign was commended in the 'Delivering Better Outcomes' category in the 2014 MJ Awards, the trade magazine for local government

- The BBC Radio Oxford Read-Along, which was run with the assistance of the Oxfordshire Reading Campaign, won a Silver Award for Best Community Programming in the 2014 Radio Academy Awards.

Building local ties

With an eye on the sustainability of the campaign, the National Literacy Trust worked closely with several local organisations, ensuring that schools were made aware of local literacy support available to them both during the campaign and after it ended.

- **The Oxford Story Museum:**

The campaign linked up with the Story Museum to hold a special storytelling event for participating schools. Best-selling author and illustrator Mo Willems delighted more than 100 children with a workshop based on his **Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus** books. The children enjoyed an afternoon out, while the Story Museum received media attention for hosting the event. The event contributed significantly to the campaign's objective of encouraging a love of reading.

- **Oxfordshire Library Service:**

The National Literacy Trust worked closely with the Oxfordshire Library Service to run training sessions for volunteers to support them in reading with young children. Each volunteer was invited to attend an event at a local library where experienced children's librarians discussed effective reading strategies, book choices and how to encourage children to express opinions on books. Events were also held for parents of children taking part in the campaign, to inspire ways in which they could engage with their sons and daughters in reading. The library service ran a similar event for teachers as part of their CPD training, concentrating on reading for pleasure and giving ideas on popular books for children. Additionally the National Literacy Trust disseminated information on joining the library and library-related activities to schools and families.

6.2 CHALLENGES

Any project has challenges as well as successes. The table below contains the most common issues faced during the Oxfordshire Reading Campaign and the actions taken to remedy them.

Challenge	Actions taken
Recruitment of target schools due to intervention 'fatigue': Some target schools were not keen to sign up to what they saw as 'yet another intervention' that would add to their already busy workload.	Target schools were contacted consistently by both the National Literacy Trust and the Oxfordshire County Council for more than six months to raise the profile of the campaign and reassure schools of ongoing support. The good Key Stage 1 results at the end of the first year led to more schools signing up.
Achieving level 2b+ at the end of Key Stage 1: Not all schools taking part in the Oxfordshire Reading Campaign met the level 2b target.	A school audit was devised and distributed to participating schools so senior leadership teams could review the campaign requirements and make adjustments. School improvement consultants prioritised school visits according to need and used the audit as a starting point for conversations about possible issues. Training places were offered to schools with new teaching assistants and school improvement consultants also conducted bespoke in-house training.
Communication difficulties Communication in some schools did not filter down to all members of staff involved in the campaign, meaning that messages got lost.	Teachers and teaching assistants were asked to provide an email address that they could be reached on. During support and challenge visits, consultants tried to identify key staff to contact and build relationships with schools.
Difficulty obtaining PERA data: Some schools continuously failed to submit PERA data for their pupils, despite a formal requirement to do so.	Help with data inputting was offered by Edge Hill University's Reading Support team, the school improvement consultants and the county council. Schools were reminded through each term's newsletter, at training sessions and during visits to keep submitting entry and exit PERA data.
Placing volunteers: Some schools in the campaign struggled to engage volunteers from their local community, meaning their participation in the volunteering strand was either delayed or prevented.	Schools were supported in advertising the volunteering opportunities to their local community and the parents at their school. Volunteers were also recruited through the campaign microsite and and the *Oxford Mail.*
Attendance at conferences: Attendance by school staff at conferences organised by the National Literacy Trust and Edge Hill University was adversely affected by various factors, e.g. overlap with other events or training, no staff cover available.	Close coordination with Oxfordshire County Council to try to ensure there was no overlap with any other events or training. National Literacy Trust staff also collected feedback from teachers who attended to ensure events matched their priorities and preferred structure.
Survey participation: The qualitative data collected throughout the project was excellent, and proved extremely useful to the evaluation. However, the quantitative attitudinal data was derived from small samples.	The parental data was not used to inform statistical analysis of the project because the sample was too low to be valid.

6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are recommendations that could be taken into consideration if further, similar projects are commissioned and run.

1. Arrange project set-up visits at the start of a campaign

While schools received several support and challenge visits throughout the duration of the campaign, it would be useful to have an initial project set-up visit to:

- Explain how the campaign works and the required commitment and expectations
- Meet participating staff, and record relevant contact details to facilitate communication
- Gain the commitment and ownership required to lead the campaign effectively
- Explain the importance of regular data submission
- Sign formal agreements to commit schools to the campaign from the start.

2. Hold a launch event at local schools

The celebration events to mark the end of the campaign were very popular with schools and pupils, and helped families and communities understand what the campaign was about. By holding launch events at schools, and inviting other local schools, we could:

- Raise the programme's profile in the community
- Attract interest from potential volunteers
- Inform and engage parents, and survey them initially (following this up later to measure change)
- Reinforce messages and objectives to schools.

3. Liaise closely with the County Council when arranging training dates

Time is very precious for school staff, and training can be difficult to fit in with other responsibilities. Sometimes training events clashed with council-run training sessions, making it difficult or impossible for staff to attend. By communicating draft schedules, such clashes could be reduced, if not avoided altogether.

4. Embed monitoring and evaluation at all stages of the project

Obtaining enough data to conduct an in-depth evaluation of the project with statistically valid samples and a high level of quality proved a challenge. In hindsight, it may have been useful to communicate better with all participants on what was required of them in terms of evaluation, whether it was taking part in a survey, or administering a survey. End of project celebration events could notably have been used to let parents fill in final feedback forms, which could have yielded more quantitative data.

6.4 LEGACY

The Oxfordshire Reading Campaign has now officially ended but the National Literacy Trust provided support for participating schools early in the autumn term to help them officially exit from the programme and to enable them to keep their good work going. A booklet was produced, giving information on:

• How and where to access further CPD training for staff

• The National Literacy Trust Network

• Details of other organisations, such as local volunteer reading charities, that have a similar remit to the ethos of the campaign

• Accessing local library services

• Other literacy-related activities and opportunities in Oxfordshire.

The Oxfordshire Reading Campaign website, **www.oxfordshirereading.co.uk**, will remain online for one year, providing links to further information for schools and members of the community.