

Oxfordshire Reading Campaign

Report for Children's Scrutiny Committee for the meeting on 18th April 2013

Background:

The Oxfordshire Reading Campaign (ORC) is part of the Campaigns Strand (Strand 2) of the Local Authority's 'Strategy for Change – Improving Educational Outcomes in Oxfordshire'. It is a commissioned programme which is being delivered by the National Literacy Trust in partnership with Edge Hill University, who coordinate training and data collection; and Oxford University Press whose Project X CODE is used as the intervention programme. The programme runs for two academic years from September 2012 to July 2014.

Aims:

The Commissioned Programme has the following aims, to:

- improve substantially reading standards as measured at Level 2B+ in Key Stage 1 tests
- contribute to wider improvements in educational outcomes
- raise the aspirations of children and families
- foster a culture of reading and a love of books
- engage the whole community in the pursuit of high standards of literacy

The programme has specific ambitious aims to achieve targets of 80% at Level 2B+ in reading in 2013, and 86% at Level 2B+ in 2014. The improvement in targets was based on 2011 data where the Oxfordshire figure for Level 2B+ was 74%.

The Programme:

There are three key strands to the programme:

- A whole school improvement model which is delivered through a new literacy intervention programme called Project X CODE published by Oxford University Press
- A bespoke volunteering programme co-ordinated by a volunteering co-ordinator in each school
- A public campaign which engages effectively with Oxfordshire families, recruits local residents and employees as volunteers and ensures the campaign has a high profile regionally and nationally

Progress so far:

The National Literacy Trust (NLT) carried out much preparatory work during the summer of 2012 and held a launch conference on 28th September 2012. This conference introduced the programme to invited targeted schools and gave the schools details of what their commitment would be and the benefits that they would receive. Following the launch 44 primary schools signed up to be in the first wave of schools on the campaign. Training in how to use the intervention effectively was

delivered to all these schools in November and schools quickly introduced the programme to the children targeted for the intervention. The training has received very positive feedback from the teaching assistants involved and Project X CODE proved to be an instant success with the children.

A further conference was held on 25th February for schools to start the training programme during the summer of 2013. The take up for Wave 2 has been a little disappointing, especially given the very positive feedback from Wave 1 schools, some of whom were present at the second conference to give first-hand accounts of the immediate impact the programme is having in their schools. However we have a group of about 10 schools who have signed up to be part of Wave 2. We are also aware that some schools are using Project X in school without having joined the programme.

There was a really positive response to the public appeal in the Oxford Mail for volunteers with over 100 coming forward in the first few weeks. NLT closed the appeal and contacted all volunteers to explain the levels of commitment involved and the timeframe when volunteers would be needed in schools. Following this work 33 volunteers from the campaign were ready to go into schools with four students and their tutor from Oxford and Cherwell Valley College (OCVC); and four workers from Unipart. These volunteers receive a half day's training in school from the volunteer co-ordinators who have themselves attended training with NLT. All volunteers are also encouraged to attend a training session on children's literature run jointly with Oxfordshire Library Service. NLT have produced excellent handbooks for Volunteer Co-ordinators and Volunteers. We are also aware that many schools have been approached directly by volunteers living close by as a result of seeing the campaign in the newspaper. The offers of help have not been even across the county and there is a shortage of volunteers in Carterton, Didcot, and Abingdon. A second recruitment drive is being run in these areas by NLT in liaison with Fran Bardsley at Oxford Mail.

The public campaign has been very successful. Our main media partner the Oxford Mail have given the campaign fantastic coverage with many celebrities adding their support to the campaign including the Prime Minister, the Bishop of Oxford, the Lord Lieutenant of Oxfordshire, the High Sheriff of Oxfordshire, Oxfordshire's MPs, many authors including Philip Pullman, Colin Dexter MBE and Gillian Cross, and many others. The public have also been able to access information through the Oxfordshire County Council website, NLT's own website, social media including Facebook and Twitter, Primary Times (readership two million) and Netmums (with four million unique users).

Recent events and activities that have been highlighted through the public campaign are a microsite article: 'Reading is down to Dad's too!', a World Book Day article including an Oxford Mail piece on how to help your child choose a character for World Book Day with photos and interviews, Oxford Mail and site theme on Easter with advice on themed activities for children; and in March a Mo Willems event was held at the Story Museum for 100 pupils from ORC schools. In the near future there will be two partner events at the Chipping Norton Literary Festival which will be ORC branded, parent events at Oxfordshire libraries and a Philip Pullman competition. In

May Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service will be hosting a Book Gifting event in a Fire Station.

Data and Reporting

Edge Hill University are collecting a range of data from schools to supplement the performance data from Key Stage 1 Sats which should be available in July. This will cover attitudes to reading as well as individual progress data for pupils on the intervention programme. They will also be collecting data on the volunteering and public campaign strands of the programme.

NLT's interim report for year 1 will be submitted to Oxfordshire County Council in September 2013. The majority of the data will be collected between June and August.

APPENDIX 1: Schools in the Oxfordshire Reading Campaign

Wave 1 schools:

1. All Saints Primary, DIDCOT
2. Bampton CE Primary, BAMPTON
3. Barley Hill Primary, THAME
4. Benson CE Primary School, WALLINGFORD
5. Botley Primary, BOTLEY
6. Brookside Primary, BICESTER
7. Bure Park Primary School, BICESTER
8. Caldecott Primary School, ABINGDON
9. Carterton Primary, CARTERTON
10. Chalgrove Primary, CHALGROVE
11. Church Cowley St James, OXFORD
12. Cutteslowe Primary, OXFORD
13. Drayton Community Primary, ABINGDON
14. Dry Sandford Primary School, ABINGDON
15. Edward Feild Primary School, KIDLINGTON
16. Faringdon Infant School, FARINGDON
17. Gateway Primary School, CARTERTON
18. Glory Farm Primary School, BICESTER
19. Great Milton Church of England Primary School, OXFORD
20. Harwell Community Primary, DIDCOT
21. Hill View Primary School, BANBURY
22. John Hampden Primary THAME
23. Long Wittenham Primary, ABINGDON
24. Madley Brook Community Primary School, WITNEY
25. Millbrook Primary School, WANTAGE
26. New Marston Primary ABINGDON
27. Our Lady of Lourdes, WITNEY
28. Queen's Dyke Primary, WITNEY
29. St Amand's, EAST HENDRED
30. St Christopher's Church of England Primary School, OXFORD

31. St Ebbe's Church of England Primary School, OXFORD
32. St John The Evangelist CE Primary School, CARTERTON
33. St John's Primary School, WALLINGFORD
34. St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, CARTERTON
35. St Leonard's Church of England Primary School, BANBURY
36. St Nicholas' Primary School, OXFORD
37. St Peter's, CASSINGTON
38. Stanford in the Vale
39. Stephen Freeman Community School, DIDCOT
40. Stockham Primary School, WANTAGE
41. Stonesfield Primary School, WITNEY
42. West Kidlington Primary, KIDLINGTON
43. West Oxford, OXFORD
44. Windmill Primary School, OXFORD
45. Wroxton Primary, BANBURY

Wave 2 Schools

1. Ewelme
 2. Fringford
 3. Holy Trinity
 4. Longworth
 5. Manor School, DIDCOT
 6. Our Lady's Catholic Primary, OXFORD
 7. St. Andrew's, OXFORD
 8. St. Michael's, OXFORD
 9. Sutton Courtney
- Possible Sandhills, OXFORD

Appendix 2: Feedback comments from schools

Comments following Teaching Assistant training December 2012

'This has been an excellent introduction into our school, we are already seeing positive results for some of the children involved after a very short time. The children and adults involved are all very enthusiastic about the project, with some very good resources and comprehensive training. It is quite intensive in terms of preparation time for the TA, but we feel very confident that it will make a big impact for the children involved.'

Peter Cansell, Headteacher, Harwell School

'At Glory Farm School the two boys and two girls selected for the Project X Code reading programme are enjoying the books so much, I have become quite a celebrity. They call out to me, "Are we doing Code today?" as I walk through their classrooms. The pupils' decoding skills have improved and they are all recognising

more vowel digraphs in words. The Code books are visually stunning and the plot appeals to the children and keeps them guessing.

There are so many strands to Project X that we will continue to be inspired for a long time. I like the monthly training sessions. I always come away with solutions to problems and new ideas.'

Julia Webb, TA at Glory Farm School, Banbury

We have not actually started the programme yet, but have just set up our 'Micro World' in school and have done a presentation to all of the children in KS1 and to say that the place is 'buzzing with anticipation' is an understatement!!!

I have completed my assessments of the targeted children and our first cohort of 4 are ready to start! We have contacted the parents and given them the link to the OUP website to watch the animation with their children. Feedback so far is extremely positive!

I have been given extra hours to work on the scheme and have timetabled in 4 x 1/2 hour sessions per week straight after lunch! I am very much looking forward to the New Year so I can get started!'

Tracey Harris, TA at Carterton Primary School

'The reading campaign is going great at the moment. The kids are so enthusiastic about the books and ask me every day is it Team X time yet!

We have already seen results in that some of the children are reading at home every day now too which was not happening before in some cases. In all I have 12 children who come out daily with me to read. Each one of them has grown in confidence and ability during the short time I have been reading with them. I would encourage other schools to make sure they are fully prepared resource wise and also read the books beforehand so that they get some idea of what it is all about. I have made all my children badges so we get into character when we come out to read.

Tracy Matthias, TA at Gateway Primary

'I am really enjoying the training. It is really nice to talk with other schools and pick up tips to use. I am also enjoying delivering the lessons and watching the children's enthusiasm, along with my own, they are engaged and progressing well already.'

Karen Williams, TA at Bampton Primary

Ruth Dollner, one of Project X CODE trainers commented: 'I have been overwhelmed by the enthusiasm and commitment of teaching assistants attending the CODE training. It has been a privilege to visit their schools: staff and children alike are excited by the initial impact on children's attitude to reading.'

Some feedback from the Spring Term

Case Study

Jenny Seijido, TA at Stanford in the Vale Primary School

I am now on week 7 of Project X Code, which is continuing to go fantastically well!

My school was a little reluctant when they were first introduced to this project. They felt that their classroom assistant would be stretched too much to work with the number of children that they had in Year 2 needing extra support with reading. It was therefore agreed that an extra member of staff needed to be employed to specifically and successfully implement the project, and I was recruited. My background is as a Key Stage 1 teacher and a Special Needs teacher.

I started working with my groups – 12 children split into three groups – after Christmas. It was decided that the sessions would take place in the afternoon, from 1-3pm, so that the children did not miss out on any maths and literacy in the mornings. I was worried that the children might be a little tired but this has not been the case; the books certainly keep the children awake!

All the children have thoroughly enjoyed both the storylines and the concept of Project X Code, and are totally immersed when reading, so much so that they are disappointed that we only have four afternoons a week and not five. One little boy asked me if I could tell his mum where she could buy Project X Code books for him! Another child commented that these were the first exciting books that he had ever read.

Many of the children now see themselves as readers

During the sessions the children are both animated and focused. I feel this is due to not only the books but also the pace and length of the lesson plans. Children that were once reluctant readers are now so much more confident and see themselves as readers. Many have also mentioned that they are reading more than before at home. All of the children's progress is very evident and I am very much looking forward to the results of their assessments at the end of the ten weeks.

I have found the intervention training very helpful. After leaving each session I feel both motivated and confident to implement the programme in school. It was also very interesting sharing with colleagues what was and wasn't working in schools with the Project. Although the handbooks are very easy to follow it was very helpful spending time during the training sessions going through these and looking at areas such as assessments.

I must say I have never worked with a programme that has accelerated a child's learning and confidence in reading in such a short time.