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Governors
for Schools
Conference
2023.

The case for reading for pleasure in Primary School

[#GfSConference2023](#)

Housekeeping

- Many thanks for taking the time to attend the Governors for Schools Conference 2023. Please note that this session will be recorded and uploaded to our website following the conference. You will receive an email alert as soon as recordings are available.
- If you have any questions for our panellists, please ask them using Zoom's Q&A feature.
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A longitudinal study with **3000** children in years 3, 4 and 5.

20 primary schools in England adopted a daily storytime in the spring term of 2023.

Aim:

to explore the effect of being read to every day on 7-10-year-olds and their reading for pleasure



STORYTIME
IN SCHOOL

Alison David
Consumer Insight Director

An imprint of HarperCollins Publishers
Farshore

Our purpose: to make every child a proud reader

through our broad portfolio and our research programme



Invest in research

- Barriers to children's reading for pleasure / how to break them down
- What are the enablers?

Farshore

Share what we

Why is reading for pleasure so important?

Greater impact on a child's outcomes than their parents' educational level or socio-economic group

Academic benefits:

Reading attainment
Writing ability
Comprehension
Grammar
Spelling
Vocabulary
Maths

Emotional benefits:

Wellbeing
Happiness
Reduces stress
Increases empathy
Resilience
Concentration

Reading for Pleasure statutory requirement:
National Curriculum in England

Ofsted: seeking evidence of
Reading for Pleasure

The Reading Framework 2023:
focus on Reading for Pleasure

There is a crisis in children's reading for pleasure

25% of children read for pleasure daily or nearly every day (4+ days per week), down from **38%** in 2012

21% rarely or never read for pleasure, up from **13%** in 2012

57% of children don't enjoy reading in their spare time
National Literacy Trust

29% of children in England enjoy reading (international average **42%**)
The Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS)

Barriers and enablers

Reading seen as learning, a school subject
Screen time is entertainment of choice

How to break down the barriers?

- Wide choice
- Free choice
- Reading aloud to children

Most children not read to, at all, or often enough, at home

- 46% of 5-7s-year-olds
- 25% 8-10-year-olds



Only 24% 8-10s read to daily, just for fun and relaxation, at school

30% of teachers do not read aloud to their class

Busy curriculum, storytime not prioritised

Reading for Pleasure statutory

20 primary schools in England

Circa **3000** children age 7-10 (Years 3, 4 and 5)

86 teachers

20 minutes of storytime daily, spring term 2023

Children part of book selection process

200 new books

No 'teaching'!

Farshore

| Data gathering

Pre- and post-questionnaires: teachers
67 teachers responded at end of trial

Pre- and post-questionnaires: children
1558 children responded at end of trial

Year 4 (age 8-9) Salford Sentence Reading and Comprehension Test
Reading attainment results from 724 children
Reading comprehension results from 695 children

End of trial in-depth interviews with teachers at six schools

Teachers' hopes for the trial

Develop a love of reading:

I hope certain children will stop seeing reading as a 'task' or something they 'have' to do. Instead know they can take real pleasure from reading a book.

Foster skills like empathy, resilience, concentration or mindfulness and improve mental well-being:

I would like the children to use reading as a way to relax and improve their well-being.

Open new worlds, feed children's imagination or build cultural capital:

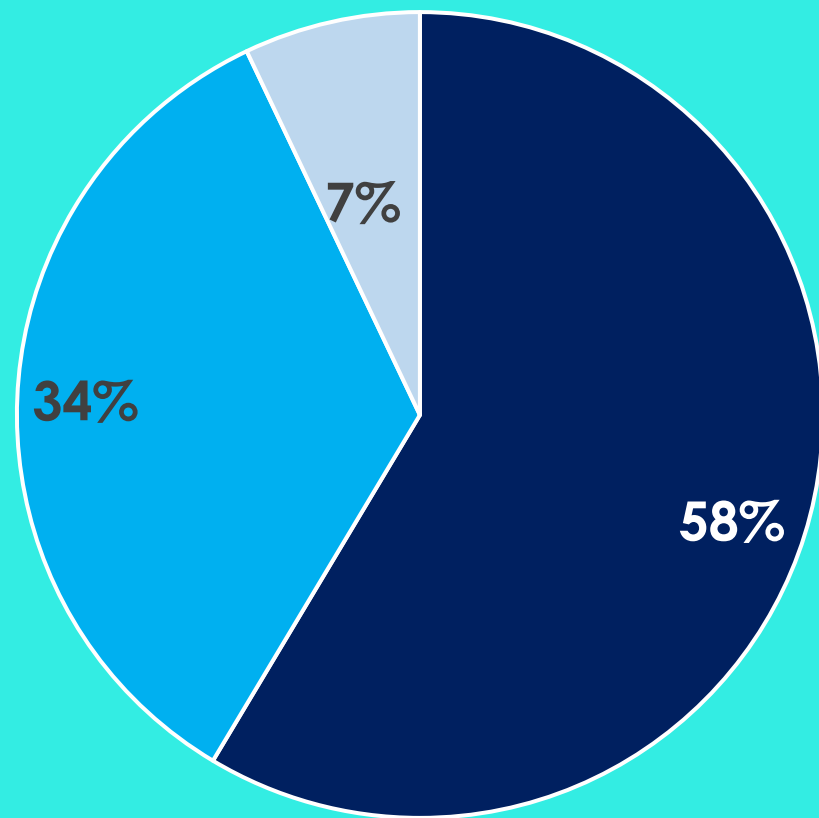
Increase the children's love of reading, their cultural capital, and their empathy for others.

Improve children's reading attainment:

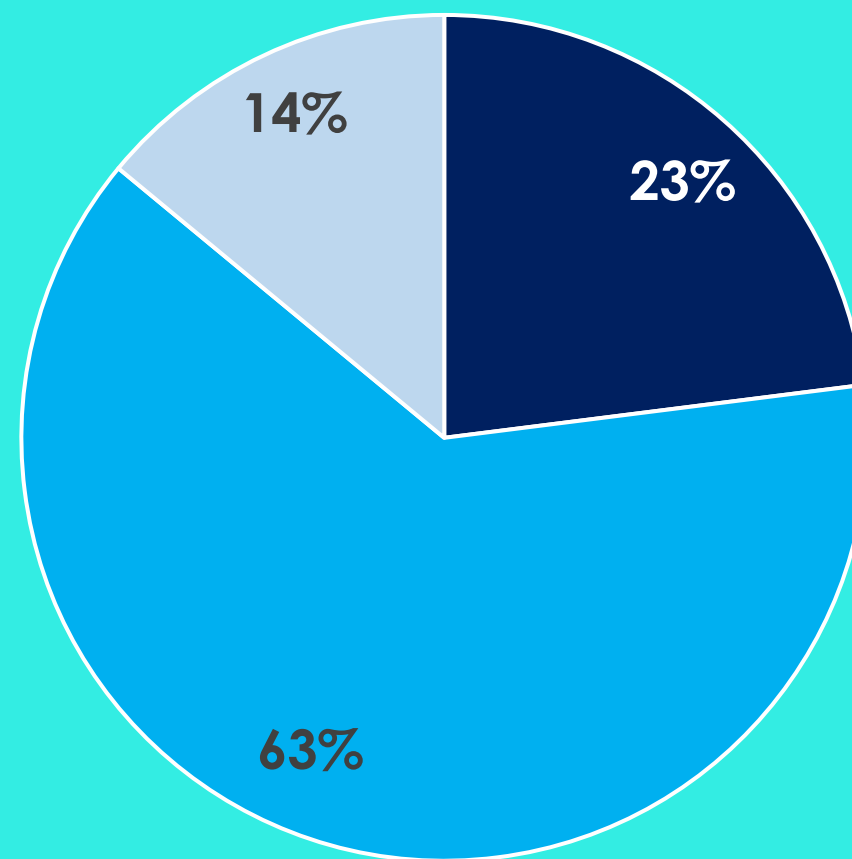
Supporting lowest 20% to catch up and empower them to choose books that they enjoy.

Increased enjoyment, confidence and independent reading

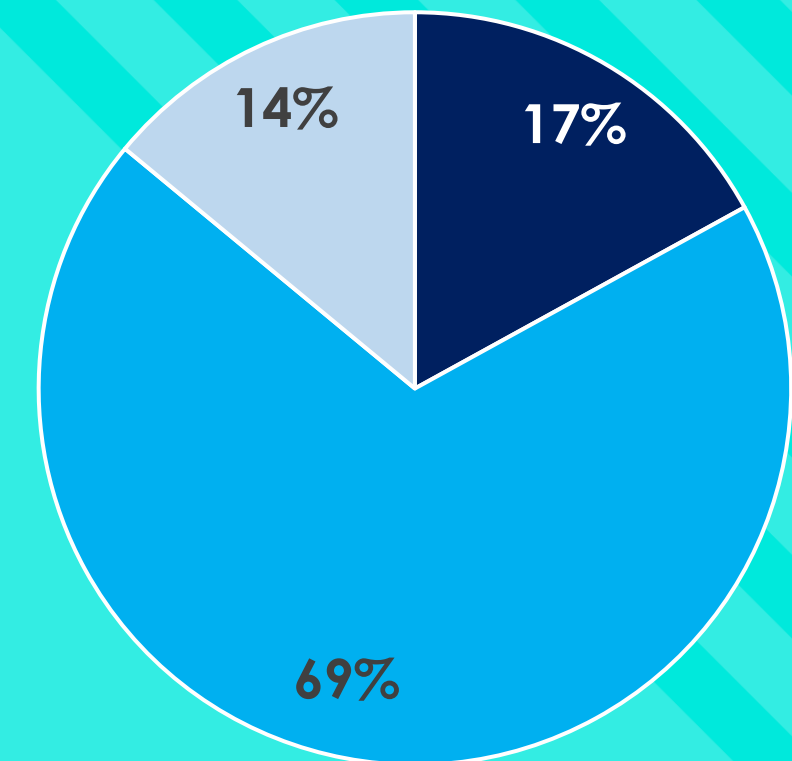
Children's enjoyment of being read aloud to increased [67 teachers]



Children's confidence as readers increased [64 teachers]



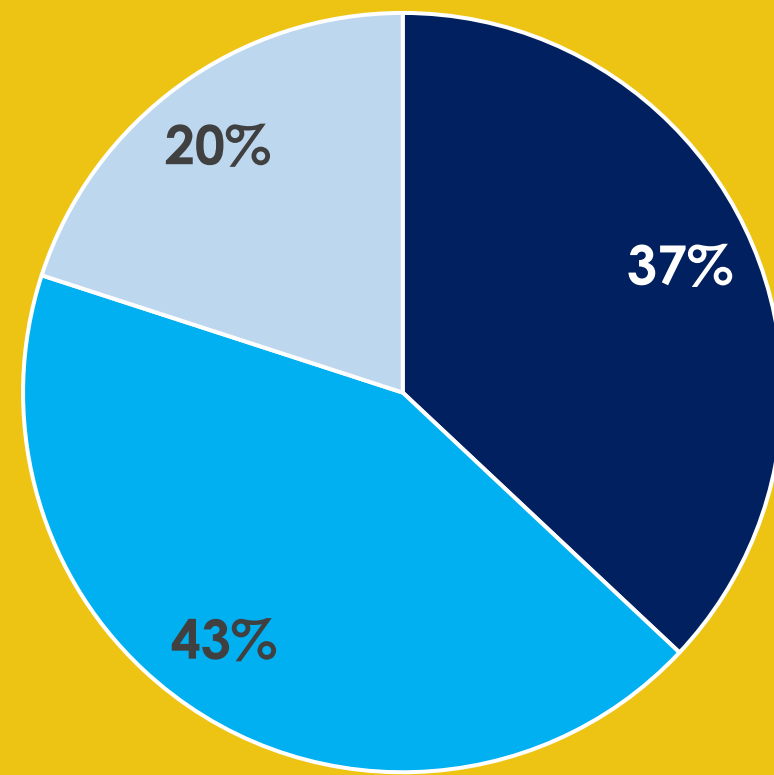
Children's enjoyment of reading independently increased [64 teachers]



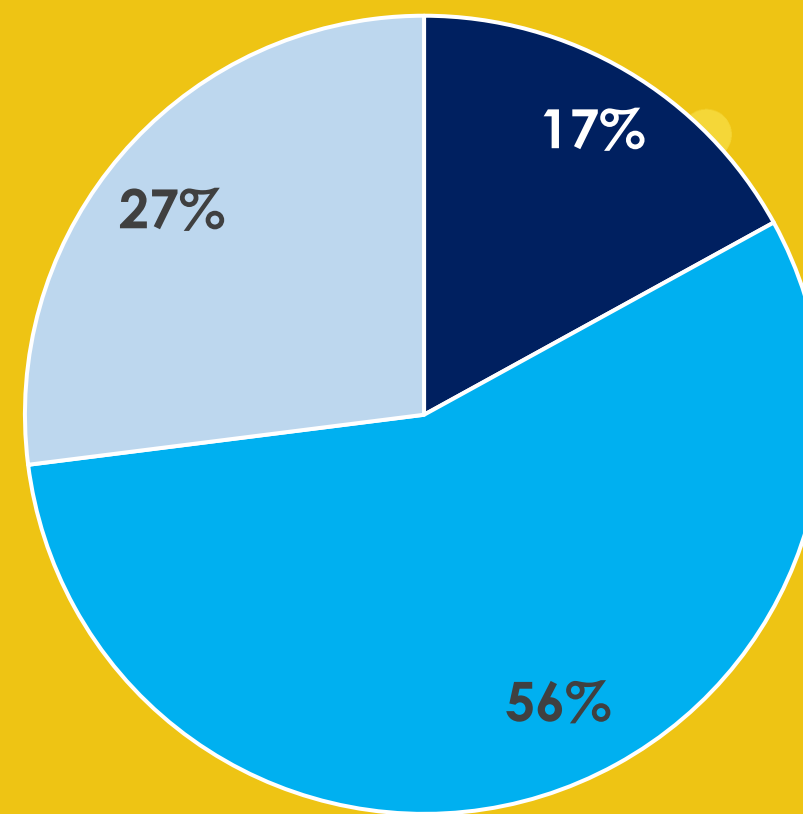
■ For all ■ For some ■ For a few

Increased concentration, amount of reading and range of books read

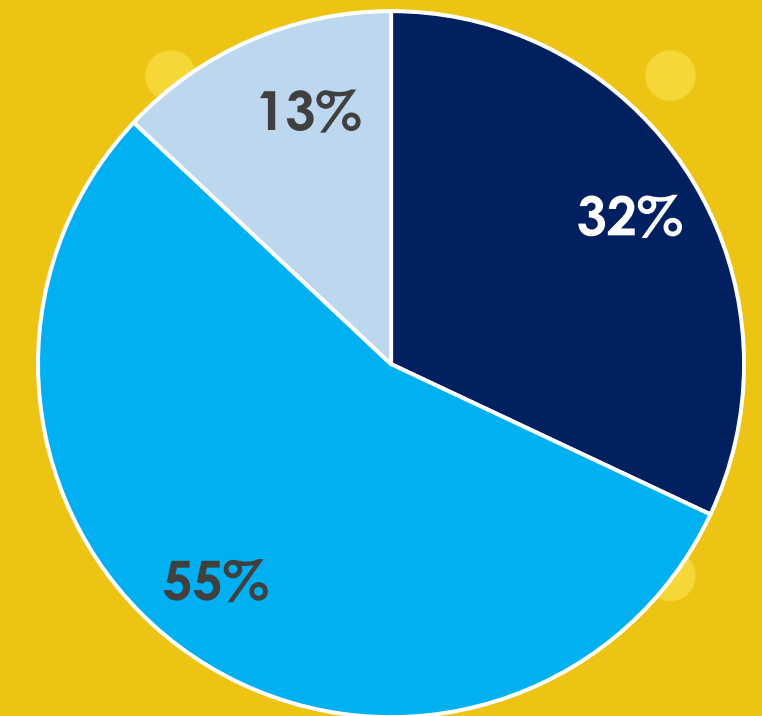
Children's ability to concentrate for the duration of the session increased [65 teachers]



The amount of reading children chose to do during the school day increased [63 teachers]



The range of books children chose to read increased [62 teachers]



■ For all ■ For some ■ For a few

Focus on Year 4

Reading attainment

All schools:
up from average/ age appropriate
to **well above average**

Reading age gain:

60% = more than 2 months

36% = more than **13 months**

Average = 12 months

Comprehension attainment

All schools: average scores increased.

Shift towards excellence:

- 49% excellent at start
- 60% excellent at end

Considerable variances by school. Two examples:

31% Pupil Premium/69% EAL:

- 29% 'excellent' at start
- 61% 'excellent' at end

59% Pupil Premium:

- 4% 'excellent' at start
- 52% 'excellent' at end

This 3-month trial was brilliant for the exposure of literature to the children. It lends itself to comprehension. Simply the fact of having a story without the pressure of having to do language work on it.

Wellbeing

Children:

Storytime makes me feel calm: boys 65% / girls 76%

it calms me down before I go home

it makes me concentrate and makes me feel better when mad or sad

Story time makes me feel ready for the rest of the day

Teachers:

91% enjoyed reading aloud

37% felt calmer and more relaxed

I felt more relaxed entering into the afternoon too! I have giggled with them and put me in a good mood.

The sessions certainly contributed to my well-being, finishing each day calmer and with a greater sense of connection with my class.

77% of children want storytime to continue

I can understand story's more and if a teacher reads I can understand but not wen I read.

It has made me like books a lot more and I feel like if we don't carry then I will go back to hate reading. Also I feel like it has made a lot of people in my class like reading.

Teacher feedback

Anxiety about available time. Some initial scepticism

I was a bit of a convert after the trial. When (I was told) 20 minutes a day I had my doubts. We made it happen – every day. We saw a massive a change in the culture of reading in the class.

Signing up to study gave ‘permission’ to allocate the time

It enabled us – gave permission to do it – so we did it. (Before) it felt as if the curriculum came first, and then if we had five minutes (we could read aloud). I wanted more but felt guilty. Now we prioritise storytime; other things can wait.

Critical success factors

○ Daily experience

Because we were doing it constantly, they were so engaged with the story. When we’ve done it before you might have read it on Monday and then Friday, it was too long in between. This was every day – so they were really involved in the story.

○ Children’s involvement in choice

I have really enjoyed taking part in the trial and I have really learnt the importance of allowing the children to choose their own books. So often we are told that our books must be carefully chosen and fulfil set criteria. Being allowed to let the children choose was exhilarating and demonstrated to me how important this is in developing a love of reading.

Review

Why did it work? Pressure off, children engage
Frequency embeds the habit

Low financial cost / high impact, high returns

Challenge to make time for it

- Should storytime be mandatory? Worthy of debate
- **88%** of teachers said they thought it should be

Every child read to every day = transformative for outcomes
No child left out or left behind

91% of teachers plan to continue with storytime



Thank you for listening

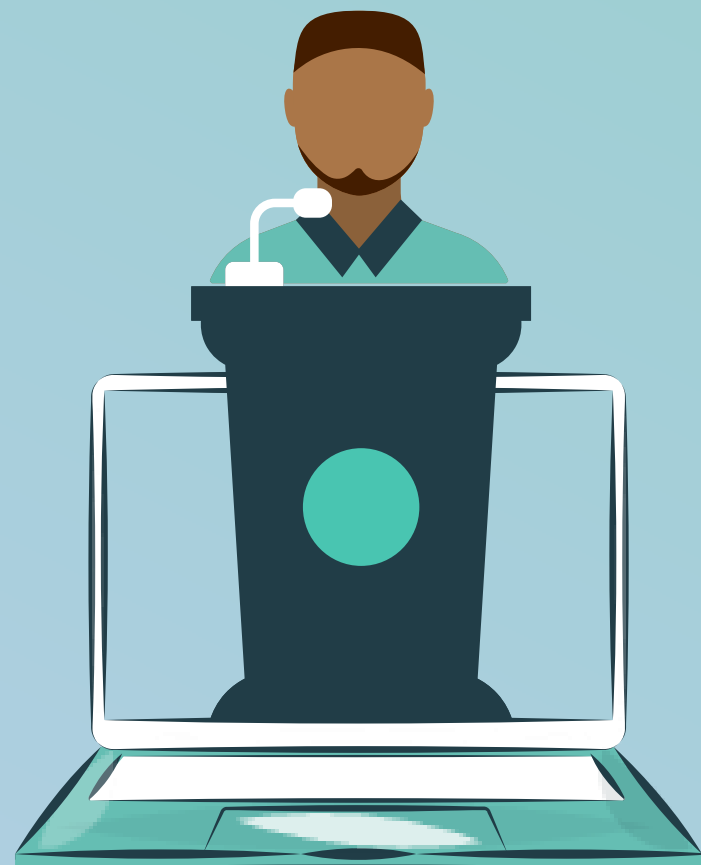
The White Paper and the Headline Findings Paper
can be found at:

<https://www.farshore.co.uk/resources-for-everyone/research-and-insights/>

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Thank you for attending

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