



Pearson

Bug Club opens doors to a world of reading and enjoyment



School name:	 St Bernadette's Primary School	School type:	 Primary (4–12 years)
Region:	 North Lanarkshire	Pupil Equity Funding %:	 39%
Area type:	 Town	EAL %:	 19%
Number of pupils:	 181		

Key points to take away

- Children from less wealthy backgrounds had access to a library of books previously inaccessible to them.
- Providing eBooks to children increased reading engagement.
- Bug Club's library particularly useful to EAL children.

Background

St Bernadette's is a one form entry all-through primary school in an area of high deprivation. 19% of children speak English as an Additional Language (EAL); Polish is the main other language spoken at home.

Implementation

In 2015, St Bernadette's were given the opportunity to trial Bug Club as part of a randomised control trial of several schools, and they jumped at the chance. "I saw it as an opportunity—where do we go next with our reading?" says headteacher Christine Boyle.

Many children were not interested in reading and did not come from book-rich homes. There were often problems with books being sent home with the children and not coming back. Often, supportive parents lacked the resources to be able to help with home reading, particularly those in the early stages of learning English.

Access to a new world

Having looked into the pedagogy of Bug Club, Christine realised it fitted in with the Active Literacy approach recommended by North Lanarkshire, and it was rolled out across all year groups at St Bernadette's.

In addition to sending home the printed books and giving access to the eBooks for home reading, Christine set up a popular after-school club where children could read online using Bug Club, which has enabled all children to access the online reading world even if they do not have internet access at home.

Having both the printed books and eBooks means the school can choose the right format for the child's home reading. Christine describes how one parent of a boy in P1 was initially concerned about her child reading on a screen, but then was amazed at how much more engaged he became reading on a tablet, and how quickly he progressed.



EAL improvements

In St Bernadette's, the programme has had particular success for their EAL children, who are some of the most enthusiastic users of the Bug Club online reading world. The Read to Me function in the eBooks has been a great bonus for EAL children whose parents are not able to read to them in English, as it allows the children to hear a model reading of the text and the parents to learn alongside them.

Christine tells us about a girl in P2 from a Nigerian family who joined the school with hardly any spoken English. Bug Club's online reading world gave her access to hundreds of books which she read voraciously, building up hundreds in her library and regularly winning the award for most books read. Now in P2, she is one of their highest achievers in reading, and her spoken English is fluent.

Christine also thinks the availability of Bug Club books online has been of great benefit to other children from low-income families who do not have access to many books for reading for pleasure. "Children who wouldn't necessarily be taken to a library, have then got the online library. That's a great benefit across the board."

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All pupils enjoyed reading the Bug Club books: the variety, the humour and all the different characters. Christine thinks the variety is very important: "There's something for everyone. It's so different from our reading scheme books which did not engage their interest." The school also found the Phonics Bug books very useful to back up their class teaching of phonics.

Developing comprehension

The school has adapted their usage of Bug Club as their confidence and familiarity with the programme has grown. To begin with, they found that children were progressing through the book bands very quickly but after using Bug Club's reading assessments, it was observed that their comprehension wasn't always keeping up. They therefore decided to slow some children's rate of

progress through the book bands and work on developing comprehension alongside fluency. Christine thinks the reading assessments will be a key part of their success in future: "They are easy for teachers to implement and interpret, and it will prevent children falling down because they haven't got the comprehension."

Another change has been how the school has engaged parents with Bug Club. When the programme was first introduced, they invited parents in for a workshop, but not all parents attended. Now, they introduce Bug Club as part of their induction visits for new parents. In the May before their child starts school, small groups of parents are shown how to use the online reading world, and are given their child's login details so they can start off on the wordless Lilac level books with their children. By the time the children starts school, both parents and children are used to using Bug Club and can get off to a good start.

Children's progress as measured through standardised reading tests has also been good. The P4 class, who have been using Bug Club since P2, recently took the New Group Reading Test and the class teacher was very pleased with the results. All children had made good progress from their baselines and some were far ahead, with reading ages of 11+.

Christine thinks that the fluency that has developed through children's use of Bug Club has formed a good part of that progress. "We would not be as far on without Bug Club. We are recommending it to other schools—I wouldn't be without it!"

The outcome

Progress across the board for all students, in both fluency and comprehension.

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Find out more

Find out more about Bug Club and the study at www.pearsonprimary.co.uk/bugclubstudy
See more case studies like this at www.pearsonprimary.co.uk/impact