



Pearson

Teaching computer-savvy children to value reading

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Bug Club
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ActiveLearn

Independent Review *by John Dabell*

Why Bug Club?

Teaching computer-savvy children to value reading as an activity, to find pleasure in books of all kinds and become real readers is crucial but far from easy, but I think I know where to start. Bug Club from Pearson is a whole-school, phonically-based 24/7 reading programme which connects online eBooks with printed books to teach and inspire children to read. It's easily the best reading programme I've seen in 15 years of teaching and the perfect marriage of print and digital resources.

Pupil eBooks

The Pupil Area of Bug Club is very easy to use. In 'My Stuff' pupils can select an eBook they want to read or have read to them. Some pages in the books contain hotspots which link to questions which children answer to earn points. This is a nice feature as it gives children an incentive to read with a purpose. This also doubles up for assessing children's comprehension. Children can zoom-in on the words and pictures for closer inspection and dip into another book if they choose. The books contain before and during tips for assessing understanding, checking vocabulary and reading the story. There are also after reading ideas and follow-up activities to consider. The books come as colour-coded bands from Reception up to Year 6, and there are stacks of phonic phase and reading recovery titles to choose from – a mixture of fiction and non-fiction titles with over 500 books thoroughly and appropriately graded. With big names such as *Wallace and Gromit* and *Doctor Who* on board, the odds of engagement are stacked in our favour.

Teacher resources

The Teacher's Area is similarly simple to use and comes with extra annotation tools for highlighting and drawing onscreen. These can't be saved, but are useful to have. Tracking and assessment has never been easier: there are quiz questions linked to

reading skill areas which feed directly into activity reports. At a glance you can get an idea of pupil strengths and weaknesses. Real-time parental reports can be printed off for meetings about pupil progress. The Teacher's section contains an excellent facility for creating and managing classes and groups and a facility for searching and allocating books.

Whole-class teaching

The Phonics Bug Teaching Tools comprise a range of pupil games, teaching guides, photocopy masters and graphemes. The Teaching and Assessment guides are written by Johnston and Watson, so we're in safe hands. I do have a couple of bugbears with Bug Club.

The eBooks can be read to the children at the click of a button, but it would have been great to see individual words highlighted as they were read.

The verdict – join the club

Bug Club deserves gushing praise for its design and innovation. This is a programme destined to lead the market and transform the way we teach reading. It will help children get the best possible start in their reading journey and enjoy page after page of reading success. This resource will make you glad you became a teacher. It's not cheap, but you get what you pay for and this would represent a canny investment.

Read more

Bug Club was reviewed by John Dabell for Teach Primary. Read the full article at

www.teachprimary.com/tried_and_tested/view/pearson-bug-club

See more case studies like this at

www.pearsonprimary.co.uk/impact