



Pearson

Tackle the summer dip in reading




School name:  St Mary's Academy

Region:  Suffolk

Area type:  Town

Number of pupils:  328

School type:  Academy Primary (4–11 years)

Ofsted rating:  Outstanding (July 2010)

Pupil premium %:  19.1%

EAL %:  5.7%

Key points to take away

- In the class using Bug Club, **no children 'dipped' in reading progress** during the research.
- **56%** of children using Bug Club during the summer months **made reading progress**.
- The intervention class was **more confident in their reading abilities** after the summer break.
- Results suggest access to Bug Club online made an **educational significance** to the test group.

Why Bug Club?

St Mary's Academy is a two-form entry primary school in Suffolk. Like most schools, it generally finds a 'dip' in reading progress between the end of one year and the beginning of the next. In the summer of 2012 **Kate Ruttle**, the **SENCO** at St Mary's Academy, carried out an action research project to see if access to Bug Club would impact on the 'summer holiday dip' between Year 2 and Year 3.

The research premise

We adopted Bug Club in May 2012 but deliberately delayed introducing it to all of our classes until September of that year, in order to carry out this specific research project first. We wanted to determine whether access to Bug Club during the summer holidays could mitigate the summer dip in reading we so often see between Years 2 and 3.

In July 2012, we designated Class I our intervention class, giving them access to Bug Club. Class C, the parallel control class for this research project, did not have access to Bug Club during this period.

Measures of reading progress

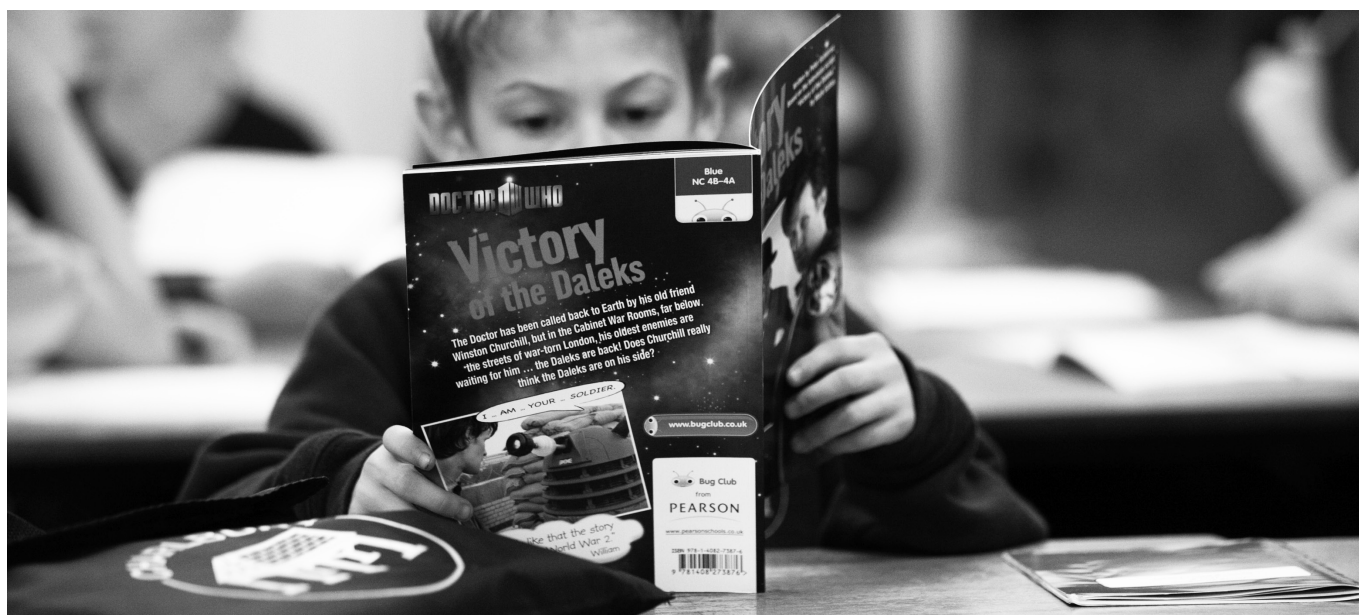
In order to find out whether Bug Club had an impact on the children's reading levels, we put in place two measures to assess all of the children's reading abilities prior to and following the summer holidays:

- progress in NC levels between June and November 2012, for the whole cohort (Classes I and C).
- progress as measured by PERA* for six children in each class, as measured in the fortnight before and the fortnight after the summer holidays.

“ Sometimes in the holidays, I forget how to read, but this time I didn't. ”



* Phonics and Early Reading Analysis, Hodder, 2012.



The results

Against our first measure – progress in NC levels between June and November – the results for Class I were encouraging whilst the results for Class C were more typical of the experience we have with other cohorts in the school. The results showed that:

- in Class I (the class using Bug Club), no children 'dipped' and 56% made reading progress.
- in Class C (the class not using Bug Club during the summer months), 11% 'dipped' and 46% made reading progress.

To determine progress as measured by PERA between July and September, we tested a boy and a girl from each class whose reading profiles were respectively high, mid and low. A total of 12 children were tested in this way, or 22% of the cohort. The results according to this measure showed that:

- in Class I (the class using Bug Club), all PERA children made reading progress of between +1 and +7 months.
- in Class C (the class not using Bug Club during the summer months), all PERA children 'dipped' by between -1 and -5 months.

Feedback from the children and parents

In addition to the tests, we asked the children in Class I and their parents about their experiences of using Bug Club online during the summer holidays.

Parents' comments included:

- "It was good to know that we were practising reading books at the right level."
- "The summer holidays are too long without changing reading books. This was much better."

And the children liked it too. One of them said:

- "Sometimes in the holidays, I forget how to read, but this time I didn't."

The outcome – no one dipped and many progressed

Although the sample used in our project was too small to be statistically significant, and a number of other variables at play prevent us from proving beyond doubt that access to Bug Club had a positive impact on our children's attainment, these results do suggest that access to Bug Club online made an educational significance to the children in Class I.

As teachers, we saw much to give us confidence in Bug Club. Our Class I children were better prepared on their return to school in September and were more confident in their reading abilities. And the feedback from the children and their parents who used Bug Club online certainly showed the resources were well-used and valued during the long summer break.

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