



# Love to Read

Co-creating and evaluating a programme to inspire and sustain a love of reading



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## Meet the team

Love to Read has been developed with the expert input from researchers, teachers, children and other professionals

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### Educational Psychology Service

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### Expert Advisory Group

Professor Teresa Cremin, James Clements, Dr Melanie Ramdarshan Bold and others.

### Children

Approximately 200 children from nine UK primary schools provided input into the Love to Read Programme (children's insights) or illustrations. Thank you all!

**Illustrator:** Katie McPherson

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### Funder

Nuffield Foundation

## Executive summary

In the UK, only 39.1% of children aged 8-11 report reading daily outside of class (Cole et al., 2022), yet there is extensive research demonstrating the language (Nation et al., 2022) and reading (Torppa et al., 2019) benefits associated with reading books, and the important role of motivation as a precursor to reading engagement and activity (Miyamoto et al., 2019; Toste et al., 2020). In addition to these academic benefits, books provide opportunities for children to learn more about themselves, the world, and others (Eekhof et al., 2022; McGeown & Wilkinson, 2021) and the importance of both reading motivation and engagement are reflected in the UK curricula (e.g., National Primary Curriculum).

The Love to Read project was designed to co-create and evaluate a research-informed programme to increase primary school children's reading motivation and engagement. It aimed to achieve this by synthesising research (via a literature review drawing upon research from different disciplinary perspectives) (Phase 1), with children's thoughts and experiences (via interviews with a demographically diverse group) (Phase 2). These insights were then shared with teachers to co-design the programme, drawing upon their professional and pedagogical knowledge, expertise and experience (Phase 3) prior to an acceptability and feasibility study designed to evaluate the programme in practice (Phase 4).



The Love to Read programme was underpinned by six research informed principles: access, choice, time, connection, social and success, identified during the Phase 1 literature review. These principles are based on a rich and complex body of research, from different disciplinary traditions, and serve to provide a clear structure to communicate this research area to teachers and school leaders. The programme contained research-informed summaries about each principle, children's perspectives and experiences of each principle (based on Phase 2 interviews), and 8-12 activities recommended by teachers to embed the principles into practice (including core and supplementary activities) (based on Phase 3, and revisions resulting from Phase 4).



The Love to Read programme was designed with both fidelity and flexibility considerations in mind: fidelity to the research-informed principles, but flexibility in implementation, allowing teachers to draw upon their professional and contextual knowledge and expertise to select the most appropriate activities based on their students' needs, interests and abilities, previous pedagogy and access to resources. The programme was evaluated in a mixed methods acceptability and feasibility study (4 schools, 18 classes, 425 children), with a focus on both implementation and effectiveness.

The acceptability and feasibility study was preregistered: <https://osf.io/qvuka> and served to assess, over a 6 week period, whether the programme would be acceptable to teachers and feasible for use in practice (with 1.5 hours per week identified as the delivery duration). In addition, the effectiveness of the programme was also measured using a mixed methods approach.

Following participation in the Love to Read programme, positive feedback was gained from all teachers (n = 8/18) who provided data with regards to implementation. That is, the programme was considered acceptable and feasible, however there was variation in the duration of delivery time each week across schools and across weeks, and no diary data from seven classes to comprehensively assess fidelity. Constructive feedback from teachers informed programme revisions (e.g., synthesis/reduction of activities to remove duplication, improvements to quality of accompanying resources, clearer guidance on delivery).

In relation to effectiveness, qualitative feedback from teachers (n = 8) and children (n = 93) about the Love to Read programme was positive, with evidence and examples relating to changes in children's attitudes, skills and behaviours (i.e., intermediate outcomes) relating to reading motivation and engagement. However, based on the quantitative analysis, no statistically significant improvements in reading motivation or engagement were found for the whole sample (n = 425). However, this was potentially due to our measures not being sufficiently sensitive to detect change, or due to other factors (e.g., short duration of the programme, lack of preparation time, absence of professional development resources for teachers).

As our measures were insufficiently sensitive to measure change in the entire sample (e.g., pre-test modal response was 3 out of 4), analysis was carried out among those children reporting low engagement prior to the programme (n = 59), and statistically significant improvements in reading engagement were found for this group (d = 0.8, a large effect size, engagement scores increased from 41 to 48, out of a maximum of 96). However, this result should be interpreted with caution and followed up in future research.

Indeed, future research will require sufficiently sensitive measures to be able to detect change, and should test for the sustained impact on both reading motivation and engagement. The delivery duration of Love to Read will also need to be considered, and it is recommended that while six weeks is appropriate to introduce the Love to Read principles to classes and stimulate a focus on reading motivation and engagement, these principles and practices should be embedded throughout the school year, with revisiting of teaching (e.g., how to choose a book) if necessary. In addition, reading motivation interventions with high quality professional development (McBreen & Savage, 2020) and school-home connections (Villiger et al., 2012) have been found to lead to more positive and sustained changes in reading motivation, therefore these represent important routes for programme development.

To conclude, Love to Read has demonstrated evidence of promise, however more research is needed to understand the contexts and conditions under which Love to Read is optimally effective, whether it can lead to measurable and sustained positive changes in children's reading motivation and engagement, and, in the longer term, whether this has an impact on children's reading and/or language skills.

## Context

### Issue

Only 43% of UK children aged 9-11 report reading daily outside of class (Clark & Teravainen-Goff, 2020), yet there is a lack of research-informed approaches to increase children's reading motivation and engagement. Reading motivation is a key antecedent to reading engagement (Miyamoto et al., 2019; Schiefele et al., 2012) as motivated readers exert more cognitive effort while reading (Taboada et al., 2009) and read more often (Schiefele et al., 2012), both of which are crucial for developing reading skills (Toste et al., 2020). Therefore focusing on improving pedagogy which aims to enhance children's reading motivation and engagement has potential to support both reading skill (Mol & Bus, 2011; Torppa et al., 2019), but also the other rich and diverse benefits known to be associated with reading books, including enjoyment, escapism, relaxation, pursuit of interests (McGeown et al., 2020; McGeown & Wilkinson, 2021) empathy and social cognition (Eekhof et al., 2022), reduced prejudice (Vezzali et al., 2015) and wellbeing (Clark & Teravainen-Goff, 2018).

### Disconnect between research and practice

Research demonstrates evidence of a disconnect between University-led research and practice (Lowden et al., 2019; McGeown et al., 2023a; Nelson, 2019) as teachers typically draw upon knowledge sources other than academic research to inform their practice. This project aimed to bridge the research and practice gap, by 'getting practice into research' and not solely 'getting research into practice'. Love to Read was a research-practice partnership, with a co-design element (McGeown et al., 2023a). This collaborative project sought to bring together diverse perspectives and experiences from research and practice contexts, within an inclusive non-hierarchical partnership, to ensure the programme developed was informed by the breadth and depth of knowledge and expertise available. This co-designed approach also ensured implementation issues were considered from the outset, thus increasing the likelihood of acceptability and feasibility for use in practice. Furthermore, children's perspectives and experiences were also prioritised, as it is rare for programme development teams to seek the views of those from whom the programme is intended. However, it is essential that programmes reach and resonate with their intended audiences, therefore children's input was sought during the development and evaluation of Love to Read.

### Relevance for policy and practice

The current primary school curricula of England (National Primary Curriculum; Department for Education, 2013), Scotland (Curriculum for Excellence; Scottish Government, n.d.), Wales (Curriculum for Wales; Welsh Government, 2016) and Northern Ireland (Northern Ireland Primary Curriculum; CCEA, 2019) all cite the importance of focusing on reading motivation and engagement/reading for pleasure. For example, the National Primary Curriculum states: *'All pupils must be encouraged to read widely across both fiction and non-fiction to develop their knowledge of themselves and the world in which they live, to establish an appreciation and love of reading, and to gain knowledge across the curriculum'* (p14), while the Curriculum for Excellence notes the importance of: *Reading / Enjoyment and Choice: 'Within a motivating and challenging environment, developing an awareness of the relevance of texts in my life'*. In the curriculum in Wales it is stated: *'Learners should experience a language-rich environment where oracy, reading and writing*

experiences are connected to ensure that they become enthusiastic, independent and reflective readers' (p5), while in Northern Ireland, it is noted that: 'Children should be encouraged to develop a love of books and the disposition to read' (p20)

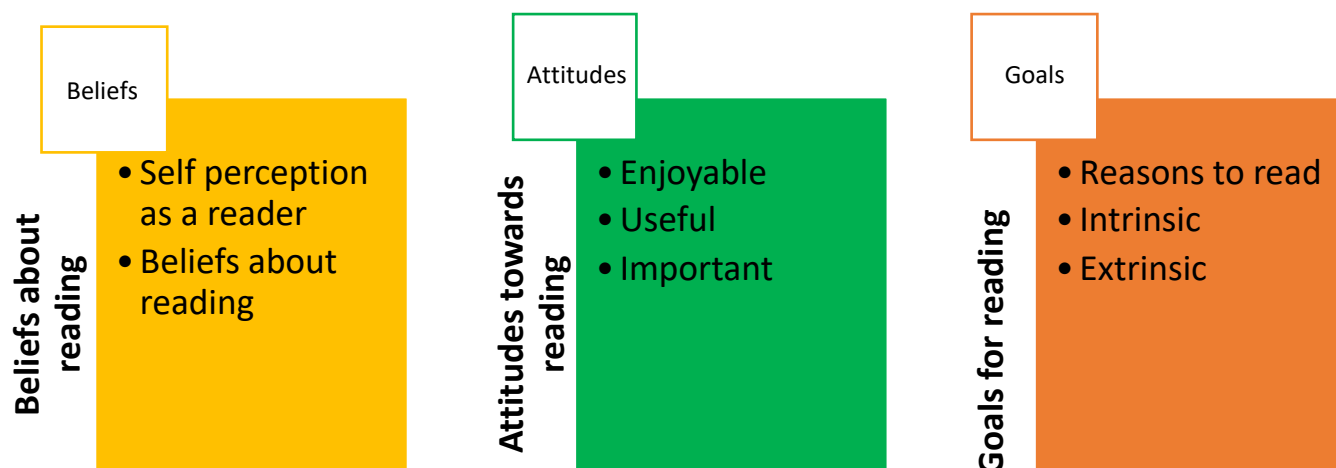
The importance of reading motivation and engagement is also reflected in the Foreword of the recent Department for Education report *The Reading Framework: Teaching the foundations of literacy*, which stressed the importance of being a 'highly engaged reader' as well as 'building a love of stories and reading' (Department for Education, 2022).

Despite this however, research-informed guidance to support teachers' practice is scarce. The project therefore aimed to create a freely available programme, which would be ready for classroom use, to support teachers in this practice.

## Key terms

### Motivation

Reading motivation reflects the extent to which a child is motivated/driven to read (i.e., wants to read). A conceptual review of reading motivation research (Conradi et al., 2014) summarised reading motivation as encapsulating children's beliefs about reading, attitudes towards reading and goals for reading, as illustrated below:



**Beliefs about reading:** Whether children believe they are good at reading or not (i.e. their self-perceptions of themselves as readers) and whether they believe reading is a useful and important activity.

**Attitudes toward reading:** The extent to which children think reading is an enjoyable, useful and important activity.



**Goals or reasons for reading:** Why children choose to read: Is it to learn, for fun, to relax, for escapism, to go on an adventure, experience thrills, to spend time with fictional friends, or because their teacher told them to? Love to Read was created to increase children's intrinsic (i.e., volitional) reading motivation, rather than extrinsic motivation (e.g., reading because they are told) as research consistently demonstrates the importance of intrinsic reading motivation for children's reading engagement and skills, rather than extrinsic reading motivation (e.g. Schiefele et al., 2012; Troyer et al., 2019).

However motivation is only the first part of the journey. Motivation acts as a driver for reading, leading children to pick up books. However, what actually happens when they read? For this, we need to focus on reading engagement.

## **Engagement**

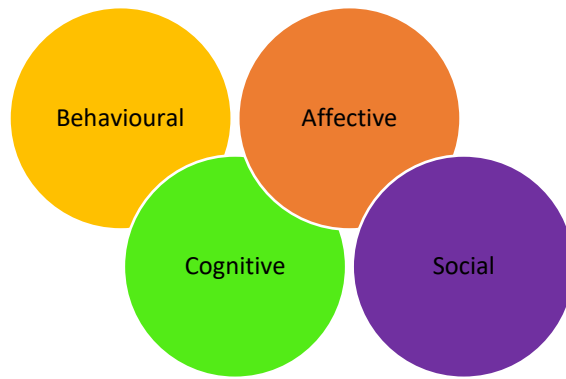
Reading engagement reflects the quality and depth of engagement children experience when they read. A systematic review of reading engagement research (Lee et al., 2021) identified four distinct dimensions: behavioural, cognitive, affective and social. While the first three reflect the type of engagement that a child has when reading independently, the latter reflects the contribution that others (teachers, family, friends and peers) can make to children's reading experiences. The different dimensions of reading engagement are summarised below:

**Behavioural engagement:** The amount of reading that children do, that is, how often children read and for how long.

**Cognitive engagement:** The level of cognitive effort children put into reading, and the extent to which they put into place strategies (e.g., decoding, re-reading) to support their comprehension. For example, it can include choosing to decipher unfamiliar words, working out the meanings of new words, re-reading text to support comprehension and/or making connections between new information and existing knowledge (Miyamoto et al., 2019).

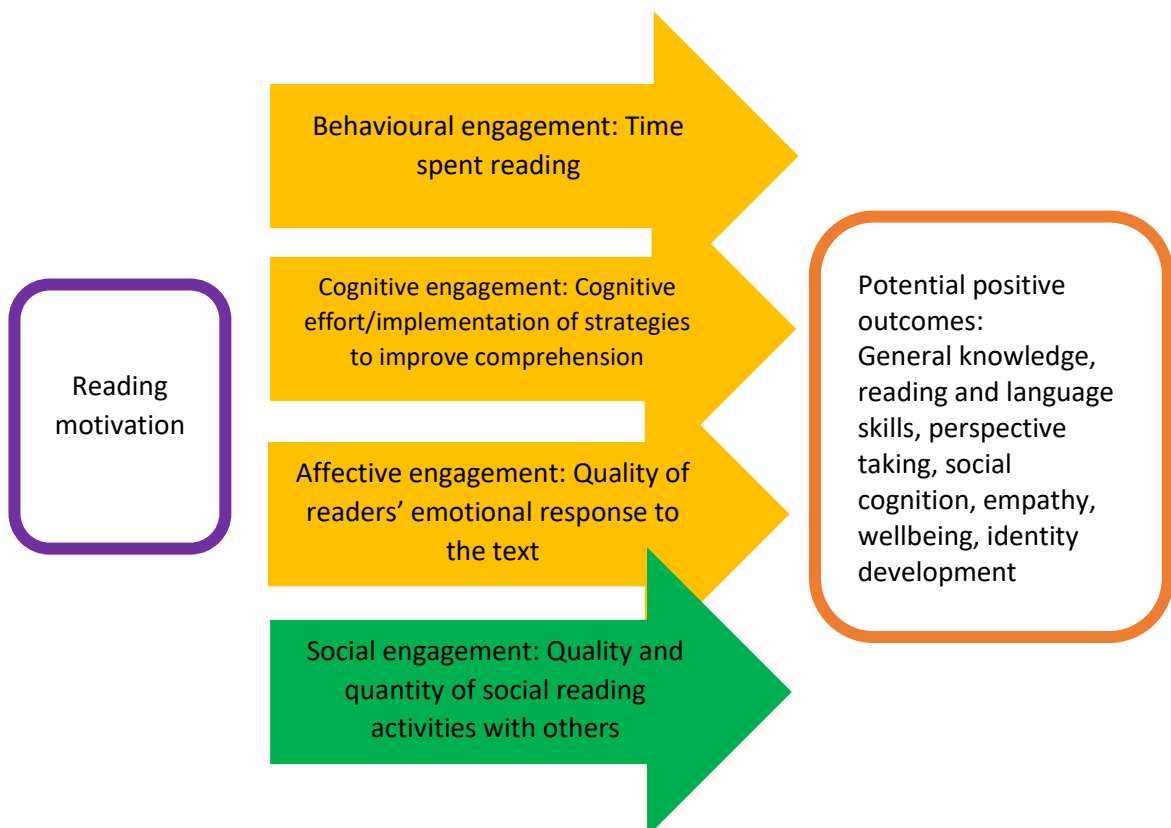
**Affective engagement:** The depth of emotions children experience while reading and the extent to which children are interested in what they read and explore personally meaningful content. It includes enjoying reading, immersing oneself in a book, relating personal experiences to text content, using ones' imagination, connecting/empathising with characters, etc (Miyamoto et al., 2019; McGeown & Wilkinson, 2021).

**Social engagement:** Children's participation in diverse reading activities with others (e.g., peers, teacher, family, etc) as they share, swap and discuss books (Cremin et al., 2014). This allows children to learn and benefit from other readers in their class.



## The benefits of reading books

Love to Read focused specifically on increasing children’s reading motivation and engagement in relation to books as time spent reading books is associated with a wide range of rich and diverse positive outcomes. For example, children who read more often have better general knowledge, language, reading and spelling skills, and school achievement (Mol & Bus, 2011; Torppa et al., 2019). In addition to learning benefits, books provide opportunities for children to relax, laugh, escape to new worlds, pursue their interests, learn new things, experience adventures and/or spend time with fictional friends (McGeown et al., 2020; McGeown & Wilkinson, 2021). For this reason, research has suggested that book reading is associated with children’s wellbeing (Clark & Teravainen-Goff, 2018), empathy and social skills (Eekhof et al., 2022) and can help children to develop an enriched understanding, and reduced prejudice, towards others (Vezzali et al., 2015). However, for these benefits to be realised, children need to be deeply engaged in the books they read. This is illustrated in the figure below:



## Aims

### Overarching Aim

To co-create and evaluate a research-informed programme designed to increase primary school children's reading motivation and engagement.

To contribute to methodological thinking and knowledge within the context of research-practice partnerships and teacher-researcher co-design.

**The project consisted of four phases, aims associated with each are outlined below:**

#### Phase 1

- 1) To synthesise research literature from different disciplinary perspectives to inform a programme designed to improve children's reading motivation and engagement.
- 2) To align the programme with policy and practice priorities across the UK.

#### Phase 2

- 1) To understand and describe the breadth and diversity of children's book reading experiences.
- 2) To understand and describe school-based practices which children feel would encourage them, and their peers, to enjoy and read more books.

#### Phase 3

- 1) To co-design (researcher-teacher collaboration) a programme which is underpinned by relevant theory, research, and children's insights.
- 2) To evaluate the co-design process, from participating teachers' and researchers' perspectives.

#### Phase 4

- 1) To evaluate the acceptability and feasibility of the Love to Read programme in primary school classrooms, as measured by quantity and duration of implementation.
- 2) To evaluate changes in children's reading motivation, engagement, and knowledge, skills and behaviours associated with the six principles from pre to post-test.
- 3) To understand teachers' perspectives of acceptability, feasibility and contribution to children's outcomes and their own professional development.
- 4) To understand children's perspectives and experiences of the Love to Read programme.

## Method

The Love to Read project aimed to co-created and evaluate a programmes designed to increase children’s reading motivation and engagement. The 18 month project consisted of four stages, outlined below:



### Phase 1

A literature review was carried out, drawing upon the breadth of research in this area, from diverse disciplinary approaches, including psychological, educational and socio-cultural. The six principles to underpin reading for pleasure had been proposed in earlier work (McGeown & Wilkinson, 2021), however this phase involved more in-depth reading into each, to ensure a strong foundation on which to create the programme. Furthermore, the curricula across the four nations of the UK was also examined, to make links between the programme aims and curricula priorities, in addition to other relevant documentation.

### Phase 2

This involved interviews with 59 children (51% female, 32% English as an Additional Language, 10% Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, age 8-11) from four demographically diverse schools (2 Scotland, 2 England) to understand children’s existing experiences of reading for pleasure practices, their thoughts on these, their own ideas of ways to promote reading for pleasure, and to understand their perspectives and experiences of the six principles (access, choice, time, connection, social and success). The aim of this phase was to ensure the co-design team understood different children’s positions, perspectives and experiences in relation to reading for pleasure, so that these could be integrated into the programme. Indeed, a priority was ensuring a demographically diverse sample, but also a sample that had diverse reading attitudes and experiences. This phase aligned with previous related research on children’s reading experiences, some of which was also used to underpin the programme (McGeown et al., 2020; McGeown & Wilkinson, 2021). This phase was preregistered and can be accessed here: <https://osf.io/5ztjk>

### Phase 3

This involved the co-design of the Love to Read programme between two researchers (SM, EO) and six teachers recruited for this process. Six teachers were recruited via a competitive process (applications stopped at 51) and teachers were selected to reflect experience working in diverse demographic school contexts (measured by school size, geographic location, rural/urban setting, plus estimated proportion of children with Special Educational Needs, English as An Additional Language and minority ethnic). Teachers themselves were also selected to ensure a range of career stages (experienced, but at least one early career teacher), with representation with regards to disability, ethnicity, age and gender also considered. In terms of the selection process, all applications were viewed by two members of the project team independently (EO, KW), before a third was involved in final decisions (SM). Through a process of six online meetings and offline communication, teachers submitted individual ideas with regards to how to embed the research informed principles into practice, this was synthesised by the researchers to remove duplication, and decisions on final content were made during meetings. All teachers also read and provided feedback on different elements of the programme, ensuring all content was read by two teachers. Following this, the programme was finalised, and further feedback was requested from practice partners in the extended team (MD, KW, CC, HF), and members of the Expert Advisory Group (TC and JC) before it was considered ready for evaluation. Full details of this phase are available in McGeown et al., (2023a). This phase was preregistered and can be accessed here: <https://osf.io/xsjhc>

A full copy of the Love to Read programme will be available on the Love to Read website from June 2023: <https://blogs.ed.ac.uk/lovetoread/>. Brief details of the programme can be found in the Supplementary Material (page 37), in addition to the Theory of Change underpinning the programme (page 41).

### Phase 4

This phase involved the evaluation of the Love to Read programme in practice. Four demographically diverse schools (3 England, 1 Scotland) participated. Schools varied in terms of deprivation indices (IMD average = 6.5; range 3-10), size (smaller than average = 1, average = 2, large = 1) and ethnicity (majority White British = 2, majority other ethnic backgrounds = 2). Two schools had a higher percentage of pupils for whom English is an Additional Language compared to the national average. Across these schools, 18 classes completed the programme, from Years 4-6/Primary 5-7 (England/Scotland). Given the duration to create the programme within the context of the entire project duration, there was no time to develop training for teachers, but instead teachers were encouraged to engage in independent self-directed study to familiarise themselves with the programme prior to delivery. All teachers had at least two weeks with the programme prior to delivery, but, to the best of our knowledge, had no allocated time in their workload for reading or preparation. Optional online after school sessions (n = 6) were offered to all teachers fortnightly as an opportunity for them to ask any questions about the programme before or during programme delivery (e.g., to clarify anything they were unsure about, ask for advice). However these were not well attended (which was considered positive) and any questions during these sessions tended to focus more on data collection (e.g., when is the researcher visiting our school) rather the programme related questions.

## Measures

Teachers and children participating in the Phase 4 evaluation completed the following measures, and were asked to provide the following demographic information (age, sex, English as an Additional Language, Free School Meals). These measures are also available in full in our preregistration: <https://osf.io/qvuka>

### **Pre-test only**

Reading skill: New Group Reading Test, GL Assessment. Intended sample: Randomly selected sample of ~200 due to costs associated with purchasing assessment.

### **Pre and post-test**

#### Children

Reading motivation: Motivation to Read Profile – Revised (Malloy et al., 2013). This 10-item measure has been widely used to measure children’s reading motivation. The items measuring value only were selected. Intended sample: All

Reading engagement: Reading Engagement Scale (McGeown & Conradi-Smith, undergoing revisions). This 24-item scale measures children’s behavioural, cognitive, affective and social engagement (6 items per dimension) in relation to reading. Intended sample: All

Six principles questionnaire: This 18-item questionnaire evaluated children’s knowledge, skills and behaviours in relation to the six principles (3 items per principle) underpinning the Love to Read programme. Intended sample: All

#### Teachers

Short online survey measuring pre-existing knowledge and confidence in relation to supporting reading motivation and engagement. Intended sample: All

### **During delivery**

Classroom observations examining teacher practice, conducted by a researcher. Intended sample: One school, with 3-5 classes.

Completion of weekly teacher diaries. Intended sample: All

### **Post-test only**

#### Children

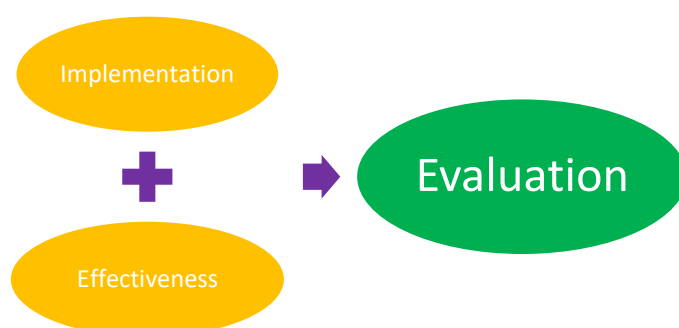
Short survey related specifically to their experiences of the Love to Read programme. Intended sample: All

Interviews to learn, in more depth, about their perspectives and experiences of the programme.  
Intended sample: Randomly selected - approximately 15%

Teachers

Online survey to learn about acceptability, feasibility, their perspectives and experiences of delivering the programme + items measured at pre-test to examine knowledge and confidence.  
Intended sample: All

This was a complex evaluation which focused simultaneously on implementation (i.e., acceptability and feasibility) and effectiveness (for teachers' pedagogy/professional development and children's reading motivation and engagement). The evaluation of the Love to Read programme was a complex evaluation which included a synchronised and balanced focus on both implementation and effectiveness.



With regards to implementation, this branch assessed how acceptable and feasible the Love to Read programme was and also to understand any implementation issues arising to inform programme revisions.

Implementation data sources and volume of data collected are summarised below:

- Completion of programme: 18/19 classes completed the programme
- Teacher diaries: 4/4 schools – 11 complete or partial data/18 classes
- Classroom observations: 1/4 school – 4/18 classes
- Teacher post-programme surveys: 3/4 schools – 8/18 classes

One class did not complete the programme following two weeks of participation, citing previously planned activities/area of focus for this semester as a priority (note: this was a final year primary school class). To ensure complete data collection from participating classes, we requested diaries and online post-programme interviews/surveys from all participating classes (n = 18). However, diary information (i.e., detailing delivery duration each week, activities implemented, plus any additional information about what went well/could have gone better) was incomplete, with data from only 11/18 classes, and some of these diaries having poor quality information (e.g., delivery duration only, or delivery duration summed across the six weeks). For the classroom observations, these were not intended across all classes as this required an experienced researcher with depth of programme knowledge to be worthwhile, therefore observations at one site only were planned. Finally, while originally intended to be in person, all teachers were sent a web link to complete an online post-programme survey; this was to allow them to complete these at a convenient time.

Teachers were sent one invite, with at least one follow up prompt to remind them to complete the survey with a deadline to do this. Unfortunately, data was not received from all classes, and future research should better incentivise teachers and school leaders to complete and share data, where it is necessary for evaluation purposes.

With regards to effectiveness, this branch assessed whether, to what extent, and for whom, the Love to Read programme led to changes in reading motivation and engagement. This mixed methods evaluation focused on a) teachers, and the extent to which Love to Read improved their depth of research knowledge and reading for pleasure pedagogy and b) children, and the extent to which Love to Read improved their attitudes, behaviours and skills in relation to reading for pleasure, and whether it changed their reading motivation and engagement.

Effectiveness data sources and volume of data collected are summarised below:

- Child self-report survey data (quantitative) at pre and post: 425 children, 4 schools
- Child post programme interviews (qualitative): 93 children, 4 schools
- Teacher pre and post survey (quantitative): 8 teachers, 3 schools
- Teacher post programme online surveys (qualitative): 8 teachers, 3 schools

In total, 491 children provided pre-test data, however one class did not complete the programme (n = 22) and 44 children were not available at post-test (therefore 13% attrition from pre to post-test). The number of child post programme interviews exceeded our original target, however we had capacity to conduct these and so chose to do so. All teachers were invited to complete pre and post survey questions (to measure for change in research knowledge and confidence in pedagogy) and all teachers were invited to take part in post programme online surveys (which primarily included open-text boxes, but also survey items). As above, all teachers received a link to the survey via email and were provided with at least one prompt to complete the survey, if hadn't completed it.

Statistical (quantitative) and thematic (qualitative) analysis was carried out, with key findings reported later. This phase was preregistered and can be accessed here: <https://osf.io/qvuka>

## **Illustrations**

To ensure the six principles and project aims could be conveyed clearly and positively to children and teachers participating, illustrations were created during Phase 1 and 2 of the project. This involved an iterative process, with input from five classes of primary school children across the UK who decided on the concept (powerful portals: books opening up portals to a range of exciting/engaging experiences), and provided ideas which have been used (e.g., colour, portal content, etc) in the final illustrations.

These illustrations are used in the programme handbook, posters for classroom walls, and in bookmarks for children to take home to share their learning with their parents. All outputs contain QR codes to link to the project's website. Examples below include the programme front cover, all six bookmarks, the six principles poster and an example of a single principle poster.



# LOVE TO READ

A Programme to Inspire and Sustain a Love of Reading

**ACCESS**  
I can access books I enjoy.

**CHOICE**  
I know how to choose books I will enjoy.

**SOCIAL**  
I enjoy sharing and discussing books with others.

**CONNECTION**  
I can access and choose books which I connect with.

**SUCCESS**  
I have positive reading experiences and feel I am developing as a reader.

**TIME**  
I have quality time to read at school and at home.

**ACCESS**  
I can access books I enjoy.

**CHOICE**  
I know how to choose books I will enjoy.

**SOCIAL**  
I enjoy sharing and discussing books with others.

**TIME**  
I have quality time to read at school and at home.

**CONNECTION**  
I can access and choose books which I connect with.

**SUCCESS**  
I have positive reading experiences and feel I am developing as a reader.

Love to Read is a programme created by researchers, teachers and children, to inspire and sustain a love of reading.

# ACCESS

I can access books I enjoy.

Love to Read is a programme created by researchers, teachers and children, to inspire and sustain a love of reading.

## Open Research

As a team we were committed to open research practices to ensure transparency and accessibility of our research process and materials. We preregistered each of our phases with the Open Science Framework and all of our data collection measures (e.g., interview schedules, surveys) are also available on the OSF. All data is currently being prepared to be shared, with sufficient metadata to ensure the data available is reusable. This will be uploaded in February 2024.

## Ethics

Throughout all phases of the project, ethical approval was sought and granted from Moray House School of Education and Sport, University of Edinburgh. This project raised important ethical considerations around consent, right to withdraw, confidentiality, data management and sharing. All consent materials were as accessible as possible, with information being read to child participants to ensure informed consent. An opt-out procedure was adopted to gain informed consent from parents/guardians. All information sheets described participants' right to withdraw, confidentiality, procedures in place to mitigate against COVID-19, and the procedures for management and sharing of data. Incentives for schools to participate were in the form of book vouchers, which reflected the level of time contributed to the project (Phase 2: £60 and Phase 4: £150). All teachers involved in co-design were paid for their time contribution and credited by name in the final programme.

## Key findings

### Implementation

**Completion:** One out of the nineteen classes did not complete the programme, citing previous commitments already planned during this time.

**Teacher diaries:** There was considerable missing data from the teacher diaries, however for those with complete diaries (n = 6) preparation time varied (0-15 minutes) which was deemed acceptable from teachers' perspectives. Delivery time each week varied from 25-215 minutes (average 71 minutes) based on this self-report data (and reflected the number of activities/activities selected).



"We discussed as a class what our library has and it reflected the fact we don't have a wide variety of diverse books"



"[pupils] had super conversations about what books they have read and whether they'd recommend"

Preregistration outlined 90 minutes a week, and so this was not met by all. One class consistently delivered for a minimum of 90 minutes each week, however for other classes, delivery duration varied each week, with 26% of delivery at 90 minutes or more across all schools/weeks. This variation has informed clarity of delivery guidance in the revised programme. Within the diaries, teachers shared what they felt went well, or didn't from each session:

'Pupils really enjoyed organising the class library, making category signs, and had super conversations about what books they have read and whether they'd recommend' ; 'This was the most useful lesson out of the programme, the class really didn't have the skills to choose a book and I found children who disengage with reading quickly were finding books they found interesting and reading consistently' ; 'I spent time with children who I know are poorer readers, we discussed what their likes were and found strategies to support their reading' ; 'We discussed as a class what our library has and it reflected the fact we don't have a wide variety of diverse books. I then resourced some QR code bookmarks with books that reflect diversity for our shared library. It wasn't worthwhile at the time but will be for the future'.

**Classroom observations:** These provided insight into the different ways in which the same activity can be embedded in practice and highlighted the importance of supporting teachers' professional development in this area, to ensure high-quality implementation which optimally supports children's reading motivation and engagement. Within each observation, differences were also noticed in terms of amount of 'on-task' time and percentage of children 'on-task' during these periods, highlighting the importance of creating activities which really reach and resonate with all children, keeping them interested and engaged while learning.

**Post programme interviews/surveys:** These provided insight into teachers' perceptions with regard to implementation, some common themes emerging included **a) ease of implementation:** 'Very easy to follow' ; 'Not a lot of prep time' ; 'Really nice programme to deliver' ; **b) programme structure and quality of information:** 'it was really well organised' ; 'I liked the structure of the six themes' ; 'I like reading the research behind the aspects' ; 'fantastic amount of information' ; 'allowed a lot of choice through the activities' ; **c) visual features and accompanying resources:** 'children enjoyed the visuals' ; 'bookmarks were a huge hit!' ; 'TA's have fed back how beautiful it was'.



However, teachers also remarked on concerns regarding implementation, including **a) proposed duration:** 'to do it in six weeks was not nearly long enough' ; 'difficult to do the programme justice within 6 weeks'; **b) it took curriculum time:** 'it took curriculum time. I wasn't necessarily teaching them reading skills. But you know, it's a different focus'; 'I just don't have enough time in a day to [do my reading session + Love to Read]. Would advocate in first 4 weeks of a new year' ; **c) a preference for flexibility in delivery:** 'would be nice to have more flexibility in not having to follow it week by week'; **d) a lack of existing resources to support the programme:** 'I struggled...because diversity range of our books is quite minimal', **e) that content duplicated existing pedagogy:** 'some of the things in the programme we were already doing', **f) that there were too many activity options or options weren't presented optimally:** 'because there were so many choices of activities per session, you don't know where to really start sometimes'; 'some of the tasks were a bit repetitive' ; 'some of the activities were not in the best logical order'; **g) the quality of accompanying resources supporting the programme:** 'there wasn't much prepared resources

already'; '[need] a bigger resource bank!' ; 'a few of the resources were also a little poor in terms of quality'

## Effectiveness

### Whole sample

**Child self-report survey data at pre and post (whole sample):** We followed our pre-registered analysis plan to examine the self-report survey data at pre and post-test. Our pre-registered analyses involved examining improvement over time for the whole sample. Because our data was collected from 425 children clustered in classes from 4 schools, we used a statistical technique called linear mixed effects modelling. This allowed us to examine the fixed effects of time (pre-test vs. post-test) and reading skill (New Group Reading Test, GL Assessment) on each of our constructs (reading motivation, engagement and six principles), modelling random effects at the level of individual participants, schools and items. These models revealed no significant changes over time for any of our constructs (all  $t < 1.57$   $p > 0.05$ ). We found there was a significant main effect of reading skill on some of our outcomes, indicating that more proficient readers tended to score more highly on self-report measures of motivation and engagement (Principle of Time:  $t = 2.61$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ; Behavioural Engagement:  $t = 2.20$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ; Affective Engagement  $t = 2.27$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ; Reading Motivation:  $t = 2.26$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). However, there were no significant interactions between reading skill and changes over time (all  $t < 1.81$   $p > 0.05$ ).

The scores for each Love to Read principle (i.e., access, choice, etc) are shown in figure 1 below, and a similar pattern was found for the other measures (i.e., reading motivation and engagement), indicating no significant improvement on any of our self-reported constructs, when the sample was examined as a whole. All of our questions (52 questions) in the self-report questionnaires used a 4-point likert scale. We observed that the modal score across all likert-scale questions was three out of maximum of four. In addition, for 14 of these questions, the modal score was four (the top score). This suggests that these self-report measures did not have sufficient sensitivity to detect improvement. For reading motivation, we chose to use a well-established measure of reading motivation (Motivation to Read Profile – Revised, Malloy et al., 2013) which is considered a reliable indicator of individual differences between children. We also created a measure of reading engagement for the project (Reading Engagement Scale: McGeown & Conradi-Smith, undergoing revisions), as no previous measure existed; this was piloted prior to use. Finally, a measure to evaluate changes in the six principles was created, which also used a 4-point scale to align with the motivation measure. Unfortunately, none of these measures have been sufficiently sensitive to be able to detect changes, if any, over time.

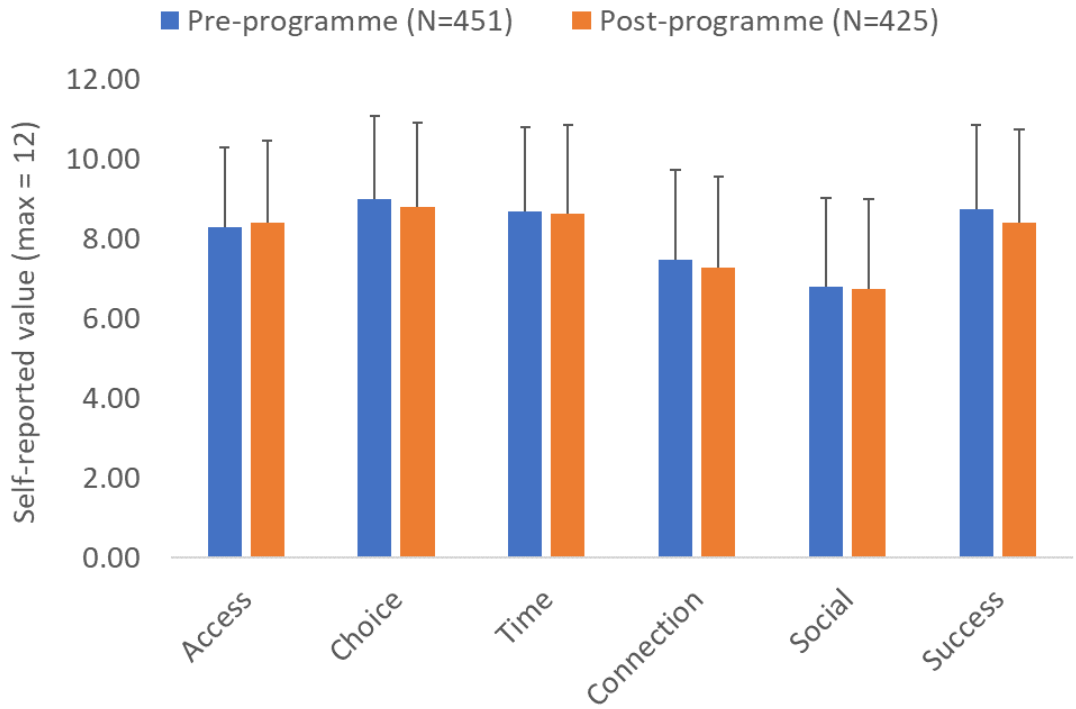


Figure 1. Self-reported scores on the six principles questionnaire for whole sample, pre and post programme

Despite no significant changes, it is important to note that responses on the Love to Read survey, which asked about perspectives and experiences of Love to Read and was administered post-programme were positive, even when examined for the sample as a whole (Figure 2).

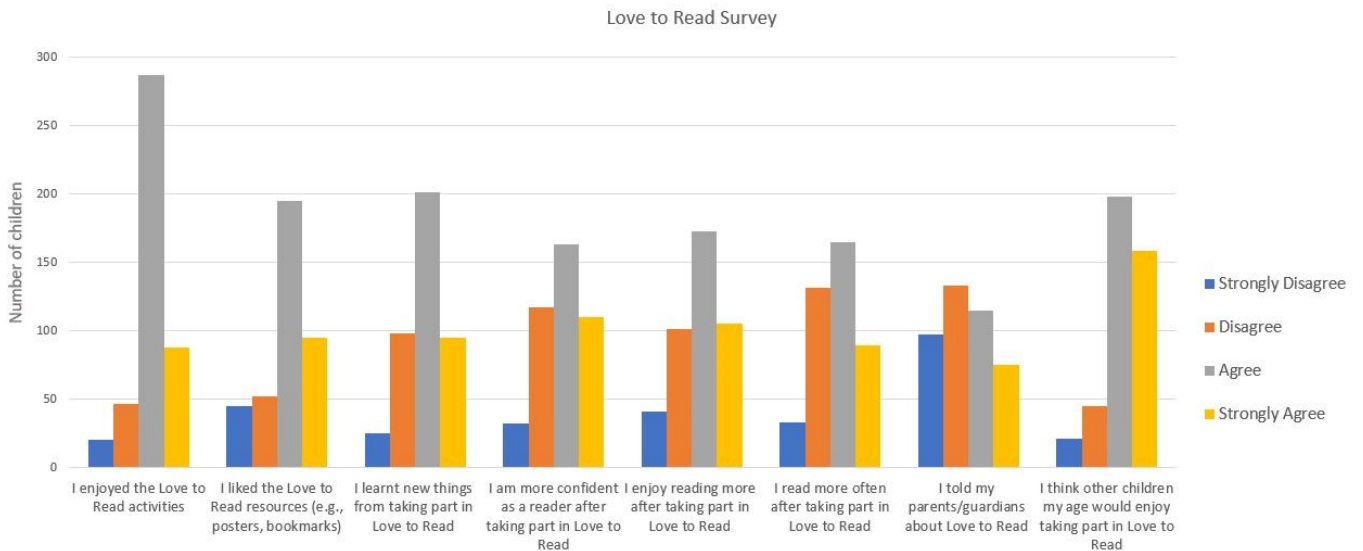


Figure 2. Responses on the Love to Read Questionnaire (post programme), for whole sample

In the next section, we report analysis on a subsample to consider the possibility that the measures are sensitive enough when examining change for those children who started at a low point in their reading engagement.

### Subsample

Child self-report survey data at pre and post (low engagement readers): We conducted exploratory analyses for those children who reported low reading engagement at Time 1, to explore whether the Love to Read programme increased scores for these reluctant readers who had room for improvement on our measures. Using the total engagement score (out of 60), we selected the bottom 15% of children at Time 1 (scoring 47 or less;  $n = 59$ ). Power simulations based on previous behaviour change interventions suggest that we need 210 participants to have 90% power for our proposed models (van der Kleij et al., 2019). Therefore, we simply examined these patterns using descriptive statistics (see figure 3). For most constructs, the effect size was less than 0.2 (less than a small effect). However, there was a small effect size for the increase in reporting of the Access principle ( $d = 0.2$ ; Figure 3) and a small increase in these students' reporting of the Social principle ( $d = 0.2$ ; Figure 3) and a large increase in Engagement ( $d = 0.8$ ; Figure 4). Although note that this was the measure used to select this sample, and selecting participants with the lowest starting point on a particular measure exacerbates the chances of observing an increase. These findings suggest greater potential to observe improvement when initial scores are lower. Future work with more sensitive measures are essential to be able to measure change in children's reading motivation and engagement, particularly for those experiencing higher levels of reading motivation or engagement prior to the programme.

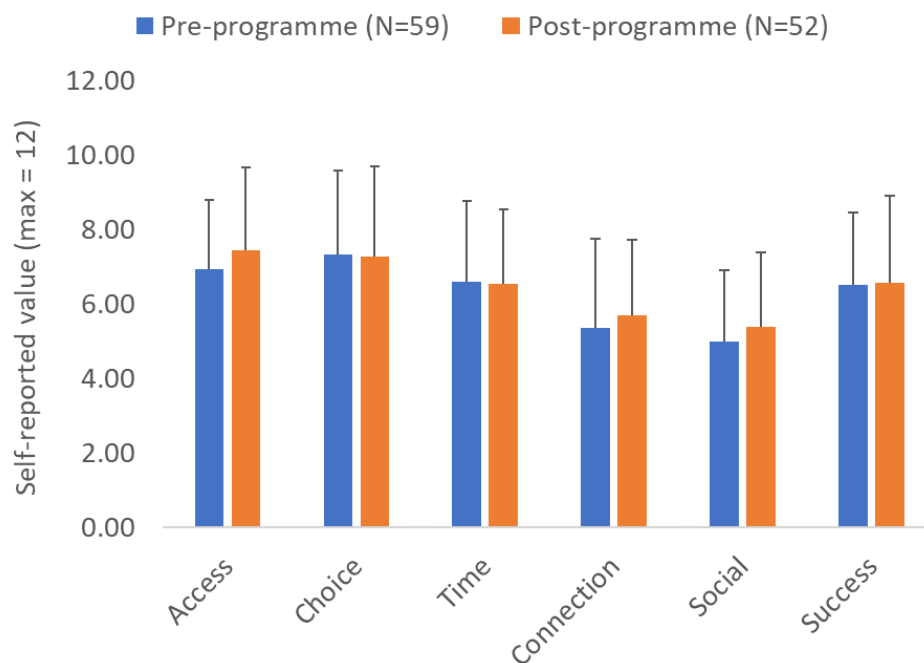


Figure 3. Self-Reported Scores on the Principles Questionnaire for low engagement readers, pre and post programme

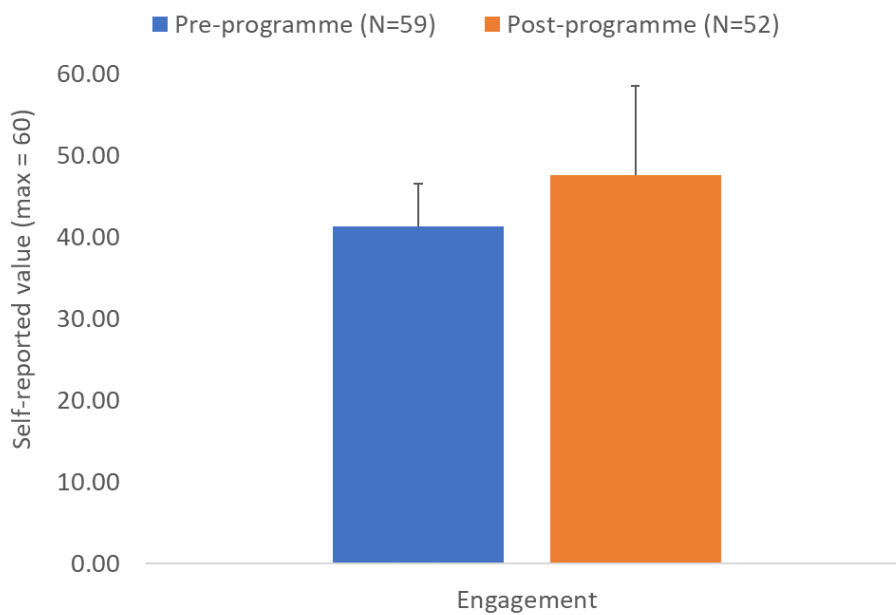


Figure 4. Self-Reported Scores on the Engagement Questionnaire for low engagement readers, pre and post programme

**Child post programme interviews** were carried out and teachers were asked to select children to take part who would offer different insights and/or opinions on the programme. These interviews provided insight into **children’s perspectives of positive changes** to their **attitudes**: ‘I used to just think that I wasn’t that good at reading and I could only read short stories... when I started reading bigger books, I realized that you achieve it if you put your mind to it’ ; ‘I used to like not like reading because I thought that it was just taking up my time but now ... I’ve realised that it’s actually fun and it’s relaxing’, ‘Before, you didn’t really think about books that much and what they would bring to you, but now like if you know there’s different genres and like there different points of stories’ ,

In addition, increases in **confidence** were mentioned: ‘I think the Love to Read has kind of boosted my confidence with books because now I’m trying out new genres like comedy, where I used to be just fantasy’ ; ‘I think it made me more confident reading out loud to like my friends and the teacher’

"I've realised that it's actually fun and it's relaxing"

"I think the Love to Read has kind of boosted my confidence with books"

"..now I feel that you can like think a lot more about the book and like relate yourself to the characters and the storyline and stuff"

"I used to like never read. I would just like play with like toys before I went to bed and now that I've like, started reading, I read books every night when I go to bed"

Furthermore, children reported new **skills and behaviours** in relation to book selection and reflection: 'I used to just like pick up a book and look at the front cover and like, 'Oh, that's interesting'. But now when I pick up book I look at the front cover. From the front cover... I think about what story could be about...'; 'Before I just thought that reading was like, you just read and then you read a book and then you finish the book but now I feel that you can like think a lot more about the book and like relate yourself to the characters and the storyline and stuff'

Finally, changes in **behaviour and reading practices** were found: 'After the first week my thoughts and feelings changed about reading because I used to think oh I'll just do this once a week but now I want to do it like every night or every morning'; 'I used to like never read, I would just like play with like toys before I went to bed and now that I've like, started reading I read books every night when I go to bed'; 'I go to the library every Friday now after swimming and get lots of books out'; 'From the Love to Read now I have a different opinion, now I keep reading books before I go to bed, even though I've never done that'; 'it's because I used to not read books, and I've started to like books more and more ... because I've found books that I like!'

It is, of course, important to recognise that some **children did not enjoy Love to Read**, for reasons including **delivery**: 'so you were sitting down on the carpet for ages, and erm, you didn't have movement breaks and you didn't get out your seat or anything outside you were just sitting on the carpet for hours'; 'She (teacher) was doing a powerpoint with us and she was just explaining the same thing over and over and it was getting kind of boring', **lack of quality book provision in school**: 'I didn't really like an activity because I didn't really find a book that I liked'; 'It's just that sometimes there are always books that I will enjoy in the library at school, but sometimes I find it a bit hard to find them because I have to search quite a lot' or a **general dislike of reading**: 'I liked the activities but I didn't like reading'; 'Mmm. I just don't like reading.'

#### Teacher post programme interviews (qualitative) and teacher pre and post survey (quantitative):

"down time was not just for reading but also to de-stress and slow down"

"Organising the class library by genre was incredible. Suddenly my reluctant readers were reading blurbs to try and categorise them!"

"for our SEN child to really be like I love reading now, I will sit and read, is amazing"

"[the programme] highlighted that many children did not have strategies on how to select a book"

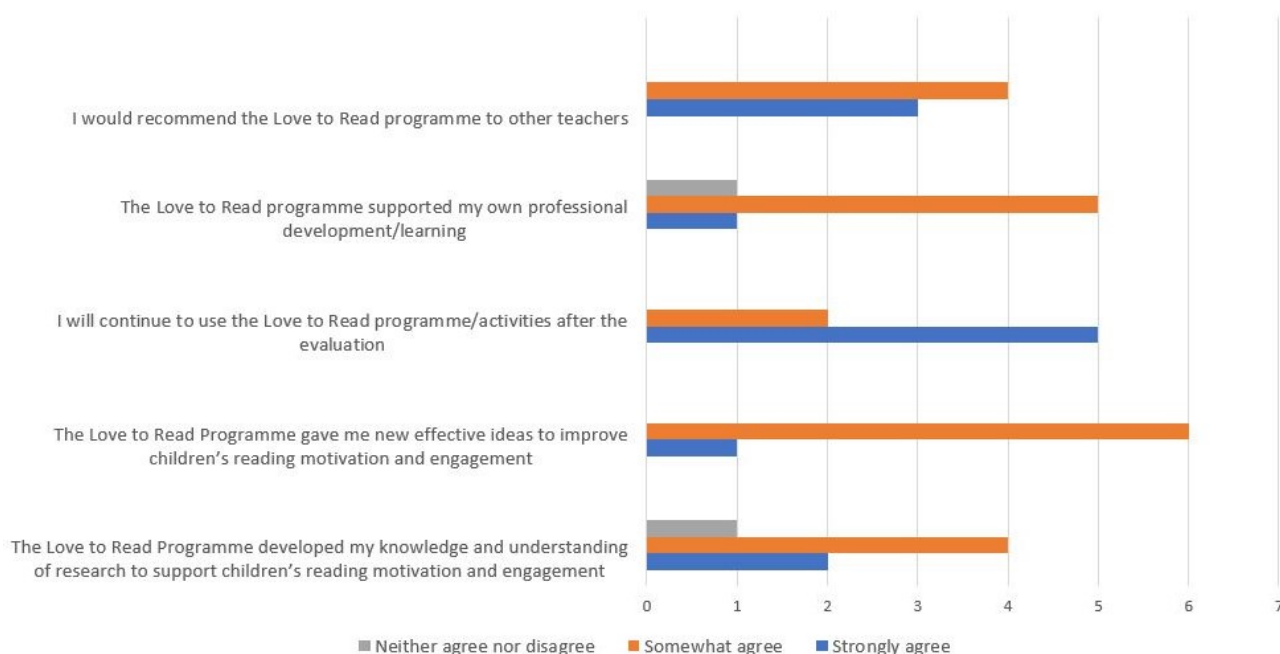
The post-programme interviews/surveys also provided insight into teachers' perceptions of changes to children's **reading attitudes**: 'if I say its love to read time within 10 seconds they got their cushions, the blankets, their dens and are starting to read which is, and I hadn't really thought that was going to be thing'; 'it has definitely instilled in some who didn't rate reading they are now enjoying it more', **skills**: 'highlighted that many children did not have strategies on how to select a book.. the weaker children in particular began to make better choice of reading material'; 'they'd be like, oh this book would be liked by X in our class'; 'Organising the class library by genre was incredible. Suddenly my reluctant readers were reading blurbs to try and



categorise them!'; and **behaviours**: 'I was surprised at ...so keen to read more generally' ; 'improved their focus in the next lesson' ; 'for our SEN child to really be like I love reading now, I will sit and read, is amazing'

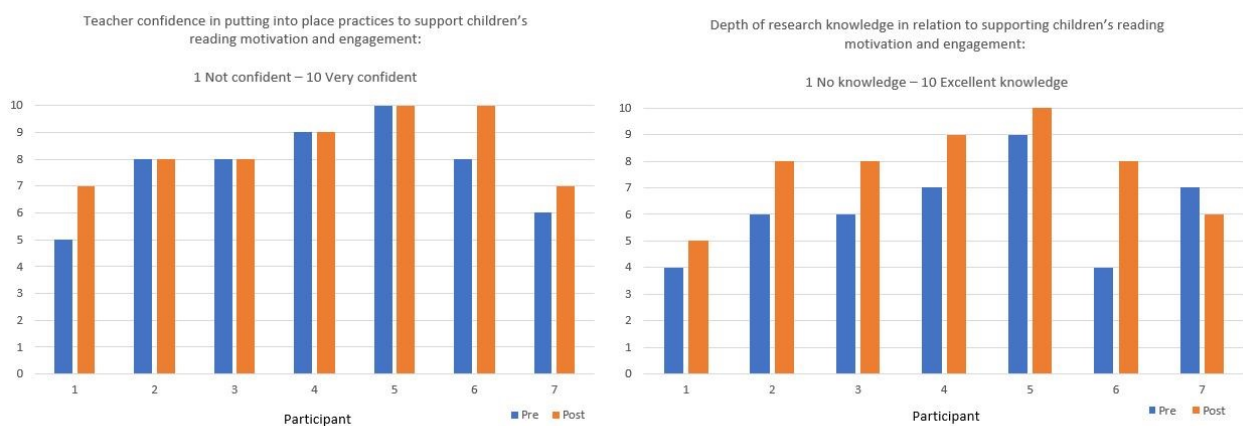
Furthermore, teachers commented on changes to themselves and/or their **pedagogy/practice**: 'its made us more focussed on what reading looks like across our school' ; 'Emptying the class library was one of the best things we ever did... now half the size but reflects much more what they want to read. I'm definitely doing this every term moving forward'; 'Loved connecting with our local library' ; 'Made us stop and take time to enjoy books – teachers and TA's too... down time was not just for reading but also to de-stress and slow down' ; 'in the evaluation yesterday, when I was filling it all in I was like actually reflecting back on how far we've come in 6 weeks is amazing'

Furthermore, post programme quantitative responses from teachers were also very positive, with primarily agree responses to questions posed regarding Love to Read specifically (based on 7 survey responses):



Note: No teachers selected strongly disagree or somewhat disagree

However, it should be noted that while teachers' reported depth of research knowledge generally increased, fewer increases were found in teachers' confidence of practice, using data from pre and post programme surveys (based on 7 survey responses):



## Discussion

In terms of implementation, Love to Read was considered acceptable and feasible for use in practice; indeed, feedback was very positive in this regard. However, it should be noted that a couple of teachers raised concerns about this taking time from a focus on developing reading skills, and also provided feedback which have informed programme revisions. In addition, comments from children have also informed programme revisions.

With regards to effectiveness, while the qualitative data from both teachers and children was generally very positive, no statistically significant increases in motivation or engagement were found for the entire sample of children who completed the Love to Read programme. This could be interpreted in several ways. It could reflect:

- a) Measurement issues. All quantitative measures used a 4-point scale, and the modal score across all likert-scale questions was 3. In addition, for 14 of these questions, the modal score was 4 (the top score). This suggests that these self-report measures did not have sufficient sensitivity to detect improvement. While 4-point scales are widely used in reading motivation research and are sufficient to understand individual differences in reading motivation, these measures are unsuitable for intervention research which aims to detect change. It has been long recognised that a lack of quality measures in this area has hindered the scientific study of reading motivation and engagement (Conradi et al., 2014). Indeed, when analysis was carried out for a subsample of those with potential for growth, significant changes were found. However, it is important to note that selecting participants with a low starting point on a particular measure exacerbates the chances of observing an increase; therefore this needs to be borne in mind when interpreting this result.
- b) Insufficient teacher training. A recent systematic review and meta-analysis of reading motivation interventions (McBreen & Savage, 2020) found that of the 34 studies that described the training process for intervention providers (e.g., teachers), 17 described intensive training (e.g., over more than 2 weeks) and 17 described short training (e.g., over the course of a single session/day). Results from this systematic review indicated that the impact of an intervention on reading outcomes varied significantly depending on the intensity of training provided to interventionists. Specifically, larger effect sizes were found for studies that included intensive training than for those that did short training, illustrating

the importance of training for optimal outcomes. In the Love to Read programme, no training was provided. Instead, intervention providers (teachers) were given time with the programme prior to implementation (at least two weeks) and were asked to engage in independent/self-directed study, but with no time allocated. Investment in quality training/professional development and time to engage with this is likely to be important for effective implementation.

- c) Dose. In the same systematic review and meta-analysis (McBreen & Savage, 2020), the duration of interventions was described (although analysis of effect sizes was not conducted with this as a moderator variable). This systematic review describes the majority of interventions as being between two weeks and 6 months. Therefore, it is possible that the 6 weeks delivery of the Love to Read programme was insufficient to lead to measurable changes in reading motivation and engagement. Indeed, this was mentioned by some teachers, and prior to the evaluation, the research team decided to preregister the evaluation with a focus on implementation (i.e., acceptability and feasibility of the programme) rather than effectiveness, due to concerns that the dose (i.e., 6 weeks) would be insufficient to lead to measurable changes. Following this evaluation, the research team believe that six weeks provides an opportunity to kick-start a focus on reading motivation and engagement, but that these principles need to be embedded throughout the school year, with some revisiting of teaching (e.g., how to choose a book) at certain points, or for certain students, to ensure momentum is maintained.
- d) Lack of effectiveness. It is possible that even with teacher training/professional development, more sufficiently sensitive measures, and increased dose, Love to Read is still not effective at increasing children's motivation and engagement to read, or that the translation of Love to Read gains in motivation and engagement do not result in increases in children's reading or language skills. While qualitative insights were positive, suggesting positive intermediate outcomes, and there were positive indications of effectiveness from those with low engagement at the outset, this interpretation does need to be stated. In addition, it is not the volitional reading of books (the focus of this programme) that will necessarily lead to measurable gains in reading and language skills, but the volitional reading of more challenging books, which introduce children to new words, new vocabulary and more complex grammar. This is an important distinction and has informed revisions of the Love to Read programme.

## Educational implications

### **Pedagogy to support children's reading motivation and engagement**

The Love to Read programme will be freely available from June 2023 for teachers to use in their practice. Integrated in the programme will be details of our evaluation, and revisions have been made to the programme (and accompanying resources) as a result of the evaluation. Specifically, the number of activities has been reduced (by approximately 30%, by removing duplication/synthesising aligned activities), a graphic designer has improved the quality of resources accompanying the programme and clearer implementation guidance is provided. In addition, the programme also includes a 'What to expect from Love to Read' section which includes details of the evaluation outcomes (implementation and effectiveness) and integrated throughout

the programme are insights from children and teachers in relation to their experiences of delivering or participating in the programme. We anticipate that this will be a useful research-informed programme/resource for teachers to integrate into their practice to support and improve children's reading motivation and engagement, particularly within the context of declining reading motivation and engagement throughout the upper primary school years (McGeown, 2013) and low levels of reading outside of school (Clark & Teravainen-Goff, 2020). However, we are also very aware that creating a programme alone is unlikely to result in optimal outcomes. Support and investment from school leaders is crucial, in addition to sufficient quality training/professional development for teachers to improve implementation, and sustained implementation so that reading for pleasure becomes part of the culture of the class. In addition, investment in quality book provision which reflects the interests, abilities, lives and experiences of the school community is essential prior to programme implementation. These demonstrate important priorities for future work, in addition to future evaluations which use sufficiently sensitive measures to evaluate evidence of impact.

## **Methodological implications**

### **Teacher-researcher collaboration**

This project also exemplified a research-practice partnership and collaborative activity between researchers and teachers to co-design an educational programme. A recent Open Dialogue (McGeown, 2023b; 2023c, with contributions from Crane, Dixon, Penuel, McPherson, Norbury, Sjouland, Snowling and Vardy) highlights the importance of prioritising 'practice into research' and not solely 'research into practice'. It stresses the value of collaborative endeavours, emphasising the importance of ensuring collaboration throughout the entire programme of research, from development to evaluation. The Nuffield Love to Read project and related publications (McGeown et al., 2022; 2023a; 2023b; 2023c) are driving forward a movement which focuses on communication, collaboration and co-production between those in research and practice as we work together towards educational improvement. This has important implications for future educational research and efforts to close the gap between research and practice. The Love to Read project has made an important contribution to methodological thinking and knowledge in this area.

### **Building bridges across different disciplinary perspectives**

The Love to Read programme is unique in that it also purposely drew upon research from diverse disciplinary perspectives (e.g., psychological, educational, socio-cultural), with underpinning research including anything from meta-analytic reviews to small scale qualitative research studies. Indeed, all types of high-quality research have an important role to play in improving our understanding and efforts to increase children's reading motivation and engagement. To date, polarised perspectives and tensions between academics working from different disciplinary backgrounds has often meant education interventions/programmes have failed to be built upon the wealth of research knowledge available. Closer collaboration between researchers with shared interests and priorities, but different disciplinary perspectives and methodological expertise, is essential to drive forward education programme development, and high-quality mixed methods evaluations which give sufficient attention to both implementation and effectiveness outcomes.

## Conclusion

The Love to Read project was a team effort: a collaboration among individuals with a shared passion and commitment to supporting and improving children's reading experiences and outcomes. It was a project which recognised the importance and value of children's voices in research, and teachers' professional and pedagogical knowledge, experience and expertise.

The Love to Read programme was found to be feasible for implementation, and the mixed methods evaluation suggests some evidence of promise. To get to this stage is a credit to all involved and we'd like to thank everyone who shared their knowledge, enthusiasm, experience and expertise. Indeed, Love to Read's focus on co-creation is helping to drive forward an agenda for educational improvement which recognises that research is better when we work together.

## Acknowledgements

### Practice Partners

Love to Read was a team effort, and we'd like to thank our extended team who were an incredible source of knowledge, expertise and support throughout. We feel very fortunate to have had such a wonderful team, including Dr Christina Clark (Director of Research, National Literacy Trust), Megan Dixon (Educational Consultant), Helen Fairlie (Senior Education Officer, Education Scotland), Katrina Lucas (Teacher – Scotland) and Katherine Wilkinson (Head of Research and Evaluation, Scottish Book Trust).

### Co-design teachers

A huge thank you to the fantastic team of teachers, Katie Jukes, Carol Ann Neil, Chereen Rain, Claire Sleath, Emily Weston and Chris Youles, who shared their immense knowledge, experience and enthusiasm with us to co-design the programme. We are so grateful to you all! Thank you also to those teachers who applied to join the co-design team and have supported the Love to Read project throughout.

### Participating schools

We are incredibly grateful to all the school leaders, teachers and children from the schools that participated in different phases of this project.

For Phase 2: Thank you to all the children who shared their thoughts and experiences on reading for pleasure – we learnt so much from you all, and hope we have done justice to your insights within the programme.

For Phase 4: A huge thank you to the teachers who implemented Love to Read and participated in the evaluation. We fully recognise the time, energy and learning required to do this, particularly at such a quick rate. Your perspectives and experiences of implementing Love to Read have been so useful and have informed changes we have made to the programme before it is available. Thank you also to all the children who took part in Love to Read and shared their thoughts after the programme was complete. We know some of you loved it, but other didn't – all of your opinions matter and we are determined to keep improving Love to Read to make it better for everyone!

For the illustrations: Thank you to the five classes of children who looked at various concepts for the illustrations and the various iterations as the illustrations were developed – your input was incredibly helpful! The illustrations are far brighter and bolder than we had ever expected – but we know you like them this way – and they are for you after all! 😊

Finally, thank you to Laura Gray, Senior Practitioner Educational Psychologist, with colleagues Jill Everett and Sarah Pagan, who offered to help us with the programme and ensure it supported those children who often struggle with reading and/or have negative reading experiences. This will always be a priority for the Love to Read team and we are grateful for your input.

Thank you also to our incredible illustrator, Katie McPherson, and graphic designer Chris Brodt. You were both incredibly patient and positive as we asked for repeated rounds of revisions in response to children’s feedback! The illustrations really exemplify the project and it’s been wonderful to see these illustrations in classrooms.

## **Expert Advisory Group**

We were very fortunate to have a wealth of expertise available to us within our expert advisory group - critical friends who simultaneously supported and provided constructive feedback throughout the entire process. Thank you in particular to Professor Teresa Cremin and James Clements for reviewing the entire programme before the evaluation (no small task!) and Melanie Ramdarshan Bold and others for their input throughout.

## **Funder**

A huge thank you to our funder. The Nuffield Foundation is an independent charitable trust with a mission to advance social well-being. It funds research that informs social policy, primarily in Education, Welfare, and Justice. It also funds student programmes that provide opportunities for young people to develop skills in quantitative and scientific methods. The Nuffield Foundation is the founder and co-funder of the Nuffield Council on Bioethics, the Ada Lovelace Institute and the Nuffield Family Justice Observatory. The Foundation has funded this project, but the views expressed are those of the authors and not necessarily the Foundation. Visit [www.nuffieldfoundation.org](http://www.nuffieldfoundation.org)

## **Outputs**

**Website:** <https://blogs.ed.ac.uk/lovetoread/>. This includes resources for teachers (one page posters aligned with each principle), newsletters (charting the progress of the project) and will host the final version of the Love to Read programme and accompanying resources (posters, bookmarks, etc) from June 2023.

**Twitter:** @ with ~1,000 followers. This account will be maintained following project completion to share updates.

### **Academic articles:**

Love to Read Research Team (in preparation). A complex evaluation of an education programme designed to support reading for pleasure

Oxley, E., & McGeown, S. (under review). Children’s Perspectives and Experiences of Reading for Pleasure Practices.

McGeown, S., Oxley, E., Love to Read Practice Partners, Ricketts, J., & Shapiro, L. (2023a). Working at the intersection of research and practice: The Love to Read project. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 117, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijer.2022.102134>

McGeown, S., Oxley, E., & Steel, J. (2022). Collaboration and co-design: Learning from literacy interventions co-created by researchers and teachers. *Psychology of Education Review*, 46(2), 4-9.

#### **Magazine articles:**

Times Education Supplement, October 2021. Title: Research: Better Together

English 4-11, Spring 2023. Title: Love to Read: Principles to support children's reading motivation and engagement

School Libraries Association, Autumn 2023. Title: Love to Read: Six principles to support reading for pleasure.

#### **Academic conference presentations to date:**

British Psychological Society Education Section, 2021. Title: Co-designing reading interventions with teachers: An implementation science approach.

Society for Scientific Studies of Reading, 2021. Title: Co-designing literacy interventions: The Love to Read project

British Psychological Society Education Section, 2022. Invited Keynote. Title: Better together: Research-practice partnerships

United Kingdom Literacy Association International Conference, 2022. Title: Motivation and engagement in reading: The Love to Read Project

Royal Society of Edinburgh, 2022: Co-designing educational programmes and interventions

#### **Academic conferences forthcoming**

United Kingdom Literacy Association International Conference, 2023

British Education Research Association Conference, 2023

European Education Research Association Conference, 2023

#### **Non-academic conferences to date:**

Scottish Government Education Research Seminar Series, 2022. Title: Collaborative research to improve literacy experiences and outcomes

Education Scotland's National Literacy Network, 2022. Title: Love to Read

Open University Children's Research Centre, 2022. Title: Better together: Participatory research with children

National Centre for Family Learning, May 2023. Title: Boosting family engagement through reading for pleasure

### **Non-academic conferences forthcoming**

Chartered Institute of Librarians and Information Professionals Scotland, June 2023. Title: Love to Read

Schools Library Association, September 2023. Title: Love to Read: Six principles for primary schools to support reading for pleasure

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## Supplementary Information

The Love to Read Programme drew upon six research-informed principles, with activities to embed these principles into practice. Principle images, definitions, short research-informed summaries and one activity to illustrate each principle is provided below:

### Access



**Teacher definition:** Children have regular and easy access to books at school that align with their reading habits and interests

**Child definition:** I can access books I enjoy

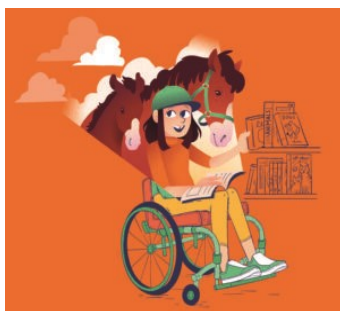
Children are more motivated to read when they have access to a wide range of reading materials (Gambrell, 2011), but specifically reading materials which reflect their interests and abilities (McGeown & Wilkinson, 2021).

### Example activity:

#### Library Audit

- Carry out a current library audit to evaluate whether text types reflect the interests, lives and/or experiences of students in your school. Ask children to be involved in looking through your library collection, removing outdated books or those in poor condition - old, tattered books can put children off reading – unless they are favourite reads! The school provision of books should look as exciting and inviting as possible.

### Choice



**Teacher definition:** Children have choice over their independent reading activities; schools have the structure, and children have the skills, to ensure 'good' (i.e., skill and interest aligned) reading choices

**Child definition:** I know how to choose books I will enjoy

Giving children control of their independent reading activities through choice is central to supporting motivation to read (Guthrie et al., 2004, 2007; McGeown & Wilkinson, 2021) However, children vary in their ability to make 'good' reading choices and will need to learn skills to do this successfully.

#### Example activity:

##### Learn and apply effective strategies to choose books

- Discuss with children different strategies for selecting a book (e.g., reading blurb, reading first few pages, looking at the front cover, having knowledge of the genre/series/author, receiving a recommendation) and encourage them to think about which strategies they use to select books, which work best for them, and try using new strategies to see if this is helpful. Encourage children to discuss and share their strategies for selecting books with each other and apply these strategies when choosing new books to read.

#### Time



**Teacher definition:** Children have regular quality time to read books they engage with in school and at home

**Child definition:** I have quality time to read at school and at home

Time spent reading books, rather than other text types, improves children's reading skills (Guthrie et al., 1999; Mol & Bus, 2011; Torppa et al., 2019; Van Bergen et al., 2020) and out of school reading is particularly important. During reading, children's depth of reading engagement (i.e., cognitive and affective engagement) is important, not just the amount of time they spend reading (behavioural engagement)

#### Example activity:

##### The right book

- Ensure children have a book that they genuinely want to read prior to independent reading time in class and give them time to choose this. This is essential to increase likelihood that children will be more engaged with the book that they read.



## Connection



**Teacher definition:** Children can access and choose books, and book reading activities, which are personally relevant, and relevant to their reading goals

**Child definition:** I can access and choose books which I connect with

Personally relevant: Characters and stories which feel personally relevant lead to enhanced engagement with the text (Calarco et al., 2017; Kuzmičová & Cremin, 2021; Oatley, 2016).

Relevant to reading interests/goals: Children are more engaged when reading if the books they read, and the reading activities they participate in, align with their reading interests, goals, and the reading experiences they are seeking (Guthrie et al., 2007; McGeown et al., 2020; McGeown et al., 2015; McGeown & Wilkinson, 2021).

### Example activity:

#### Model book selection via an experience driven approach

- Model selecting a book that aligns with the type of reading experience you are seeking. For example, ask the students, do you want something to make you laugh, be exciting, help you learn something new, etc. Discuss the thought process behind picking a book – including what type of book you are in the mood for. Talk about how, when and where you are reading can also influence your reading experience. Talk about how different genres lend themselves to different types of reading experiences and that selecting a book is often about finding the right fit.

## Social



**Teacher definition:** Children have the time, activities, and the skills, to share and discuss books with others

**Child definition:** I enjoy sharing and discussing books with others

Social reading environments and informal book talk create ‘richly reciprocal reading communities’ (Cremin et al., 2014). Social interactions can take different forms and can include talking about books with others (i.e., friends, peers, teachers, family, etc), sharing books, etc (Gambrell,

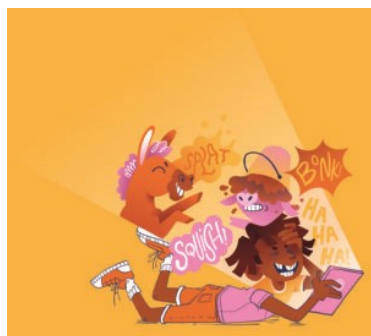
2011; Guthrie et al., 2000, 2007). However, not all children feel confident doing this, and not all children naturally enjoy social reading interactions (Guthrie et al., 2007).

### Example activity:

#### Reciprocal reading goes social

- Similar to reciprocal reading, give each child a 'role' within book talk as children are initially developing the skills and confidence to talk about books with each other. For example, the 'connector' – the child who discusses connections between the story and real life, the 'character' – the child who discusses the main character's personality, feelings, actions, the 'best bit' – the child who shares their favourite part of the story so far, the 'better if' – the child who suggests what would make the story more exciting/funny/realistic etc. Encourage children to swap around these roles as they read and suggest new roles that they could take on. This can be used for different books in the class, ensuring all children are working with a book that they find enjoyable/accessible.

### Success



**Teacher definition:** Children have a range of positive and successful reading experiences, can set meaningful goals, and recognise their growing success as readers

**Child definition:** I have positive reading experiences and feel I am developing as a reader

Perceptions of success are central to theories of what motivates children to read (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Wigfield & Eccles, 2000) and reading skill has been widely cited as important for reading motivation and engagement (Toste et al., 2020, van Bergen et al., 2020). However, a broader conceptualisation of success is essential for children to set meaningful goals and see themselves developing as readers (McGeown & Wilkinson, 2021).

### Example activity:

#### What is a successful reader?

- In small groups or as a whole class ask children to contribute ideas about what it means to be a successful reader, but without mentioning reading skill. Provide post-it notes for children to write their ideas down in case they don't want to say them aloud or wish to remain anonymous. These post-it notes could go on a display in the school classroom or corridors to highlight and remind children of the various ways to be a successful reader.

## Love to Read: Theory of Change

The Love to Read theory of change is illustrated below. This provides a complete description and illustration of how and why an increase in children's reading motivation and engagement was expected, including the inputs and processes required for change to happen, anticipated outputs, outcomes and impact. Please note that the feasibility study did not extend to measuring impact. Furthermore, points in capital letters were not included in the feasibility study but should be considered in future as elements of the theory of change.

