

Case Study: Mary Igoe, Primary School Librarian, Tower Hamlets Schools Library Service

After-school reading club, St Saviour's Primary School

Mary Igoe works for Tower Hamlets Schools Library Service who offer primary schools access to a professional librarian on a part-time basis and one of her schools is St Saviour's Primary School. Mary noticed that some children had a less positive attitude to reading groups which usually run in the classroom and during school time. The after-school reading club was thus designed to make the experience a fun time and to promote reading for pleasure; it initially started with a Y4 group of 10 children but has since been offered to other year groups throughout the year.

The School had *"reading for pleasure"* as a high priority on the school development plan. Senior management were keen to target children who needed extra help but Mary felt it was important that children chose to come as it was an out-of-school activity. If children are "volunteered" by others attendance can fall off over a few weeks.

Children used a scrapbook format to record their learning and attitude to reading at the beginning and as the group progressed. This showed the increase in their involvement in reading/books/story throughout the intervention, supported by a rating of a scale of 1 to 10 and quotes.

The school ran many after-school activities but they were mainly sports-based; this initiative started an appetite for reading and other curriculum-based clubs. Children really enjoyed the mix of co-operative games and sharing stories. There was no pressure to "read aloud", finish every book or write a review and, when released from these pressures, the children became more adventurous in their choices of reading and enjoyed the experience more.

Advice:

- Allow children to choose to come. Their enjoyment will encourage others who might "need" to join more.
- Ensure you have a wide range of books to choose from but not the whole library - children can find this intimidating.
- Initially include more games, etc. than reading and gradually change the ratio over the time of the club.
- Run it from 3.30pm to 4.20pm (for example) – make it short and sweet, children are tired after school!