# Oxfordshire Reading Campaign Interim Evaluation Report

# September 2012 – July 2013



September 2013

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National Literacy Trust

## About the National Literacy Trust

We are a national charity dedicated to raising literacy levels in the UK. Our research and analysis make us the leading authority on literacy. We run projects in the poorest communities, campaign to make literacy a priority for politicians and parents, and support schools.

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# Executive summary

This report evaluates the first year of the Oxfordshire Reading Campaign, which took place from September 2012 to July 2013. It will outline the success of the campaign which has led to an increase in literacy levels and literacy engagement at Key Stage 1 across Oxfordshire. It will also show that there has been a positive change in the confidence of parents and community members who now feel more confident to support their child's literacy development.

The Oxfordshire Reading Campaign is a two-year funded initiative, commissioned by Oxfordshire County Council and delivered by National Literacy Trust and its partners. The campaign was commissioned in order to create a step change across the County to increase the literacy levels of children at Key Stage 1, with a greater proportion of pupils achieving level 2b+ in national curriculum reading assessments. A change of attitude was also desired, towards a culture where books and reading is loved and encouraged by teachers, families, and community members across Oxfordshire.

To create this change, National Literacy Trust adopted a three strand approach: one to improve attainment levels through continuing professional development for teachers and the Project X Code reading intervention (delivered in partnership with Edge Hill University), one that involved community volunteers in the delivery of a 10-week volunteer reading programme designed to promote reading for enjoyment to children aged 5-7,and another that engaged with local and regional media to engage parents and the wider Oxfordshire community (in partnership with Oxford Mail newspaper).

A total of 56 schools took part in the first year of the campaign, with over 500 children being supported through its activity, and 120 community volunteers participating in the volunteering programme.

Year one of the campaign has delivered positive outcomes for the children, families, and wider community of Oxfordshire. These are the key findings:

- **80.8%** of children in Oxfordshire achieved level 2b+ in their SATs results for 2013 (a 2.8% increase on 2012 results).
- **55%** of participating schools had 80.8% or greater of their Key Stage 1 children achieve level 2b+.
- Only **47%** of non-participating focus schools had 80.8% or greater of their Key Stage 1 children achieve level 2b+.
- **95.4%** of children who participated in the volunteering programme reported that they like reading more now than before, and 93% reported that they read more now than before they started the programme.
- **92.9%** of volunteers feel that the volunteering programme has supported their knowledge of early reading and literacy, and 82.1% feel that the volunteering programme has supported their confidence in supporting the literacy skills of their own children and/or family members.
- **401** pieces of media were created about the campaign, with a reach of **5,499,906** and a value of **£330,500**.
- **3,019** visits were made to the Oxfordshire Reading Campaign microsite, from **2,316** unique users since the launch and **8,038** page views.
- **25%** of participating volunteers came forward as a result of the media campaign.

The following recommendations are made for the coming year of the campaign:

## Pupil progress/attainment

Evidence has shown that in some cases, schools were putting children forward for the Project X Code intervention who were far below the national average and not likely to achieve the desired level within the timeframe of the intervention. These schools will need further support in year two of the campaign to choose the children who would most benefit from the intervention. In order to make the step change required in year two of the campaign, towards 86% of pupils in Oxfordshire achieving level 2b+, this is crucial.

## Volunteering programme

Volunteer feedback has shown that a lack of communication and information from teaching staff towards volunteers has resulted in some volunteers feeling less able to comment on a child's progress. Going forward, it is recommended that more information on children can be passed to volunteers involved in the programme where possible.

## Campaigning strand

As the campaign will be moving into its final year, media and campaigning activity that focuses on the legacy of the programme may be beneficial. This may involve continuing its work with its existing stakeholder network, and/or engaging with new stakeholders to ensure that key messages are shared beyond the lifespan of the campaign.

# Introduction

This evaluation report shows that during the first year of the Oxfordshire Reading Campaign, over 500 children in KS1 improved their reading skills. Not only do more children now read better but more children also enjoy reading and do it more often as a result of the campaign. The campaign also had significant impact on community volunteers, with 82.1% of community volunteers now feeling more confident in supporting the literacy skills of their own children or those of family members.

## Programme description

### Background and rationale

In July 2012 the National Literacy Trust were commissioned by Oxfordshire County Council to deliver the Oxfordshire Reading Campaign, a two-year initiative targeting Oxfordshire primary schools and the wider community, with the aim of substantially improving reading levels at Key Stage 1 and to increase the number of pupils reaching level 2b+.

Oxfordshire County Council's decision to commission the initiative was influenced by a variety of factors. The first was the Council's desire to create a step change in Key Stage 1 results, particularly in Oxford City which has a history of poor attainment. In 2010, Oxford City had the lowest attainment results at Key Stage 1 in the Country. Therefore, the County Council, as well as local councillors, wanted to do more to support schools in Oxfordshire. The Council see literacy as a vital foundation block for all learning and a key component of their mission to drive attainment and standards. They set out five key outcomes for the campaign:

- To substantially improve reading standards as measured at level 2b+ in Key Stage 1 tests;
- To contribute to wider improvements in education outcomes;
- To raise the aspirations of children and families;
- To foster a culture of reading and a love of books;
- To engage the whole community in this pursuit of high standards of literacy.

The Council felt that an important part of the campaign should be to include the use of community volunteers, who read with and support children in schools, as this was seen as a crucial part of their aim to engage the whole community in their pursuit for high literacy standards.

The National Literacy Trust is an independent charity that believes everyone in the UK should have the literacy skills they need. It is the only national charity dedicated to raising literacy levels in the UK. It does this through research, projects that work with the most deprived communities, support for schools and other practitioners and campaigning. The charity was therefore well-placed to deliver the campaign.

## Programme overview

### About the Oxfordshire Reading Campaign

The Oxfordshire Reading Campaign is a two year commissioned programme, taking place across Oxfordshire from September 2012 to July 2014. The programme offers a range of literacy teaching and learning support to Oxfordshire primary schools, and involves the local community in volunteer reading support for primary school children. This is delivered through three strands, as outline in the section on programme activity on page 8.

### Recruitment of schools

81 focus schools were initially identified as being ones that would most benefit from the campaign. In order to identify the focus schools, county-wide Key Stage 1 results from 2009 to 2012, Early Years Foundation Stage profile results in communication, language and literacy from 2011 to 2012, and the Year 1 phonics screening check results from 2012 were analysed. Cohort size was also important and schools that could potentially have larger cohorts were sought, in order to make the regional gains needed to meet our outcomes. Lastly, Ofsted results were also analysed to suggest schools that might benefit.

The Oxfordshire Reading Campaign launch and recruitment began in September 2012. All Oxon schools were made aware of the campaign but funding and priority was reserved for focus schools. 45 schools signed up initially in the first recruitment wave and then a further 11 schools signed up at the end of 2012.

## Programme aims and objectives

When commissioning the Oxfordshire Reading Campaign, Oxfordshire County Council set out their key outcomes for the campaign. These are:

- To substantially improve reading standards as measured at level 2b+ in Key Stage 1 tests
- To contribute to wider improvements in education outcomes
- To raise the aspirations of children and families
- To foster a culture of reading and a love of books
- To engage the whole community in this pursuit of high standards of literacy

Oxfordshire County Council also set out their minimum expectations for the attainment results at Key Stage 1 they wanted to achieve, which were at least 78% of year 2 children achieving level 2b+ in 2013, and 84% of year 2 children achieving level 2b+ in 2014. However, National Literacy Trust set higher attainment targets which were that 80% of year 2 children would achieve level 2b+ in 2013, and 86% of year 2 children would achieve level 2b+ in 2014.

Alongside these targets, to meet the programme aims the National Literacy Trust set out some complementary outcomes to be delivered through the volunteering and campaigning strands. These are:

### Targeted Key Stage 1 pupils in focus schools:

- Improve attitudes towards reading
- Improve reading confidence and enjoyment
- Increased knowledge of own reading preferences (diversification of book choice)
- Changed reading behaviour (increased reading frequency and social interactions around reading)

- Improved perceptions of reading ability

## Volunteers

- Increased knowledge of supporting early reading and reading engagement
- Increased confidence in supporting families to improve home learning environments

## Families

- Increased knowledge of supporting children's reading and other literacy disciplines
- Increased confidence in ability to support children's reading and other literacy disciplines
- Increased engagement in supporting children's reading and other literacy disciplines

# Programme activities

As mentioned previously, the Oxfordshire Reading Campaign is delivered through three strands. In order to get a clear understanding of the Programme activities, more detail on each strand is outlined below.

## Strand one: school improvement

The Oxfordshire Reading Campaign school improvement strand is run in partnership with Edge Hill University's Reading Support team. This strand is two fold and includes:

1. Training with teaching assistants on how to run the Project X CODE reading intervention in school and wider continual professional development for heads, literacy leaders and Key Stage 1 teaching staff, led by Edge Hill University.
2. School improvement support and challenge visits, delivered by National Literacy Trust school improvement consultants.

Project X CODE is a reading intervention developed by Oxford University Press. It is a reading programme that embeds systematic synthetic phonics within an animated 3D adventure series. Edge Hill University's Reading Support Team provides training on Project X CODE with assessment and teaching resources to schools nominated for the Oxfordshire Reading Campaign. They also provide professional development courses and events for Key Stage 1 teachers and literacy subject leaders, including guidance on managing and maximising the impact of Project X CODE, as well as training and support for teachers, subject leaders and headteachers on early reading policies and practices.

Alongside this support, National Literacy Trust provides school improvement consultants who complete support and challenge visits to the schools involved in the Oxfordshire Reading Campaign. Their support focuses on implementation and delivery of the intervention, as well as monitoring progress of schools and provide guidance where needed.
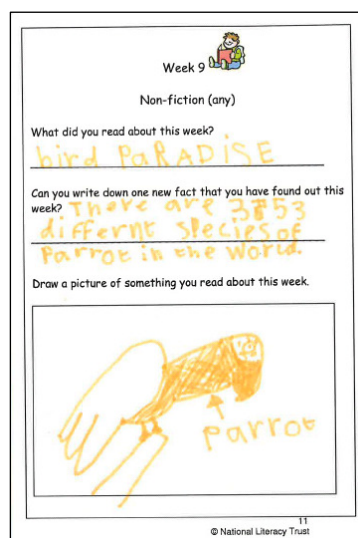
## Strand two: volunteering programme

The Oxfordshire Reading Campaign volunteering programme is a bespoke 10-week programme designed specifically for this campaign. It aims to:

- Provide targeted pupils with trained volunteer support that will increase their engagement, attitudes, behaviours and confidence towards reading.

- Engage volunteers in promoting the importance of literacy, empowering local people within their communities.
- Generate complementary outcomes to those achieved through the school improvement strand.

Volunteers engage in one-to-one sessions with children where they deliver a programme of activities designed by the National Literacy Trust. In these sessions, children are supported to engage more with books and print, and to become more confident in their own abilities around literacy.

Each school has a Volunteer Coordinator who coordinates the volunteering programme in their school and supports the volunteers. These Coordinators are assisted by the Volunteering Manager at the National Literacy Trust, who trains them, provide resources and guidance, and supports them throughout the duration of the project.



In line with National Literacy Trust research and practical expertise, the 10-week volunteering programme has been designed in a bespoke fashion, to support the aims of the Oxfordshire Reading Campaign. Across the 10-week period, volunteers and children follow session plans and get the chance to explore a range of genres including fiction, non-fiction, and poetry. Children also have the opportunity to choose books/texts of their choice during free choice sessions. At the end of each week, children have the opportunity to write and draw about the books/texts they have been exploring in their reading journals, and are encouraged to talk about their likes and dislikes with their volunteer.

Child journal entry for week nine from Luca (6 years) St. Ebbe's Primary School

## Strand three: public facing campaigning

Strand three of the Oxfordshire Reading Campaign involves marketing and communications activity designed to engage and inform local families, recruit residents and local employees to act as reading volunteers, and profile the initiative regionally, nationally and in government and education settings.

The campaigning strand is strongly supported by a partnership with the Oxford Mail newspaper. This partnership includes the recruitment of volunteers and news stories on the progress of the campaign.

An Oxfordshire Reading Campaign microsite has also been developed to inform the community, engage parents and facilitate volunteer recruitment. The microsite acts as a single point where campaign information and news is gathered, a place for volunteers to find out more, sign up and access resources, and a place to deliver campaign messaging to parents. It also acts as a portal to monitor engagement with the campaign and to capture feedback from the public.

# Findings

## School improvement: Attainment data

Attainment data from Key Stage 1 (KS1) SATs results for Oxfordshire were obtained from Oxfordshire County Council (OCC). This was cross-referenced and analysed in relation to schools that participated in the Oxfordshire Reading Campaign participating schools (N = 56) as well as those that had originally been targeted but that had not taken part in the campaign (N = 38).

Data for schools was analysed in line with 2013 KS1 outcomes at or above the 2013 OCC regional average of the proportion of pupils achieving 2b+ or above (80.8%). We found that:

- **55%** of Oxfordshire Reading Campaign participating schools succeeded in having 80.8% or more of their year 2 children achieve level 2b+.
- In contrast, only **47%** of non-participating focus schools succeeded in having 80.8% or more of their year 2 children achieve level 2b+.
- In 2012, only 5 of the 45 wave 1 schools succeeded in reaching the regional average of 77.6% or more of their children reaching level 2b+. Conversely, in 2013 almost five times as many of these schools (24) succeeded in reaching the regional average (80.8%).

Based on data retrieved throughout the programme on individual schools, and visit notes from school improvement consultants, it could be said that improvement was greatest where:

- KS1 teachers reflected on and improved provision and practice as a result of continuous professional development (CPD).
- Teaching assistants embraced Project X CODE training and were well-supported by link teachers/subject leaders/head teachers.
- Schools have made good use of data and the guidance provided as part of the training to carefully select year 2 pupils who were likely to benefit most from the programme. [1]
- The teaching assistants leading Project X Code were highly skilled and knowledgeable. This resulted in improved outcomes for the vast majority of CODE children, and level 2b+ outcomes for some children previously considered vulnerable/ unlikely to achieve this level.[2]

**Phonics and Early Reading Assessment (PERA)**

Phonics and Early Reading Assessment (PERA), is a standardised assessment tool used to test children's phonic knowledge and use of phonics for reading, as well as reading accuracy and comprehension. This was used by schools undertaking the Project X Code intervention to track children's pre- and post reading scores.

According to PERA results submitted by schools, the average reading age gain on exit from the intervention was 13.2 months. This shows good gains made by pupils involved in the campaign.

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[1] The exception was Wroxton as they considered that children in other year groups would benefit more. Their Year 2 results back this up.

[2] This information was taken from data from school improvement visits.

**Progress towards outcomes**

In relation to the outcome, *To substantially improve reading standards as measured at level 2b+ in Key Stage 1 tests*, the following interpretation of the data presented can be made:

- On a regional level, provisional data for 2013 has shown that Oxfordshire County had 80.8% of their Key Stage 1 pupils reach level 2b+. This is a marked change from previous years and in line with the targets set out by National Literacy Trust at the beginning of the campaign.[3]
- On a programme level, good strides have also been made to substantially improve reading standards at Key Stage 1 towards level 2b+, with 55% of the Oxfordshire Reading Campaign participating schools having 80.8% or more of their Key Stage 1 children achieve level 2b+. In contrast, of those schools who were initially target schools but had not taken part in the campaign only 47% had 80.8% of their Key Stage 1 children reach level 2b+ or higher.
- As well as the changes made in relation to attainment, PERA data shows that for participating schools, the average reading age gain was 13.2 months. This highlights positive gains made by individual children, even if they did not achieve level 2b+, and shows the impact that the Project X Code intervention can have.

This data shows a promising change across the region towards higher Key Stage 1 attainment results and the outcome to substantially improve reading standards. However, it could be said that to make the step change needed in year two of the campaign, more of the participating schools will need to reach the desired attainment level.

## Volunteering programme

In addition to raising the reading skills of participating children, children who participated in the sessions with the community volunteer also showed wider reading outcomes.

- **95.4%** of children reported that they like reading more now than before, with **79.1%** reporting that they like reading a lot more now.
- **93%** of children reported that they read more now, with 79.1% reporting that they read a lot more now.
- Boys and girls equally benefited from this project in terms of their reading enjoyment, with **96% of boys and 95% of girls** reporting that they like reading more at the end of the sessions with the volunteer than they did at the beginning. However, more girls than boys say that they read a lot more now than they did before (84% vs. 75%).

The children's own perceptions were to a large degree backed up by those of the volunteer they were working with.

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[3] National Literacy Trust set out attainment targets to be achieved during the Campaign, in line with the minimum targets set by Oxfordshire County Council in the original tender. These targets were 80% of pupils reaching 2b+ in year one, and 86% of pupils reaching 2b+ in year two. Oxfordshire County Council minimum targets were 78% in year one and 84% in year two.

- **78.7%** of volunteers reported that children seemed to enjoy reading more since they started the volunteering programme, with 29.8% reporting that children seemed to enjoy reading a lot more since they started the volunteering programme.
- **97.9%** of volunteers reported that children seem to know more about their book likes and dislikes since starting the volunteering programme, with 63.8% reporting that they seem to know a lot more.
- **85.1%** of volunteers reported that children seem to be more confident around reading since starting the volunteering programme, with 40.4% reporting that children seem to be a lot more confident. This increase in confidence was also shown in the proportion of children who wanted to read to their volunteer, and 61.7% of volunteers reported this to be the case.

This was backed up by volunteer comments which gave some positive feedback on children's progress on the volunteering programme.

*'At the start Chris struggled to focus on a book for a long time, by the end he was engaged in a book for a whole session. Traction Man was his all time favourite book.'* Volunteer, Faringdon Infants School.

*'Summer is more willing to try to read now and gets more involved.'* Volunteer, Carterton Primary School.

As volunteers only engage with children for a limited time per week, they are often less placed to provide feedback on children's overall changes. We strove to mitigate this somewhat by building up a more complete picture of the impact of the programme on the children with information from class teachers and parents. However, due to access issues, we were unable to collect this data. Volunteers also commented on this in their feedback, with many reporting that they would have benefited from feedback from class teachers on children's progress, as well as information initially on why children were chosen to take part in the programme, to help them evaluate a child's progress more effectively. This is certainly something that will need to be looked into next year.

The impact of the volunteering programme on community volunteers' knowledge and awareness of literacy was also a vital part of the campaign. Therefore feedback was sought from volunteers regarding their own experiences and development as a result of being part of the campaign.

**Volunteers**

During the first year of the campaign 120 volunteers took part in the volunteering programme, and of these a quarter (30) were recruited through the media campaigning work of the campaigning strand. To bring about the change needed in the wider Oxfordshire community, volunteers were supported and trained to learn more about literacy and early reading. The campaign was successful in terms of volunteer retention, and of all volunteers who started the programme completed the 10-week period. In instances where a child did not complete the programme for a particular reason, volunteers were found another child to work with.

At the end of the first year of the campaign, volunteers were asked about their own experiences and development throughout the volunteering programme, and many showed progress in relation to the community engagement outcomes.

- **92.9%** of volunteers reported that they felt satisfied with the volunteering opportunity overall, with 35.7% reported that they felt extremely satisfied with the opportunity.

- **96.4%** of volunteers reported that the volunteering experience has supported their confidence in supporting children's literacy skills, with 46.4% reporting that the experience supported their confidence in this area a lot.
- **92.9%** of volunteers reported that the volunteering experience has supported their knowledge of early reading and literacy, with 35.7% reporting that the volunteering experience supported their knowledge in this area a lot.
- **82.1%** of volunteers reported that the volunteering experience has supported their confidence in supporting the literacy skills of their own children and/or family members, with 28.6% reported that the volunteering experience has supported their confidence in this area a lot.

## Campaigning strand activity

The campaigning strand has supported the school improvement strand and the volunteering programme throughout the first year of the campaign, promoting the campaign activities and aims across Oxfordshire and neighbouring areas. Work undertaken has been as follows:

### Stakeholder Engagement

A stakeholder briefing was held on 24th September 2012 to help stakeholders develop an understanding of the Oxfordshire Reading Campaign within the local context and to build partnerships.  Attendees included ARCh volunteering, the Oxfordshire Library Service, Reading Quest, Bookfeast, Student Hubs charity, Oxford Volunteer Centre, the Firefighters, Oxford Unlimited and Oxford Brookes University. Children's Centres, Read to a Dog and Oxford University were also sent details and information.

Additional stakeholders that have been engaged since the original briefing include The Story Museum, Barefoot Books Café, Chipping Norton Literary Festival, and the Oxford Playhouse.

From this meeting, a key relationship was forged with the Oxfordshire Library Service, which has been heavily involved in supporting local volunteers and schools involved in the volunteering programme, as well as working with local parents.

### Oxford Mail Partnership

The partnership with the Oxford Mail has generated a huge amount of positive and engaging campaign coverage consistently over the course of the first year of the



campaign in both the Mail and their regional papers. Coverage has included campaign endorsement from a wide variety of local dignitaries, authors, celebrities, and MPs including Prime Minister David Cameron, Education Secretary of State Michael Gove, schools, literacy professionals and stakeholders. It has also included articles targeting parents to encourage support of their children's literacy development, reports from schools, teacher interviews, call outs for volunteers, and coverage of the volunteering process, case studies, campaign updates, coverage of events and success stories.
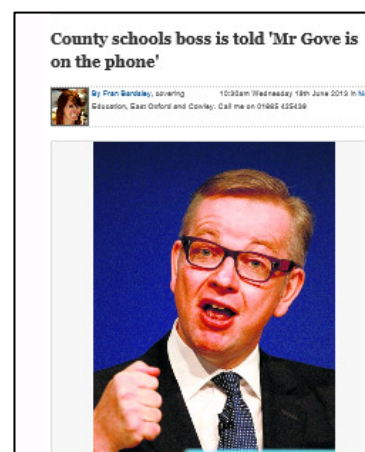
*" Mr Gove said: "The Oxfordshire Reading Campaign is a brilliant initiative""*

**Headline media statistics**

Here is a summary of the headline media statistics from the campaigning strand activity:

- Reach: 5,499,906
- Volume: 401 pieces
- Media value: £330,500

**Additional media coverage**

We have run news pieces and a competition on Netmums and the ORC project manager was interviewed on Heart FM.

**Microsite**

The Oxfordshire Reading Campaign microsite www.oxfordshirereading.co.uk exists to inform the community about the campaign, engage parents and facilitate volunteer recruitment. Regularly updated sections feature:

- Campaign news
- Section for parents including topically themed literacy activities and competitions
- Access to hundreds of resources from www.wordsforlife.org.uk
- Blog from local stakeholders
- Call for volunteers (209 expressions of interest made via the site to date)
- Event calendar including campaign dates and partner events

There have been 3,019 visits to the website from 2,316 unique users since the launch and 8,038 page views.

**Events**

The campaigning strand organised a range of events to support the aims of the campaign.

- Mo Willems author talk at Story Museum: 5 April 2013

A free talk by US author of "Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus" Mo Willems was organised at the Story Museum for participating Oxfordshire Reading Campaign schools. It was attended by 90 children from three schools; St Ebbe's, Cutteslowe and Bure Park.

Keep reading and stay out of jail says US author

By Freddie Whittaker,
covering Politics and
Kidlington. Call me on 01865 425498

7:00am Friday 5th April 2013 in Get Oxfordsh
Readi

SHOUT IT OUT: Mo Willems reads one of his stories to primary school children

Buy this photo »

*"It was a really lovely event, thank you so much everyone for all the hard work of bringing it together. I've never seen kids laugh so hard at dramatic pauses in my life."* Hannah Love, Walker Books:

- Parent Training Session at Oxford Central Library: 25 June 2013

Parents of participating children were invited from Botley, Cutteslowe, Edward Feild, St Ebbe's, St Nicholas, New Marston, West Kidlington, Windmill, St Andrew's and St Michael's primary schools to a session on how to support their children's participation in the Oxfordshire Reading Campaign. Eight families attended with their children who had a storytelling session at the library during the training.

**Feedback from parents on the campaign**

*"Since taking part in Project X my daughter's reading has really come on. She has grown in confidence and has been very enthusiastic about the Project X books and characters. Thank you!"*

*"Very positive people, enthusiasm really helps"*

*"It was a great support for my child and she is very confident now from Project X Code."*

**Online Survey**

An online survey was conducted from June –September 2013, to gather feedback from members of the wider Oxfordshire community on the Campaign. Headline statistics include:

- **65%** of respondents who have children aged 0-16 years said that they had heard of the Oxfordshire Reading Campaign.
- **58.8%** of respondents reported that they had heard of the Campaign through the local community (schools, local organisations, or local community members).
- **17.6%** of respondents reported that they had heard of the Campaign through local newspapers (Oxford Mail, Didcot Herald, Bicester Advertiser, Banbury Cake or Oxford Herald).
- **55%** of respondents reported that they know more now about how to support their child's literacy development as a result of the Campaign.

**Chipping Norton Literary Festival: 18-21 April 2013**



The campaigning strand supported the Chipping Norton Literary Festival and featured in two of its events for children. Writer, illustrator and comic creator Sarah McIntyre led a popular event for children of all ages on Saturday 20th April 2013 and children's author Joe Craig coached aspiring thriller writers on Sunday 21st 2013. The Oxfordshire Reading Campaign microsite was promoted at both events to around 50 families. Joe Craig also tweeted Oxfordshire Reading Campaign messages about the importance of reading to over 2,000 Twitter followers.

**Newsletters**

To support schools involved in the initiative, a half-termly newsletter has been developed to keep schools updated with campaign news, and share case studies and good practice.



**Progress towards outcomes**

- To foster a culture of reading and a love of books
- To engage the whole community in the pursuit of high standards of literacy;
- To raise the aspirations of children and families.

Due to the nature of the campaign delivery, it seems appropriate to interpret the data from the volunteering and campaigning strands towards these outcomes simultaneously as they are intrinsically linked.

Data relating to the volunteering programme has shown promise towards all three of these outcomes, with 95.4% of children reporting that they like reading more

now than before and 93% reporting that they read more now than before they started the programme. Similarly, 85.1% of volunteers reported that children seem to be more confident around reading since starting the volunteering programme, which it could be said is vital in creating a culture where reading and books are loved.

In a bid to engage the whole community in the pursuit of high standards of literacy, it is clear that both the volunteering programme and the campaigning strand have made achievements towards this outcome, with a quarter of the volunteers who took part in the programme initially coming through the campaigning activity. Linked to this, the volunteering programme has encouraged schools to engage local parents and community members, and a large number of volunteers were recruited this way. Data from volunteer surveys has shown that 92.9% of volunteers feel that the volunteering programme has supported their knowledge of early reading and literacy, and 82.1% feel that the volunteering programme has supported their confidence in supporting the literacy skills of their own children and/or family members. It could be said that both of these results are important steps for engaging the community in high pursuits of literacy, as well as important steps in fostering a positive culture towards reading and literacy within the local community and the home.

From the campaigning strand data and information provided, it is clear that a lot of work has been done to promote a culture of reading across Oxfordshire, including 401 articles on the campaign and on tips and ideas to support around books and reading.

- To contribute to wider improvements in education outcomes;

Any possible wider educational outcomes as a result of children and/or staff members taking part in the reading intervention and the wider campaign, will have to be explored in year two of the campaign, when the intervention and work delivered has become more embedded within schools.

# Recommendations

## Attainment targets

In order to make the step change required in year two of the campaign, towards 86% of pupils in Oxfordshire achieving level 2b+, participating schools may need further support to ensure that more children achieve level 2b+. The reasons for this will be explored with schools, and there are several factors that may have contributed to this:

Data suggests that some schools have selected children working well below national expectations. While they may have made exceptional progress, they have not achieved level 2b+ in the Key Stage 1 reading assessment and were not able to achieve this level within the scope and timescale of the intervention.[4] Therefore, schools may need more support to ensure that they are using data more strategically to select children to take part in Project X Code, who with the support offered will realistically be able to achieve Level 2b+. The team will need to offer support to select suitable interventions for children working well below expectations.

From school improvement consultants visit notes, a number of teaching assistants suggested that schools were uncertain about when to exit children from the Project X CODE intervention. It is possible that some children may have benefited from additional time on the intervention and that this would have enabled them to achieve level 2b+. Therefore additional support and training for teaching assistants around the length and structure of the intervention is needed to ensure children are receiving the appropriate support.

While the children who participated in the intervention have made significant progress and many of the schools have improved reading attainment across the board, there are some schools where results have not increased. These schools will be targeted for additional support and challenge visits during the second year of the campaign. The presence of the National Literacy Trust Network will also increase to facilitate wider ongoing support for the development of literacy across participating schools.

## Volunteering programme

Evidence from volunteer feedback has shown that a lack of communication and information from teaching staff towards volunteers has resulted in some volunteers feeling less able to comment on a child's progress. Some also felt that they would have benefited from more information on why particular children were chosen for the volunteering programme (i.e. due to lack of confidence, lack of parental support), as this could have aided them in supporting children from an early stage of the programme. Going forward, it is recommended that this is explored further and where possible, if more information on children can be passed to volunteers involved in the programme.

Where possible pupil data on attainment, participation in the volunteering programme and from parents should be matched up to provide better evidence on the child's journey through the programme.

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[4] To access this data, please refer to the *Project X Code - Annual Report for Oxfordshire Reading Campaign – All Schools*, produced by Edge Hill University, which is in the appendix of this report.

## Campaigning strand

As the campaign will be moving into its final year, it may be beneficial for the campaigning work to focus more on the legacy of the programme and sharing good practice. This may involve continuing its work with its existing stakeholder network, and/or engaging with new stakeholders to ensure that key messages are shared beyond the lifespan of the campaign.

While the campaigning work undertaken so far has engaged with a range of local community members through a variety of mediums, it may be beneficial to engage more parents of children in participating schools, so that they can learn more on the campaign, and the key messages that will help them support their child in the home environment.

# Appendix 1: Evaluation methodology

## Data collection techniques

This report has drawn on a range of data from each strand to support the analysis of the Programme. These have included:

**Strand one**

- Regional attainment data for Key Stage 1

Key Stage 1 attainment data for 2012 and 2013 was obtained from Oxfordshire County Council, and then analysed in relation to the schools taking part in the campaign.

- Visit notes from school improvement consultants

School improvement consultants support and visit participating schools and their observations and notes were used to build a better picture of the progress individual schools were making. They also provided their feedback on how schools could be further supported going forward.

- PERA data

Phonics and Early Reading Assessment (PERA) was used by Edge Hill University to monitor pupil progress through the Project X Code intervention. This provided reading age gains in participating schools and also served as a tracking tool for Edge Hill University.[5]

**Strand two**

- Child exit survey (self reported)

Children were asked to report on their experience of the volunteering programme in a simple attitudinal survey made up of four question and smiley faces as a scale. This was chosen due to the age of the children (5-7 years), to try and make it as accessible as possible.

- Child's experience perception surveys (volunteer reported)

As volunteers spent 10-weeks working with children and building a rapport with them, they were asked to give their feedback on the child's experience and attitudinal change (if any). This was analysed alongside the children's self reported data to get a picture of the children's progress on the volunteering programme.

- Volunteer exit survey (self reported)

Volunteers were asked about their experience through an exit survey. This was used to provide information on volunteer's general experiences, as well as their attitudes towards their own development throughout the volunteering programme.

**Strand three**

- Microsite visits data

The Oxfordshire Reading Campaign microsite was the main portal for volunteer registrations as well as the main resource for the wider Oxfordshire community to

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[5] The full PERA data can be found in *Project X Code - Annual Report for Oxfordshire Reading Campaign – All Schools*, produced by Edge Hill University, which is in the appendix of this report.

find out more on the campaign. Therefore data on traffic/visits and volunteer sign ups were gathered to support the evaluation of the campaigning strand.

- Media coverage data

As the campaigning strand included a large amount of media work, data on reach and volume was gathered using the media monitoring service Precise.[6]

- Parent feedback surveys (self reported)

Parents who attended the library training session were asked their feedback on their experience of the session as well as their feedback on their children's experience of Project X Code. This was used to gain more understanding of targeted parents' views of the campaign.

- Survey Monkey

Survey Monkey was used to facilitate a survey on the media campaign activity. This survey was housed on the Oxfordshire Reading Campaign microsite and the Oxfordshire County Council website.[7]

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[6] Precise is a company that monitors, analyses and draws insight from news, opinions and conversations to help organisations evaluate their work. More information can be found at www.precise.co.uk

[7] Survey Monkey is an online survey software and questionnaire tool. More information can be found at https://www.surveymonkey.com/

# Appendix 2: Project X Code annual report

# Project X CODE



# Annual Report

# for the Oxfordshire Reading Campaign - all schools

# 2012-13

based on data recorded by 21 October 2013

# INTRODUCTION

Project X CODE is a reading intervention published by Oxford University Press.  It is designed to provide additional support for struggling readers in Years 2 to 4 who are not on track to achieve appropriate levels for their age.  It helps them get back on track with reading skills and enjoyment, so that they can catch up with their peers and make continued progress.

Project X CODE is based on a gripping series of adventure books.  They contain a cumulative, episodic adventure in a 3D style that builds children's and motivation to read.  They are based on a careful progression of systematic synthetic phonics and comprehension skills.



A trained teaching assistant or teacher normally teaches a small group of children for half an hour four times a week.  Sessions are based on the books and help the children to overcome difficulties, develop their skills and become accustomed to enjoying success at reading.

Teaching and Assessment Handbooks with detailed session notes enable a trained teaching assistant to deliver the intervention.  The children's class teacher oversees Project X CODE and supports the teaching assistant.

Edge Hill University, in partnership with Oxford University Press, provides training, resources and support to help teachers or teaching assistants to deliver Project X CODE to the highest possible standard and to link it to children's daily literacy lessons.  The University also trains literacy subject leaders and special educational needs co-ordinators to maximise the impact of the intervention and to tackle underachievement in reading across the school.  Project X CODE training is a part of the University's Reading Support and Every Child Counts intervention programmes, which support over 3,000 schools to raise achievement in reading and mathematics.

The Oxfordshire Reading Campaign aims to improve standards of reading for children in Key Stage 1. Edge Hill University provides Project X CODE training with assessment and teaching resources to schools nominated by the ORC.  Professional development courses and events for Key Stage 1 teachers and literacy subject leaders include guidance on managing and maximising the impact of Project X CODE.

This report has been prepared for the Oxfordshire Reading Campaign and is based on data submitted to the University's online data collection and analysis system.  Its purpose is to help the ORC to monitor children's progress and to evaluate the effectiveness of Project X CODE in contributing towards targets for children's outcomes at the end of Key Stage 1.  The majority of tables therefore refer to children in Key Stage 1 who completed a Project X CODE programme; for the sake of completeness, the first and last tables also include children in Key Stage 2 and those who did not complete a programme.

The level of detail in the tables depends on the data supplied by schools and on the time of year.

If you have any questions about this report, please contact the Reading Support Team at Edge Hill University: rs@edgehill.ac.uk or 01257 517 107.

# 1. PARTICIPATION IN THE PROGRAMME

Children normally receive about four Project X CODE lessons a week for at least 8 weeks, while also continuing to take part in their normal class literacy lessons.  The school decides when they should exit the programme.

In this report, children are regarded as having completed a programme if the school reported that they did so after receiving at least 25 lessons and if it reported outcome data for them.  A few children may exit before completing the programme if they leave their school or are withdrawn for a particular reason.

TABLE 1.1 shows the numbers of children who took part in the programme during the reporting period and TABLE 1.2 analyses the lessons that they received.

### Table 1.1  Participation in Project X CODE
####            Oxfordshire Reading Campaign - all schools - 2012-13

| | |
|---|---:|
| **Entry** | |
| Schools reporting data | 49 |
| Children who entered a programme | 377 |
| *Y5* | *6* |
| *Y4* | *6* |
| *Y3* | *38* |
| *Y2* | *315* |
| *Y1* | *10* |
| *school year not reported* | *2* |
| **Exit** | |
| Schools reporting data | 45 |
| Children who completed a programme of at least 25 lessons | 266 |
| *Y5* | *6* |
| *Y4* | *4* |
| *Y3* | *26* |
| *Y2* | *225* |
| *Y1* | *5* |
| Children who left the programme before completing 25 lessons | 53 |
| Children with no exit data | 58 |

all children who began a programme

**Table 1.2 Lessons received**
**Oxfordshire Reading Campaign - all schools - 2012-13**

| | |
|---|---|
| Number of children | 230 |
| Average calendar weeks | 18.7 |
| Average number of lessons | 43.5 |

children in KS1 who completed a programme

## 2.  TEST OUTCOMES

Schools are encouraged to test children's reading when they enter and exit from the programme. Entry testing helps to identify children's initial attainment and learning needs and exit testing provides an objective measure of the progress that they have made.  The Phonics and Early Reading Assessment (PERA) is supplied by Edge Hill University and is normally administered by a teacher.

TABLE 2.1 shows five measures based on the PERA or alternative data supplied by the school.

| | |
|---|---|
| Age | *This is the mean chronological age of the children at the time of their entry and exit tests.* |
| PERA Sentence Reading Age | *The child reads sentences and the teacher counts the number of words that are correct.  The PERA Sentence Reading Age is the average chronological age of children, across all ability ranges in a national sample of schools, who achieved the same score when the test was standardised. Sentence Reading Ages for scores beyond the standardised test range are calculated by Edge Hill University.* |
| PERA Phonics Age | *The child reads single words, including both real words and 'non-words,' and the teacher counts the number that are correct.  The Phonics Age is calculated in the same way as the Sentence Reading Age.* |
| PERA Comprehension | *The child answers ten comprehension questions on the sentences that they have read.  The Comprehension Score is their number of correct answers.* |
| Reading Age | *If the child completed the PERA, a Reading Age is calculated by Edge Hill University as the average of their Sentence Reading Age and Phonics Age.  If the child did not complete the PERA, the school can report a Reading Age based on another standardised test.* |
| Estimated National Curriculum Points and Level for Reading | *If the child completed the PERA, a National Curriculum level for Reading is estimated by Edge Hill University in relation to guidance in the test manual and to the child's Reading Age.  If the child did not complete the PERA, the school can supply a National Curriculum level based on a teacher's assessment.* |

**Table 2.1  Test outcomes**
**Oxfordshire Reading Campaign - all schools - 2012-13**

| | Entry<br>Average | Exit<br>Average | Gain<br>Average |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Number of Children* | | *230* | |
| Age (months) | 80.7 | 85.2 | 4.4 |
| PERA Sentence Reading Age (months) | 68.9 | 83.3 | 14.4 |
| PERA Phonics Age (months) | 70.1 | 81.5 | 11.4 |
| PERA Comprehension Score | 3.8 | 7.9 | 4.1 |
| Reading Age (months) | 69.6 | 82.7 | 13.1 |
| Estimated National Curriculum points (& level) | 8.7  (1B) | 12.8  (2C) | 4.1 |

children in KS1 who completed a programme

TABLE 2.2 analyses children's estimated National Curriculum levels for reading when they had completed the programme.  For the Oxfordshire Reading Campaign, this table is designed to help monitor the number of children who were on track to achieve target levels.

**Table 2.2  Estimated National Curriculum levels on exit**
**Oxfordshire Reading Campaign - all schools - 2012-13**

| School Year | NC Level | NC Points | Number of Children | Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Y2 | 2A | 17 | 6 | 3% |
| | 2B | 15 | 86 | 39% |
| | 2C | 13 | 50 | 23% |
| | 1A | 11 | 45 | 21% |
| | 1B | 9 | 26 | 12% |
| | 1C | 7 | 5 | 2% |
| | WA / P8 | 6 | 1 | 0% |
| | *all children* | | *219* | |
| Y1 | 2C | 13 | 1 | 20% |
| | 1A | 11 | 3 | 60% |
| | 1B | 9 | 1 | 20% |
| | *all children* | | *5* | |

children in KS1 who completed a programme

# 3. END OF YEAR ASSESSMENTS

Towards the end of each school year, children's class teachers normally assess the National Curriculum level that they have attained.  TABLE 3.1 shows the National Curriculum levels achieved by children who completed a Project X CODE programme during the year and TABLE 3.2 shows their progress since the end of the previous year.

**Table 3.1  National Curriculum levels at the end of the year**
             **Oxfordshire Reading Campaign - all schools - 2012-13**

| School Year | National Curriculum Assessment | | Number of Children | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | level | points | Reading | Writing | Speaking & Listening |
| Y2 | 3B | 21 | | 1 | 1 |
| | 2A | 17 | 6 | 3 | 2 |
| | 2B | 15 | 38 | 14 | 27 |
| | 2C | 13 | 23 | 36 | 9 |
| | 1A | 11 | 12 | 20 | 3 |
| | 1B | 9 | 2 | 4 | 1 |
| | 1C | 7 | 1 | 4 | 1 |
| | *all children* | | *82* | *82* | *44* |

children in KS1 who completed a programme and for whom a National Curriculum assessment was reported at the end of the year

**Table 3.2  National Curriculum points at the end of last year and this year**
             **Oxfordshire Reading Campaign - all schools - 2012-13**

| National Curriculum Assessment | School Year | Children number | End of Last Year | | End of This Year | | Annual Gain NC Points |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | NC Points | Approx NC Level | NC Points | Approx NC Level | |
| Reading | Y2 | 78 | 8.3 | 1B | 13.7 | 2C | 5.4 |
| Writing | Y2 | 64 | 7.8 | 1C | 12.6 | 2C | 4.8 |
| Speaking & Listening | Y2 | 37 | 9.3 | 1B | 14.4 | 2B | 5.1 |

children in KS1 who completed a programme and for whom a National Curriculum assessment was reported for both the end of last year and the end of this year

# 4. CHILDREN'S CHARACTERISTICS

TABLE 4.1 analyses children's participation and outcomes in relation to their background characteristics. It is designed to help the school to monitor the progress of relevant vulnerable groups.

## Table 4.1  Children's background characteristics and key outcomes
### Oxfordshire Reading Campaign - all schools - 2012-13

| | CHILDREN | | LESSONS | READING AGE | | | NATIONAL CURRICULUM POINTS FOR READING | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *n* | Age months | Total | Entry | Exit months | Gain | end of Last Year | end of This Year | Gain |
| **All children** | *230* | **80.7** | **43.5** | **69.6** | **82.7** | **13.1** | **8.3** | **13.7** | **5.4** |
| **Children's School Year** | | | | | | | | | |
| Y2 | *225* | 80.9 | 43.7 | 69.7 | 82.8 | 13.1 | 8.3 | 13.7 | 5.4 |
| Y1 | *5* | 70.8 | 36.8 | 65.8 | 77.1 | 11.3 | | | |
| **Gender** | | | | | | | | | |
| Boy | *134* | 80.5 | 42.3 | 70.0 | 82.7 | 12.7 | 7.9 | 13.5 | 5.6 |
| Girl | *95* | 81.0 | 45.1 | 69.1 | 82.7 | 13.5 | 8.7 | 13.9 | 5.2 |
| **Free School Meals Entitlement** | | | | | | | | | |
| Yes | *32* | 81.4 | 47.2 | 68.2 | 81.6 | 13.4 | 8.5 | 13.6 | 5.1 |
| No or not recorded | *198* | 80.6 | 42.9 | 69.8 | 82.9 | 13.0 | 8.2 | 13.7 | 5.5 |
| **Special Educational Need Status** | | | | | | | | | |
| Yes | *80* | 80.8 | 42.2 | 70.0 | 82.5 | 12.5 | 7.7 | 12.9 | 5.2 |
| No or not recorded | *150* | 80.7 | 44.1 | 69.4 | 82.8 | 13.4 | 8.7 | 14.3 | 5.6 |
| **Ethnic Background** | | | | | | | | | |
| White British | *186* | 80.5 | 43.5 | 69.4 | 82.3 | 12.9 | 8.3 | 13.7 | 5.5 |
| Ethnic minority | *18* | 79.7 | 46.7 | 68.2 | 82.6 | 14.4 | 8.1 | 13.3 | 5.1 |
| Not recorded | *26* | 83.0 | 40.8 | 72.4 | 85.5 | 13.1 | 9.0 | 14.3 | 5.3 |
| **First Language** | | | | | | | | | |
| English | *200* | 80.6 | 43.3 | 69.5 | 82.4 | 12.9 | 8.3 | 13.7 | 5.4 |
| Other | *27* | 81.5 | 45.1 | 69.9 | 84.5 | 14.6 | 8.4 | 13.9 | 5.4 |
| **Season of Birth** | | | | | | | | | |
| Autumn | *60* | 84.5 | 46.4 | 69.6 | 82.8 | 13.2 | 8.7 | 13.4 | 4.7 |
| Spring | *79* | 81.2 | 43.1 | 69.0 | 81.7 | 12.7 | 8.5 | 13.9 | 5.4 |
| Summer | *89* | 77.7 | 41.7 | 70.1 | 83.3 | 13.2 | 7.7 | 13.7 | 6.0 |

children in KS1 who completed a programme