

# Bookbuzz: evidence of best practice

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## Introduction

Booktrust is an independent charity, established in the 1920s, with the aim of building a literate, connected and creative society through encouraging engagement with books. The charity runs a number of national book-gifting programmes, one of which is the *Bookbuzz* programme which was launched in 2012. Bookbuzz provides a book for Year 7 students soon after their transition from primary to secondary school at a crucial time when formative attitudes towards reading develop.

Participating schools give their students the opportunity to choose their own book to keep from a list of 17 titles suitable for 11-year-olds and selected by a panel of experts. A designated coordinator (usually the school librarian or LRC manager) uses support materials provided by Booktrust to help students make their choices from the list, then collates and places the order for each school. The books are then delivered to the school for distribution to the students. Schools are encouraged to use Bookbuzz as an opportunity to:

- focus on reading for pleasure;
- develop students' abilities to choose books; and
- develop a whole school reading culture.

Each Bookbuzz school receives:

- a book and bookmark for every participating student to keep;
- a set of the Bookbuzz books for their school library;
- access to a website packed with a wealth of information and resources; and
- a kit to support whole school reading for pleasure including an extra staff set of the Bookbuzz books to support teachers as readers.

Schools are able to purchase the Bookbuzz programme at the cost of £2.50 per participating student.

## The current research

In December 2012 the Centre for Education and Inclusion Research (CEIR) at Sheffield Hallam University and the School of Education (SoE) at the University of Sheffield were commissioned by Booktrust to carry out some research around their Bookbuzz programme. The aims of the evaluation were to:

- produce a review of literature around the importance of engaging students in reading when they are in the first years of secondary education; and
- undertake four best practice case studies of the Bookbuzz programme, showing the difference that the programme can make for both schools and students.

## Methodology

### Literature review

A literature review was carried out covering the current research on reading for pleasure for 11-13 year olds. The literature review focused on research around the importance of engaging students in reading when they are in the first years of secondary education. The review also included relevant research on the importance of choice in engaging this age group in reading, and situated the Bookbuzz programme within the literature.

### Case study best practice examples

In order to address the research aims, case study visits were undertaken with four secondary schools, where interviews were carried out with library staff and Year 7 students involved with the Bookbuzz programme. The schools chosen were to be used as endorsements of the Bookbuzz programme, so were therefore schools where there was good practice and/or innovative and imaginative roll out.

### Sampling

The sample of schools were drawn from a list of participating Bookbuzz schools from two geographical locations, Sheffield and Cambridge. Limited timescales meant that concerns arose around school willingness to participate with the evaluation. Therefore Booktrust made initial contact with the sample of schools to inform them about the research. The initial email asked for case study volunteers from schools with examples of good practice in relation to the Bookbuzz programme, and outlined what their participation would involve including the potential use of their good practice on the Booktrust website and for other promotional materials.

Booktrust made a free selection of books available to case study schools as an incentive for participation. As anticipated, there were some difficulties in terms of getting four case study schools on board in the short timescale, so the sample area was widened to include an increased number of Bookbuzz schools in the south east and north east of England. Once four schools had indicated that they were interested in taking part in the project one of the researchers contacted the relevant member of staff to outline what it would involve, which students should be included, parental consent, and arrange a convenient time to visit in early January.

School staff were asked to consider which students had benefited from the Bookbuzz programme and should therefore take part in the research. They were asked to include both boys and girls and to consider the following categories of reader (adapted from Moss, 2000; Merchant et al, 2012):

- Can read and does read;
- Can read but doesn't read;
- Struggles to read but does read; and
- Struggles to read and doesn't read.

School staff were informed that although they were not required to choose children from each of these categories, they should bear them in mind so that the researchers would be able to take their ability and interest into account during the interviews. It was not deemed important to include children from all categories as those who 'can read and do read' were less likely to have been impacted by the programme than other types of reader.

Although the research remit stated that there should be between three and four student interviews in each of the Bookbuzz schools, it had been necessary for staff to choose twice this many. This allowed for a degree of attrition, given that some of the students may have declined the invitation to participate in the study on the day or may have been absent from school. Interestingly in two of the case study schools all of the potential students had been so excited about participating in the research that the decision was made to interview them all so as not to cause any disappointment<sup>1</sup>.

### **The research tools and case study visits**

The fieldwork case study visits were carried out in early January 2013. Each visit involved between three and eight short interviews with Year 7 students, and a longer interview with staff involved in the administration and implementation of the Bookbuzz programme. The researchers spent up to a day in each of the four case study schools.

The student interviews followed a semi-structured interview guide and covered the students' experiences of Bookbuzz, including any impact it may have had<sup>2</sup>. The interviews also incorporated an activity that had been used during a previous research project for Booktrust (Merchant et al, 2012) where the students had been shown a scale from 1-5 and were asked to score themselves on a number of questions around reading ability and interest.

After each student interview a photograph was taken of the child; these will be used on the Bookbuzz website and for other Booktrust marketing materials. Participating children were asked for separate consent in relation to their photograph being taken and used publicly. The interviews with school staff were around 30 minutes in length and covered how the programme has been administered, examples of best practice, and any impact the programme had had upon the students, staff and the wider school.

### **Interview analysis**

The interviews with students and staff were recorded and then partially transcribed as soon after the fieldwork as possible. The notes were then used to construct standalone case study reports for each participating school.

The staff and students involved in the research were informed at the outset that the school would not be anonymised in any outputs. As the research was funded to explore best practice it was felt that naming the schools would have a positive effect on participating schools rather than a negative one. Individual student names have however been changed in the report, this was felt to be appropriate due to e-safety concerns around the potential use of student photographs on the internet.

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<sup>1</sup> The students from one of these schools also wanted to set up an afterschool book club after the fieldwork visit (see p27)

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix 1 for a copy of the interview questions

## Literature Review: Motivation for reading (11-13 year olds)

### Introduction

It is of fundamental importance that children and young people are motivated to read. Research shows that there is a clear link between motivation for reading and children's academic achievement. For example, studies have shown that while children certainly need to have key 'skills' in reading (such as understanding of language and the ability to decode), they must also have the motivation to read if they are to be successful in reading (Logan et al., 2011; Medford & McGeown, 2011). Similarly, in a national survey about motivation and reading achievement, McKenna et al. (1995) identified a strong correlation between motivation and reading ability.

Research studies that are concerned with understanding young people's motivation for reading are, not surprisingly, closely bound with exploration into attitudes towards reading. This was highlighted by Sainsbury and Schagen (2004, p374) who provide a *working definition* of attitudes towards reading, arguing that it involves *'intrinsic motivation in the form of a positive self-concept as a reader, a desire and tendency to read and a reported enjoyment of, or interest in reading'*. It is not in the interests of this review to attempt to separate these components, but rather to recognise that motivation and attitude towards reading are inextricably connected to each other, and relate to issues of interest and enjoyment in reading. The literature has identified many different factors associated with young people's attitude towards reading; these include gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic background, perceptions of reading ability and engagement with different types of reading material. Some of these will be discussed in this literature review; however there is one further factor that must be recognised from the outset and this is age. Indeed, as children progress into and through their secondary education, attitudes towards reading seem to decline rapidly. For example in a recent survey of 4,491 students in the US, McKenna et al (2012) recently reported a gradual worsening of attitudes towards reading from 6<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Here in the UK, Clark (2012, p13) similarly reported that the difference among the three key stages (KS2, KS3 and KS4) in terms of reading enjoyment are 'truly staggering', with *'nearly four times as many KS2 than KS4 pupils say[ing] that they enjoy reading either very much or quite a lot'*.

The purpose of this review is therefore to examine the current research on motivation and attitude towards reading for 11-13 year olds and will focus on research about the engagement of students in reading when they are in their early years of secondary education. However, much of the literature in this review will include reference to children and young people who are both older and younger than this age group; this will be necessary in order to provide a context for this review. We therefore begin with a brief introduction into some of the literature that has examined motivation for reading, before turning to some of the more specific issues associated with reading for pleasure amongst young people.

### Motivation for reading – setting the scene

There is a substantial and growing body of literature that examines children's motivation for reading. As McGeown et al (2012, p329) point out, 'as reading is an activity that often requires effort or interest for involvement, children's reading skill has been associated with their motivation to read (Baker and Wigfield, 1999; Wang and Guthrie, 2004)'. Much of this literature draws on psychological perspectives in making a sharp distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic factors that influence motivation for reading. For example, as McGeown et al (2012) go on to explain, a child who is intrinsically motivated will be motivated by 'internal factors', such as the desire to read something out of curiosity, interest and/or enjoyment. On the other hand, a child who is extrinsically motivated will be motivated by 'external factors'

such as the need to achieve a good grade or the desire to be praised by teachers or parents. In brief, there is often a desire to achieve a particular outcome rather than reading simply for enjoyment.

As raised in the introduction, a strong correlation exists between attitude and attainment in reading (Petscher, 2010; Cipelewski and Stanovich, 1992; Cox and Guthrie, 2001). For example, young people who report reading for enjoyment also do better in reading tests than their peers who do not enjoy reading (Blunsdon et al., 2003; OECD, 2010). This is summed up by Mullis et al (2011) who conclude that:

*Research indicates that positive attitudes and high achievement in reading go hand in hand. That is, students who like reading have higher achievement, but the relationship is bidirectional, with attitudes and achievement mutually influencing each other (Mullis, Martin, Foy and Drucker, 2011, p203)*

Previous PIRLS data has indicated that England's children have consistently rated poorly in terms of attitudes towards reading (Twist et al, 2003; 2007). The latest report shows that little has changed with only 26% claiming that they do 'like reading' and 20% reporting that they 'do not like reading' at all, with the rest stating that they only 'somewhat like reading' (Mullis et al, 2011). Interestingly, in comparison with other countries, England's children are currently scoring relatively well in terms of 'attainment', but these findings suggest that this 'attainment' could be seriously threatened if we do not find a way in which to raise our children's attitude and engagement in reading. What is more, research has suggested that the further children progress through their compulsory years of education, the more likely they are to report that they do not enjoy reading or do not read for pleasure, though these attitudes may 'plateau' as students reach their middle years of secondary schooling (McKenna et al, 2012).

This suggests that initiatives such as *Booked Up* and *Bookbuzz* are vital in supporting this aim. As stated on the Booktrust website, '*Bookbuzz is a new reading programme from Booktrust, which supports schools to encourage reading for pleasure, independent choice and develop a whole school reading culture*'. Following on from the successful *Booked Up* programme which offered every Year 7 child in England their choice of a free book, funded by the Department for Education, *Bookbuzz* continues to offer Year 7 students a free book as a gift. It is vital that initiatives such as *Bookbuzz* continue to focus on students of this age, as this is clearly a crucial stage in young people's lives, where attitudes towards reading are likely to decline.

Of course the reason why *Bookbuzz* is successful is not simply a matter of timing. This review now explores some of the factors identified in the literature that are associated with young people's engagement with reading.

## Gender and Reading

It is without question that as McGeown et al (2012, p329) point out, there is a substantial body of literature that tells us that 'children's motivation to read is an area where consistent and substantial sex differences are found (Baker and Wigfield, 1999; Marinak and Gambrell, 2010)'. While it is important to stress that much of the debate on gender and reading has undergone substantial criticism in recent years, the role of gender on young people's motivation for reading cannot be ignored.

For some time now, studies have indicated that girls tend to outperform boys in all aspects of literacy achievement and engagement in the subject (Twist and Sainsbury, 2009; Bradshaw et al, 2010). It is therefore no surprise that research has consistently shown that girls do

better at reading than boys at all stages of their school career (DfE, 2011a; DfE, 2011b, DfE, 2011c).

Considerable attempts have been made to try and explain why boys do not enjoy reading as much as girls. For example, in their study of a hundred 11-year-olds and a hundred 14-year-olds, Nippold et al (2005) examined the preferences of young people with respect to reading as a leisure-time activity and its relationship to other free-time activity options. They found that while boys reported that they would often prefer to play video games than read books, girls did not always report wanting to read in their free time either. However, the study did reveal that boys were more likely than girls to say that they never read for pleasure and would always prefer to do something else – even though some of their preferred activities, such as videogaming, may involve quite complex reading skills (Steinkuehler, 2007).

Much of the literature suggests that girls' feelings about reading are more positive than boys, with further study attempting to understand why this is the case. As a consequence, one explanation is that boys' reading interests are often not met by schools and publishers. For example Millard's (1997) study of early secondary aged children revealed that while some of the boys in her study stated a preference for 'hobby-related' magazines, such as football and computer, the largest contrast in her study was 'between boys' interest in action and adventure, and girls' preference for emotion and relationships', both of which pertain to fictional texts. Further studies have suggested that the curriculum therefore fails boys because it does not recognise the value in their home reading choices (Osmont and Davis, 1987), which tend to be information-rich reading (Hall and Coles, 1997, 1999). A decade later, studies continue to show that boys read different things to girls (OECD, 2010) and that girls are twice as likely as boys to read fiction for enjoyment (Clark with Burke, 2012). Non-fiction texts continue to be regarded as appealing to boys (Smith, 2004), though more recent research suggests that teenage boys' extended reading for personal pleasure or information is now more often in digital format than paper text (Boltz, 2010). This is important because debates over reading for pleasure often privilege the kinds of immersive reading associated with print fiction to the exclusion of other genres and formats (Merchant, 2013).

It is undisputable that research has consistently revealed that gender has an impact on young people's engagement with reading. However, as Smith (2003, p286) points out, the problem is the fact that *'the debate is frequently reduced to the binary notion of underachieving boys and successful girls'* which she claims is overly simplistic and subsequently misleading. This view is supported by Weaver-Hightower (2003, p487) who, speaking of boys' and girls' progression in literacy, asserts that *'the causes are complex and the interconnections of the causes are poorly understood'*. Given such complexities, Weaver-Hightower suggests that rather than focusing on the achievement of one gender grouping, such understandings could be used to support both boys' and girls' developments in literacy. In other words, it is important to use the debate on gender and reading to inform practice, while simultaneously recognising that much of this literature has limitations. It is naïve to treat boys and girls as two separate groups of readers, and such a stark conceptualisation will do little to support the quest to raise young people's motivation.

However the literature does suggest that boys and girls often have different reading interests, which is clearly of importance to those concerned with implementing programmes such as *Bookbuzz*. In fact this was confirmed in the evaluation of *Booked Up* (Merchant et al, 2012) which revealed that many of the students described the books in the selection as being 'for boys' or 'for girls'; however it was also the case that a number of the books appealed equally to boys and girls. More importantly though, the evaluation also identified that while the majority of students reported that *Booked Up* provided them with sufficient choice, weaker female readers did not appear to be as well served as weaker male readers. As a result, Booktrust has ensured that *Bookbuzz* has addressed this issue and the selection of books for this year has been created with this in mind.

In this example, the debate on gender and reading was allowed to inform practice; however it was simultaneously recognised that other factors (such as ability) needed to be taken into consideration. This is important as further research has shown that factors such as socioeconomic background can have a far greater impact on children's and young people's engagement with reading than gender. This is discussed in the next section.

## Socio-economic factors

It is well known that children from more economically deprived backgrounds are less likely to achieve at school than those from less economically deprived backgrounds (Blandan, 2006). As Gillborn and Mirza (2000, p18) state, *'put simply, the higher a child's social class, the greater are their attainments on average'*. In particular, much of the research in this area suggests that children from more deprived backgrounds do not enjoy reading as much as children from less deprived and more privileged groups (Neuman and Celano, 2001). Similarly, Clark and Akerman (2006, p2) also discovered in their study of 8,206 pupils from 57 primary and 41 secondary schools, that *'a significantly higher proportion of pupils receiving FSMs (Free School Meals) (14.7%) stated that they do not enjoy reading at all compared with pupils who do not receive FSMs (10.7%)'*.

Although this study also found that boys receiving FSM tended to report enjoying reading less than girls receiving FSM, it is clearly the case that the issue of enjoyment and motivation for reading is influenced by a variety of factors beyond gender. In particular, the social class of a young person does appear to be related to the extent to which they report enjoying reading. However, as Clark and Akerman (2006) point out, although social background does clearly influence academic performance, it is not necessarily the case that poor performance in reading automatically follows from low socio-economic status. For example as identified in the OECD PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment)(2002) study:

*15-year-old students whose parents have the lowest occupational status, but who read regularly and feel positive about it, are better readers than students with home advantages and weaker reading engagement (OECD, 2002)*

This raises another crucial aspect to the debate. It is clear that young people's motivation for reading is highly complex and cannot easily be explained by looking broadly at factors such as gender and social class. Rather, there is a need to understand *why* such factors influence engagement with reading. There are a number of studies that support the view that parents who promote reading as a valuable and worthwhile activity are more likely to have children who are motivated to read for pleasure regardless of their social background (Baker and Scher, 2002). Furthermore, findings from OECD (2002) indicate that while socio-economic status does have an impact on academic achievement, factors such as parental involvement with reading can in fact 'compensate' for low family income and educational background (see also Guthrie and Wigfield, 2000). In a similar vein, the EPPE Project, in an extensive study of early childhood provision, reported that *'for all children, the quality of the home learning environment is more important for intellectual and social development than parental occupation, education or income'* (Sylva et al., 2004:ii). The project concluded that reading books to children was one of a range of factors in the home learning environment that was associated with higher intellectual and social/behavioural scores (2004:25).

In other words, this research suggests that the ways in which reading is promoted in the home can have a significant impact on the young person's own engagement with reading, irrespective of socio-economic background. This is, in some senses, reassuring in that it suggests that children and young people need not be disadvantaged by factors such as low

socio-economic status, and can still grow up to become life-long readers, with all the benefits that are attached (Jordan et al, 2000).

## English as an additional language

Although it is clear that the home environment is important in promoting positive attitudes towards reading, further research underlines the importance of the school, especially for young people who speak English as an additional language. Protacio (2012) recently explored what motivates English learners to read in English, and found that the school played a significant role in motivating these particular students. Having closely followed six upper elementary EL's (English Learners), Protacio reported that all participants emphasised the importance of the teacher in selecting books. She stated that '*many of the books mentioned by the focal students as ones they enjoyed were recommended by their teachers*' (p76). Moreover, some of these children reported that even though they were motivated to read, they did not know how to choose books and relied on their teacher for guidance.

This provides further evidence to support the role of initiatives such as *Bookbuzz*. All previous evaluations of *Booked Up* have confirmed that students and staff alike report being impressed with the selection of titles on offer and feel that the books are of a high standard (SQW, 2010; ERS, 2011; Merchant et al, 2012). As a result, *Bookbuzz* continues to support schools by introducing new authors and quality books to Year 7 students and their librarians and teachers. While this is clearly of value to all children, Protacio's study suggests that this might be especially important for students who are learning English.

## Promoting young people's motivation for reading

So far this review has examined various factors that appear to be connected to young people's motivation for reading. The previous section identified that while the home environment is important in motivating young people to want to read, the school is also crucial. Building on this, this final section now examines some of the more specific factors associated with motivation for reading focusing largely on the role of the adult.

There is much evidence to show that the earlier parents become involved in literacy activities with their children, the stronger and more enduring the effects (Mullis et al., 2004). Further research has indicated that while parental involvement does have the greatest impact in the early years, positive educational and literacy outcomes can be traced into teenage and adult years (Desforges & Abouchar, 2003). Yet Clark and Hawkins (2010) conclude that as children move into their teenage years, parents become less likely to directly encourage reading, despite the fact that parental encouragement is strongly linked with young people's reported enjoyment of reading.

This raises a number of issues. Firstly, if parents tend to become less likely to directly encourage reading as their child gets older, then this underlines the need for schools to engage in direct initiatives to foster motivation for reading, such as *Bookbuzz*. Secondly, one needs to recognise that the whole concept of 'encouraging' children and young people to read must reflect the changing needs of the young person and that encouragement takes on many different forms. For example, studies have shown that parents can encourage their children's reading by developing a positive ethos around reading in the home. Clark and Hawkins (2010) noted from their study that nearly twice as many young people who report that they see their mother and father read a lot, also report that they read outside of school every day, in comparison with the participants who stated that they do not see their parents read.

Motivation for reading is also linked with book ownership. For example, Clark et al (2011, p7) established that there is a relationship between young people receiving books as a present and reading ability, further reporting that *'having books of one's own is associated with more frequent reading'*. Furthermore, the 2012 evaluation of *Booked Up* revealed that all participating practitioners felt strongly that the 'gifting' element of the programme was vital in terms of encouragement. For example one library manager reported that she thought the gifting provides a strong message of support for children's reading, which is just not possible with a book token or book gift voucher.

This suggests that the role of the adult both at home and at school is fundamental to young people's motivation for reading, which includes the creation of a positive ethos around reading and the provision of quality reading material - all the better if the young person owns the text. Miller (2012, p90) made the further point that book choice is also an important factor. As a teacher committed to raising the motivation of her students, she implemented a number of strategies but concluded that *'no single practice inspires my students as much as the opportunity to choose their own books does'*. This again supports the view that programmes like *Booked Up* and *Bookbuzz* are successful because the students are not just given a book, but are allowed to choose their preferred title from a selection of 17 carefully chosen books.

Finally, the literature also makes the point that in order for adults to motivate young people's reading, they need to learn to open up a dialogue about reading, literature and reading identities with them. For example in a reaction to a growing concern that an outcomes-driven literacy curriculum mitigates against extended reading for pleasure, Cremin et al (2009) worked with teachers to develop their own knowledge and experience of literature themselves in order to help them increase children's motivation and enthusiasm for reading. One of the main outcomes of this project was the extent to which teachers became increasingly aware of their role in facilitating motivation for reading, and amended aspects of their pedagogy accordingly. Cremin et al (2009) present numerous examples of this, but this is pertinently summarised in the following quotation from a teacher in the project:

*I identified really early on in the project that one of the reasons the children didn't read for pleasure in my class was that ... the way I was delivering – or teaching – was kind of taking the fun out of books ... we never really discussed reading with them or said, well you could read a book by such-and-such an author, that kind of made me think, well actually I've got a role to play here. One of the days we went to in London and some of the [LA] centre-days, we spent time talking about books, enjoying books and I thought 'I need to change my approach here. I need to think about how I introduce books as 'tasks' to them' (Cremin et al. 2009, page number not available)*

What is important to note here is that in order to increase children's motivation for reading, Cremin and colleagues encouraged teachers to concentrate on improving their own relationship with reading. The focus shifted from 'teaching reading' to 'talking about books' and 'enjoying books'. Further study has suggested though that it is not just teachers who need to learn to open up a dialogue with young people about reading, but parents also. McKenna et al (2012, p284) expanded upon this in their survey of reading attitudes amongst middle school pupils, and concluded that adults need to recognise 'that each adolescent has multiple reading identities and that these extend beyond those constrained by school-based literacies'.

It is therefore being argued that part of the role of the adult, in motivating young people's reading, is to create an ethos around reading which is open to discussion, acknowledges the multiple reading identities of young people and is free from the constraints of a school-centric discourse. The value of this approach was evident in another study by Love and Hamston (2004) who investigated the recreational reading practices and attitudes towards

reading of two cohorts of teenage boys and their parents, who were all from the same 'educated, middle class community in Australia'. The data from this study suggested that the teenage boys who were identified as 'capable' but 'reluctant' readers, demonstrated a growing sense of 'agency as emerging adults' which meant that they tended to react to their families' reading cultures in unique and individual ways. For example, Love and Hamston noted that some of the boys spoke directly about valuing their families' leisure reading dispositions, but did not regard it as being relevant for themselves. It was further reported that others '*strenuously resisted established intergenerational reading practices and appeared able to constrain their parents' attempts to guide and facilitate their reading in any form*' (p368). In sum, Love and Hanson concluded that their findings work against notions of '*commitment and reluctance as singular and dichotomous constructs*' (p368) and instead indicate that parents (and indeed schools) need to re-evaluate how they encourage their teenagers to read. While constructions of reading that are traditionally valued in homes (particularly middle class homes), such as 'bedtime reading' and the reading of novels may be appropriate for some teenagers, Love and Hamston are arguing that we need to 'move beyond the limitations of those reading-related practices and find reciprocal ways to maintain different reading relationships' (p371) with teenagers as they develop their own reading identities.

The literature reviewed in this section suggests an urgent need for parents and school-based practitioners to promote an environment where reading is openly discussed and debated. This again supports *Bookbuzz* as an initiative, given that the intention of the programme is not just to introduce books to the students but also to create a 'buzz around books'. By creating this dialogue, adults will be able to 'listen' to what young people say about their reading interests and ensure that their own 'traditional' perspectives on reading are not serving to demotivate and discourage some young people from reading for pleasure. Of course, this issue is particularly salient given that further research has identified that recent rapid developments in technology has had a major impact on the ways in which teenagers (dubbed 'screenagers' by Luke and Luke, 2001, p40) are reading and interacting with texts today (see for example Thomas, 2011; Janell and Linda; 2007). It is beyond the scope of this review to discuss the impact of digital technology on the ways in which young people read today, and the connection with motivation for reading; however in the light of the issues raised in this review it is clear that parents and teachers do need to invest time in understanding what 21st century reading is.

## Literature review conclusion

It is clear that motivation and attitude towards reading are inextricably linked, not just to each other but also with attainment in reading. Yet it has been highlighted in this review that motivation for reading is seen to decline during young people's early years in secondary school. *Bookbuzz* makes a sound and deliberate attempt to address this issue, by implementing a strategy to raise the motivation of young people at this crucial point in their lives.

This review has demonstrated that *Bookbuzz* is strongly supported by the literature examining the factors associated with young people's motivation for reading. For example, recognising that boys are consistently reported as showing a lower motivation for reading in comparison with girls, Booktrust has made clear attempts to ensure that the *Bookbuzz* books offered are appealing to boys of different reading abilities, as well as girls. However, in response to further research, *Bookbuzz* does recognise that other factors, such as ability, culture and class also impact upon students' motivation, and this has been used to inform the selection too. As a consequence, the *Bookbuzz* selection is based upon evidence gained during evaluations, to ensure that the needs of many students are accommodated, which includes, but is not limited to, gender-based factors.

Furthermore, given that book ownership and choice have both been identified as relevant factors in promoting a positive attitude towards reading, *Bookbuzz* ensures that young people continue to receive their own book, and the students are able to choose the book themselves from a selection of quality texts. Moreover, this also allows teachers and librarians to guide students who want or need support in selecting books for themselves.

Finally, the literature has indicated that if we are to motivate adolescents to read, we must be prepared to talk with them, and encourage them to talk to each other about their evolving reading identities. This again fits neatly with the *Bookbuzz* agenda, which aims to encourage an open dialogue and a general 'buzz' around the books on offer. *Bookbuzz* is committed to facilitating opportunities for young people to share reading material and enjoy talking about their reading together. In sum, this review has suggested that there is a wealth of evidence in the literature to suggest that *Bookbuzz* is not only valuable, but is vital in encouraging young people to become engaged and motivated readers.

## Bookbuzz case studies

### Case Study 1: Hope Valley College

#### School context

Hope Valley College is a small rural academy with specialist status located in the Peak District National Park in Derbyshire. The school has around 650 students, many of whom live in rurally isolated villages. There are few students from minority ethnic backgrounds and an above average proportion of students who are identified as disabled or having special educational needs. The proportion of students eligible for the pupil premium is well below the national average.

The school has a reading programme, which includes the Reading Challenge programme where students are incentivised to read certain books - including their Bookbuzz book - and work their way up through the Bronze, Silver and Gold levels. Year 7 students participate in a Reading Challenge session once a fortnight.

#### The administration of Bookbuzz

The Learning Resource Centre Manager at Hope Valley College introduced the Bookbuzz programme to the Year 7 students this year. Prior to the Bookbuzz session posters were placed around the school which simply stated '*Buzz off to the library*' alongside a picture of a bee. A display about the programme had also been set up in the library, which also contained the picture of a bee and a sign saying '*which book will you choose?*', this had created interest and excitement and encouraged students to ask questions about the programme.

The three Bookbuzz sessions were part of the Reading Challenge and followed a lesson where the students were introduced to the library. During the initial lesson the students were shown the authors' videos on the Bookbuzz website as well as the sample of physical books and were given the bookmarks from which they chose their books. The sample of books were felt to be incredibly helpful in terms of helping the students make their choices as it had meant that they could consider the length of the book and read an excerpt to ensure the book was suitable for them.

The LRC Manager and Assistant Librarian mentioned the use of a Booked Up document called *Thinking about Books* during this session where the students were asked to complete questions about the types of books they were interested in. The library staff talked about how useful this document was in terms of recommending titles and knowing which books would be suitable for each student as well as finding out more about their personalities and gauging how far students had progressed in terms of their literacy interest and ability later in the year.

The students were then given a few weeks to make their decision about which book to choose. The students were encouraged to take time over their choices and to try not to pick the same book as their friends so that they could swap them at a later date if they wanted. Although parents and carers were not informed about the programme, the LRC Manager felt that this is something they would do in coming years to encourage the students to discuss their book choices at home.

During the second Bookbuzz session the students chose their books, and it was at the final session where the books were given out in Year 7 English classes. Since the third session

was close to Christmas and because Hope Valley College is a relatively small school, it was decided that the books would be covered in wrapping paper. The LRC Manager had not used this method during previous years with Booked Up, and noticed a difference in the students' reaction stating *'it was nice because they felt like they were getting a present'*. Once the students have finished reading their Bookbuzz books they are encouraged by the library staff to review and discuss their choices.

### **The impact on students - staff views**

From the moment that the bespoke Bookbuzz posters went up around the school there was a 'buzz' about the programme. It was felt that the simplicity of the posters had led to increased levels of student anticipation and interest, and had meant that they were intrigued enough to go to the library to find out what it was all about.

Once the students had made a decision about their book choice there was a feeling of excitement about their arrival, and staff talked about how the students had *'driven us mad asking when the books were coming, so they were very excited when we put up a poster to say they'd arrived'*. Many students from Hope Valley College were also excited about the idea of having their own book to keep:

*There are children who haven't had a book before...for a lot of them it is a new experience, and they get quite excited when they realise they can keep it and they don't have to bring it back* (LRC Manager, Hope Valley College)

Impacts were also experienced in relation to the role of the library, with students being more likely to visit the library once they had received their book. The familiarity of the Bookbuzz books supported the popularity of the library, with students recognising titles which they would then want to loan from the library. The library staff at Hope Valley College also spoke about how the Bookbuzz selection had been suitable for all of the Year 7 students, whatever their reading ability and interest:

*There's a good selection, there's a nice variety of books. For those that come out of the reading assessments with age 17+ reading, there's something there for them, and there's something there for the other end as well. It's nicely worked out* (LRC Manager, Hope Valley College)

One of the first students to finish and review his Bookbuzz book told staff that he was really glad he chose *Don't Wipe Your Bum with a Hedgehog* by Mitchell Symons because it was exactly his sort of book and that he had had a brilliant time reading it out loud at home and making everyone laugh. Being able to support decisions about what to read was also noted as being important in terms of the progression from being told what to read to making an independent choice. Staff also questioned whether this would have happened in the future had it not been for Bookbuzz:

*When they come from primary school they've always been watched to see what they're reading...It gives them that bit of independence as well, because it's their choice...it's putting a responsibility on them that they've not had before* (LRC Manager, Hope Valley College)

### **The impact on staff**

The Bookbuzz programme was hailed as a really good way of getting to know the new Year 7 students, both in terms of their personalities and their reading ability and in relation to introducing them to the library. Staff felt that the programme had helped them to spend more personal contact time with the Year 7 students at an ideal time, right at the beginning of the school year.

*It's a nice way to start off, and by the time we've gone through all that [Bookbuzz] we're getting to know them quite well and we're getting to know the ones who are going to be tricky and the ones who are not...It gives you a bit more one-to-one with them, because you feel that you can talk to them about what they've chosen...I think that makes them feel a bit more connected...it just makes it a little bit more personal for them (LRC Manager, Hope Valley College)*

Staff also commented on how the Bookbuzz programme had helped them to understand the actual reading ages of the children and this was seen as being particularly beneficial.

### **The impact on the school**

Bookbuzz had contributed considerably to Hope Valley College's school reading programme and, inspired by the Bookbuzz Guide to Whole School Reading there was now a 'Drop Everything and Read' programme running, where everyone - including staff - were now reading for half an hour once a week. The activity was also incorporating paired reading between Year 7s and older students.

Whilst it was sometimes difficult to separate out the outcomes from the school's different reading interventions, school staff talked at length about how Bookbuzz had helped to tie together the entire reading programme, had given the students choices about what they read and had made reading fun for the Year 7 students:

*It's making it fun really, that's the important thing, because one of the fears of something like Drop Everything and Read is that they'll see it as a chore, they'll see it as something they've got to do...a lot of this is the Reading Challenge overlapping with Bookbuzz but I think...this feels like you're an individual, that you're being given a choice (LRC Manager, Hope Valley College)*

Staff also felt that taking part in Bookbuzz had had a positive effect in terms of how they were viewed by external organisations and talked about their recent Ofsted inspection:

*We had an Ofsted inspection last term and it was nice to be able to say 'we've got this involvement with outside organisations, and we're doing this initiative'...It's good for the whole school, it goes on the website (LRC Manager, Hope Valley College).*

### **Student example 1: Mark**

Prior to the Bookbuzz programme Mark did not read much outside of school. He talked about how he was at the Bronze level of the Reading Challenge and spent the fortnightly sessions in the library with his reading buddy.

Mark explained how the Bookbuzz programme was launched in the library with the authors' videos, and how he had looked at the blurb on the back of the books to help inform his decision about which book to choose. He felt that he had had enough information to make a good decision, and decided to pick *Don't Wipe your Bum with a Hedgehog* by Mitchell Symons.

Some of Mark's friends had chosen *Small Change for Stuart* by Lissa Evans and Mark talked about how he would probably swap with them once he had finished reading his own Bookbuzz book. Mark said that he felt excited when the books arrived and he liked the fact that he was getting a free book from the school.

Bookbuzz had made Mark feel differently about books and reading because he had now got an 'interesting' book; he felt that he would read more in the future because he had realised that there were exciting books out there. He also mentioned how he would probably take some of the other Bookbuzz books out of the school library in the future because he now recognises the titles.

Mark felt that Bookbuzz should be offered to next year's Year 7s because it would encourage those students who have not got books at home to read and look at more books in the future:

*It's a good opportunity to read what you've not read, and you can choose what you want, and you can have it for free and you don't have to go looking round for it.*

### **Student example 2: Bernadette**

Bernadette did not read much before she started at Hope Valley College and preferred watching the television, saying that she sometimes finds reading 'a bit boring'. When Bernadette and her friends do find time to read it tends to be 'girlie' type books like Jacqueline Wilson.

When Bernadette first heard about the Bookbuzz programme she thought that it sounded quite good because she would be able to make a well informed decision about her book choice rather than just picking something she thought looked good. She made her choice by watching the authors' videos and reading the blurb on the back of the sample of books, and commented how this had helped her to make a good choice:

*I thought it was quite good because sometimes you just pick a book because you think 'that looks good' but we didn't see the covers, we just heard about them and thought about which one was most interesting, so we didn't really pick them by the covers, it was about the book, it was quite nice*

Interestingly, Bernadette and her friends chose books that were different to the genre that they would normally read. Bernadette chose *Twelve Minutes to Midnight* by Christopher Edge, and had found the book captivating, talking about how she could not put it down and how Bookbuzz had made her think differently about reading:

*I thought Bookbuzz was excellent because it moves people away from their normal type and it gives them an opportunity to read different books and to get to like them, because I thought I wouldn't really like that one and it would just sit on my shelf, but I really like it and it's given me an opportunity to move away from my normal type*

Bernadette also commented on how Bookbuzz had made her realise that there were different types of books out there and had encouraged her to experiment more with her choices. She also appeared to be excited by the book and talked about the discussions she had with her friends when she came to an interesting part, and how talking to her friend's about their choices had made her want to swap books with them.

Bernadette talked about the arrival of the books in Christmas paper and indicated that this had made it feel like the school was given Year 7 students a present:

*It was wrapped up in Christmas paper, it was like a Christmas present, so it was quite nice having that, quite nice because it was Christmassy and stuff, and it was from the school! [The class were excited] they were like 'oh god the books are here!'*

In the future Bernadette said she would like to try and read some of the other Bookbuzz books that were in the library, and said that she would choose a non-girlie one because she now thought that they were more interesting:

*When I've finished that one I might come and try and get another one of those [Bookbuzz books] from the library. They do look really good and we've heard everything about them...sometimes the girlie books can get a bit boring and I think that's probably what's put me off reading, but if I keep reading different types of books I might get more into it.*

### **Student example 3: Abigail**

Abigail is part of the paired reading scheme at Hope Valley College and talked about how she likes reading but finds difficulties in terms of finding the 'right' book for her:

*Sometimes I can't find a suitable book. I enjoy reading the right book... I've not read very hard books, just easy ones...I've struggled a bit [with the Reading Challenge], I keep swapping from book to book...because I keep on reading books and they don't get very interesting...some people have done their first book already and they're half way onto their second...There's got to be at least one that's interesting [from the Reading Challenge selection]*

She felt that the Bookbuzz programme had a good selection of books to choose from, and talked about how she had watched the authors' videos, read the blurb on the books and also looked at the Bookbuzz website. Abigail chose *The Secrets Club* by Chris Higgins and talked at length about how the video had attracted her to the book as it had made it look 'really interesting'. When the book arrived Abigail was so excited about finding out what the 'secret' in the book was that she started reading it that evening and was disappointed when it was time for bed:

*I liked getting the book...I was so excited because I wanted to find out the big secret*

There were a number of other Bookbuzz books that Abigail was interested in reading (*A Most Improper Magick* by Stephanie Burgis, *Shadow Forest* by Matt Haig and *Twelve Minutes to Midnight* by Christopher Edge), and she talked about how she was now reading *A Most Improper Magick* in the school library and how she was excited that it was part of a series. One of Abigail's friends had been reading *The Messenger Bird* by Ruth Eastham and she was now contemplating reading that one even though it was not the sort of thing that she would normally choose:

*This one actually looked quite interesting, I'm definitely going to try this one out sometime...I thought it was a boys' book at first to be honest but when I looked a bit closer...I'm going to give quite a few of these books a go.*

### **Student example 4: Anna**

Anna discussed how she enjoyed reading in her spare time and tended to read 'creepy' books about science and forensics, and had a dislike for 'girlie' books. When Anna was introduced to the Bookbuzz books she said that she had felt that there was a good selection even though she tended to be 'picky' about books:

*I got excited because they all looked like good books...[although] I don't like girlie books...and joke books aren't really my thing*

Anna thought that hearing the authors speak about each of their books had been particularly beneficial, and was torn between Christopher Edge's *Twelve Minutes to Midnight* and *The Messenger Bird* by Ruth Eastham. She chose *Twelve Minutes to Midnight* due to her fascination with 'creepy' texts:

*I'm into creepy murder books, so the Bedlam thing sort of drew me to it*

The sample of Bookbuzz books had been on display in the library after the Year 7 students had made their choices, but the students had been told that they were not allowed to read them; Anna spoke about how this had made her excited about getting her book and that the fact that they had arrived wrapped in Christmas wrapping paper had added to this feeling:

*I couldn't wait to read it, because they had all the books on display in the library and it said 'not to be used'... [When we were given the books] they were wrapped in Christmas wrapping paper...I thought that was a good idea, it was just before Christmas*

Even though Anna is quite specific about the genre of books that she likes to read, she enjoyed her choice and also talked about getting *The Messenger Bird* out of the library in the future. She also talked about how the programme had been a great way of familiarising the Year 7 students with the school, library and Learning Resource Centre staff:

*I thought it was a good way to introduce us to the school.*

## Case Study 2: Ormiston Bushfield Academy

### School context

Ormiston Bushfield Academy is positioned on the outskirts of Peterborough in an area of high deprivation. The school is located within a brand new state-of-the-art building with cutting edge design and the latest educational technology. The non-maintained school is recognised as one of the fastest improving academies in the country, and the school currently has 772 students on the roll of which 100 are in the sixth form. The academy has a high proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported by school action plus or by statements of special educational needs is higher than average.

The school has a strong commitment to the encouragement of reading and a supportive Headteacher. All students read for at least 20 minutes a week in form time, and there is also a scheme at the school called ERIC - Everyone Reading in Class - where once a year everyone at the school stops what they are doing and reads. The Headteacher at Ormiston is also called Eric, thus emphasising the commitment to whole school reading from the senior leader. Each classroom has a selection of books on hand for this purpose. There are also three reading groups at the school which meet once a month. The onsite library is a joint public and school library, and the librarian has created posters within this space which have been designed to encourage motivation for reading and extend children's engagement with authors.

### The administration of Bookbuzz

The school librarian at Ormiston Bushfield Academy was solely responsible for implementing the Bookbuzz programme this year. The programme was administered via the ten Year 7 English classes. The librarian went into each individual class and explained what Bookbuzz was about, emphasising that each of the students would receive a free book that they would be able to keep. The librarian talked about her commitment to Bookbuzz, and how she ensured that the children received the message that a book is precious and important:

*I think you've got to make a big deal out of it. That whole 'it's free' thing, 'this is a precious, valuable life-long thing that I am giving you here. You can keep this forever, you can read this to your grandchildren, you can read it as a bedtime story to your own brothers and sisters'. I think that's the essence of it – make a big deal of it and say how precious it is – because this kind of thing doesn't often happen*

The students were then given time to look at the books. They were encouraged to look at the whole selection, to read the blurb, look inside the books, and to not necessarily go for the most popular choice. The librarian felt that it was important to talk about book swapping to the students, but also to point out that some children may enjoy having the same book as their friend so they can talk about the books together, and subsequently create a 'buzz' about that particular book. The bookmarks were then given out and the students were asked to mark their choices. The librarian then informed them that they would receive their books just before Christmas, but did not notify them as to when this would occur.

The students' Bookbuzz books were given out during a distinctive launch event at the school. Prior to the event the librarian organised all of the books into alphabetical order according to the students' names; this corresponded with the way that the children were later arranged in the school hall. This organisation of the books and students meant that the launch event ran more smoothly on the day and the students received the book that they had ordered.

The Bookbuzz gifting event also included a slide show, a festive poem and Christmas songs. The Head of English entered the room and talked about her love of stories and Christmas, and told the Year 7 students that she had presents for them all. Following this was the entrance of the English teachers dressed as reindeers and another teacher dressed as Father Christmas. The librarian noted the importance of the gifters being from the English department as well as being the students' own English teacher. The librarian talked about the reaction of the students:

*We played Jingle Bells as they came in and the reaction of the children – you can hear the children laughing at their teacher – and they bring in their box of books and...we made them all canter in, they weren't allowed to walk or stroll...It was very good fun...we had a lot of laughs and we did create that pantomime that I wanted*

Each teacher then gave the box of books out to their own class. The librarian viewed this event as being memorable for all those involved and stated:

*I bet if we asked our Year 9 kids, 'what do you remember from Year 7', I bet some of the will say, 'oh I remember that day that Father Christmas gave me a free book', because it was a stand-out thing – and they got something!.*

### **The impact of Bookbuzz**

The Ormiston Bushfield Academy school librarian was very positive about the Bookbuzz programme, noting that it had an excellent selection of quality books and was impressed that it included award-winning titles:

*Quality is very important to me ...It is valuable, it is worthwhile. I feel that way and I know our Head of English does as well. We enjoy the opportunity*

The school has a strong commitment in relation to encouraging students to read, and they felt that Bookbuzz has a significant role to play in supporting this aim.

The Bookbuzz programme had an impact on the role of the librarian herself as it enabled her to meet all of the new Year 7 students within the first few weeks of the autumn term and tell them that she was going to give them a free present. The librarian felt that this cultivated a highly positive association with both herself and with the school library, which would continue after the Bookbuzz books had arrived.

The school librarian talked about how the Bookbuzz programme had led to a level of excitement which she does not frequently see amongst the students, and that this started when the students first had the opportunity to look at the books during the initial lesson:

*It does build up that kind of excitement, which you don't see terribly often, because of course you don't have that opportunity...You hear 'John John John – look at this – look at this'. And then they read a bit out of it...on the choosing day, they're very excited*

This buzz and excitement continues whilst the students are waiting for their books to arrive. During this time many of the students approach the librarian to find out when they will be delivered:

*The amount of children that do come in and say 'Where's my book?' 'Why isn't my book here yet?'...it's immense the amount of people that ask me that – you wouldn't believe it – kids that you don't probably see from day to day just stop me in the*

*corridor and say 'When's my book coming?'...Because we don't do anything else like that*

This includes students who would not normally be interested in reading going into the library to find out about the Bookbuzz books, and as a result some of them end up picking up a book and sitting down to read it in there for the first time. An impact was also mentioned in terms of students returning to the library once they had finished their book to borrow the second one in the series.

In previous years when the Booked Up programme was running the school had put together a video of the Headteacher reading an extract from one of the books, this was played to all of the tutor groups and subsequently led to a large increase in the number of students loaning the book as well as other books from the same series.

The importance of owning a book was deemed particularly significant for the students at the school, partly because of the school's location within a highly deprived area. The librarian talked about how the programme had been responsible for generating pleasure and excitement:

*We are a governmentally recognised deprived area...just to be able to see that smile that day; it's worth every penny...That reaction is worth millions.*

### **Student example 1: Sophie**

Sophie discussed how she likes reading and talked about how many students in her year enjoyed reading but was aware that this tended to tail off as they progressed through secondary school. When the librarian introduced Bookbuzz to them Sophie had looked through all of the sample books and had read the blurb and the first page from each of them; she had then chosen *Shadow Forest* by Matt Haig. Sophie spoke about her excitement in relation to the arrival of the book, and how the other students had been asking when they were likely to turn up:

*I was really looking forward to getting my book and I'm sure other people were too... Lots of people were asking 'oh when are the books coming out' – it was quite nice because no-one really knew*

The anticipation around the arrival of the books added to the excitement of receiving them on the launch day. Sophie had found the Christmas themed event an enjoyable surprise:

*They just called us into the hall and we didn't really know what was going on – it was like a surprise! [The event] was quite entertaining, 'cause we had a Santa and all our teachers gave out the books. I thought that was really good...[My friends] enjoyed it as well because people behind me were saying 'this is really funny'*

And she advised other schools running the Bookbuzz programme to consider incorporating the gifting stage with some kind of celebration such as a Christmas assembly.

Sophie is currently reading her book and has been enjoying it; she started reading it on the same day that she received it and believes that it has encouraged her to read more often:

*I think that encouraged me quite a lot. Because when I saw the book and I got it, I was quite excited to read it. So I thought, 'oh yeah – I can't wait to read it', so I started reading it as soon as I got back to the classroom*

Owning the book appeared to matter to Sophie, and she particularly praised the fact that she had been able to keep the book rather than having to take it back to the library as is normally the case:

*I thought this was quite a good idea because...it's quite different because normally you have to get books out the library. And for a change you get a book that you can actually keep – that you can read more than once – you don't have to bring it back.*

### **Student example 2: Charlie**

Although Charlie does not appear to be as confident in his reading as others, he reported that he 'likes books' and enjoys reading authors such as Rick Riordan and Darren Shan at home, and actively dislikes true stories. Charlie selected *The World of Norm: May Contain Nuts* by Jonathan Meres stating that this was because the book made him 'laugh a lot'. On the day of the Christmas event Charlie talked about how everyone had wanted to read their books as soon as possible and how he had enjoyed the way the Bookbuzz books were given out:

*That was a good way to give the books out. It was near Christmas!... We came back to the classroom and we just read them... People wanted to read their books – they were saying 'we want to read our books!'*

Charlie felt that he had made the right decision about which book to pick and appeared to be really pleased about his choice. He said that he read it all the time and that he had found it 'interesting to read about his [Norm's] life and what he did'. Book ownership was also important to Charlie and he liked the fact that it was his own book that he could keep. He also talked about the impact *The World of Norm* had had on his younger sibling who had also been inspired to read the book:

*I think it's good to be given your own book because you can keep it forever, and you can show your brother... It encouraged my brother to read!*

Although it was not possible to discern the longer-term impact of Bookbuzz on Charlie's perceptions of reading, due to the timing of the research, it appeared that Bookbuzz had encouraged Charlie to engage with a new genre (humorous books) and a new author. In fact Charlie reported that since receiving *The World of Norm* a few weeks before he had purchased and read the next two books in the series:

*Yes I've read number two and number three of these – I read these ones after I got my Bookbuzz book*

Charlie spoke very positively about Bookbuzz and reported that he thought that the initiative was really helpful in encouraging children who perhaps are not engaged with reading, to discover a book and/or a new author that they like. He stated:

*I think Bookbuzz was a really good thing to do because everybody might start reading and get excited to read stuff that they like, and find out who their favourite author is, and what their favourite kind of book is*

This shows that Charlie can see that Bookbuzz has the potential to encourage children to become engaged with reading, even if this has not previously been the case. This was further evident in his concluding comment where he stated:

*I think it was good because it could encourage people to start reading – to choose a book and read it and keep reading*

What is more, Charlie also reported that Bookbuzz had encouraged him to talk about reading with his friend. He stated, *'I talked to my friend Luke, and he picked the same book as me, and we discussed it a little bit'*.

### Student example 3: Dylan

Dylan talked about being a confident reader who enjoyed reading as a hobby in his free time; he spoke about reading books by the same author and those that are part of a series. Dylan chose *The World of Norm: May Contain Nuts* by Jonathan Meres because he thought that the book was more unusual than the others and contained a comedy element which is something he enjoys.

He felt that the selection of books was good for a range of students, and noted that the inclusion of age-appropriate thin books had been beneficial in terms of not patronising weaker readers, as the easier books did not necessarily look like the 'easy' book:

*[Bookbuzz is good because] there are different types of books – there are hard ones...and there are easier ones as well...The books are good because the easier ones are not necessarily thin, some are thick, but like a comic*

Dylan particularly enjoyed the Bookbuzz event when they had received their books saying that the students had been excited as they had not expected it to happen in the assembly, and that he had found it to be funny even though they knew that Father Christmas was not real:

*It was good because first, when they did hand them out it was unexpected...We were screaming at them to give us the books, because we got so engaged with it... especially because it was for free*

The Bookbuzz programme helped support Dylan in finding different kinds of books that he may not have discovered otherwise. He talked about his appreciation for the programme in terms of it introducing new texts for him to read:

*It lets people realise that there are different books out there, that you haven't seen and that you might like...It's like you're finding something, but you don't know what it looks like...and then they just give it to you – and you've found it!... If you are just going round the library and you just see a book with a good cover, it could let you down. A book that doesn't engage you, I don't really try it. But if you really look at it, and it's great, then I would be missing out*

He went on to discuss how his Bookbuzz book had enabled him to find the 'right' book as well as introducing him to a new series by Jonathan Meres that he planned on reading once he had finished his current book. He talked about how this had increased his enjoyment of reading:

*I've always liked books but I've sort of enjoyed them more [following Bookbuzz] because I've found a new series...that I can actually read more, because to enjoy reading you need to find the right book*

Dylan was also planning on reading some of the other Bookbuzz books in the future, and felt that the programme should be rolled out across other schools:

*I would like to read three other books from Bookbuzz – like Shadow Forest... It was a good idea – people should do it in other schools.*

## Case Study 3: Penistone Grammar School

### School context

Penistone Grammar School is located in a small market town near Barnsley, South Yorkshire, and is a larger than average secondary school. There are low levels of students that are known to be eligible for free schools meals and a low percentage of students from minority ethnic backgrounds. Less than three percent of students are disabled or have special educational needs.

The school has recently moved into a new state of the art building and has a range of flexible learning spaces to enable teachers to deliver innovative learning. Since the move the school has introduced a vertical tutoring system where students in different years are placed together rather than by age group.

There has been a strong focus on whole school reading and literacy skills across the curriculum and students are now expected to bring a book to their lessons and carry out ten minutes of silent reading before classes begin. The school combines history, geography and English lessons, and calls this Bright Sparks. Once a fortnight, Year 7 students have a Bright Sparks lesson in the library where they have dedicated reading time. During lunchtimes a paired reading scheme runs in the library where students from Year 10 and Year 11 pair up with Year 7s who are struggling with their reading.

### The administration of Bookbuzz

At Penistone Grammar School this year's Bookbuzz programme was administered through the Bright Sparks classes by the Learning Resource Centre (LRC) Manager. It was the first time that she had had to involve the school's senior management with a book gifting programme due to the financial implications, and was happy that the Headteacher, Bright Sparks team and Year 7 staff all gave their full support:

*I was very very concerned about that [the cost implications] but I was adamant that we still had to do this, because it causes such a lot of excitement... our Headteacher backs us completely on the funding for Bookbuzz*

The Bookbuzz programme was delivered over three dedicated lessons. In the first lesson the LRC Manager went into each of the Bright Sparks classes to introduce the Bookbuzz programme, emphasising that the students would be getting a free book. The students then looked at the sample of Bookbuzz books, and had the opportunity to read the blurb on the back, handle the books and read the first paragraph of the ones they liked. The LRC Manager made sure that the students knew that there was a wide variety of books from which they could choose.

During this lesson the students were asked to have discussions in their friendship groups about which ones they liked. They were also encouraged to talk about the potential for sharing their Bookbuzz books and not necessarily choosing the same one:

*We tried to have discussions in groups when they were choosing them about a book share type thing, friendship groups who couldn't decide what they wanted, a group of four friends we tried to get each of them to order a different book, and then they read it and swapped... [They can then talk about the books] and this is something we actively encourage all year round. I always say to the students 'don't keep a good book to yourselves'*

The LRC Manager then handed out the bookmarks for the students to take away whilst they made a decision about which one to choose, and pointed out the Bookbuzz website address so that they could find out more about the selection of books in their free time.

During the second lesson the book orders were taken, and the LRC Manager noted the importance of making a note of which student chose which book, as she had found with Booked Up in the past that a few of them had tended to forget what they had picked once the books arrived. The books were handed out during the third and final dedicated lesson, they were then allowed to have a look at them and discuss them with their friends for the remainder of the class.

The LRC Manager felt that the dedicated lessons had worked well. In previous years she had not run dedicated book gifting lessons, and had only had access to the Year 7s once a term. She had also been conscious that she did not want to disturb their lesson time for too long. The limited contact that she had had to talk to the students about their choices had meant that she often ended up with most of the class picking the same book, or those students who were not interested in reading not picking one at all:

*Because [this year] I was having each class in once a fortnight I utilised that time and it gave me a lot more time to go into depth about each book, talk to students on an individual basis as well as in small groups about how they choose a book, what they like and what attracts them to that one and if we had the reluctant readers, trying to pair them up with a book that I thought they would enjoy the most.*

### **The impact on students - staff views**

The LRC Manager said that the selection of Bookbuzz books had been suitable for all types of reader, emphasising that the choice had been even better than in previous years. Previously she had found that there tended to be a small number of students who felt that there was nothing for them, adding that the problem this year was that they were having difficulties choosing between them:

*I was quite confident from the sample that we were sent that there would be something for every reading age, every interest level...I am a big fan of Booked Up and Bookbuzz, I've always found it a good selection but this was the best selection yet, for the fact that it covers such a broad range*

All of the students had been excited about the arrival of the Bookbuzz books, and the students had been incredibly eager to get hold of them:

*I get nagged to death from when the books are ordered at the end of September to when they're delivered at the end of October, for that month I feel like putting a sign up on my desk saying 'no they haven't arrived', because it really is constant, they want the books and they want it now, and that fills me with a warm glow*

The LRC Manager talked about how the older students still recall the free Booked Up book they received when they began at the school with fondness:

*...it causes such a lot of excitement... they talk about it and even now I have students in Year 10 who find a book off the shelf and say 'I remember this I got this in Year 7'. They don't remember the name of the initiative but they do remember that they got that book and they read that book*

Since receiving their Bookbuzz books the students had been using them during their paired reading sessions and looking at them during the fortnightly dedicated reading time. The

students normally choose a book from the library shelves during the dedicated reading time, and the LRC Manager said that the Bookbuzz books were being used to such an extent that the library issue rates had actually began to suffer a little!

Many of the students had also been visiting the library to loan the other Bookbuzz books and had been making requests for other books by the Bookbuzz authors to be ordered:

*I've also noticed that a number of students have gone on to read other things by the same author. 'The World of Norm' series for example, they've asked me to look out for other books by the same author, and Mitchell Symons ones I do already have other titles by him now...Elizabeth Laird as well, the people who have read 'Lost Riders' have gone on to read other books by her*

Friends had also been swapping their Bookbuzz books with one another:

*We have amazing trends in books, that you just don't know where it's come from, and it's when a book gets passed from friend to friend to friend to friend to friend, and I've seen that happen with the Bookbuzz books*

As well as the various impacts on the students from the actual Bookbuzz programme, the librarian also noted how a number of those who had been involved in the research project had since asked if they could set up an afterschool book club. She felt that this was as a 'direct result of them taking part in this study and realising how much they actually enjoy reading'.

### **The impact on staff**

The LRC Manager talked about how she had used Bookbuzz as an ideal way of introducing herself and the library to the new Year 7 students:

*I use Bookbuzz as a key pivotal point in the transition for Year 7 when they come up...The link with the library is something that is invaluable to be honest with you, because it's the first chance I have to meet them is basically to promote Bookbuzz; it gets me on a good footing to start with*

She also spoke about how Bookbuzz enabled her to get to know the Year 7 children on an individual level when talking to them about what kind of books they might be interested in:

*It lets me get to know individuals as well when I'm talking to them about what books they want to order and why they think that's a particularly good story. It also gives me an idea of the level of reading that they're at*

The Bookbuzz programme had also supported the LRC Manager in finding out about reading ability levels for each of the new students, and she spoke about how it had helped her discover who the confident readers were as well as those who might be struggling:

*Our year 7 intake this year, we have the highest proportion of statemented students ever, and I've noticed that from the type of books that have been chosen. I know who my confident readers are from the books that they've chosen, I know for example that a lot of the weaker readers went for the Mitchell Symons book and...'The World of Norm', whereas the students who were going for the more serious natured books, I can pick them out as those who are the better readers, the more confident readers.*

## The impact on the school

The LRC Manager had been using the Bookbuzz Guide to Whole School Reading to support a reading culture within Penistone Grammar School, and was planning on putting together lists of fiction and non-fiction books for each subject and department throughout the school. She had already successfully constructed a list for the history department which included one of the current Bookbuzz books - *The Messenger Bird* by Ruth Eastham.

The Bookbuzz programme was being used as a way of promoting the role of the library and the whole school reading programme, and the LRC Manager had been talking about Bookbuzz to prospective parents at open evenings:

*Bookbuzz is a big part of what I talk about with the parents...I do actually promote that quite heavily with parents when they look around the school*

The role and status of the library for students themselves was also affected by the Bookbuzz programme as it is something that they remembered as they moved up through the school:

*Students remember getting that free book; they remember that excitement when the book got delivered... it does tend to stay with them. The Year 8s when they come back and see the Bookbuzz boxes they remember and they say 'I got so and so and I read that, and I read my friend's', so I think it does stay with them, definitely.*

## Student example 1: Jonathan

Jonathan enjoys reading and although he likes to challenge himself he tends to stick to what he knows he likes - books about World War II. He recalled how the Bookbuzz programme was introduced to him:

*In one library lesson they were talking about this Bookbuzz, and they said Year 7s get one free book, and that you get your own bookmark and that it has the website on, so that you can choose your book*

He talked about how they had looked at the sample of physical books in the Bookbuzz lesson and how he had read the blurbs on the back of the books; he felt that this had helped draw him in to certain texts. Then when he went home he had a look at the Bookbuzz website and was impressed that there was more to see on there than just the book covers:

*There was lots of different things; it wasn't just about your free book. You could go to 'Choose your Book' and click on it and then it tells you a bit about it. It's got this video clip about the author talking about it*

Jonathan talked about how it had taken him a long time to choose the right book. The website had helped him to make his choice. Initially he had considered getting *The Messenger Bird* by Ruth Eastham, but decided that he had read quite a few books about World War II already, so decided to try something different. He had never tried different books before, this was the first time:

*They give you loads of books to choose from and it takes forever to pick one...it took me quite a while to pick...I used to read all these war books, I read 'The War Horse' and everything. I hadn't really read a book like this before so I thought 'I'll read that' [Lost Riders, because]... it looks really good*

He thought that the choice of books was really good, and that there had been something for everyone:

*I thought Bookbuzz was really good because you get a lot of books, it explains about it and you get a little preview of it so that you can get into the book before you choose it... It's not just adventure, there's girl books, there's boy books, there's adventure, there's fantasy, romance and non-fiction. It's just a really good selection of books, there's something for everyone. It's not just for the story lovers and stuff it's for everyone*

When his book arrived he had felt excited, and thought that it had been a good idea that they had been able to read a bit of their book straight away as *'that was a really good way of getting into it before we started reading it at home'*. Jonathan has almost finished his book now and thinks that he made a good choice. He is happy that he has found a different genre of book to read and is planning on reading other books from the Bookbuzz selection:

*I do like the look of some of them...When you like a book you'll start to get other books like it*

He talked about the impact that Bookbuzz had had on some of his friends who did not enjoy reading before, saying that the programme had encouraged them to read more often:

*Some of my friends didn't like to read, but a lot of them are starting to read more after this*

Overall Jonathan thought that Bookbuzz was a great way of encouraging children who might not be into reading for pleasure, and felt that this was because of the wide selection of texts that they were available to choose from:

*I thought it was a really good way of getting children to read. Because if it's one free book and you like that book you'll start to get into it more and start getting other books. It gives you a wide selection of books... I think that any Year 7 should have a chance to see the free book, because they might think that reading is not really fun...but there are books for everyone.*

### **Student example 2: Scarlett**

Scarlett talked about how she had enjoyed reading when she was younger but had not been so keen in recent years. When she started at Penistone Grammar School, Scarlett had not been reading for pleasure at all and said that she was average in terms of how difficult she found reading.

When Scarlett was first told about the Bookbuzz programme during her Bright Sparks library lesson she said that she was not particularly interested in it and thought that she would just choose a free book for the sake of it:

*Because before I didn't really like reading...I was just going to choose a book and not read it*

However, once she saw the selection of books she became more interested in Bookbuzz, but had still felt that she would probably not read the entire book. Scarlett spoke about how she had looked at the actual books to help her make her decision. She had wanted to choose a 'thin' book as she had felt that this would be more suitable for her ability, and decided that *Twelve Minutes to Midnight* by Christopher Edge looked the most appealing:

*I didn't want to choose a really thick book because I find them a bit difficult...I read the description on the back [of 'Twelve Minutes to Midnight'] and it sounded the best [of all the thinner books]*

There were a number of other books that Scarlett was interested in, including *Don't Wipe your Bum with a Hedgehog* by Mitchell Symons, and she liked that there was a good representation of authors rather than books by the same writer:

*[The range] was good because there was lots of different authors and there wasn't just a whole series of that [the same] author*

Since receiving her Bookbuzz book Scarlett has been reading it both at home and at school, and is now enjoying reading. She talked about how she had been reading other books such as *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* which had been recommended to her by her parents, and how she now enjoys reading Roald Dahl at bedtime.

Scarlett appeared to be surprised at how much she had enjoyed her Bookbuzz book, and discussed how having the 'right' book can make the difference between finding reading a chore and it being something that was fun. She felt that having the 'wrong' book leads to becoming more disengaged and finding reading more difficult:

*I was looking forward to reading it, I know it sounds weird, but you know when a book doesn't feel nice, you don't want to read it... you know if you don't read that much you start to struggle even more*

Since taking part in the Bookbuzz programme she had been visiting the school library and was impressed with herself for progressing on to a 'thicker' book:

*I have been coming to the library more often after reading this book... and I've taken quite a thick one out, I think it was 'Angel Blood' or something... and I've finished it*

Scarlett also mentioned that she would like to read other books by Christopher Edge and was also thinking about borrowing *Don't Wipe your Bum with a Hedgehog* in the future. Overall Scarlett was really pleased that she had been involved with Bookbuzz as it inspired her to take up reading again:

*At first I thought I weren't gonna do it, but then I thought it's a really good idea because it gets people if they don't like reading, it gets them to read more and get into reading.*

### **Student example 3: Charlotte**

Charlotte enjoys reading and discussed how she likes to read the Harry Potter series and funny books and dislikes books that are too 'girlie'. She talked about how she likes to read at home and how she tends to read the same books over and over again:

*I enjoy it very much, it's a good pastime... I do it a lot at home... My favourite kind of books are Harry Potter books, I read them a lot*

Charlotte mentioned how the librarian introduced the Bookbuzz programme to them in the library, outlining that they would be able to choose a free book that they would be able to keep. After the initial lesson she decided to have a look at the Bookbuzz website to help her to make her decision. She decided to choose something that she felt more familiar with and picked *Don't Wipe your Bum with a Hedgehog* by Mitchell Symons as she had previously

enjoyed reading some of his other books. She talked about how she had enjoyed her Bookbuzz book:

*It was very good, it was a book about advice so I learnt a lot from it, some of it was funny and some of it was serious*

Her friends and classmates had also enjoyed reading their books, and she spoke about how some had been reading them so much that the teacher had had to ask them to put them away, and others were already reading them for the second time.

The range of Bookbuzz books had given her confidence and inspired Charlotte to think about choosing books from a different genre than those she would normally pick, and since finishing *Don't Wipe your Bum with a Hedgehog* she had taken out a war book:

*It's quite different how I read [now] because I feel more confident with books because there was such a range of choices I could've chosen from, so I feel more confident about choosing one from a different genre for a change. Like right now I've tried reading a war book and I'm enjoying it quite a lot*

Charlotte discussed her plans around progressing her reading via a selection of texts with her goal being to understand some of the classics:

*I really haven't had that spread of books... I am into the war right but I think I'll go into more adventurous books next... and once I've done that I might try to read the classics, like Charles Dickens. I was going to try and read them but I don't understand the language right now, so I was going to wait until I have read a selection so that I can understand the language a bit more... I'm trying to find different books to read.*

#### **Student example 4: Tristan**

When Tristan started at Penistone Grammar School he did not enjoy reading, and had not been reading at home at all, but when he was introduced to the Bookbuzz selection he began to feel excited about the wide choice of books that he would be able to choose from:

*I were quite excited to have the choice of quite a few books, and most of them I liked*

He talked about how this had made it quite difficult to choose just one title, and how he had looked at the sample of Bookbuzz books, reading the first page of them all before making his decision to pick *Heroes* by Paul Dowsell:

*I found it really hard to pick one because I liked all of them. Like 'The Messenger Bird' because it was set in World War II, and the 'Lost Riders'... but I really loved the 'Heroes' one. I like it because it's got all true stories*

Tristan also discussed his book choice with his friend who had been on the Bookbuzz website and suggested that Tristan order *The World of Norm: May Contain Nuts* by Jonathan Meres, but he decided that his friend was more of a 'comedy person' than him and that an action book would be more suitable to his taste.

Once Tristan had ordered *Heroes* he became excited about the imminent arrival of the book, and was disappointed that they had arrived whilst he was on holiday:

*I were quite excited and I kept coming up [to the library to check if they'd arrived], it took a few weeks...[I was on holiday when they arrived] so I went the next week and*

*got it and what I did was basically sit down and read most of it, because I just love the book*

Since receiving his Bookbuzz book Tristan has been reading it both at home and at school, he talked about how he had finished reading it and had enjoyed it so much that he was now reading it again. He was planning on reading other books by the same author as well as some of the other titles from the Bookbuzz selection:

*I finished it in class and at home I restarted it, because I just love it. I'm on to last chapter now...[when I finish it this time] I'm probably going to see what books he does and get another book by him...because Paul Dowsell has got me already in one book so I'd probably be happy to read some more books by him, because I think he's a good author*

He had also been visiting the school library during his lunch breaks and spoke about how he had been reading *The Guinness Book of Records* and books about World War II. Tristan felt that Bookbuzz had made him think differently about books and had sparked an interest that he had not felt previously:

*[Before Bookbuzz] the thing was with me, I didn't really read a lot, but as soon as I got that book and read it I started reading a lot more! Because I didn't read at home and now I keep on getting more and more books and finishing them...at home sometimes if you're always watching TV and playing on your X box it gets boring, but when you're reading you can never get bored because there's all sorts of different books, you can just try different books if you feel like having something different. That's why I like reading*

Tristan believed that the Bookbuzz programme was really good for people like him who thought that they do not like reading as it was a way of introducing interesting books that would inspire them to enjoy reading:

*Because some people really don't like reading, but because of Bookbuzz they've started reading. Like me, I didn't really like reading, but now I just love it, because it's given me the 'Heroes' book, I love it, I've found it, and I've never wanted to stop reading it!...Basically, I just really like Bookbuzz and it's got me much more into reading. I've got really into reading now, I really like it!*

## Case Study 4: St. Paul's Way Trust School

### School context

St Paul's Way Trust School is situated in the Tower Hamlets region of London. It is a Comprehensive Foundation school, serving students of mixed gender. The school moved to its new purpose-built accommodation in January 2011. As a result of the 2010 Ofsted inspection the school was asked to address certain areas for improvement. Following some major changes, the school is reported to have made '*outstanding progress in making improvements and outstanding progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement*'.

Most students at the school are of Bangladeshi origin; there are also a small number of Black British African students and White British students. Almost all students speak English as an additional language, and a large proportion of students are believed to be entitled to free school meals. A high number of students join or leave the school part-way through their secondary education.

The school has a whole school reading policy where every child in Year 7 has to have a reading book and is required to borrow at least two books from the school library each term; this has had an impact on the lower school. A *Drop Everything and Read* scheme has recently been implemented by the Head of Language and Literacy whereby everyone has to stop what they are doing and read; this includes all school staff. The Head of Language and Literacy and the school librarian work closely to promote reading across the whole school, and have plans in terms of extending their existing book clubs and inviting the author Sita Brahmachari in to school to talk to the students. The role of the school library has recently grown and has become the focal point for language and literacy.

### The administration of Bookbuzz

St Paul's Way Trust School had been administering Booktrust's Booked Up programme for a number of years, and decided to continue to run a book gifting programme this year in the form of Bookbuzz. The librarian at the school had previously run Booked Up and through his experience of the old programme had felt that Bookbuzz was a '*great opportunity*' for the current Year 7s.

Prior to informing the students about Bookbuzz the librarian placed posters around the school; these had been part of the pack sent to the school from Booktrust and helped to raise the profile of the programme. He also spoke about how the programme fits well with library induction as a way of discussing different authors and genres to the new Year 7s.

The Year 7 students were reminded about Bookbuzz during an assembly where the librarian talked to them about the free book; he also saw this as an opportunity to reinforce the importance of reading books and role of the library. The bookmarks were distributed after the assembly to each of the form tutors so that the students could mark down their choice of book, and the books were subsequently delivered via tutor groups once they had arrived.

### The impact on students - staff views

The librarian felt that there was a good selection of books that matched the different reading needs of the children at the school, both in terms of gender and ability. He talked about how the children had been able to choose from a wide range of books that had suited everyone:

*They just seem to fit the niche of what our girls want to read and what our boys want to read... The more able children would choose these books [indicating 'Twelve Minutes to Midnight'] but there were lots of books for the others... it's fantastic... I think it's a really good, eclectic mix*

The Year 7 students had been excited about receiving their Bookbuzz books, and had been repeatedly asking the librarian whether or not they had arrived yet. There had been a 'buzz' around the school in the run up to the delivery:

*The children kept asking me 'Are the books here yet? Are the books here yet?' And children were coming down asking when they were going to get them all the time. So – they were very engaged, very excited about their books*

The students were 'more than happy' with their books once they had arrived, and the librarian felt that this was partly linked in with them being able to own their own book. He discussed how there was limited engagement with books and reading at home for many of the children at the school, and how some of the children had never owned a book before, linking this with the importance of being given a book for free:

*It's very important because it's engaging the child with literacy – and giving the child a gift – a book... not everyone has this access to books. Some of our children have never been given a book, and it's wonderful to see them receiving these books. And you can see the absolute joy on some of these children's faces – it's a gift! It's a present! It's theirs!*

Impacts were noted both in terms of those students who did not have access to books at home and for those children who had not engaged with a book since primary school; both in terms of reading their Bookbuzz books *and* enjoying them. Children were not only motivated to read Bookbuzz books, but also to use the school library, and many were visiting the library once they had finished their books to try and find more books by the same author:

*[The impact] has been incredible. Children who have never before found themselves engaged with book ownership...now have books. And now they borrow books too. So it's been fantastic... Bookbuzz has engaged children with the library. I've had dozens of children come down this year and said 'I've just read this book – have you got any other books by the same author'... so it has really helped*

There was also an impact amongst those students who were already known to be reading as Bookbuzz had encouraged them to find new authors and new books, with the librarian stating that:

*Bookbuzz does open up that door to other authors and other books*

The librarian was very enthusiastic about the Bookbuzz programme, both in terms of the selection of books on offer and how the programme managed to engage the students with reading for pleasure:

*Bookbuzz has been fantastic in getting those children [who are not engaged with reading] motivated and into reading, because the books are attractive, they're on fantastic subjects, the genres are across the board and I think this has really, really helped our children to engage with reading.*

## The impact on the school

The Bookbuzz programme had also helped to support the overall school strategy in terms of raising the profile of reading in the school. It was noted as being a 'vital' piece of the literacy agenda at the school. The senior management had been adamant that they should continue to run a book gifting programme even though they would have to pay for the books this year, and viewed it as a wonderful opportunity for the students:

*I know economic times are hard and we had to start paying, but our Headteacher said 'no problem, we pay for the books, we engage those children, we keep this on, this is wonderful'... the Head teacher and the Deputy were adamant – and said it was vital that those children get those books*

Bookbuzz was viewed as something that had elevated the role of the library, and the timing of the programme when the Year 7s were new to the school had been particularly effective in supporting this:

*To have Year 7 coming into the library and engaging in reading, we can now carry that on to Years 8, 9 and 10 as they go through the school. Bookbuzz has been very important and it has really supported the role of the library... after their induction, they get a free book – so it makes the library a nice place to be!*

The librarian recommended that other schools who were thinking about ways of implementing Bookbuzz should consider integrating it into their library induction as a way of discussing different authors and genres to the new Year 7s and 'use Bookbuzz as a way of engaging children in reading right from the beginning'. The Bookbuzz Whole School Reading guide had been useful in terms of helping them move forward with the whole school reading policy:

*[The guide] was very useful. I thought the good practice case studies were very good. We read and used some of these ideas. And the 'Step-by-Step to developing whole school reading' was more than useful, because we actually used this as part of our library development plan. This was very useful and very interesting*

Overall, the Bookbuzz programme was seen by St Paul's Way Trust School as something that had been really positive for both the school and the Year 7 students themselves:

*I think it's such a small price to pay, and such a big thing to get children motivated in reading... I think schools should engage, it's part of their road to Higher Education from Year 7... I think it's been a fantastic initiative for the school... we just hope it continues... Long live Bookbuzz!*

## Student example 1: Emma

Emma likes to read but she finds some books too difficult, particularly those with small writing, and talked about people in her year who do not enjoy reading at all and 'think it's a waste of time'. She enjoys mystery books as well as books that are written in a diary format as she finds these easier to read than some other types of books:

*I like sort of mystery books... sort of mystical and a bit grim... There a lot of diary books that I like... it's an easy read, because you can just pick a book up – even if it's not from the start, and you can just start reading it. You can't do that with other books*

Emma thought that the Bookbuzz programme had a good selection of books, and had found it difficult to choose just one. She liked the look of *The Messenger Bird* by Ruth Eastham and

*Lost Riders* by Elizabeth Laird, and particularly liked the inclusion of *The World of Norm: May Contain Nuts* by Jonathan Meres. She talked about how many people had liked *Don't Wipe your Bum with a Hedgehog* by Mitchell Symons and that many of her friends had chosen *The Secrets Club* by Chris Higgins. Emma finally decided to pick *Shadow Forest* by Matt Haig which is a fantasy book.

On the day that the books arrived Emma recalled them turning up in a cardboard box, one for each form group. They were received positively by most of the students, and there was a 'buzz' in the air about their individual choices:

*Most people were pleased and happy... For a while, while they were reading their books they were saying, 'Oh my book's really good', 'What's yours like?', 'What book did you pick?'... I heard that over and over again, so they were all asking about the books*

Emma has finished reading *Shadow Forest* and said that it was 'very good', saying that she would now like to read some more books by the same author as well as some of the other Bookbuzz books:

*[Matt Haig is] quite a good writer, so I would quite like to find out if he has any more books and read them... I really liked the look of the 'Messenger' book, and 'Lost Riders' as well [as some other titles]*

She felt that the programme had been beneficial for Year 7 students because it had helped extend the choices of those children who were already reading as well as encouraging those who were not to pick up a book:

*I think Bookbuzz is really good, because it gives people who like reading more books to read, and so they can widen their choices, and then other people who don't like reading, it gives them a chance to get into reading.*

### **Student example 2: David**

David finds reading enjoyable but talked about how he sometimes finds it hard work. David does not like books that are '*poor quality written*' and noted how they made reading '*strenuous*', adding that he wants to read books that are not always difficult but do not have '*simple words in them*'. In other words David is stating that he doesn't always want to have to work too hard when he is reading, but at the same time he doesn't want to read books that are clearly written for younger children.

He spoke about how some children find reading boring, and that this was often the case when they were forced to read something that was not enjoyable and fun:

*Reading is something that is fun – to be enjoyed. Not something that is forced on to you – like the teacher says 'oh it's reading time now' and all the kids make a groan. Which – it shouldn't be like that... people think that looking at a book is boring... so it has to be a good describing book*

He felt that the selection of books from the Bookbuzz programme met his needs in terms of providing him with books that he could manage whilst also being enjoyable and a bit of a challenge. David chose *Shadow Forest* by Matt Haig. He also talked about how many students in his class had chosen *The World of Norm: May Contain Nuts* by Jonathan Meres, and that his younger sister had spotted this book in the school library during parents evening and had since read it.

The students in his class had enjoyed their Bookbuzz books and David felt that it was better to have an actual book than one in a digital format:

*[Books aren't dated] books will always be here – the feel of a book, the smell of it... it's nice to have an actual book*

He also talked about his desire to read one of the other books from the Bookbuzz selection - *Don't Wipe your Bum with a Hedgehog* by Mitchell Symons - as he recognised the author and liked that it was a factual book.

### **Student example 3: Gemma**

Gemma has not been enjoying secondary school and talked about how she had been finding the work too difficult, saying that she likes English and science classes but does not enjoy maths. Gemma said that she enjoys reading, but feels that some students find it easy whereas others find it really hard. She tends to choose 'girlie' books to read.

Gemma chose *The Secrets Club* by Chris Higgins and was interested in the book because she had not heard of the author before. After making her decision Gemma was motivated to discuss her book choice with her mother, who said that she should broaden her reading repertoire and choose something that was less 'girlie' in the future. On the day that the books arrived Gemma said that some of the students were '*really excited*', and there was some discussion about the books once they had been handed out.

*The Secrets Club* had been an enjoyable read, and Gemma liked the fact that it was a new author, and talked about how it had encouraged her to look for more books by the same writer:

*Yes I really liked it... I would like to read another book by that author... It let me experience books more... and the different authors, because there are some authors that I don't really know*

She also talked about Bookbuzz in relation to book ownership and how she liked the fact that she could keep the book:

*I think it (Bookbuzz) is good... we don't have to use our [library] cards to get the books. We just take it and read.*

## Summary and Conclusion

This report provides evidence to show that *Bookbuzz* does indeed motivate young people to read. Recognising that for many young people, the early years of secondary education are often accompanied by an increasing lack of interest in reading (McKenna et al, 2012; Clark, 2012); *Bookbuzz* addresses this issue by providing schools with a high quality programme that encourages young people to engage with reading during this crucial period of their lives. Indeed, all four schools included in this document reported that *Bookbuzz* made a significant contribution to their individual attempts to raise the profile of reading and develop a positive ethos around reading in their schools.

*Bookbuzz* 'works' for a number of reasons, but findings from this research indicate that much of this can be attributed to the fact that *Bookbuzz* provides schools with a very carefully designed programme, selecting books that allow young people to experience genuine choice, while simultaneously ensuring that this choice is appropriately guided. The literature review highlighted that motivation for reading is a complex phenomenon, influenced by many different factors, including book ownership (Clark et al, 2011) and the opportunity for students to choose their own books (Miller, 2012). In addition, the literature identified a need for young people to feel that their multiple reading identities are recognized and taken seriously (Love and Hamston, 2004). However, the literature also acknowledges that schools do play a major role in motivating reading, and for some young people, book recommendations from teachers are crucial (Protacio, 2012).

All in all, this suggests that encouraging motivation for reading is a challenge, yet it is one that *Bookbuzz* successfully meets. This report is saturated with examples from students who applaud the fact that *Bookbuzz* not only provides significant choice but extends their engagement with reading by introducing them to new authors, who they enjoy, and new genres or 'types' of books that they may not have otherwise experienced. Moreover, it was also reported that *Bookbuzz* encouraged some students to become 'hooked' onto a series of books, by introducing a title from a series. In brief, this can perhaps all be summed up in the words of this student:

*It's a good opportunity to read what you've not read, and you can choose what you want, and you can have it for free and you don't have to go looking round for it (Mark, Hope Valley College)*

Students from all four schools commented on the fact that *Bookbuzz* met the needs of a wide variety of readers, encouraging everyone to read, as it is '*not just for story-lovers*' (Jonathan, student at Penistone Grammar School). Students and staff also reported that the selection enabled weaker readers to engage with good quality, age-appropriate texts, that matched their reading ability, thus accommodating the reading identities of this pre-teen audience. Moreover, a number of staff and student participants argued that *Bookbuzz* achieves the dual aim of encouraging students who may be reluctant to read, to find '*the right book*' (Scarlett, student at Penistone Grammar School) and thus ignite an interest in reading, while simultaneously widening the reading interests of other more established readers. As this student concluded:

*I think Bookbuzz is really good, because it gives people who like reading more books to read, and so they can widen their choices, and then other people who don't like reading, it gives them a chance to get into reading (Emma, St Paul's Way Trust School)*

Although the four schools in this report implemented *Bookbuzz* in different ways, they made use of the materials provided by Booktrust, including the two sets of books, the bookmarks, the website (including videos from the authors) and the posters, to introduce the programme and assist the students in making their choice. Similarly, the schools found different ways in which to give the books to the children, and two of the schools drew upon the fact that the books were given out near to Christmas and therefore arranged for the books to be given in the form of a Christmas present. All four schools reported that there was a great deal of excitement around the programme, with students from all schools asking staff when they would receive their books. As a result, given that these schools all implemented the programme through the library, *Bookbuzz* helped to create positive relationships between the students and the library/librarians from their earliest days in secondary school.

In conclusion, *Bookbuzz* is intended to encourage a 'buzz about books', by promoting interaction and excitement about reading. The evidence from this report strongly indicates that *Bookbuzz* did indeed achieve this aim within these four case study schools, as the young people were clearly talking about their books and their reading, exchanging books with each other, engaging with teachers and librarians about their reading and expressing an excitement about the programme in general. Given that the literature demonstrated that in order to motivate young people to read, there is a need to open up a dialogue about reading and encourage an ethos which emphasises reciprocal and positive relationships with reading (Cremin et al, 2009; Love and Hamston, 2004; McKenna et al, 2012), *Bookbuzz* clearly supports interaction about reading and 'talk' about books, thus helping young people to create and sustain their motivation for reading.

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## Appendix 1: Student interview questions

### Reading ability and interest

1. Scale of 1 – 5. 1 is lowest score, 5 is highest. I want you to score yourself on each of these questions
  - How much do you like reading? (1 is don't like it at all, 5 is like it very much)
  - How difficult do you think reading is (1 is very difficult, 5 is very easy)?
  - How good are you at reading? (1 is not got at all, 5 is very good)
2. Would you say that you enjoy reading? Do you read in your free time?

### The introduction of Bookbuzz

*Show the student the 'The buzz about the books' sheet, books and bookmarks to remind them what programme we are talking to them about*

3. Can you tell me about the way the Bookbuzz programme was introduced to you? What happened? (probe: Who told you about it? Where were you? Did anything special happen?)
4. What do you think about the way it was introduced to you? (probe: exciting, boring etc) What were the best things about the way it was launched in your school?
5. What did you feel about Bookbuzz at this point (before you received your book)? (probe: were you excited by it? Did you think that it looked interesting?) Why was this?

### The books

6. What did you think about the books that were on offer? (probe: did you recognise them, did they look interesting?)
7. How did you choose your book? What information did you have/was it enough information? How long did you have/was it long enough?
8. Which book did you choose? Why?
9. Did you read your chosen book? What did you think about it?
10. What book did your friends choose? Do you know why?
11. Were these books used in school at all? In what ways?

### **Whole school reading**

1. Have you been involved with any other reading related things at school? (probe: reading in tutor time; other reading programmes; reading targets or challenges; reading groups) What did you think about it?
2. Have you seen any posters about reading around school? (probe: what do they look like or say? Does this encourage you to read?)
3. Do you know whether your teachers like reading? How do you know this? (Probe: do you see them reading at school? Do they talk about reading?)

### **The impact of Bookbuzz**

4. Can you tell me about Bookbuzz? Did you enjoy it? What was good about it?
5. Has Bookbuzz made you feel differently about reading? Why? In what ways?
6. Has the Bookbuzz book encouraged you to read other books? Which ones? Why?
7. Will you read any other books by the same author?
8. Have you talked about or shared your book with anyone else?
9. Do your friends talk about their books? What do they say?
10. Have you read any of the other Bookbuzz books since you took part in the programme? Which one? Why?
11. Have you used the school library more often since you got your Bookbuzz book?
12. Do you feel any differently about books since taking part in Bookbuzz? In what ways?

### **Final thoughts**

13. Overall, what do you think about Bookbuzz?
14. Do you think that Bookbuzz should be offered to Year 7s again next year? Why?
15. Has Bookbuzz encouraged students to talk about books?
16. Is there anything else you'd like to say?

## Appendix 2: Staff interview questions

### The launch and administration of Bookbuzz

1. Please could you outline your role within school along with your role in the Bookbuzz programme?
2. Could you talk me through the way the programme is run in your school? How was it implemented?
3. Do you have a launch event? If so, could you tell me more about this? What worked well? Why?
4. Could you tell me about the way that the students chose their book? How long was spent on this? Did this work well? Why?
5. How were the Bookbuzz books given out at your school?
6. Did you carry out any Bookbuzz related activities with the students once their chosen books had been delivered?

### Wider school linkages

7. Have you linked the Bookbuzz programme with the English curriculum? Can you tell me about what you've done? Has this worked well? Why? Do you have any tips for other schools in terms of making this work well?
8. Have you linked it with any other reading initiatives? Can you tell me about what you've done? Has this worked well? Why? Do you have any tips for other schools in terms of making this work well?
9. Have you linked it with any other school events? Can you tell me about what you've done? Has this worked well? Why? Do you have any tips for other schools in terms of making this work well?
10. Have you linked the programme in with wider whole school reading activities? (*probe: reading in tutor time; other reading programmes; reading targets and challenges; reading groups; posters; reading role models*) Do you have any tips for other schools in terms of making this work well?
11. Have you read the Bookbuzz Guide to Whole School Reading? Have you used any of the ideas from it? Why/why not? If used ideas: did they work well?
12. Is there parental involvement with the programme? In what ways? How successful has this been? Do you have any tips for other schools in terms of making this work well?

## Impact of the Bookbuzz programme

13. What do you think has worked particularly well in terms of the way you run the programme? (*probe: examples of good practice; innovative ideas in terms of roll out*)
14. How did your Year 7s react to Bookbuzz?
15. Do you think the programme has impacted on your Year 7s? How? (*probe: improved confidence; improved ability; use/join the library, talk about books/reading, read more for fun; more likely to read digital forms e.g. e-books, what elements of Bookbuzz encourage this behaviour? more likely to try new authors/genres?*)
16. Can you think of any students for whom the programme has made a particular impact? In what way?
17. How effective do you think it was in terms of engaging a range of different types of reader? How? (*Hand out 'categorisation' document*)
  - Pupils who can read and do read
  - Pupils who can read and don't read
  - Pupils who struggle to read but do read
  - Pupils who struggle to read and don't read
18. Have you had any comments from parents in relation to the Bookbuzz programme? What did they say?
19. Does Bookbuzz help you in your role? (*probe: how? useful tool in lessons; help introduce ideas around choosing books; promotes reading, helps engage with parents, integrated with lessons, introduces children to the school library, helps collaboration with other departments*)
20. Has your school's involvement with Bookbuzz had an effect on the status of the school library? How?

## Final thoughts

21. From your school's experience of taking part in Bookbuzz, what best practice tips could you give other schools to help them make the most of their involvement?
22. Do you have anything else you would like to say about the Bookbuzz programme?