

Park Primary School and Alloa Academy Literacy Project 2016

Background

This literacy project started with a four week pilot project during which time a P6 class and their teacher (the school's literacy leader funded by the Scottish Attainment Challenge) came to the secondary school library to choose books and meet with the librarian and Faculty Head of English and Literacy. Thereafter the project was extended to involve a group of S3 pupils as reading buddies.

Project Aims

1. To share the library and expertise of the librarian with one of the cluster primary schools.
2. To allow primary and secondary pupils and staff to work together and to share good practice.
3. To contribute to the Scottish Attainment Challenge, specifically to improving attainment in literacy and closing the attainment gap between the most and least advantaged children.
4. To build the self-esteem and employability skills of a group of S3 pupils.

Project Description

After the initial four week pilot programme it was decided to extend the project by another twelve weeks and to involve a group of S3 pupils as reading buddies. Primary pupils attended the secondary school once per week and were joined by a group of S3 pupils (who came out of one period of English – with parental permission to do so). Staff members were the P6 teacher, the secondary school librarian and the Faculty Head of English and Literacy.

Pupils chose books from the library then participated in paired reading with their S3 reading buddies. (S3 pupils were trained in paired reading by the school librarian.) Pupils were also taught about appropriate use of and behaviour in the library.

Another project activity was building vocabulary. All pupils were given a vocabulary book (funded by the Scottish Attainment Challenge) and encouraged to note "new" words. Vocabulary books were checked on a weekly basis and small prizes issued for various achievements (most words collected; most interesting word; most accurate definition etc.).

Primary pupils also attended the local library once every three weeks from September till mid-June to borrow books and to meet the librarian. The librarian visited the primary school to ensure that pupils could access ebooks.

An additional activity was inviting a P3/4 class and parents/carers from Park Primary School to accompany their P6 buddies to a World Book Day event at Alloa Academy. In liaison with Waterstones bookshop in Stirling, the librarian had arranged for the World Book Day books to be brought to Alloa Academy so that pupils could exchange their WBD tokens for a book of their choice. In addition to encouraging reading at home and in school, this was an opportunity for much younger pupils and

their parents/carers to be introduced to Alloa Academy staff and pupils. The librarian also distributed paired reading leaflets to parents and carers.

The project culminated in a “Celebrating Success” event to which the parents and carers of pupils were invited, as well as the head teachers of the primary and the secondary school. The event was partly organised by the pupils who all worked together to decide who should be invited and to make invitations. The main focus of this event was a power point presentation prepared and delivered by the primary and secondary pupils. Scottish Attainment Challenge funding provided a dictionary for each primary pupil and a novel for each S3 pupil.

Project Evaluation

On completion of the project, pupils and staff members carried out evaluation activities: a SWOT analysis was carried out by staff; pupils completed an evaluation questionnaire. A summary of the questionnaire feedback is provided below.

1. What did you learn from the reading project?
<p>P6 HEADLINES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●10/15 pupils commented about learning new words/vocabulary. ●5/15 pupils mentioned learning about the Dewey system. ●2/15 pupils stated that they thought their reading had improved.
<p>S3 HEADLINES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●4/5 pupils felt that their vocabulary had improved since the start of the project.
2. What did you enjoy?
<p>P6 HEADLINES (1 pupil did not respond to this question):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●5/14 pupils commented that they enjoyed working with/meeting the S3 pupils. ●6/14 pupils commented that they enjoyed reading.
<p>S3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●“I enjoyed socialising with the younger pupils and helping them improve their confidence when reading.” ●“Working with the P6 pupils and seeing them progress with their reading.” (2 pupils) ●“I enjoyed helping bring them on and making them feel better about coming to high school.” ●“Going back to my old primary school.” (2 pupils) ●“The vocabulary book.” ●“Meeting the P6 pupils and doing different activities.”

3. How could the project be improved?

P6 HEADLINES:

- 8/15 pupils wanted more time at Alloa Academy and/or more visits.

S3

- “Carry the project on for longer”. (2 pupils)
- “Have more time.”
- “More visits every week.”
- “Maybe to get a few more S3 pupils so that every P6 has a buddy each.”
- “The project could be improved by having the S3s take more trips to Park Primary.”

4. Have you read more since you started the project?

P6 HEADLINES:

- 9/15 pupils stated that they had read more since starting the project.
- 7/15 pupils stated that they had not read more since starting the project (but continued to be keen readers).

S3

- 4/5 pupils stated that they have read more since the project started.

5. Since the project started, how many books have you read?

P6

- 0 books: 1 pupil (“I looked at the pictures of the books I borrowed” - scribed by teacher)
- 1-3 books: 4 pupils
- 4-6 books: 3 pupils
- 7-10 books: 1 pupil
- 11 – 16 books: 3 pupils
- Don't know: 3 pupils

S3

- 1-3 books: 3 pupils
- 4-6 books: 2 pupils

6. Do you feel your vocabulary has improved since the start of the project?

P6 HEADLINES:

- 12/15 pupils felt that their vocabulary had improved since the start of the project – even if just “a bit”.

S3

- 5/5 pupils said their vocabulary had improved since the start of the project.

Next Steps

1. The project will be run again this session (2016/17) with another primary class and another group of S3 pupils.
2. The original primary class (now P7) will visit the secondary school once per term this session to participate in book choosing and further literacy activities.
3. The original S3 group of pupils will help to “recruit” and train the next group of S3 pupils.
4. The original group of S3 pupils will act as buddies/mentors for the primary pupils when they start Alloa Academy next year.