The Impact of Chatterbooks on Children's Reading Enjoyment, Behaviours and Attitudes

Final report

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National Literacy Trust

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About the National Literacy Trust

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

About The Reading Agency

The Reading Agency is a leading independent charity whose pioneering work brings the joy of reading to the widest possible audience across the UK, in partnership with the public library service. Our mission is to create and deliver innovative reading opportunities inspiring more people to read more, encouraging them to share their enjoyment of reading with others and celebrating the difference that reading makes to all our lives. The Reading Agency is a national portfolio holder of Arts Council England.

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Foreword

"Education has the power to transform lives and, for me, is a matter of social justice" says Secretary of State for Education Nicky Morgan in her foreword to *Educational Excellence Everywhere*[1]. What this external evaluation of the Department for Education KS2 Book Clubs in School project has shown is just how important it is that the work happening in schools to get and keep children reading is supported by fun and inspiring reading activities outside the classroom. The Reading Agency, the Association of Senior Children's and Education Librarians and School Library Services have worked together throughout the project to support teachers in the 200 schools to develop new ways of inspiring more children to read more; to increase their enjoyment of reading, and to encourage them to use their local library.

This report by the National Literacy Trust shows the impact creative and engaging reading activities can have on children's reading patterns, on their views about reading and on the frequency with which they read. We are delighted with the results and will be using the findings to further develop our partnerships and resources, to sustain the programme in schools. We hope that it will encourage more schools to set up book clubs and to partner with their local libraries and their schools library service, bringing to many more children the benefits shown by this report to come to those involved in this programme.

Sue Wilkinson, Chief Executive Officer at The Reading Agency, May 2016

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[1] https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/508447/Educational_Excellence_Everywhere.pdf

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We would like to thank the pupils and staff at the following schools without whom this study would not have been possible:

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Executive summary

The Reading Agency's Chatterbooks programme is an extracurricular reading initiative that aims to increase a child's motivation to read by providing schools with tools and resources to encourage reading for pleasure. This evaluation explored the impact of a delivery model focusing on school-based rather than library-based activities on children's reading enjoyment, reading behaviour and reading attitudes.

Data were analysed from 114 schools that ran Chatterbooks between September 2015 and April 2016, with responses from 1,430 children aged 8 to 11 to an online pre-survey and 1,141 children aged 8 to 11to an online post-survey. This evaluation shows that:

- Children hold more positive attitudes towards reading after taking part in Chatterbooks activities. In particular, fewer say at the end of Chatterbooks that they read only when they have to and that they cannot find things to read that interest them.
- Children read more frequently after taking part in Chatterbooks. For example, there was a 22% increase in the number of children who said that they read daily over the course of the project, increasing from 35.9% to 43.9% at the end of project activities.
- Children also discovered some new genres and reported a shift in their reading preferences. Some of the genres the children said they enjoyed more in the post-survey include adventure, mystery, war or spy stories, fantasy worlds and family and friends.
- More children also said that they enjoy reading at the end of Chatterbooks activities, but the increase was not statistically significant.
- There was a significant difference in children's perceptions of their own reading ability over time, with 49.1% of children feeling that they are very good readers at the end of Chatterbooks compared with 41.1% before.
- Nearly twice as many children say that they are a member of their local library after Chatterbooks than before (54.8% vs. 33.9%). In addition, 30.9% of children said in the pre-survey that they never go to the library, a percentage that dropped down to 19.3% at post-survey.

These impacts are corroborated by Chatterbooks group leaders (N = 101). In particular:
- 9 in 10 club leaders believe that as a result of the project, children enjoy reading more and have become more enthusiastic about reading. Most also believe that as a result of the project, children read more often and more children read on their own initiative. But the project did not just lead to improved reading outcomes: 8 in 10 club leaders believe that children are more confident speaking in public as a result of taking part in Chatterbooks activities.
- 8 in 10 club leaders also believe that children are now better at choosing books to suit their interests and over 9 in 10 believe that children discovered books they like as a result of taking part in Chatterbooks activities.
- Over 3 in 4 believe that Chatterbooks has resulted in either significant improvement (17.3%) or some improvement (60.5%) in children's reading skills. Similarly, most group leaders identified either significant or some improvement in children's speaking and listening skills. However, they were more ambivalent about any impact on writing skills.

Some of the testimonies from Chatterbooks group leaders gathered in the survey provide useful illustrations to the statistical data, and demonstrate the enthusiasm of group leaders who delivered the project for the outcomes they have seen on participating children:

> *"A very disengaged boy attended Chatterbooks. He has discovered that he likes to read series of books. It has been lovely to watch him become a confident reader and enjoy reading. He couldn't wait for the next box of books to come out and loved talking about the funny stories to the group. From January to March he made five months' progress. Fantastic!"*

Introduction

Research shows that one of the most effective ways of helping children to reach their potential is to engage them in reading for enjoyment.[2] Children who read for enjoyment make more progress in maths, vocabulary and spelling between the ages of 10 and 16 than those who rarely read[3] and young people who read regularly are significantly more likely to attain a professional or managerial position than those who do not read.[4]

The Reading Agency's Chatterbooks programme is an extracurricular reading initiative that aims to increase a child's motivation to read by providing schools with tools and resources to encourage reading for pleasure. The programme has been running since 2001 and has built the UK's largest network of children's reading groups. The sessions are intended for to 12-year-olds and attendance is voluntary. Each Chatterbooks session includes time for children to discuss what they have been reading, a creative activity that develops their response to reading, and time listening to and discussing a shared text. Chatterbooks reading clubs aim to help children build a lifelong reading habit.

A previous evaluation of an adapted model of Chatterbooks[5] in secondary schools found no direct evidence of impact on pupils' reading ability either immediately after the intervention or at a three-month follow-up. From the process evaluation, it seems that a lack of engagement and poor behaviour during delivery may have contributed to the lack of impact of the intervention at the time[6]. Another evaluation conducted by Coventry University in 2014/15 highlighted the positive impact of Chatterbooks on children's attitudes towards reading, enjoyment of reading and motivation to read[7].

However, improving reading skills is far from the only goal of Chatterbooks. What the programme is primarily trying to achieve, and what this evaluation will measure, is children's reading engagement. Namely:

- o Reading enjoyment
- o General attitudes to reading
- o Confidence and book choosing skills
- o Frequency and breadth of reading
- o Frequency of visits to the library
- o Social behaviours around reading (talking to friends and family about reading, reading with siblings, etc.)

In addition, the evaluation will capture the programme's outputs both in terms of reading groups (number of schools, pupils, targeting of pupils, number of sessions, etc.) and library memberships (particularly for Year 3 pupils), as well as feedback from practitioners who deliver the activities on logistics and various aspects of implementation.

This project, funded by the Department for Education (DfE), aimed to create 200 reading clubs in 200 state-funded schools across England, focusing on schools with more than 17% of pupils on free school meals (FSMs), with up to 20 pupils per club. It also aimed to encourage schools

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[2] *Reading for Change: Performance and engagement across countries*. OECD (2002, 2009)

[3] *Social inequalities in cognitive scores at age 16: The role of reading*, A Sullivan and M Brown, Institute of Education, 2013

[4] Apr 2011: Mark Taylor of Nuffield College, Oxford University

[5] Styles, B., Clarkson, R. and Fowler, K. (2014). *Chatterbooks evaluation report and executive summary*. Slough: NFER. https://www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/EFTR02/EFTR02.pdf

[6] ibid

[7] Vardy E., Waldron S. (2015) *Evaluation of Chatterbooks in Primary School Settings*. Coventry: Coventry University Centre for Psychology, Behaviour, and Achievement. https://tra-resources.s3.amazonaws.com/uploads/entries/document/1588/Coventry_University_Report_-_Chatterbooks_in_Primary_School_Settings.pdf

to enrol their Year 3 pupils in public libraries, notably by providing a named contact in the library services for each school.

The Chatterbooks programme was first established in libraries, but in the past five years increasing numbers have been running in schools. In 2014 there were 180 schools signed up to the network. In 2014/15 The Reading Agency ran a pilot programme with 13 primary schools in the West Midlands, working with three school library services, and this model was used as the basis for the Book Clubs in Schools project funded by the DfE.

Research methodology

The National Literacy Trust was commissioned by The Reading Agency in September 2015 to conduct the evaluation of the Chatterbooks project in schools. This evaluation is quantitative in its approach and uses a pre and post-survey to measure any changes in attitudes among pupils over the course of the Chatterbooks project. Online survey links were created for all 207 participating schools. The pre-survey for pupils contained 18 questions and the post-survey contained 26 questions, most of which were multiple choice.

Pre-survey data were collected between October 2015 and mid-January 2016 to allow for as many schools as possible to participate in the survey. Seven of the 207 schools decided not to run Chatterbooks over the two terms when the evaluation was taking place. Overall, 1,712 pupils from 130 schools took part in the pre-survey: a response rate of 63%. Post-survey data were collected between December 2015 and April 2016. We obtained 1,171 responses from 120 schools to the post-survey: a response rate of 58%.

For a more rigorous approach while analysing at cohort level, we chose to use data only from schools where pupils had done both the pre and post-surveys. In total, data were analysed from 114 schools, with 1,430 responses to the pre-survey and 1,141 to the post-survey. This equates to a response rate of 55%.

To capture feedback on delivery and some of the programme's outputs, a post-survey was administered for group leaders; the survey was online and contained 29 questions, with several open-ended questions to allow group leaders to pass on their feedback in their own words. The data were collected in March/April 2016. We obtained responses from 101 group leaders: an overall response rate of 49%.

Finally, a separate survey was also administered online for School Library Services (SLS) staff, with 17 questions, most of them open-ended. We obtained 19 responses out of 20 SLS staff members participating in the project: a response rate of 95%.

Data analysis

Most of our data are ordinal and not normally distributed, i.e. it is skewed in one direction. We therefore use mostly, but not exclusively, non-parametric analyses. Where possible, we also report relevant effect sizes and confidence intervals. Due to the sample size (above 1,000) we use a more stringent significance level – $p = 0.01$. If a difference or relationship is statistically significant at this level then the likelihood is not more than 1 in 100 (1%, using the 0.01 p-value) that it would happen by chance. We can therefore be relatively confident that it is meaningful.

Demographics

The gender balance in both the pre and post-survey samples was almost exactly 50/50 (see **Table 1**). There was no significant difference in terms of gender between pre and post-survey samples[8].

Table 1: Gender at pre and post-survey

	Boy	Girl	Total
PRE	701	714	1415
	49.5%	50.5%	100%
POST	573	561	1134
	50.5%	49.5%	100%
Total	1274	1275	2549
	50.0%	50.0%	100%

Participating children were aged seven to 12 years old, with an average age of eight. **Table 2** shows that half of them are in Year 3 (49.4% at pre and 51.6% at post). There was no significant difference between pre and post-survey in terms of the children's year group[9].

Table 2: Year groups at pre and post-survey

	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Total
PRE	677	303	240	150	1370
	49.4%	22.1%	17.5%	10.9%	55.3%
POST	571	217	198	120	1106
	51.6%	19.6%	17.9%	10.8%	44.7%
Total	1248	520	438	270	2476
	50.4%	21.0%	17.7%	10.9%	100%

As can be seen in **Table 3**, the pre and post-survey samples were well matched[10] in terms of children's socioeconomic background, assessed by using free school meal (FSM) uptake as a proxy. At both pre and post-survey, over 1 pupil in 3 pupil said that they receive FSMs. The percentage of FSM pupils in our sample is twice that of the national average, which reflects the fact that the project is targeting schools with higher numbers of FSM pupils[11].

Table 3: Free school meal uptake at pre and post-survey

	FSM	No FSM	Don't know	Rather not say	Total
PRE	466	614	178	57	1315
	35.4%	46.7%	13.5%	4.3%	100%
POST	382	502	132	34	1050
	36.4%	47.8%	12.6%	3.2%	100%
TOTAL	848	1116	310	91	2365
	35.9%	47.2%	13.1%	3.8%	100%

42% of the group leaders who responded to the survey were class teachers. Other roles in school included teaching assistants, literacy leaders and school librarians (see **Table 4**). 40% of them have been working with KS2 pupils for more than 10 years.

Table 4: Job titles of participating group leaders

Classroom teacher	42	42%
Teaching assistant	18	18%
Literacy coordinator	16	16%

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[8] Chi^2 (1, N = 2,549) = .246, p = .620
[9] Chi^2 (3, N = 2,476) = 2.466, p = .481
[10] Chi^2 (3, N = 2,365) = 2.538, p = .468
[11] https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/433680/SFR16_2015_Main_Text.pdf

School librarian	9	9%
Librarian	6	6%
Parent volunteer	4	4%
Management	6	6%
Total	101	100%

88% of surveyed group leaders ran one Chatterbooks group, although 10 of them ran up to three groups. The average number of pupils per group was 11, and the average number of sessions was 10.2. The group leaders report that Chatterbooks primarily involved Year 3 pupils, which is consistent with findings from the pupil surveys.

A third of group leaders reported that some of their Chatterbooks pupils had learning difficulties (see **Table 5**)[12], although it should be noted that eight respondents categorised children with English as an additional language (EAL) as having a learning difficulty. Being a non-native English speaker is not usually considered a learning difficulty, but since the respondents brought it up, it is included in the table below.

Table 5: Types of learning difficulties of participating children

Dyslexia/dyspraxia	14
EAL	8
Speech and language	6
Autism	5
SEN	3
ADHD	1
Other	13

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[12] An unexpected outcome of the project regarding learning difficulties came out via a quote from a group leader: *"All the children who were dyslexic were so pleased to know that they were not alone and that other people had been diagnosed too. Drew confidence from each other."*

Findings

This evaluation sought to explore the impact (or lack thereof) of Chatterbooks on children's:

- Reading enjoyment
- General attitudes to reading
- Confidence and book choosing skills
- Frequency and breadth of reading
- Frequency of visits to the library
- Social behaviours around reading (talking to friends and family about reading, reading with siblings, etc.)

The evidence outlined below comes primarily from the children's pre and post-surveys, which allow a comparison on the above outcomes from before Chatterbooks to after the project is completed. However, the following section also includes evidence of impact observed by group leaders. To help contextualise findings further, this section also includes information from the National Literacy Trust's annual literacy survey. 7,097 KS2 pupils participated in this survey at the end of November/December 2015, which asked several questions that were worded in an identical manner to the Chatterbooks evaluation.

In addition to the outcomes for children, the findings section also presents some elements of outcomes for the group leaders and feedback about the delivery of Chatterbooks in schools from group leaders and SLS personnel.

Impact on children

Attitudes towards reading

There was a statistically significant[13] difference in children's attitudes towards reading[14] over the course of the Chatterbooks project, with children thinking more positively about reading at the end of the project (M = 2.52, SD = .886) than they did before Chatterbooks started (M = 2.32, SD = .867; NB lower Means (M) indicate more positive attitudes).

Figure 1 outlines the differences in agreement over time across the eight individual attitudinal statements in percentages. The results show that after taking part in Chatterbooks fewer children agree with statements such as, "I only read when I have to" and "I cannot find interesting things to read that interest me" than before taking part.

To help contextualise findings, the figure also includes information from our latest annual literacy survey (ALS), in which 7,097 KS2 pupils participated at the end of November/December 2015. It shows that Chatterbooks participants were more likely than their peers who took part in the ALS to agree that reading is cool, both at pre and at post-survey, while fewer saw a link at either point between reading amount and their reading skill.

However, **Figure 1** also shows that compared with their peers from the national survey, at the beginning of project activities Chatterbooks children were more likely to agree that reading is more for girls than boys, they cannot find things to read that interest them, they don't read as well as other pupils in their class, they only read when they have to and they would feel

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[13] t(2499) = 6.017, p = .000, Mdiff = .2124, CI 95%(.1432, .2817), Cohen's d = 0.232

[14] All eight attitudinal items in the survey were combined into a scale (the more I read the better I become, I cannot find things to read that interest me – reverse scored, I don't read as well as other pupils in my class – reverse scored, I only read when I have to – reverse scored, reading is cool, I prefer watching TV to reading – reverse scored, I would be embarrassed if my friends saw me read – reverse scored) to assess attitudes to reading (Cronbach's alpha = .695)

embarrassed if their friends saw them reading outside class. Once Chatterbooks activities had finished, levels of agreement were much closer to their peers nationally.

Figure 1: Percentage agreement with attitudinal items at pre and post-survey and in comparison with ALS 2015
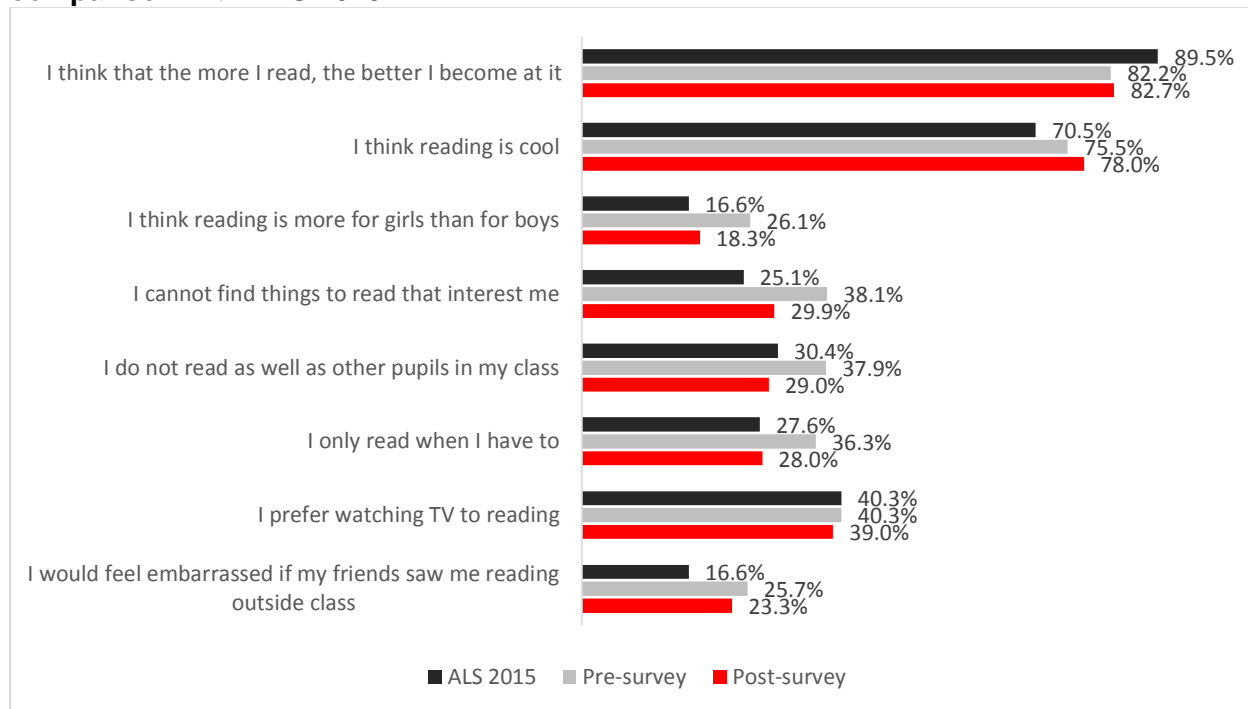
Children taking part in Chatterbooks activities were also asked several questions about book choice. Only responses to one item – "I don't know what types of books I like" – showed a significant difference over time[15]. **Figure 2** outlines the percentage agreement for each individual item and shows that the percentage of children who agreed with that item dropped from 31% before Chatterbooks began to 27% at the end of project activities.

Figure 2: Percentage agreement with book choice attitudinal items at pre and post-survey

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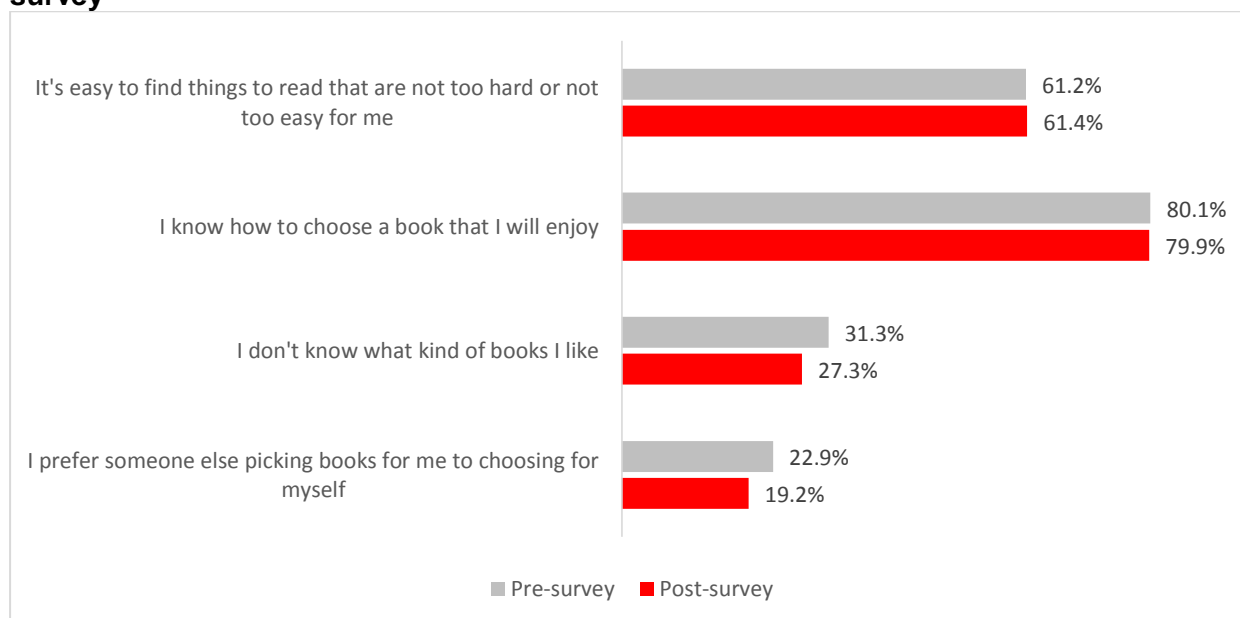
[15] Mann Whitney U (2237) = 580193.500, z = -2.752, p = .006, r = 0.06

Figure 2 shows that the difference in agreement with the statement "I know how to choose a book that I will enjoy" between pre and post-survey is very small (only 0.2 percentage points). However, when children were asked if after completing Chatterbooks they found it easier to choose books to read, 81.6% agreed.

Reading enjoyment

Before taking part in Chatterbooks almost three quarters of pupils said that they enjoyed reading either quite a lot or very much (74.3%); a seemingly high percentage for a baseline but one that is in line with the percentage found in our national attitudinal survey (72.6%).

Children were even more likely to say that they enjoy reading at the end of Chatterbooks activities, though the difference over time was not statistically significant[16]. **Figure 3** outlines the difference in reading enjoyment between pre and post-surveys in percentages and shows that the percentage of children who enjoy reading either very much or quite a lot rose from 74.3% to 79.7% at the end of Chatterbooks activities.

Figure 3: Reading enjoyment at pre and post-survey
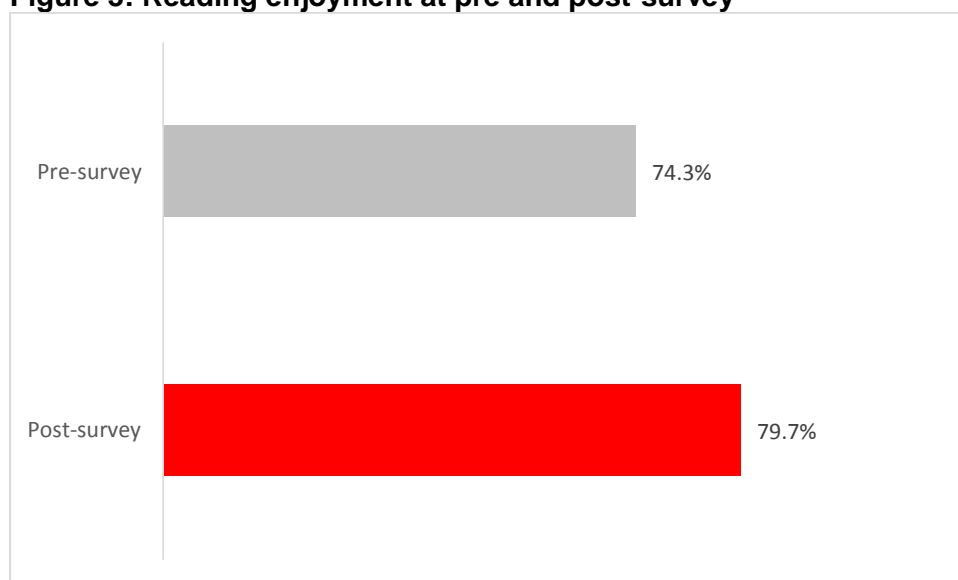
Although the difference between pre and post-survey in terms of reading enjoyment was not statistically significant, children themselves feel much more positive about the impact of Chatterbooks on their enjoyment of reading. When children were asked in the post-survey whether they enjoy reading more now that they have taken part in Chatterbooks, 9 in 10 children agreed, with 73% enjoying reading a lot more and 17.5% enjoying reading a bit more. Only 6.4% of children said that they enjoy reading just the same, while 3.2% were not sure.

In the post-survey, we asked the students if there was one particular book or story that they had enjoyed above all. The responses (over 600) were very varied and included names of authors, books and more general themes such as dinosaurs and monsters. The overall responses are displayed in the word cloud below (see **Figure 4**).

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[16] p = .054

Figure 4: Favourite books word cloud

Perceptions of reading skill

In the pre and post-surveys children were also asked how good a reader they think they are on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being not a very good reader and 10 being a very good reader. Responses were then collapsed to form three categories: not a very good reader (1 to 3), an average reader (4 to 7) and a very good reader (8 to 10). Analyses show that there was a statistically significant difference in children's perceptions of their reading ability over time[17], with 49.1% of children considering themselves very good readers at the end of Chatterbooks compared with 41.1% before (see **Figure 5**).

Figure 5: Reading ability perceptions at pre and post-survey

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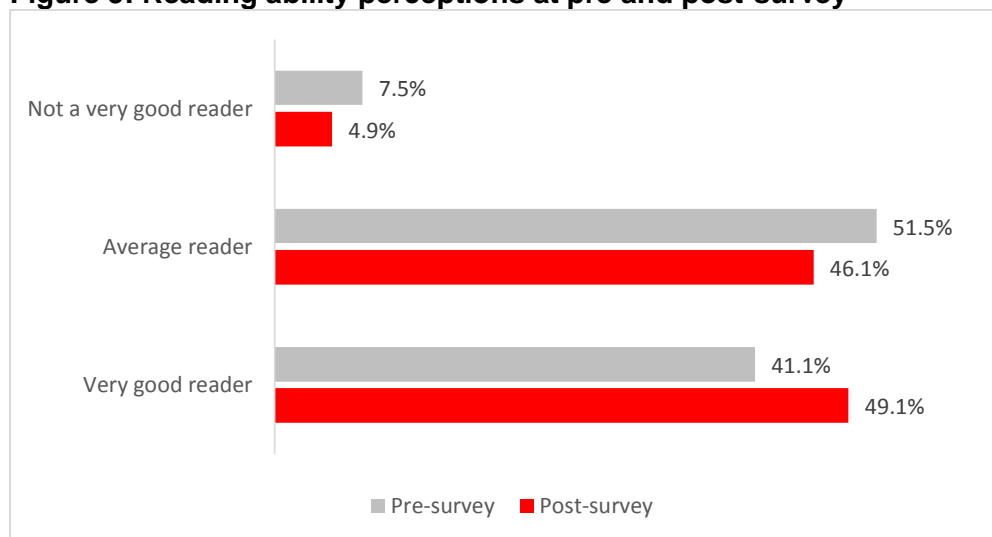
[17] Chi^2 (2, N = 2,538) = 19.276, p = .000, Cramer's V = .087

Reading behaviours

Before starting Chatterbooks over a third (35.9%) of children said they read every day. This is less than the percentage of KS2 pupils in our national survey who said they read every day (45.5%), which was conducted at roughly the same time.

However, there was a statistically significant difference in reading frequency between pre and post-survey[18]. **Figure 6** outlines this difference in percentages and shows that the number of children who read daily increased by 22.3% over the course of the project, rising from 35.9% at the beginning of Chatterbooks to 43.9% at the end of project activities. This also means that Chatterbooks participants have almost caught up with their peers in terms of their daily reading level.

Additionally, the post-survey asked children if they thought they read more often since taking part in Chatterbooks, and 86.4% agreed.

Figure 6: Reading frequency at pre and post-survey
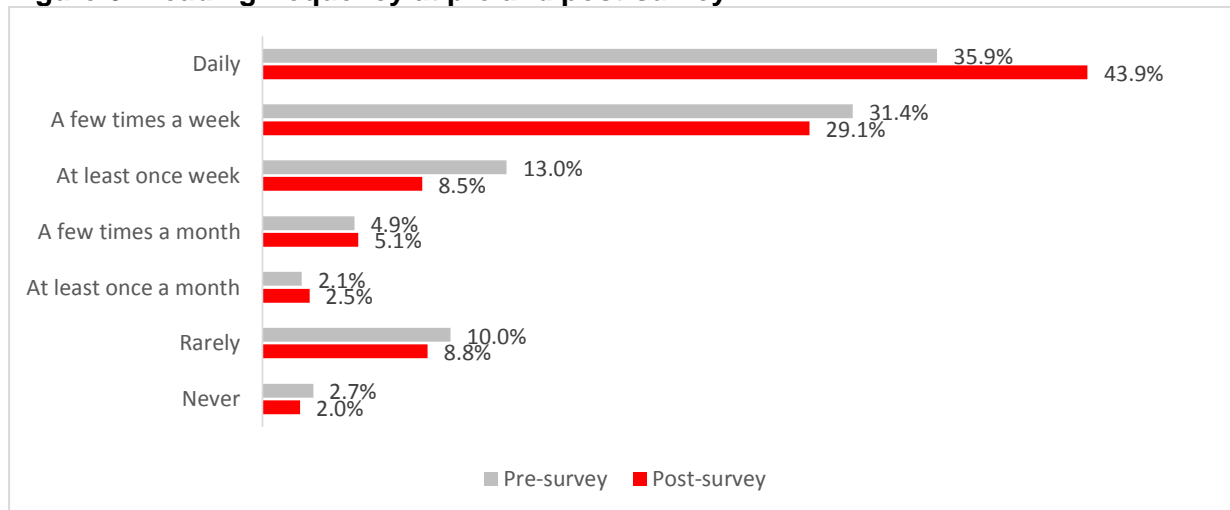
Reading length

There was a statistically significant difference in children's reading duration over time[19]. **Figure 7** outlines this difference in percentages and shows that fewer children read for up to 10 minutes after the end of Chatterbooks activities, while more read for one hour or more.

Figure 7: Reading duration at pre and post-survey

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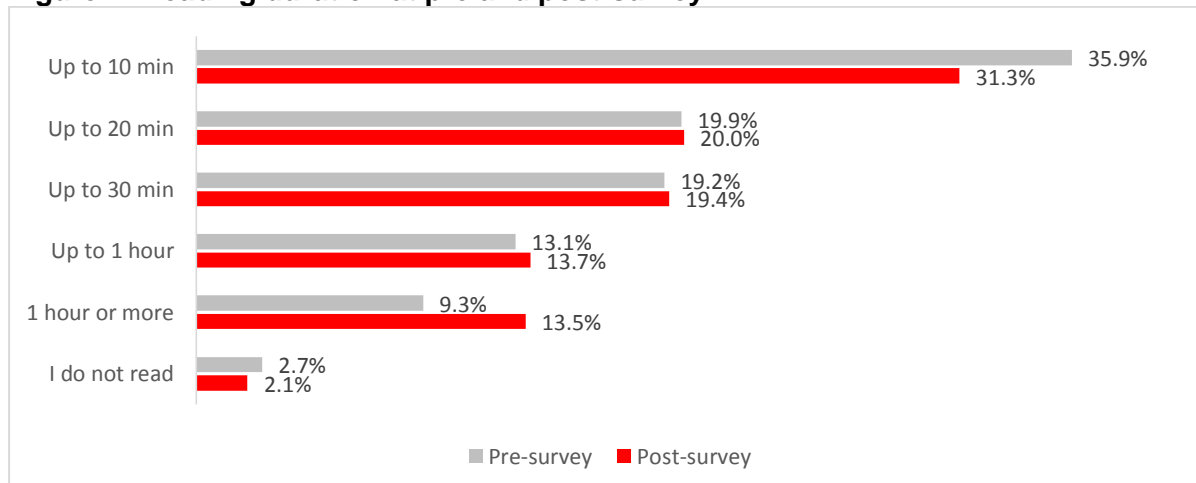
[18] Mann Whitney U (2159) = 716699.500, z = -3.884, p = .000, r = .0.08
[19] Mann Whitney U (2506) = 726916.500, z = -2.824, p = .005, r = .0.06

Reading volume

Children were asked in both surveys to indicate how many books they read in a typical month. Figure 8 outlines children's reading volume in percentages over time and shows that at the end of Chatterbooks more children said they read 10 or more books a month. It is also worth noting that at the end of Chatterbooks activities, more Chatterbooks children said that they read 10 or more books in a typical month than their peers in the national survey (26.6%)

Figure 8: Number of books read in a typical month at pre and post-survey
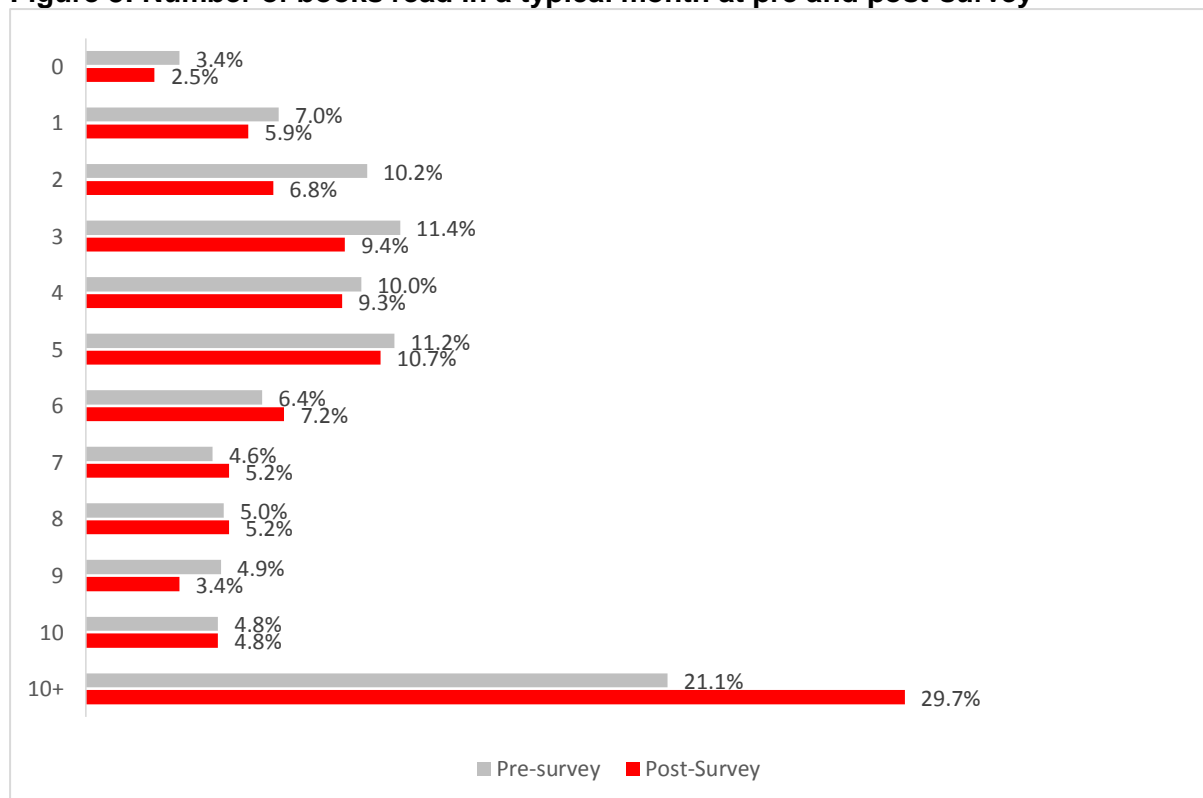
Library membership and usage

There also were statistically significant[20] changes in children's library membership over the course of the Chatterbooks project, with nearly twice as many children saying that they are a member of their local library after taking part in Chatterbooks compared with before (54.8% vs. 33.9%).

Not only did more children join the local library over the course of the project, but there was also a statistically significant difference in how often children visited their local library over the course of the project[21]. **Figure 9** outlines the difference in local library usage in percentages and shows that 14.8% of children went to the library every day or a few times a week before Chatterbooks, compared with 16% afterwards. Furthermore, 30.9% of children said in the pre-survey that they never go to the library, a percentage that dropped down to 19.3% at post-survey.

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[20] Chi^2 (2, N = 2,398) = 137.336, p = .000, Cramer's V = .239
[21] Mann Whitney U (2398) = 620407, z = -5.326, p = .000, r = .109

Figure 9: Local library usage at pre and post-survey

	Pre-survey	Post-survey
Every day or a few times a week	14.8%	16.0%
Once a week	10.5%	14.4%
Once or a few times a month	19.9%	24.6%
Rarely	23.9%	25.8%
Never	31%	19%
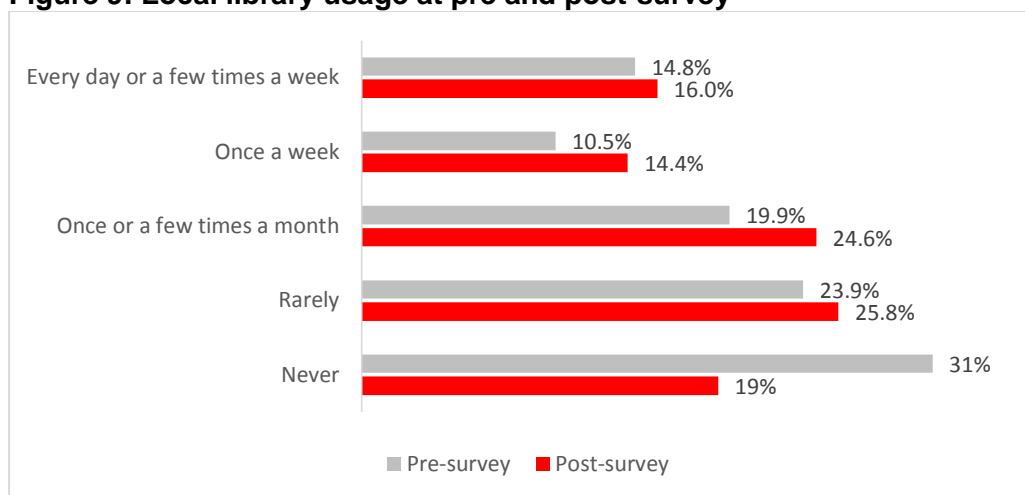
The trend is similar with respect to using a school library (see **Figure 10**) and the differences are also statistically significant[22]. Overall, the percentage of children who never go to the school library halved over the course of the project, from 12.1% at the beginning of Chatterbooks activities to 6% at the end of the project.

Figure 10: School library usage at pre and post-survey

	Pre-survey	Post-survey
Every day or a few times a week	24.8%	27.4%
Once a week	27.1%	33.2%
Once or a few times a month	14.5%	13.4%
Rarely	15.9%	16.1%
Never	12.1%	6.0%
No school library	5.6%	4.0%
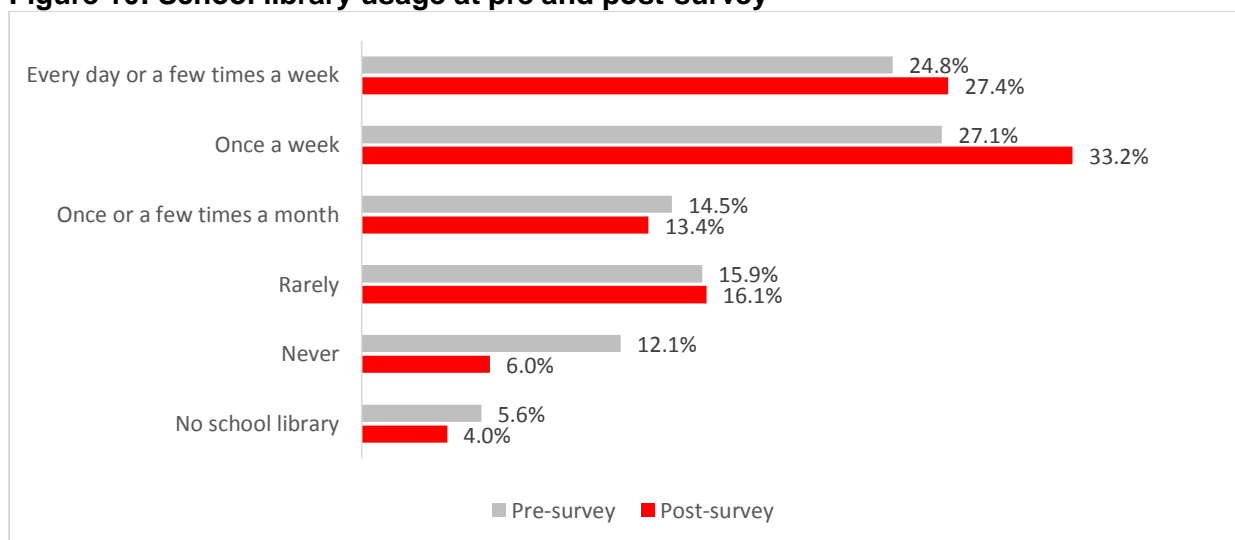
Reading preferences

One of the aims of Chatterbooks is to encourage children to discover what they like to read and to allow them to choose what they read. The rationale behind this is that if children can read books they enjoy, they are more likely to be intrinsically motivated to read and therefore to read more.

The survey asked Chatterbooks pupils what genre of books they liked to read. **Figure 11** shows how preferences have shifted over time. Funny books are a great favourite at both pre and post-survey (51% and 54% respectively) and adventure is also a popular genre (43% at pre-survey and 48% at post-survey). Several of the shifts in reading preferences are statistically significant[23]; namely: adventure, mystery, war or spy stories, fantasy worlds, and family and

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[22] Mann Whitney U (2400) = 643572, z = -4.108, p = .000, r = .083

[23] Adventure : Chi^2 (1, N = 2,571) = 7.249, p = .007, Phi = .053 ; Mystery : Chi^2 (1, N = 2,571) = 7.480, p = .006, Phi = .054 ; War and spy stories : Chi^2 (1, N = 2,571) = 10.946, p = .001, Phi = .065 ; Fantasy worlds : Chi^2 (1, N = 2,571) = 15.016, p = .000, Phi = .076 ; and stories about family and friends : Chi^2 (1, N= 2,571) = 10.859, p =.001, Phi = .065

friends. This could have reflected some of the themes that the schools used in their sessions, as popular themes included funny books, spies and thrillers, and fantasy creatures.

Figure 11: Reading preferences at pre and post-survey
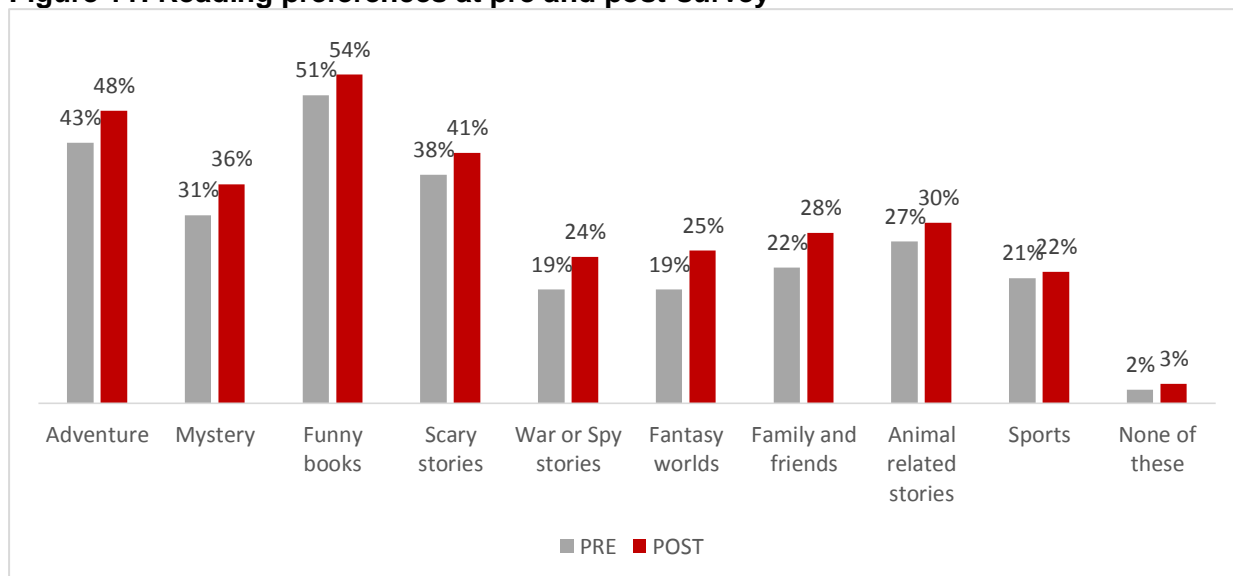
Social interactions around reading and other outcomes

Children were also asked in both surveys about their social interactions around reading. However, our analyses showed that there was no significant difference over time in how often they talk about what they are reading with their family[24] or friends[25].

Similarly, there was no statistically significant difference over time in children's confidence in talking in front of other people about what they like to read[26]. For example, 50.6% of children said at the beginning of Chatterbooks activities that they don't find it at all scary to talk about what they like to read in front of others compared with 52.0% at the end of the project.

It is interesting to note, however, that when asked: "Now that you have taken part in the Chatterbooks reading club, do you think that you like talking about what you read more?", 53.4% of children said yes, a lot, and 28.3% said yes, a bit.

Differences by sub-groups

The evaluation explored whether there were any significant differences in key outcomes for children in different groups. We notably compared children by gender, year group and FSM uptake in order to assess whether Chatterbooks was more or less effective for certain groups of pupils.

There were differences between groups before the project began and afterwards. For example, as can be expected based on other research conducted on children's reading, girls enjoy reading more than boys and children who receive FSMs do not read as much or as often as those who do not receive FSMs. However, no statistically significant differences *over time* were found in reading enjoyment, frequency or attitudes between the groups, or for social behaviours around reading, book choosing skills, library usage or book preferences.

This suggests that as an intervention, Chatterbooks is equally effective for all children taking part. It does not narrow the gap in attitudes between boys and girls, or between FSM pupils and others, but it improves attitudes and enjoyment for all participants equally.

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[24] p= .644
[25] p =.358
[26] p = .418

Group leaders' observations on children impact

We received feedback from 101 Chatterbooks group leaders about their impressions of the project's impact. **Figure 12** shows that 9 in 10 club leaders believe that as a result of the project, children enjoy reading more and have become more enthusiastic about reading. Most also believe that as a result of the project, children read more often and more read on their own initiative. But the project did not only lead to improved reading outcomes: 8 in 10 club leaders believe that children are more confident speaking in public as a result of taking part in Chatterbooks activities.

Figure 12: Reading preferences at pre and post-survey
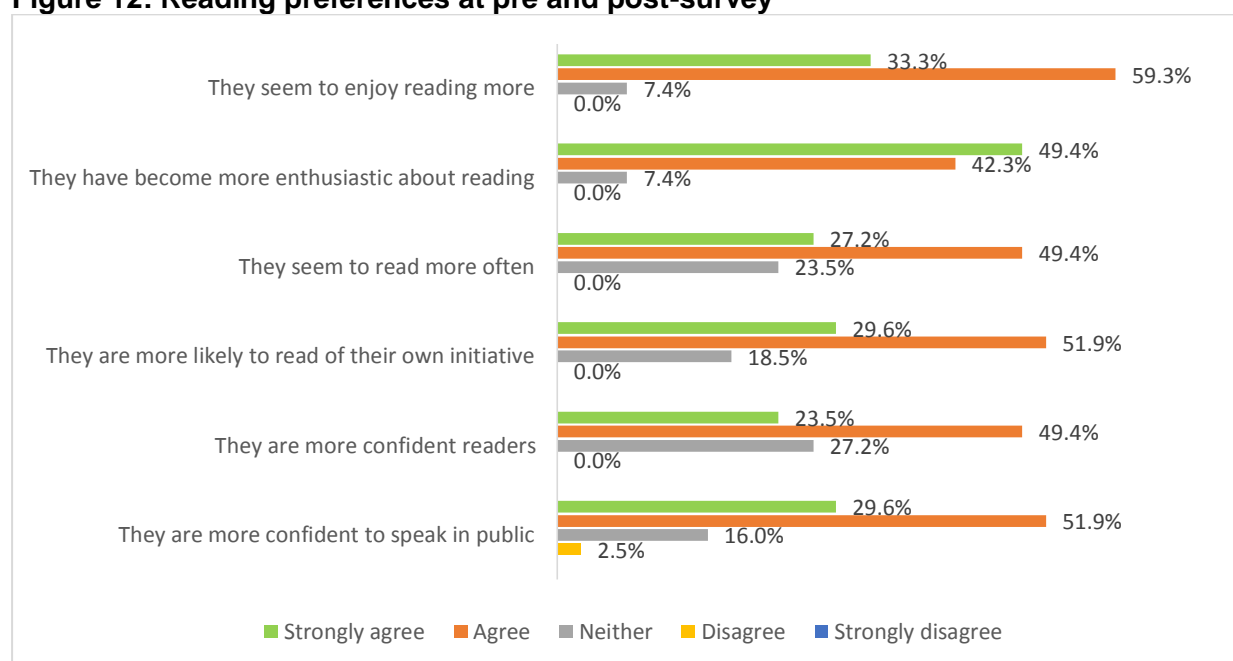
A few quotes from group leaders obtained from the survey illustrate the positive outcomes for children's reading behaviours that the adults working with them were able to observe:

"Parents of the children taking part have mentioned how their children are going home and reading by choice now."

"A boy in my class went from hating reading and always finding a book boring to one of my most consistent and enthusiastic readers."

"A girl was disinterested and lacking confidence at the start, but by the end she was much more confident and prepared to read aloud to the group."

Group leaders also believe that Chatterbooks resulted in children talking more about what they read and recommending books to each other (see **Figure 13**). 8 in 10 club leaders also believe that children are now better at choosing books to suit their interests and over 9 in 10 believe that children discovered books they like as a result of taking part in Chatterbooks activities.

Figure 13: Group leader feedback about children's book-related interactions

They talk about what they read more
- Strongly agree: 37.0%
- Agree: 51.9%
- Neither agree nor disagree: 9.9%
- Disagree: 1.2%
- Strongly disagree: 0.0%

They recommend books to each other
- Strongly agree: 33.3%
- Agree: 53.1%
- Neither agree nor disagree: 13.6%
- Disagree: 0.0%
- Strongly disagree: 0.0%

They are better at choosing books to suit their interests
- Strongly agree: 23.5%
- Agree: 59.3%
- Neither agree nor disagree: 17.3%
- Disagree: 0.0%
- Strongly disagree: 0.0%

They have discovered new books they like
- Strongly agree: 46.9%
- Agree: 48.1%
- Neither agree nor disagree: 4.9%
- Disagree: 0.0%
- Strongly disagree: 0.0%

Legend: ■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree

"Lucas - he has dyslexia and is a reluctant reader. He is now extremely enthusiastic about books and his mum sent me a lovely message thanking us for running Chatterbooks!"

"My most reluctant reader of all has discovered Oliver Fibbs! Finally he has found some reading material he is drawn to and motivated to read."

"Isabel [is] a very reluctant reader and extremely lacking in confidence. After Chatterbooks she sent us a letter thanking us for giving her the confidence to talk about her reading in front of others."

Indeed, most group leaders not only identified the impact of Chatterbooks on children's reading enjoyment, behaviour and skills but they also saw a link between the project and children's literacy skills. **Figure 14** shows that over 3 in 4 believe that Chatterbooks has resulted in either significant improvement (17.3%) or some improvement (60.5%) in children's reading skills. Similarly, most group leaders also identified either significant or some improvement in children's speaking and listening skills. However, they were more ambivalent about any impact on writing skills. It should be noted that this is based on the group leaders' professional perception of children via their interactions in the reading group or in class, but not on formal attainment tests.

Figure 14: Group leader feedback about children's skills progress

Reading skills
- Significant improvement: 17.3%
- Some improvement: 60.5%
- No change: 2.5%
- Don't know: 19.8%

Writing skills
- Significant improvement: 5.0%
- Some improvement: 40.0%
- No change: 21.3%
- Don't know: 33.8%

Speaking skills
- Significant improvement: 29.6%
- Some improvement: 61.7%
- Don't know: 8.6%

Listening skills
- Significant improvement: 21.0%
- Some improvement: 63.0%
- No change: 6.2%
- Don't know: 9.9%

Legend: ■ Significant improvement ■ Some improvement ■ No change ■ Don't know

Once again, the quotes from group leaders corroborate the findings from the survey:

"Whilst their reading and writing skills hadn't improved much their attitudes towards reading and lesson time had changed a lot. Previously near-silent pupils are now far more likely to put up their hand in class. Kids that wouldn't read before now make time to do so before they go to sleep. Kids that would never remember to bring their books in are now making the effort. Reluctant readers started mirroring the way I'd share books with them and would be falling over themselves to tell the others about the book they'd read. I'd be interested to see what their reading and writing is like after a longer period of Chatterbooks events."

"A very disengaged boy attended Chatterbooks. He has discovered that he likes to read series of books. It has been lovely to watch him become a confident reader and enjoy reading. He couldn't wait for the next box of books to come out and loved talking about the funny stories to the group. From January to March he made five months' progress. Fantastic!"

One group leader, however, made the point that improving reading skills was not and should not be the purpose of Chatterbooks as a reading for pleasure initiative:

"I think if the focus of the group is on reading enjoyment, there should not be a link to attempting to raise attainment or develop particular skills. Then it stops being about enjoyment for the pupils and is just another intervention group. So trying to '"sell: Chatterbooks into schools in this way is a shame, and I feel that schools get a mixed message about the purpose of Chatterbooks. Certainly I have had discussions with my SLT where they have been to a conference and are comparing Chatterbooks to intervention programmes like Accelerated Reader and have been shown data that appears to show children in Chatterbooks groups do not improve as fast as the rest of the class. I feel then that I'm trying to justify running Chatterbooks as a way to raise attainment, when I want to run the group to foster a love of reading and a lifelong reading habit."

Some of the quotes from group leaders also highlight that the benefits of Chatterbooks go beyond reading attitudes, skills or confidence, and that the club has had positive outcomes for children's social lives as well as their overall school life:

"Can I just say that I thoroughly enjoyed running the club and would love to continue. The highlight for me – and when I knew that the children were all benefiting so much from it – was when one of the children, with health needs, and who barely spoke at all at the start of the club, felt comfortable enough to volunteer to read aloud to the rest of the group. To their credit the rest of the group realised that this was a really big moment for this particular little boy as he finds reading very tricky and they sat there as good as gold and listened to him and did not comment when he struggled with some of the words and needed some adult help and when he finished they all clapped him and I could have cried! The beaming grin on his face and their kind behaviour towards him was amazing and made the whole Chatterbooks experience so worthwhile. This is why we would like to keep going with it."

"One of our pupils has emotional and confidence issues; a lack of resilience, he gives up easily if a task is perceived to be too hard. In Chatterbooks sessions he shone. He particularly enjoyed Info Challenge and led activities around infographics. He planned his 20-second advert recommending a book carefully and filmed his advert sticking to his plan. His confidence grew as it became evident to other pupils that he had hidden depths of knowledge. This was an added bonus to find that the benefits were broader than simply enthusing children to enjoy books."

"We had a lad of 10 participating who had never willingly read a book in his life and said reading was 'boring and stupid'. The Head came to see me last week, to tell me that the boy had just won a Headteacher's Award for reading (voluntarily) four books

in five days. He said, and I quote: 'This group has been the making of him. He's like a different child. He's concentrating better in class and choosing to read whenever he can. You have changed that boy's life.' The boy's feedback has been great too: he told me he loves the group, and his excitement at seeing the author (and being chosen to 'help' the author with an experiment during the talk) was amazing. He's even got three of his friends attending the group too."

Impact on education professionals

Group leaders were asked whether they had noticed any impact from Chatterbooks on themselves as education professionals. **Figure 15** below highlights the level of agreement from group leaders with positive statements about change brought about by the project. Almost 3 in 4 group leaders find they have developed new skills and ideas for drama and creative activities to do with their pupils. A similar proportion find that their relationship with their local SLS has improved, and 7 in 10 group leaders find they are now better at managing groups and discussions among pupils.

Figure 15: Self-perceived outcomes for group leaders
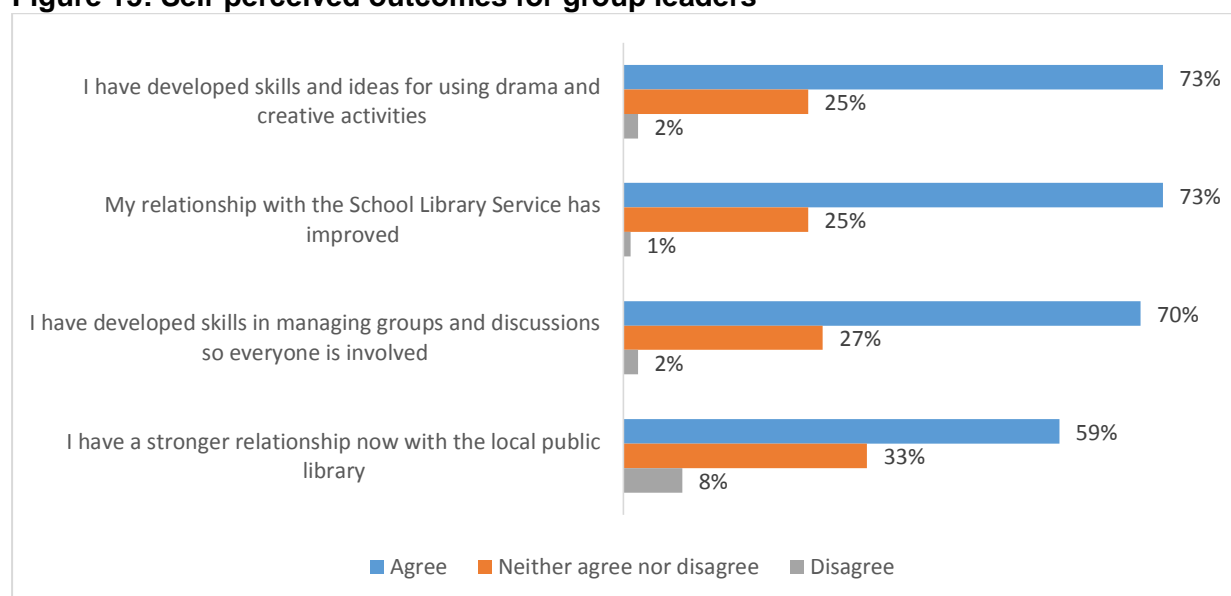
Feedback about Chatterbooks

Feedback from children

In the post-survey, the children were asked directly to feed back about their Chatterbooks experience, notably what they did and what they particularly enjoyed, both displayed in **Figure 16** below. 21% of children remember acting out stories during the group, 17% wrote stories or poems and 21% listened to stories. 47% met an author and 52% visited the library. Drawing, painting and making things was a favourite for 29% of children, followed shortly by meeting an author, which was the favourite aspect of Chatterbooks for 28% of pupils.

Figure 16: Chatterbooks activities children engaged in and their favourite activities
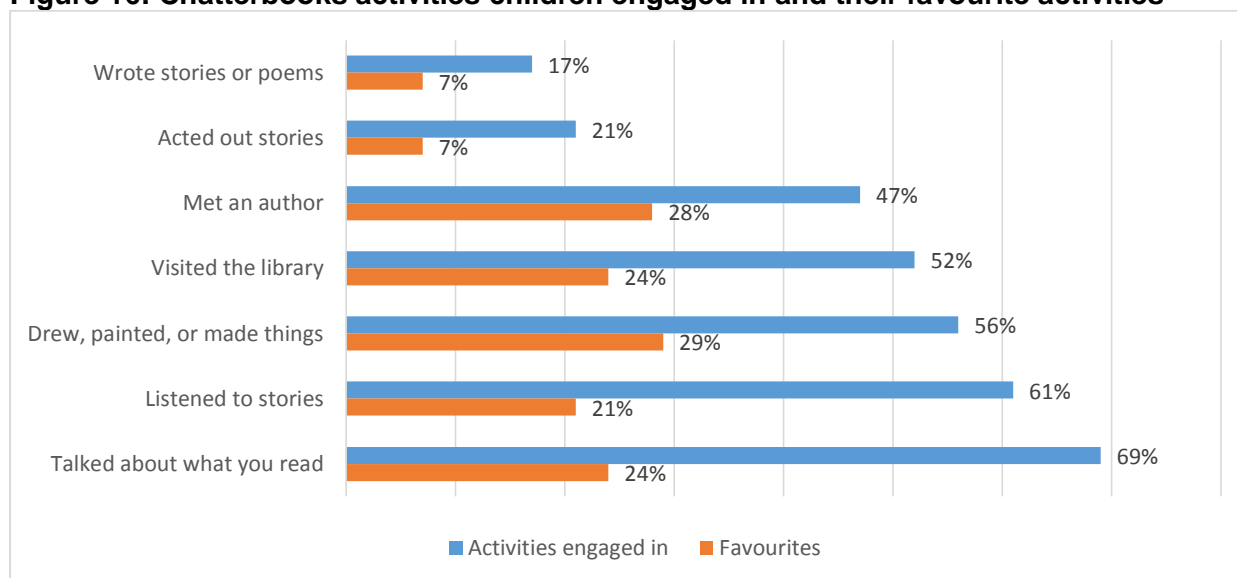
Overall feedback about Chatterbooks from participating children is overwhelmingly positive. 81.1% of post-survey respondents said they very much enjoyed Chatterbooks and 91.8% said they enjoyed the books they read in the club either very much or quite a lot.

Feedback from group leaders and SLS personnel

Much like the feedback from children, the feedback from group leaders is extremely positive about Chatterbooks in general. 93.9% of respondents in the group leader survey say that their experience of Chatterbooks this academic year has motivated them to organise more reading groups in the future, although 62.7% of them had never run a book club before.

> "*I am hoping that next September I will be able to run an after school book club with parents and children. Hopefully I can use skills I have gained from my Chatterbooks experience.*"

> "*I have run various book clubs/ groups but Chatterbooks is definitely the most popular, initially down to the merchandise but thereafter due to the activities and themes.*"

> "*I will be running another group this half term as the last group showed a significantly higher interest in books and reading, as well as developing more confidence. I also hope to continue running groups next year.*"

> "*It has motivated me to looking at regular visits to the local library with my Nurture group. I am also looking at setting up another reading group to help support children socially and emotionally and looking at the possibility of taking other years groups down to the local library on a regular basis.*"

Group leaders are nonetheless aware of the demands on their time and the necessary resources they may need to run a successful book club again, making a case for continued support from The Reading Agency.

"We would dearly love for Chatterbooks to continue as we all enjoyed it so much! If it can't we are going to style our own reading club but are a little concerned re sourcing so many books on the same subject at a time. To be as effective as Chatterbooks we would need at least 20 books on each topic we cover to enable the children to have a good choice and that might be the pitfall."

"If I have the time. In principle yes, but finding an hour a week is difficult for any class teacher. Although the benefits are clear to see the demands on time are also increasing year on year."

"I would love to have at least one Chatterbooks reading group running in school at all times. However, it is dependent on release time being available, and finance being available to cover for me. As well, other teachers need to see the value of a group so that they feel happier about children being released from lessons."

"I absolutely loved the resources, the support, the themes and the books. It took very little extra time and energy to run it well. Otherwise I wouldn't have had the headspace or time in the manic school day to get it going. I would love to do it again."

One group leader also pointed out the difficulty of reaching out to the most reluctant readers:

"I really enjoyed spending quality time with the children without the pressure of lessons. However, I feel it needed more incentives to encourage the harder to reach groups to come. Most of the children who came already enjoyed reading so I'd like some help to engage the children who are not keen readers. Also some thinner easier books would have been nice for the less able Year 3 readers."

It should be noted here that 27% of respondents said they selected Chatterbooks pupils by targeting the most reluctant readers, while 23% opened up the group to anyone who wanted to take part. Another 20% focused on children on free school meals or eligible for the Pupil Premium allowance.

SLS staff tend to reflect the same opinion that Chatterbooks has been a positive experience overall, but feel that the availability and engagement of school staff was key to its success and could sometimes be difficult to obtain.

"I think that the overall experience has been very positive for the schools and children taking part, the feedback has been very good. However, the success very much depends on keen staff in schools with the time (and energy) to make it a success."

"I would strongly recommend schools to assign 2 members of staff to run the groups. Our observations showed that the sessions ran more smoothly and enabled far more staff support for individual pupils. Also senior teaching staff need to be aware of what is happening in Chatterbooks (drop in!) and the potential benefits for pupils - in some of our very challenging schools, the librarians felt that none of the SMT was interested despite the excitement of the pupils."

"Not all of our schools paid staff to run the groups after school so it did rely on the enthusiasm of the staff involved, but I'm not sure what could be done to help with that. A longer lead-in time or not such a structured timescale would be better for most schools."

The group leader and SLS surveys asked respondents to focus on specific aspects of the project to provide feedback. This allowed group leaders to enthuse about the author visit: 80% of group leaders who organised one said it was "very valuable" for the pupils, and the remaining 20% found it "somewhat valuable".

"All the children loved meeting the author. Some said it was the best part of Chatterbooks. Also, some children said the author didn't look like an author so it changed their idea of what they thought an author would be like. It really got them involved."

"Debi Evans was amazing! She had the children hooked from the moment she began to talk, adults too! She read extracts from her books, had a presentation and objects for the children to see and it truly was great. Would definitely recommend her to all."

"The author event was amazing. We had John Dougherty. He did a superb KS2 assembly. A very funny session. He also took a Q&A session for a group of 30 children which included our PP children as well as winners of a competition I ran which we launched on WBD. As a result of this he has agreed to become our Patron of Reading. We got an Arts Award and are using it to self-publish a book. John Dougherty is going to write the first chapter. The children will write the rest and we will publish and sell the book. All amazing. [Our SLS contact] was a great support during this and we were delighted to host the event. We held a book signing which was very well attended and the buzz has been fantastic. The pupils from the Chatterbooks groups played a central role in all of this and not a single one of them is any longer a reluctant reader."

Some suggestions for improvement were also provided, notably a request for more diverse authors.

"We had Ifeomaa Onyefulu come to talk to the children about her non-fiction books about Africa and her experiences of being a writer. This reflected what our schools asked for which was to have a non-white author that better reflected the backgrounds of the children taking part in the Chatterbooks groups and to inspire them by giving them a role model they could relate to. The list from The Reading Agency was great from the point of view of fun and well-known children's authors but there was little cultural diversity and the couple of non-white authors that were listed wrote for older children, and as our groups ranged from Year 3 to Year 6 we didn't think they would be suitable, hence why we arranged our own event. This did cost us more than the amount offered by The Reading Agency but we thought it was worth it to provide our children with the right event. We subsidised the extra cost from some of the money paid by The Reading Agency to SLS for supporting the project."

13 out of 15 SLS staff members who responded to this question in the survey said they had organised author events for their participating schools. 10 of them rated the experience as "quite easy" while one found it "very easy" and two found it "very difficult".

"We already had Ali Sparkes visiting the county for our book award so we asked her to do a session for Chatterbooks. The problem was geographical in that our schools were widespread (at least 50 miles between Portslade and Rye). This limited the schools who could attend but we offered the opportunity to bring children to some of our book award author visits as an alternative."

"Authors are very expensive and our schools were very widespread making it difficult to get schools in one venue."

"We liaised with Guy Bass' publisher and it was all pretty straightforward. Guy visited two libraries on the one day and 97 children from eight Chatterbooks schools attended."

"We contacted our author through the publisher contact provided by The Reading Agency. The money provided was not enough but we used some of original grant."

Group leaders were asked to rate the usefulness of the various Chatterbooks features; their responses are illustrated in **Figure 17** below. 80% found the proposed Chatterbooks themes for books very useful, and 71% found the welcome pack very useful for the pupils. The scrapbook, posters and stickers were the resources which group leaders found less useful, along with the online resources which some group leaders had difficulties accessing. Some suggestions were made to improve the resources; these can be found in the appendix.

Figure 17: Group leaders' usefulness rating for Chatterbooks features

Bar chart showing usefulness ratings (Very useful, Somewhat useful, Not very useful, Not at all useful):

- The proposed Chatterbooks themes: Very useful 80%, Somewhat useful 20%, Not very useful 0%, Not at all useful 0%
- The pupils' welcome pack: Very useful 71%, Somewhat useful 25%, Not very useful 4%, Not at all useful 1%
- The Chatterbooks handbook: Very useful 65%, Somewhat useful 33%, Not very useful 1%, Not at all useful 1%
- The Chatterbooks resources available online: Very useful 55%, Somewhat useful 40%, Not very useful 2%, Not at all useful 2%
- The scrapbook, posters, and stickers: Very useful 49%, Somewhat useful 41%, Not very useful 7%, Not at all useful 2%

Interestingly, the SLS respondents would rank the usefulness of these features in a slightly different order: the children's welcome pack doesn't appear quite as useful to them as it does to group leaders. Note that **Figure 18** displays responses in real numbers rather than percentages as results are based on 15 responses.

Figure 18: SLS usefulness ratings for Chatterbooks features

Bar chart showing usefulness ratings (Very useful, Somewhat useful, Not very useful, Not at all useful):

- The proposed Chatterbooks themes: Very useful 14, Somewhat useful 1
- The Chatterbooks handbook: Very useful 14, Somewhat useful 1
- The Chatterbooks resources available online: Very useful 10, Somewhat useful 4
- The scrapbook, posters, and stickers: Very useful 10, Somewhat useful 5
- The pupils' welcome pack: Very useful 9, Somewhat useful 6

The survey also asked group leaders what time of day they ran Chatterbooks, and what were the pros and cons of their chosen time. 53% of group leaders ran the club after school. The main issue with this timing was that parents were in a rush to pick up their children after school and not always willing to wait, that the club may conflict with other extra-curricular activities and that the children were tired after a day of lessons. But on the other hand, group leaders appreciated the fact that they could run the club for a full hour because they were not rushed by other lessons and could enjoy a quiet and empty library. Some also mentioned that the children were more relaxed as they felt Chatterbooks was clearly separate from lesson time.

Another 25% ran Chatterbooks during lunchtime, which presented the issue of being slightly rushed in the middle of a busy school day; another 20% ran Chatterbooks during lessons, the

obvious issue here being that the children missed out on lessons. In both cases however, the group leaders found that fitting Chatterbooks into the regular school hours made things easier for themselves and the pupils, as well as making their planning easier.

In truth, it appears that the decision to run Chatterbooks at one time or another was mostly dictated by practicality and any time of day has its pros and cons. Some group leaders who ran the club at lunchtime plan to run it after school in the future and vice versa.

The Reading Agency made funding available to the SLS in order to support the delivery of Chatterbooks. The survey asked SLS respondents what they used the funding for and what they thought of the amount. **Table 6** below reflects how the funding was used. Book stock was the number one expenditure for the majority of SLS (14 out of 19 respondents), followed by author visit fees (11 out of 19 respondents).

Table 6: How did you use the funding you received from The Reading Agency?

Book stock	14	73.7%
Author event fees	11	57.9%
Delivery costs	5	26.3%
Staff time and expenses	5	26.3%
Training costs	5	26.3%
Transportation for children	3	15.8%
Resources to support groups, e.g. incentives	3	15.8%
Funding to support public library service in theY3 sign up	2	10.5%

About half the respondents (8 out of 15 who responded to this question) said that the amount of funding available was about right, but a very close 7 out of 15 said it was not enough.

> "[Our] SLS spent more than the funding provided, mainly on book stock to ensure we could offer the Chatterbooks themes to all participating schools. However, this is stock we can continue to use for Chatterbooks and in our mobile van stock"

> "Without the funding we would not have been able to support the reading groups to the extent we did; the funding allowed us to make the programme extra special to the pupils."

> "The author event amount wasn't enough as the author fee was greater and we had transportation costs. We provided staff time for training for free."

> "Nothing's ever enough - it was very welcome but more money would have meant we could do more! :)"

When asked how they would rate Chatterbooks overall compared with other initiatives in school to support reading enjoyment, 93.8% of group leaders rate the project as excellent or good.

A few final quotes to conclude the feedback from group leaders:

> "Chatterbooks has provided the ""Kick Start"" we needed to relaunch our tired looking Library Area and has been a catalyst for a change in approaches in attitudes towards reading. We now have 20 Junior Librarians trained up who are doing a fabulous job of promoting reading throughout the school."

> "Thank you very much for all your hard work in organising the Chattterbooks groups - the children and I thoroughly enjoyed being a part of it!"

> "It's a great initiative and I hope it continues. It definitely gives children the chance to learn to love books and reading."

> "It has been a positive experience for all the children involved and I have enjoyed having the opportunity to talk about books with the children, sharing what they like

and dislike as well as their enthusiasm for new books."

Likewise, from SLS:

"*All of the teachers were well impressed with the Chatterbooks scheme and the support via SLS. It is important to have a signed agreement with the school regarding the delivery of the programme. The majority of the teachers were very responsive to emails sent to them. Keeping in regular contact with the groups and visiting them is essential to maintain the flow and partnership. It would have been nice to have a meeting with all teachers taking part prior to the beginning of the sessions, however this is not always feasible. On the whole I think they went very well, with the majority of teachers saying they would be keeping the reading groups going.*"

"*I think it was an excellent thing to do and totally reinforces the idea that SLS support literacy, language and communication. Most of my schools would not have enough quality stock to support the programme and needed the SLS to provide resources.*"

"*I think that we are in an ideal position to support schools with our stock and links to the public library service. This would be very difficult for schools to do themselves. The book collections and deliveries went well.*"

"*The initial visits to the schools were very effective in providing an opportunity for SLS to explain the project, its aims and what it would involve, and to create a supportive link with the school. Taking the resources along to these meetings worked very well, with school staff impressed with the quality of the resources. Schools mainly responded well to this initial meeting, contacting SLS with queries and requests for books and giving feedback.*"

Conclusion

In conclusion, findings from this evaluation suggest that Chatterbooks positively impacts children's reading outcomes. Analyses of pre and post-survey responses show statistically significant differences in children's reading attitudes, motivation, engagement, confidence and behaviours over the course of Chatterbooks activities. This is corroborated by feedback from teachers and other practitioners who delivered the project and who witnessed positive changes taking place among children over the weeks of the activities.

Why does it matter that children enjoy reading more, read more often and think more positively about it? The National Literacy Trust routinely explores the link between reading skills and reading enjoyment, behaviours and attitudes. Using data collected in 2015 we wanted to know whether reading enjoyment, reading frequency, reading duration and reading attitudes predict reading scores[27]. Our analyses showed that all four successfully predicted reading scores[28] and significantly added to the prediction (p = .01). Overall, the four variables explained 33% of the total variance in reading scores. The positive weights illustrated in **Figure 19** indicate that pupils with higher reading enjoyment, higher reading frequency, longer reading duration and more positive reading attitudes are expected to have higher reading scores, after all other variables are controlled for[29].

Figure 19: Predicting reading scores
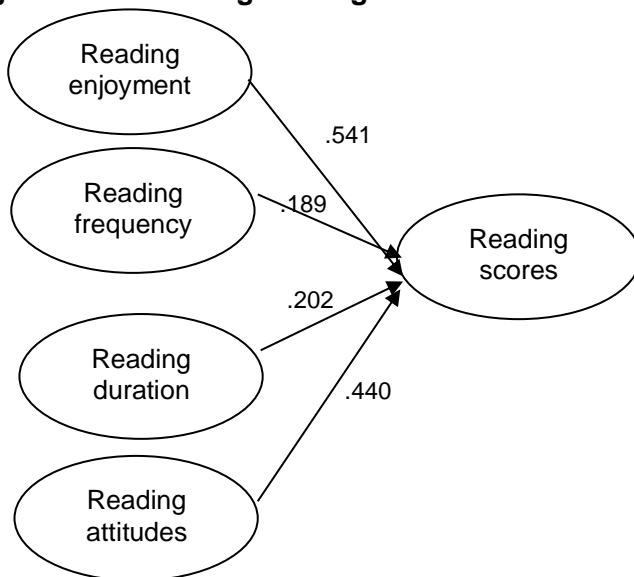
Although attainment was not measured as part of this evaluation, and although it is unlikely that changes in reading attainment may be measurable over the course of a 10-week reading enjoyment intervention, it is likely that the impact of Chatterbooks that we evidenced on children's attitudes and enjoyment will play a significant role in the personal and academic development of participating children. It would therefore be interesting to explore the longer-term impact of Chatterbooks in future research.

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[27] In 2015 we had age-standardised reading scores for 1,016 participating pupils. These standardised scores of educational tests, regardless of the test used, have a mean of 100 and standard deviation of 15. The mean reading score in our sample was 101.38 (SD = 14.244)
[28] Multiple regression: $F_{(4,1012)} = 165.711$, p = .000.
[29] For more information regarding the relative importance of reading enjoyment, behaviour and attitudes on attainment see our 2011 paper:
http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/assets/0001/0025/Attainment_attitudes_behaviour_enjoyment-Final.pdf

However, this is not to suggest that attainment is not the only important measure for children's life success or well-being. The non-cognitive skill progress we evidenced through this evaluation can be equally meaningful, if not more so, for the future development of children in and out of school. Evidence of how non-cognitive skills support academic outcomes is well-researched, but additionally more and more research demonstrates that non-cognitive skills such as self-concept of ability or self-efficacy are associated with financial stability in adulthood, improved well-being and better health behaviours[30]. There is also increasing evidence that reading for pleasure leads to positive outcomes in a wide range of domains, from self-esteem and empathy to communication skills and improved motivation to learn[31].

It would obviously be inappropriate to draw conclusions about the entire lifetime of Chatterbooks participants based on this evaluation. However, it is important to bear in mind that the positive outcomes for children evidenced in this research have wider implications, and that a successful reading intervention for young children can lead to broader lifelong impact.

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[30] Morrison Gutman L., Schoon I., *The impact of non-cognitive skills on outcomes for young people, Literature review*, IOE, EEF, and Cabinet Office, November 2013
[31] BOP Consulting for The Reading Agency, Literature Review: *The impact of reading for pleasure and empowerment,* June 2015

Appendix 1: Suggestions for improvement

Suggestions for improvement of resources by group leaders

A smaller (thinner) handbook

Difficult to select best reading material from such a wide range of books. Some recommended first chapters or sections to save you having to plough through all of the books (even though they were of very good quality) would have been useful.

Found the website really hard to negotiate. Thought the sheets included in the themed boxes of books very useful.

I liked that there were some activities. Word files would have been more useful so that documents could be altered/differentiated.

I loved the book selection that was sent to me, although it would have been more helpful if there had been a list of the books in each box, so that I could just tick off the ones that were borrowed and ensure that none went missing.

More books

More examples of activities would have been great. Perhaps schools could share some of the activities they did as we did some activities that worked well but were not in the handbook.

Session planning template sheet didn't get used, it didn't really suit the way my group needed to be organised.

Some of the books mentioned in the handbook which linked to activities or wider reading were not available as part of the class sets loaned to us by the library service (the book selection however was great).

Some of the resource packs had more content than others. One of the boxes of books did not have a resource pack; I could find it online however this took more time. There was a range of activities in them however possibly a Lower KS2 and upper KS2 would have been better as some of the activities were very difficult for Year 3.

The bag and other items were popular with the children – maybe a badge they could have worn on their uniform to promote being a Chatterbooks member.

The children loved getting a welcome pack, it made them feel special. The online packs were excellent but it would be nice if they were easier to search - there doesn't seem to be an online list of what's available.

The children loved the welcome pack. We found it quite difficult to find the resources online. It is not easy to navigate to them from the main site.

The resources online were based on specific books and information was given on these books. The books in the resource boxes did not match any of the books in these lists which made my preparation and familiarisation more time consuming. Also meant that some activities were not appropriate as they needed the right books sometimes. There is no way that a teacher will have time to familiarise books that don't have a given synopsis/info. This was the single most factor that had a negative impact.   Some of the suggestions were very good, did a few of my own that I thought would be fun/enjoyed.

The resources were useful but the children were not hugely keen on the bag and contents.

The scrapbook should have more pages.

The wrist bands were too large for children's wrists! Aside from that all was good!

We could not access the online resources so had to provide our own planning.

We found it very difficult to find relevant handbooks online to gather ideas and resources from

so we generated our own.

We thought they were good but the books contained within the themed boxes were so different in reading ability that the numbers of books from which the children could then choose were limited.

Word searches were hard for Yr 3s. Some of the activities took too long for the session time. I invented a lot of my own activities: e.g. writing acrostic poems, creating giant group-created monsters for Spinetinglers. The suggested activities varied in interest from subject to subject, some more thought out than others, but gave helpful ideas. I liked the simplicity of the lesson plan document.