

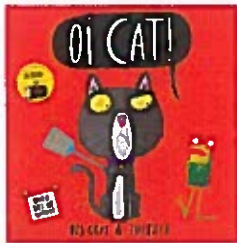
### Executive Summary for Teachers

The Reading Road Map (RRM) is a school resource designed by Islington Education Library Services to foster children's reading for pleasure for children from Year 1 to Year 8. The roads on the maps are colour coded to represent different reading genres (e.g. poetry, classics, adventure, sci-fi etc.) with points that highlight newly published book titles. Schools are provided with maps, a set of the books, stickers and certificates.

The Open University (OU) undertook an evaluation of the RRM 2018-19. This included two online surveys for practitioners and four Case Study Schools collecting views from teachers (interviews), parents (questionnaires) and most importantly children (facilitated questionnaires). This summary provides an overview of the key findings from the surveys and the Case Study Schools.



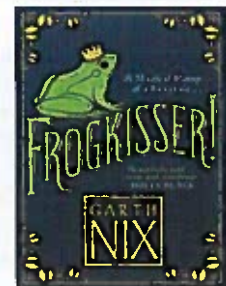
#### The case for Reading for Pleasure



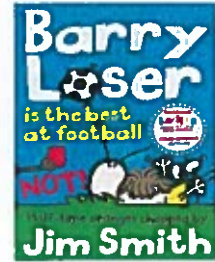
Reading for Pleasure (RfP) is now a mandatory part of the National Curriculum (DfE, 2014). There is strong international evidence that RfP is associated with improved general knowledge (e.g. Clark & Rumbold, 2006); a richer vocabulary (e.g. Sullivan & Brown, 2013) and increased attainment in literacy and numeracy (e.g. OECD, 2010; Sullivan & Brown, 2013). It has also been found to encourage imagination, empathy and mindfulness of others (e.g. Kidd & Costano, 2013). Yet, enhancing reading for pleasure is challenging in the current context with schools tending to prioritise decoding, comprehension and attainment at the relative expense of RfP (Cremin, Mottram, Powell, Collins and Safford 2014).

The OU evaluation indicates that the RRM has positive impact and value - it enhances children's enjoyment in reading, widens their range and introduces teachers to contemporary authors. Thus, we found that the RRM initiative addresses some of the difficulties in enhancing RfP in schools.

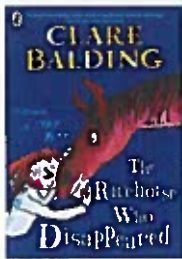
**Enhanced enjoyment in reading:** The carefully chosen and newly published quality texts, together with the organisation of those texts by genre, are factors that encouraged children's engagement and motivation. Children appreciated having the opportunity to choose the books that they wanted to read, and to read at their own pace. Most children (mainly the younger children and the motivated readers) enjoyed receiving stickers and certificates as a measure of their success in reading the books. The traffic lights were seen to provide useful information particularly for the reluctant readers in helping them to select books.



**Experience of a wider range of genres and authors:** The RRM extended the children's experience of genres, encouraging them to try new types of books and to get to know lesser known authors, widening their repertoires beyond 'celebrity' authors. Not only was the availability of new books motivating, but the books themselves were popular and engaging, and included genres that may not be readily available in school libraries, for example graphic novels.



**Independent reading and book talk:** The findings indicate that most classes offered the children opportunities to read their RRM book independently in class and at home. In addition, some teachers and children reported engaging in informal book talk when swapping books and recommending books to their peers. As the RRM is a shared resource this meant that everyone in class could voice their views and discuss these as 'books-in common'. Opportunities for children to choose their own books and engage in independent reading are factors that have been found to foster reading for pleasure (Cremin et al. 2014).



**The impact on teachers' knowledge:** The findings indicate that the RRM extended teachers' awareness of contemporary children's literature, though few teachers read more than half of the books. In order to develop children's reading for pleasure, teachers need considerable knowledge of children's literature and other texts and the RRM offers this potential (Cremin, Bearne, Mottram and Goodwin 2008). With extended reading repertoires, teachers are enabled to engage as fellow readers and role models and participate in significant book blether.

**The impact on teacher practice:** Teachers mostly used the RRM for independent reading at home/school. Few used it as a pedagogic resource, although some fostered recommendations and book reviews. Engagement with the RRM was also encouraged through the stickers and certificates, competitions, celebration assemblies and newsletters. The findings suggested that for younger children and keen readers the certificates were well received, however, for more reluctant or weaker readers, the stickers and certificates were not so motivating. Generally, parents were informed, but not involved in the RRM.



In sum, the Reading Road Map initiative represents a rich resource for schools committed to developing children's reading for pleasure. Placed within a rigorously planned RfP pedagogy, it offers schools significant support, introducing children to quality contemporary children's writers, widening their repertoires and motivating their engagement in reading.

#### References:

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