



Report for Booktrust

Evaluation of Booktime in
England
2012-2013

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Executive summary

Introduction

Booktime is the national free books programme for reception-aged children, providing a free book pack for every child aged four to five years in England and Wales to share and enjoy with their family and friends. Booktime aims to promote the pleasure of books by encouraging families to have fun reading together. The programme is run by Booktrust and Pearson. In 2012/2013, the two books for reception-aged children in England were *'Tim's Din'* and *'The Tale of a Naughty Little Rabbit'*.

Booktrust commissioned the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) to conduct an evaluation of the Booktime programme in England. The evaluation ran from November 2012 to April 2013.

Feedback on the programme was gathered from Reception Teachers, Headteachers, Assistant/Deputy Headteachers, Literacy Coordinators and Early Years Foundation Stage Leaders via an online survey and qualitative telephone interviews. A total of 1,656 respondents completed the survey, and in total 20 telephone interviews were conducted.

The evaluation was designed to build on the findings of previous Booktime evaluations to provide insight into stakeholders' perceptions of its use, impact, strengths and weaknesses.

The Booktime books

The most frequently used method for giving out Booktime book packs was for them to be given out after sharing one or both of the books in class (70 per cent). Inviting parents in for the sharing of books was rare (seven per cent). Visits to the local library or library staff coming in to the schools when books were given out were also very rare (three per cent and two per cent respectively).

The majority of respondents had used the Booktime books in class. For both titles, respondents most frequently reported using the titles by reading them aloud (72 per cent for *'The Tale of a Naughty Little Rabbit'*, and 56 per cent for *'Tim's Din'*).

'Tim's Din' was used in guided reading more frequently than *'The Tale of a Naughty Little Rabbit'* (26 per cent, compared to three per cent).

Feedback on the Booktime books from the survey and the interview responses was overwhelmingly positive. The vast majority of respondents either *'agreed'* or *'strongly agreed'* that the titles were appropriate, attractive and generated excitement amongst children.

There is some evidence of schools using Booktime to link to wider curriculum activities.

Additional Booktime resources

Use of the various online Booktime resources was not as high as overall use of the Booktime books themselves. However, of those respondents who had used the resources, the feedback on them was very positive. The majority *'agreed'* or *'strongly agreed'* that they were enjoyable, appropriate and easy to use.

The biggest reason for not using the Booktime website was lack of time (72 per cent). Lack of awareness of the Booktime website and resources also came through as a key theme in the qualitative feedback.

The qualitative data also highlighted the fact that many respondents miss the previous hard copy Booktime resources, such as the 'big book'. These hard copy Booktime resources are no longer provided.

Impact of the Booktime programme

Respondents reported a variety of impacts of the Booktime programme. Increased childrens' enjoyment of reading was the most frequently reported impact (66 per cent mentioned this), followed by increased frequency of shared reading at home (50 per cent).

When asked about the frequency of reading-related activities, the greatest influence of Booktime on teachers appears to have been on the frequency of delivering reading activities with parents and carers.

Additional cross-tabulation analysis¹ suggests that there were some associations between reported areas of impact, and other school characteristics and survey responses (See Chapter 4 for further details). For example, those respondents who reported increased frequency of shared reading in the home came from schools with a higher average proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals.

Also, respondents who indicated that they had given the Booktime books out after sharing as a class more commonly mentioned the following areas of impact:

- Increased enjoyment of reading
- Communication and language development
- Personal, social and emotional development
- Literacy skills
- Supporting children and families through transition to primary school

This suggests that schools that *'made the most'* of Booktime (by giving out the books after sharing as a class) were more likely to report areas of impact relating to children's social and skill development.

¹ Please note that throughout this report the cross-tabulations used in the analysis highlight associations between particular school characteristics or survey responses. This type of analysis does not identify how different variables interact with each other. In addition, these associations should not be taken as indicating a causal relationship.

Respondents who had already distributed the book packs were asked how successful they felt Booktime had been in their school. Success ratings of Booktime in schools were very high; the majority of respondents rated Booktime as *'highly successful'* or *'successful'* in their school (31 per cent and 53 per cent respectively). Just one per cent of the respondents who were asked this question rated the programme as unsuccessful. Overall, respondents liked Booktime and thought it worked well in their school.

Respondents who had given the books out after sharing them in class were more likely to rate Booktime as *'successful'* or *'highly successful'*.

Reading in schools

The majority of respondents reported having either a school library or a designated book corner or reading area in each classroom.

The most frequently reported strategies used to support reading for pleasure were providing choice of reading materials for children, and reading aloud to the whole class. Setting up book groups and partnership/events with the local library were less common responses.

The majority of respondents said that creating a whole-school reading culture was a priority within their school's aims and policies. The qualitative data strongly highlighted feelings regarding the importance of promoting a whole-school reading culture and supporting reading for pleasure. The majority of respondents rated their school's success in supporting reading for pleasure as *'successful'* or *'highly successful'*.

The most frequently cited challenge to supporting reading for pleasure was difficulty engaging parents and carers; followed by a lack of resources.

The most frequently cited barriers to dedicating time to books and reading for pleasure in the classroom were: a lack of time, and other curriculum requirements taking up more time.

When asked about use of digital resources, responses were broadly positive; the majority of respondents had used digital resources for literacy-related activities and had found them useful. Online video clips, interactive storybooks and DVDs were the most positively rated digital resources.

Engaging with parents and carers

The most frequently used strategy for raising awareness of Booktime amongst parents and carers was sending letters or leaflets home (56 per cent). Awareness raising strategies using online facilities such as Virtual Learning Environments (VLEs), blogs and news pages were the least common.

Of those respondents who did not use any strategies to raise awareness of Booktime with parents and carers, the most common reason was that respondents had not thought of doing this (59 per cent).

The majority of respondents considered communicating various messages to parents and carers about the importance of reading for pleasure as *'important'* or *'very important'*.

This highlights the potential for Booktime to provide further guidance to schools on engaging with parents and carers. Respondents recognise this as an important message to communicate, but this engagement is seen as the biggest challenge to supporting reading for pleasure.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Booktime is a well-liked and much respected programme, and schools that receive the Booktime book packs really value the resource. Perceptions of the books are extremely positive, and the books are well-used by schools.

Awareness of the online resources is not as widespread as awareness of the books themselves. However, the teachers that do use the online resources rate them very highly and find them very useful. Teachers miss the previous hard-copy resources provided by Booktime, such as the 'big books'. The qualitative feedback suggests that teachers valued this resource, and regret that it is no longer available.

In relation to reading for pleasure more widely, the research findings indicate that this is seen as a high priority for the majority of primary schools involved in the survey. Schools make use of a wide range of strategies to help promote reading for pleasure; the biggest challenge experienced with this is difficulty in engaging with parents and carers.

Based on the research findings and areas for improvement as suggested by respondents, the following recommendations are suggested as areas where Booktime could improve even further and encourage schools to make the most of the programme:

- **Raise awareness of Booktime:** Raise the profile of Booktime in schools, and raise awareness of the online resources, promote these resources further with a key Booktime contact in schools.
- **Review logistics:** Areas to review include: consider sharing further details on when books will be delivered, accuracy in numbers of books provided to schools, and advance notification of deliveries enabling schools to plan ahead.
- **Provide guidance on working with parents and carers:** The survey findings suggest that this is an area in which Booktime has made a difference for teachers and they would welcome further information and ideas on engaging parents and carers.
- **Review resources provided:** Respondents greatly valued the previous hard-copy resources provided by Booktime, particularly the 'big book', this was seen as especially useful in making the most of the Booktime programme, and teachers miss this resource.

1. Introduction

This report is based on an evaluation of the Booktime programme in England. Booktime is the national free books programme for reception-aged children, providing a free book pack for every child aged four to five years in England and Wales to share and enjoy with their family and friends. Booktime aims to promote the pleasure of books by encouraging families to have fun reading together. The programme is run by Booktrust and Pearson.

Booktrust commissioned the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) to conduct an evaluation of the Booktime programme in England. The evaluation ran from November 2012 to April 2013; this report outlines the various findings from the research.

Background information on the programme

Reading for pleasure is defined as:

‘Reading that we do of our own free will, anticipating the satisfaction that we will get from the act of reading. It also refers to reading that having begun at someone else’s request we continue because we are interested in it’ (DfE, 2012, p.5).

There is a growing body of evidence which shows that reading for pleasure instigates a wide range of benefits; for example, reading attainment and writing ability, breadth of vocabulary, positive reading attitudes, general knowledge, greater self-confidence as a reader, and, a better understanding of other cultures (DfE, 2012).

Despite this evidence, there is evidence to suggest that children in England now appear to read for pleasure less than ever before. Furthermore, they do so less than in many other countries across the world, and tend to view reading less positively than in the past (DfE, 2012).

One initiative aimed at encouraging reading for pleasure is Booktime. The Booktime programme, run by Booktrust and Pearson, provides a free book pack containing two books for every reception-aged child (four to five-year-olds) in England and Wales. Its purpose is to promote the pleasure of books, and involve parents and carers in reading aloud with their children. The programme aims to support, enable and encourage reading at an important transition stage in a child’s learning and development.

In 2012/2013, the two books given out in the Booktime packs in England were:

- *‘The Tale of a Naughty Little Rabbit’*
- *‘Tim’s Din’*

Aims and objectives of the research

The evaluation was designed to build on the findings of previous Booktime evaluations to provide insight into stakeholders’ perceptions of its use, impact, strengths and weaknesses.

The evaluation gathered data on the outcomes of the programme, and aimed to:

- Provide strong and robust evidence on the impact of Booktime on children, parents and carers.

The specific aims of the evaluation were to investigate:

- How Booktime is used in schools
- How teachers perceive Booktime's impact, strengths and weaknesses
- How the online Booktime resources have been received
- How Booktime can efficiently use digital resources to support literacy, reading for pleasure, and home-school links, and
- Current approaches to supporting reading for pleasure in schools and associated challenges

This evaluation also had a broader scope than previous Booktime evaluations, in that it also involved a wider investigation of contemporary approaches to supporting reading for pleasure in schools and the various challenges associated with this. It also examined how well the Booktime resources have been received in their new digital format.

Methodology

The research followed a mixed-methodological approach; combining a large-scale online survey of schools with 20 qualitative interviews with a variety of survey respondents.

Quantitative online survey

The online survey involved respondents in the following job roles:

- Headteachers
- Assistant/Deputy Headteachers
- Reception Teachers
- Literacy Coordinators
- Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Leaders/Managers

The online survey ran from 7th January 2013 to 15th February 2013. Letters and emails were sent to Headteachers to inform them about the research and invite them, or their colleagues, to complete the online survey. A link to the survey was contained in the letters and the emails. The letter aimed to encourage schools to engage with the research through explaining how participating in the survey will help Booktrust improve and develop the programme in the future.

Prior to contacting schools, letters were sent to each of the local authorities concerned to inform them of the aims and requirements of the evaluation, offering them the opportunity to suggest that a school should not be approached for any reason. This is in line with NFER's protocol for working with schools.

School-level identification numbers were issued so that survey responses could be linked to contextual information held on the NFER register of schools. Details on this contextual information are included in Appendix Five. All survey responses have been anonymised for the purposes of analysis, and the contextual data has only been included at aggregate level.

Reminder strategies were used to encourage survey responses; in total, three email reminders were sent out to schools that had not yet completed the survey, these were sent at strategic points during the project: 21st January, 4th February and 11th February. Around 500 schools received a telephone reminder in the week commencing 4th February. Also, additional reminder letters were sent to 5000 schools on 31st January.

A prize draw was used as an incentive to encourage respondents to complete the survey; all respondents had the option to be entered into a prize draw to win a big book and selection of picture books for their schools. Twenty winners were selected at random.

The survey took respondents around fifteen minutes to complete, and mostly consisted of closed multiple-choice questions, with four open-ended questions included. A copy of the survey is included in Appendix One.

Qualitative telephone interviews

The survey asked respondents whether they were happy to be contacted to take part in a thirty-minute telephone interview as part of the evaluation of the Booktime programme. If respondents selected 'Yes' to this question, they were then asked to indicate their preferred interview dates and times.

Of the respondents agreeing to be contacted for a telephone interview; twenty were selected to take part in a semi-structured telephone interview. This was based on:

- Ensuring an even-spread across job role; four respondents from each of the five job categories
- A quota was applied to ensure that at least six of the respondents had used the Booktime online resources, to ensure that the interviews would provide feedback on this.

The interview schedule was semi-structured, and was designed to create a good balance between covering key subject areas while giving the interviewees freedom to express their views on the subjects covered. The final interview schedule used can be found in Appendix Two.

A total of 20 telephone interviews were conducted between 7th February and 1st March 2013

Sampling

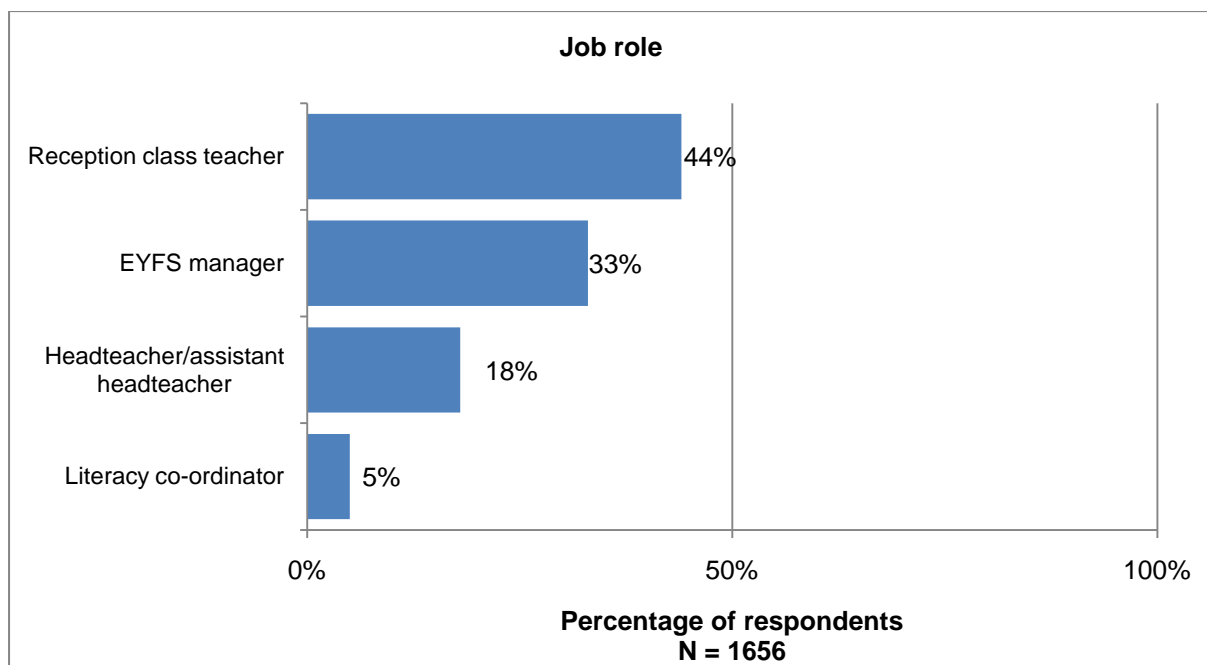
The sample was drawn from the NFER Register of Schools, and was based on all state sector primary schools in England, a total of 15,438 schools were drawn in the sample used for the survey (as at 19th December 2012). Details on the contextual and background characteristics of the schools responding to the survey can be found in Appendix Five.

The total achieved number of responses was 1,656; that is just over a ten per cent response rate from the overall sample drawn. In two cases, more than one respondent from the same school completed the survey, i.e. a Headteacher and a Reception Teacher. In these instances, all responses have been included in the analysis.

It is important to flag the caveat that those engaged with the programme may be more likely to participate in the research, the findings relate to these respondents only. The sample is not claimed as representative of the wider population.

Figure 1.1 shows a breakdown of the respondents by job type; this illustrates that the majority of respondents were Reception Teachers (44 per cent), followed by Early Years Foundation Stage Leaders/Managers (33 per cent), Headteachers (11 per cent), Assistant/Deputy Headteachers (eight per cent), and, Literacy Coordinators (five per cent).

Figure 1.1: Job role of survey respondents



Source: Q1 Booktime online survey, see Table Q1, Appendix Three
Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100.

Analysis

The survey data was analysed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), and a full set of frequency tables is included in Appendix Three. The majority of the analysis within this report features descriptive statistics, explaining the frequency of responses to each question.

Various cross-tabulations were also explored as part of the analysis. Four variables were used to produce cross-tabulations of survey data, these are:

- Proportion of Free School Meals (FSM) pupils
- Having a school library

- How the Booktime book packs were distributed
- Strategies used to raise awareness of Booktime with parents/carers

Only results of the cross-tabulations that were found to be statistically significant are included in the report, and findings are reported where relevant. Please note that throughout this report the cross-tabulations used in the analysis highlight associations between particular school characteristics or survey responses. This type of analysis does not identify how different variables interact with each other. In addition, these associations should not be taken as indicating a causal relationship. Full details of the cross-tabulation analysis are contained in Appendix Four.

Tests of statistical significance have not been carried out on the frequency data.

The various elements of qualitative data: interview feedback and open-ended survey questions have been analysed in relation to the key themes and research questions being explored. Quotes have been used in each chapter to '*bring the data to life*' and illustrate perceptions of Booktime, and give real-life examples of the ways in which Booktime books and resources are used.

Additional coding of the open-ended survey responses was not included as part of the evaluation.

Structure of this report

This report is structured around the following chapter headings:

- The Booktime books
- Additional Booktime resources
- Impact of the Booktime programme
- Reading in schools
- Engaging with parents/carers
- Conclusion and recommendations

Please note, the appendices are saved in a separate document and can be found here: <http://www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/BTEP01/BTEP01appendices.pdf>

Within each chapter, findings from the quantitative and qualitative research are woven together to provide the reader with a full picture of the research findings.

Graphs and tables have been included throughout the report to highlight findings that are of particular interest, a full set of data tables is included in Appendix Three.

Often quotes from the qualitative research have been included to illustrate feedback that reflects the views of several interview or survey respondents; where quotes only represent the views of one particular respondent, this has been noted.

Abbreviations of job titles are used in graphs throughout the report, these abbreviations are:

- Reception Teacher (RT)
- Headteacher/Assistant Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher (HT)
- Literacy Coordinator (LC)
- Early Years Foundation Stage Leader/Manager (EYFS)

Throughout the report, findings from Headteachers and Assistant/Deputy Headteachers are often combined.

2. The Booktime books

How packs were distributed

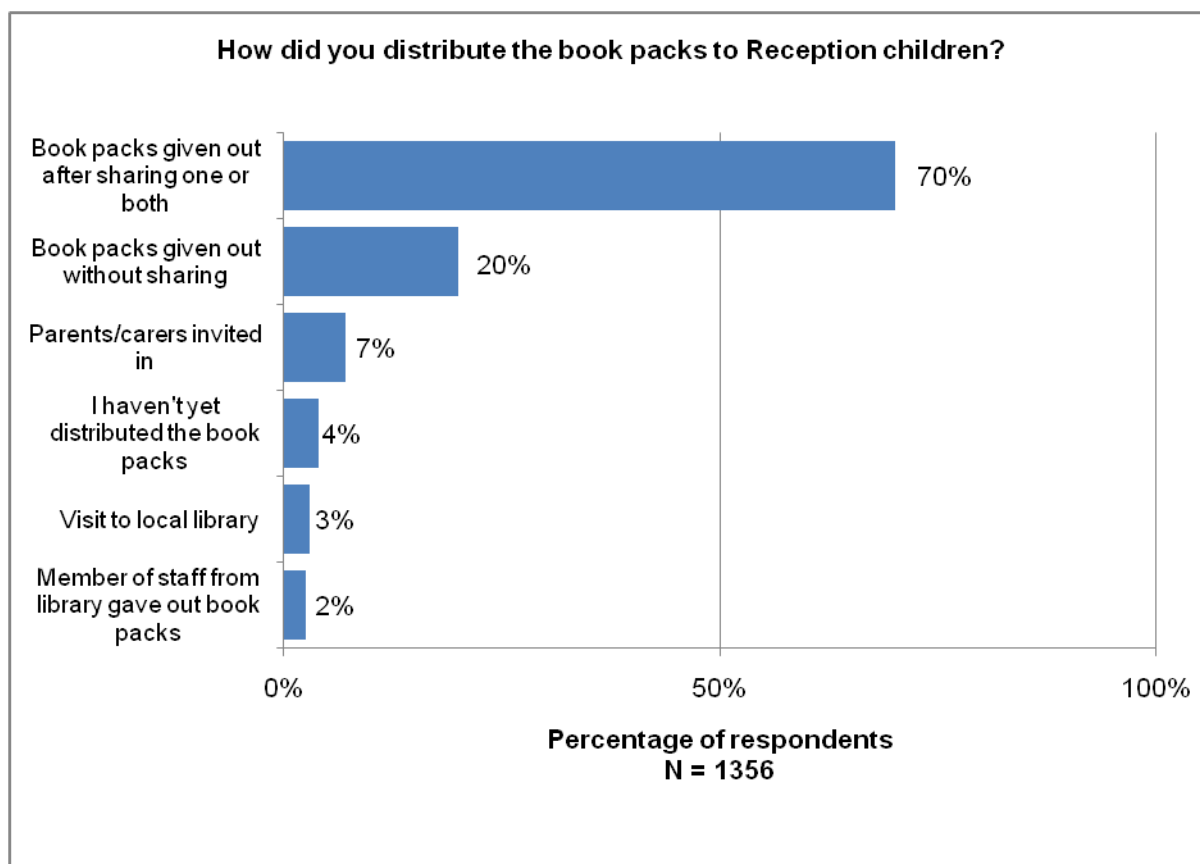
The survey asked respondents to indicate how they had gifted the Booktime book packs. This was asked of each job role except Headteachers or Assistant/Deputy Headteachers. Figure 2.1 shows the data in relation to this question.

The most frequently used method was for book packs to be given out after sharing one or both of the books; with the majority of respondents asked (70 per cent) giving this response. Inviting parents in for the sharing of books was quite rare; with just seven per cent of respondents asked giving this answer.

Visits to the local library, or library staff coming in when the books were given out were also very rare, with just three per cent and two per cent respectively selecting these response options.

A small minority (just four per cent) of the respondents asked, indicated that they had not yet distributed the Booktime book packs; these respondents were then routed through the survey accordingly, and were not asked certain questions about how the books were used.

Figure 2.1: How the book packs were distributed



Source: Q2 Booktime online survey, see Table Q2, Appendix Three
More than one answer could be given so percentages may sum to more than 100.

Chart does not include 'no response'

A filter question: all those who answered [(Q1=1 OR Q1= 2 OR Q1=5)].

A total of 1351 respondents answered at least one item in this question.

One interesting message that arose in the interview data was that *'sharing'* does not necessarily mean reading the book aloud; some interview respondents explained that *'sharing'* could mean simply showing the children the pack and the various contents, and explaining what they are supposed to do with them. The emphasis then was given to the child taking the book pack home, and sharing the book with their parent/carer. This highlights the fact that the idea of *'sharing'* is open to different interpretations.

The interviews helped to provide further depth and explanation as to how the books were given out and used in school. Respondents provided further qualitative feedback on how they gave out the book packs, for example, from inviting parents in for activity afternoons around the books, to showing the children the books in class without reading them out.

One Literacy Coordinator spoke about a parent session they held on school expectations in general, part of that was about sharing books:

- *'...not just the mechanics of reading but also talking to children about what they have read'* (Literacy Coordinator)

Another example of working with parents came from a Reception Teacher describing an event they ran for parents about reading with their children:

- *'Lovely informal set up, people could move freely between classrooms – mats, cushions, range of books, table showing reading support and teaching – so Booktime was in that context'* (Reception Teacher)

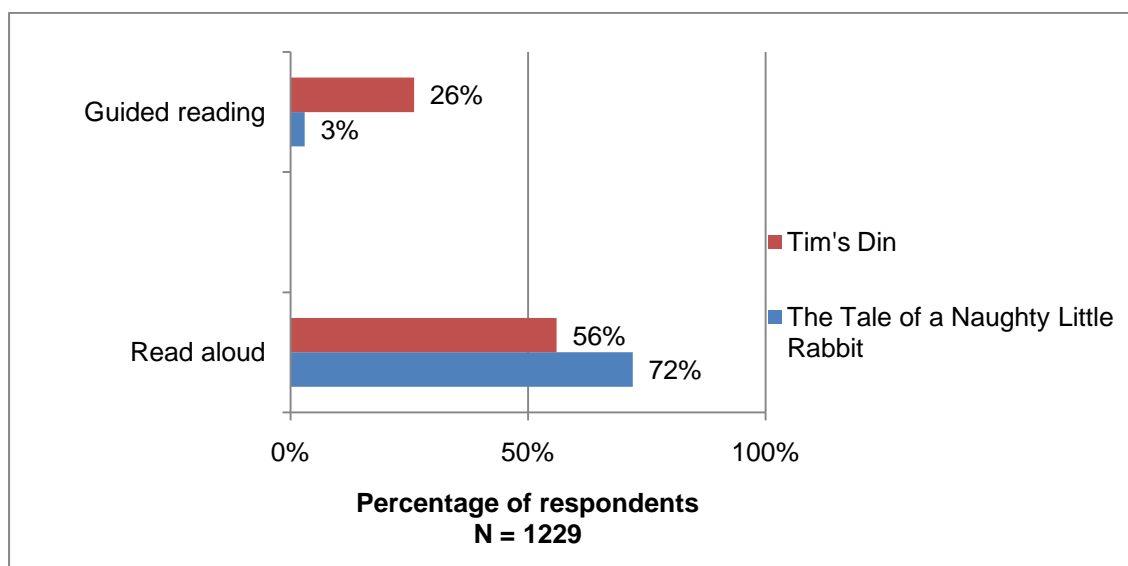
How the books were used in class

The survey feedback demonstrates that the majority of respondents asked had used the Booktime books in class. Reception Teachers and EYFS Leaders/Managers were asked, for each of the Booktime books, whether they had read the book aloud with the class or used the book in guided reading. The findings for these questions are shown in Figure 2.2.

For both titles, respondents most frequently reported using the titles by reading them aloud; 72 per cent for *'The Tale of a Naughty Little Rabbit'*, and 56 per cent for *'Tim's Din'*.

'The Tale of a Naughty Little Rabbit' was not widely used in guided reading, with just three per cent of respondents using the book in this way, compared to 26 per cent using *'Tim's Din'* for this purpose. This fits with the intentions of the two books.

Figure 2.2: How the Booktime books were used in class



Source: Q5 Booktime online survey, see Tables Q5A and Q5B, Appendix Three
Due to rounding percentages may not sum to 100.
A series of single response questions.
Chart does not include 'no response'

Q5A. A filter question: all those who answered $(((Q1=1OR Q1= 5) \& Q2_6=0))$.
A total of 1211 respondents gave at least one response to these questions.
Q5B. A filter question: all those who answered $(((Q1=1OR Q1= 5) \& Q2_6=0))$.
A total of 1214 respondents gave at least one response to these questions.

These findings from the survey are closely reflected in the interview data. For example, a key theme arising in the interview data was that *'Tim's Din'* was well-suited to the reception age group, and facilitated the use of phonics well. Interview respondents commented that *'The Tale of Naughty Little Rabbit'* book was better suited to shared reading with class, as it was not always accessible independently to pupils of this age. *'Tim's Din'* was seen as the more accessible of the two titles.

Examples of effective ways of using the books

The interview data provided a very useful source of qualitative information on examples of interesting and effective ways that teachers had used the Booktime books in class, or integrated the books into the wider curriculum and other activities. One EYFS Leader/Manager explained how they had planted vegetables at the school to link in with *'The Tale of a Naughty Little Rabbit'*.

Another Reception Teacher explained how they have a school rabbit, which they visited as a linked activity: *'after we went to see the rabbit, many of the children went to find the rabbit book themselves independently... [we] would have gone to see the rabbit anyway, but getting the book prompted me to think, we might as well link it in'*.

An important finding to flag is that some interview respondents mentioned that they did not read the books with/to the children at school because they wanted them to get a brief insight and then to read them at home with their families. This was seen as the main focus by some

interview respondents, rather than doing lots of reading and activities around the books in school.

Perceptions of the Booktime books

The feedback on the Booktime books from both the survey and the interview responses was overwhelmingly positive.

In the survey, Reception Teachers, EYFS Leaders/Managers and Literacy Coordinators were asked to respond to several statements about the two Booktime books, and were asked to indicate how much they agreed with the various statements on a five-point scale (from ‘*Strongly agree*’ to ‘*Strongly disagree*’). Both of the books scored very highly on every measure.

For example, Tables 2.1 and 2.2 show that the vast majority of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the following three statements in relation to both titles:

- Children showed excitement about receiving this book
- This book was appropriate for children
- The appearance of this book was attractive

Table 2.1 shows that over 90 per cent of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that ‘*The Tale of a Naughty Little Rabbit*’ was appropriate, attractive, and generated excitement amongst children. The vast majority of respondents also agreed with these statements in relation to ‘*Tim’s Din*’ (see Table 2.2).

Table 2.1: Perceptions of ‘The Tale of a Naughty Little Rabbit’

Please rate ‘*The Tale of a Naughty Little Rabbit*’ book according to the extent to which you agree with the following statements...

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	No response	Total
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Children showed excitement about receiving this book	56	37	6	0	0	1	100
This book was appropriate for children	52	41	4	1	0	1	100
The appearance of this book was attractive	55	38	4	1	0	1	100
N = 1229							

Source: Q6 Booktime online survey, see Table Q6A, Appendix Three
 Due to rounding percentages may not sum to 100.
 A series of single response questions.
 A filter question: all those who answered $[(Q1=1OR Q1= 5) \& Q2_6=0]$.
 A total of 1218 respondents gave at least one response to these questions.

Table 2.2: Perceptions of ‘Tim’s Din’

Please rate ‘Tim’s Din’ according to the extent to which you agree with the following statements...

	Strongly agree		Neither agree nor disagree		Strongly disagree		No response	Total
	%	%	%	%	%	%		
Children showed excitement about receiving this book	45	42	9	1	0	2	100	
This book was appropriate for children	51	43	4	1	0	2	100	
The appearance of this book was attractive	47	43	7	1	0	2	100	

N = 1229

Source: Q6 Booktime online survey, see Table Q6B, Appendix Three
 Due to rounding percentages may not sum to 100.
 A series of single response questions.
 A filter question: all those who answered $[(Q1=1OR Q1= 5) \& Q2_6=0]$.
 A total of 1217 respondents gave at least one response to these questions.

Reception Teachers, Literacy Coordinators and EYFS Leaders/Managers who indicated that they had already used the books in class were also asked whether they agreed with the statement: ‘Children enjoyed the story’. Again, the responses to this question were overwhelmingly positive; 99 per cent of the respondents asked this question agreed that children had enjoyed the story of ‘The Tale of a Naughty Little Rabbit’, and the equivalent figure for ‘Tim’s Din’ was 93 per cent (Tables Q6A4 and Q6B4 in Appendix Three).

The positive feedback on the two books also came through strongly in the interview data. Respondents often commented on the appearance of the books being appealing to children, and spoke positively about the pupils’ reactions to receiving the books.

Several interviewees commented on the ‘traditional’ and ‘classic’ nature of ‘The Tale of a Naughty Little Rabbit’ book. The idea of the titles being age-appropriate also came through:

- ‘A wonderful re-telling of Peter Rabbit in four year old appropriate language’ (EYFS Leader/Manager)

One comment that arose in the survey open-ended question was that *'Tim's Din'* had been part of a reading scheme in some schools, which did cause a bit of confusion for some parents between the book being provided through Booktime and through the reading scheme.

Children's excitement

Finally, in relation to teacher perceptions, the idea of *'excitement'* came through strongly in all strands of the research. The interview feedback and responses to open-ended questions highlighted the way in which pupils get excited about receiving their Booktime book packs. Some examples to help illustrate this idea include:

- *'It heightens their excitement towards books and reading'* (Reception Teacher)
- *'There was a buzz in reception'* (EYFS Leader/Manager)
- *'When I told them they had a bag with two books for them to keep forever their faces lit up'* (Reception Teacher)
- *'We always put one of the book bags at the front of the class one morning and make lots of guesses why it is there and what could be in it. By the time we peep in the bag we are all nearly bursting!'* (Headteacher)

3. Additional Booktime resources

Awareness and use of the website and online resources

Reception teachers, Literacy Co-ordinators and EYFS Leaders/Managers were asked about their use of the Booktime website, and whether they had found it useful.

Over a quarter (27 per cent) of Reception Teachers, Literacy Coordinators and EYFS Leaders/Managers had used the website and found it useful, while 39 per cent intended to use it (Table 3.1). Use of the various online resources was not as high overall as use of the Booktime books themselves.

Table 3.1: Use of the Booktime website

The Booktime website	N	per cent
Have used and found useful	366	27
Have used, but did not find useful	12	1
Have not used, but intend to use	532	39
Have not used, and do not intend to use	31	2
Unaware of this resource	401	30
No response	14	1
Total	1356	100

*Source: Q7 Booktime online survey, see Table Q7A, Appendix Three
Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100.*

A filter question: all those who answered [(Q1=1 OR Q1=2 OR Q1= 5)].

It is important to flag that 30 per cent of the respondents asked whether they had used the Booktime website were ‘unaware of this resource’, which flags a potential recommendation for Booktime in terms of promoting the website and various online resources. The respondents that have used the website and online resources were positive in their feedback, which further demonstrates the potential for Booktime to raise awareness about the availability of these resources.

Of those who indicated that they had used the website, respondents were then asked to indicate which of the various online Booktime resources they had used, and whether they found them useful. The online resources asked about included: PDF activity sheets, PDF session ideas, Interactive storybook read by Tamsin Greig, and ‘Have some fun’ interactive games. The findings for this question are shown in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2 shows that around half of the respondents asked this question had used the PDF activity sheets, PDF session ideas, interactive storybook and interactive games. Around a third said they intended to use each of these.

The percentage responding ‘*have not used and do not intend to use*’ was higher for the PDF activity sheets and PDF session ideas, while respondents were more likely to be ‘*unaware*’ of the interactive storybook and games.

Table 3.2: Awareness and use of the Booktime online resources

Which of the following Booktime resources have you used? These are all available on the Booktime website...

	Have used and found useful %	Have used, but did not find useful %	Have not used, but intend to use %	Have not used, and do not intend to use %	Unaware of this resource %	No response %	Total %
PDF activity sheets	46	1	29	14	6	4	100
PDF session ideas	46	2	31	12	6	4	100
Interactive storybook read by Tamsin Greig	46	2	35	2	13	3	100
'Have some fun' interactive games	48	3	34	3	11	1	100
N = 378							

A series of single response questions.

Due to rounding percentages may not sum to 100.

A filter question: all those who answered [(Q7A=1 OR Q7A=2)].

A total of 377 respondents gave at least one response to these questions.

Source: Q7 Booktime online survey, see Table Q7 Appendix Three

Perceptions of the online resources

Respondents who had used each resource were then asked to state their level of agreement with the following statements:

- Children enjoyed [the resource]
- [The resource] was appropriate for children
- [The resource] was easy to use
- [The resource] enhanced Booktime

For the PDF activity sheets and the Booktime website, there was an additional statement: ‘*the design of [the resource] was appealing*’. For PDF session ideas, the first statement was replaced with ‘*the session ideas helped me to plan lessons*’.

Of those who had used the resources, the feedback on them was overwhelmingly positive. For each resource, the vast majority of respondents either ‘*agreed*’ or ‘*strongly agreed*’ that they were enjoyable, appropriate, easy to use, and that they enhanced Booktime. For the

session ideas, the majority *'agreed'* or *'strongly agreed'* that they helped to plan lessons. The majority also *'agreed'* or *'strongly agreed'* that the design of the Booktime website and the PDF activity worksheets was appealing. For each resource very few respondents disagreed with any of the statements (See Tables Q8A to Q8E Appendix Three).

By comparing the percentages who *'strongly agreed'* with each statement about the resources it is apparent that the most popular resource on all counts was the interactive storybook. For example, around three-quarters of respondents (72 per cent) *'strongly agreed'* that children enjoyed the interactive storybook, and 26 per cent *'agreed'* with this statement.

The popularity of the interactive storybook also came through in the qualitative data, and was mentioned by several respondents in the interviews and in open-ended survey questions. For example:

'Interactive book was brilliant – this was the highlight. Brought the story to life for children'
(Reception Teacher)

Examples of using the online resources

There was some evidence of interesting use of the resources as part of parent engagement activities. For example, one Reception Teacher planned a whole afternoon session around *'The Tale of a Naughty Little Rabbit'*. Parents and carers were invited in, and the whole group used the interactive storybook, before breaking into smaller groups of parents and children working together on the activities such as food tasting and making rabbit masks, ending with a singing session.

Where the distribution of the book packs was not accompanied by classroom activities facilitated by the Booktime resources, teachers may have used follow up activities. For example, one Assistant Headteacher mentioned organising a discussion with children about their views and experiences of the two books after they had read them at home.

Reasons for not using the Booktime website and resources

Reception Teachers, Literacy Coordinators and EYFS Leaders/Managers who had not used the website were asked about their reasons for this; time was found to be the biggest factor for non-use.

The most frequently selected response amongst those who had not used the website was *'I do not have time'* (72 per cent). Equipment or security settings did not appear to be an issue; just four per cent respectively of this subset of respondents reported each of these as reasons for non-use (See Table Q9 Appendix Three).

Lack of awareness of the online resources came through in both the survey and the interview data. Almost a third (30 per cent) of Reception Teachers, Literacy Coordinators

and EYFS Leaders/Managers said that they were unaware of the website. Similarly, this was a common theme in the qualitative data, for example:

- *'...I was not aware of the Booktime website/initiative until the books turned up in my classroom with instructions to hand them out'* (Reception Teacher)
- *'...I was not aware of the online resources that can be used in school'* (EYFS Leader/Manager)

Some interview respondents suggested that more information about the website and resources should be included along with the book pack delivery. Some also mentioned that while they were aware of the resources, and intended to use them, they had not had time to do so yet.

Several interview respondents viewed Booktime primarily as an opportunity for parent engagement, rather than for classroom activities which may have utilised the resources. For example: *'We just associated this with a parent engagement event rather than going down the route of expanding the Booktime content'* (EYFS Manager).

Feedback on previous hard-copy resources

The qualitative feedback really highlighted the fact that many respondents valued the previous hard copy resources that were provided by Booktime, such as the 'big books', and they miss these resources being provided:

- *'I really miss having the big book'* (Reception Teacher)
- *'Having the big book and the CD-Rom was much more inviting as a teacher to use'* (Reception Teacher)
- *'...was better when teachers received the big book to support delivery'* (Reception Teacher)

Finally, in relation to the use of resources, another theme that arose in the qualitative data is the idea that respondents felt they could do more with the resources next time now that they are more informed and have been made aware of what is available. This is looked at in more detail in Chapter Four.

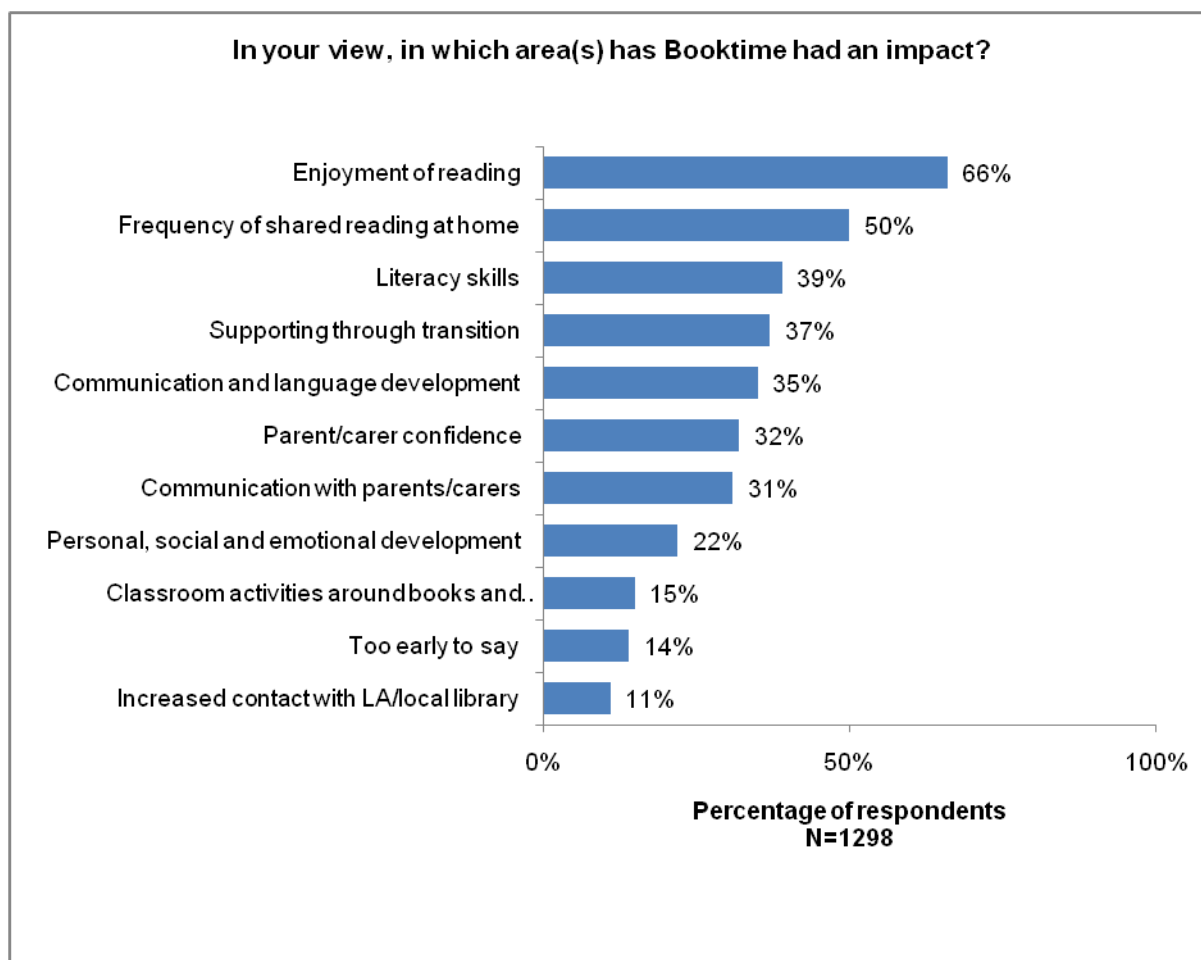
4. Impact of the Booktime programme

Perceived impact and benefits of Booktime

All respondents who had already distributed the Booktime book packs were asked in which area(s) they thought Booktime had had an impact.

Figure 4.1 shows that children's enjoyment of reading was the most common response (66 per cent mentioned this), followed by increased frequency of shared reading in the home (50 per cent).

Figure 4.1: Impact of Booktime



Source: Q11 Booktime online survey, see Table Q11, Appendix Three

Chart does not include 'no response' and 'other'.

More than one answer could be given so percentages may sum to more than 100.

A filter question: all those who answered [(Q2_6=0)].

A total of 1272 respondents answered at least one item in this question.

The cross-tabulation analysis found that there were some statistically significant associations between reported areas of impact and other school characteristics and survey responses. For example, those respondents who reported increased frequency of shared reading in the

home came from schools with a higher average proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals (Table 1, Appendix Four).

Where books were given out after sharing as a class, respondents more commonly mentioned the following areas of impact (Tables 14 to 18, Appendix Four):

- Increased enjoyment of reading
- Communication and language development
- Personal, social and emotional development
- Literacy skills
- Supporting children and families through transition to primary school

This suggests that schools that *'made the most'* of Booktime (by giving out the books after sharing as a class) were more likely to report areas of impact relating to children's social and skill development.

There was also some association found between awareness raising strategies with parents/carers and the reported impact of Booktime; if no awareness raising strategies were used, respondents less commonly reported impact in the areas relating to parents/carers (Tables 20 to 22, Appendix Four):

- Increased frequency of shared reading at home
- Supporting children and families through transition to primary school
- Increasing parent/carer confidence about reading with their children

This theme was also reflected in the interview data. For example, one Headteacher who had organised a coffee afternoon where parents came in to look at the books and play alongside children mentioned that *'lots more parents have come in this time...and been more engaged since Booktime'*.

Other commonly mentioned areas of impact in the qualitative data (both in the open-ended survey questions and in the interview data) were:

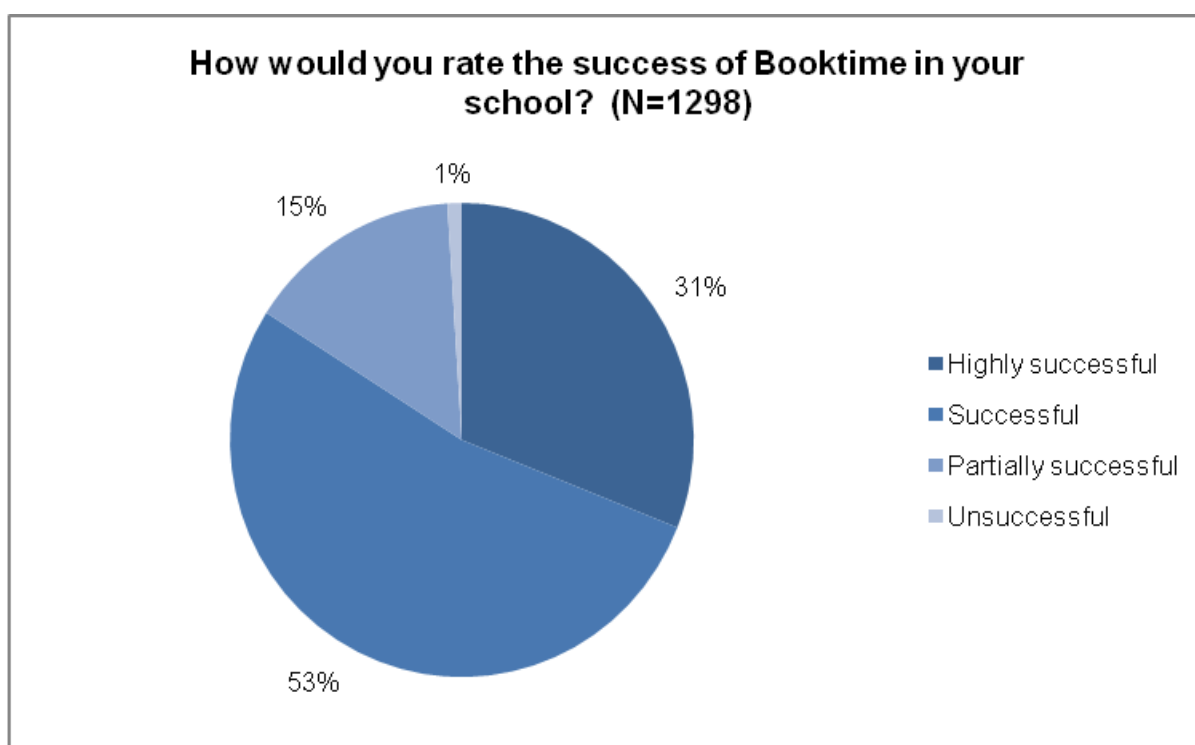
- **Ownership of books:**
 - *'Book ownership is an integral part of empowering children as readers and fostering their love of reading books...there's nothing like owning your own book to inspire you'* (Headteacher)
 - *'Enabled the children to enjoy books at home and increased their opportunities for owning a book'* (EYFS Leader/Manager)
 - *'Working in an area of deprivation, this provides children who otherwise might not have any books with a book of their own to keep'* (EYFS Leader/Manager)
- **Reinforcing existing school efforts to promote reading for pleasure, and providing another opportunity to discuss books:**
 - *'It raises awareness of reading – something the school is always striving to do'* (Reception teacher)
 - *'Increased children's confidence during shared reading and guided reading – as knew stories from home'* (Reception Teacher)

- **The importance of Booktime's universal nature:**
 - *'It's really nice that they all have the same book – it means you can do something as a whole class and try to engage parents together'* (Headteacher)
 - *'There are some children who are never going to be reading at their age appropriate level but they should still be encouraged to enjoy reading...it should be a level playing field – not about ability but about enjoyment of books'* (Literacy Coordinator)
 - *'A fantastic initiative, every child feels valued'* (EYFS Leader/Manager)
- **Booktime provides support and guidance for parents/carers:**
 - *'Particularly for parents who are struggling with reading themselves, knowing what books to buy is a barrier. Having books chosen that are suitable for your children helps in supporting reading'* (Literacy Coordinator)
- **Promotes a greater understanding of books:**
 - *'It's created a greater understanding and love of books. One family I can think of, now actively borrow books from the library, and Mum says it has helped her with her reading as well'* (Headteacher)
- **Longer term engagement with the books:**
 - *'Children remember the books and make references'* (Reception Teacher)
 - *'Encouraged reading in families where children do not necessarily have lots of high quality books available'* (Reception Teacher)

Success of Booktime in schools

Respondents who had already distributed the book packs were asked how successful they felt Booktime had been in their school. As Figure 4.2 shows, success ratings were very high; the majority rated Booktime as *'highly successful'* (31%) or *'successful'* (53%). Just one per cent of respondents who had distributed the packs rated the programme as unsuccessful.

Figure 4.2: Success of Booktime in school



Source: Q12A Booktime online survey, see Table Q12A, Appendix Three
Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100. Chart does not include 'no response'
A filter question: all those who answered [Q2_6=0].

Results from the cross-tabulation analysis show that respondents who had given the books out after sharing them in class were more likely to rate Booktime as 'successful' or 'highly successful' (Table 19, Appendix Four).

Survey respondents were then invited to elaborate on their responses and explain further about their success ratings. Respondents often used this as an opportunity to further explain why the programme had worked well in their school; common themes arising included details on events they had held related to Booktime, how they had involved parents/carers, other curriculum activities and comments again highlighting the positive feedback on sending children home with a book:

- *'We spent an entire week's literacy dedicated to Peter Rabbit. We received a letter from Peter and wrote letters back to him'* (EYFS Leader/Manager)
- *'The children were totally engaged and it encouraged some children and their parents to go to the library more regularly'* (EYFS Leader/Manager)
- *'Children really enjoyed taking the books home and told us about how they had read them at home...'* (Reception Teacher)

Common themes to emerge regarding areas to improve included schools reporting that they could have made more of the resources, and that they miss the hard copy resources received in previous years, and also the idea that they could do more with parents:

- *'I have not promoted it enough this year. Am hoping to make more of it next year'* (Reception Teacher)

- *'...I don't think we have used Booktime initiative to its full potential as was unaware of website'* (Reception Teacher)
- *'Need to do more to raise awareness of scheme with parents'* (Assistant/Deputy Headteacher)

Areas for improvement

The qualitative data suggested several areas for improvement of the programme in future years, which may have modified success ratings. These often included logistics, such as numbers of packs, and timings of their arrival. For example, there was some mention of the book packs arriving later than desired (late in the autumn term), making planning of activities difficult when timetables were already set; and schools receiving the incorrect numbers of books, necessitating re-ordering additional packs. This reflects the difficulties for Booktrust and Local Authorities of predicting the number of children at each school.

As mentioned in the chapter on additional resources, respondents often reported that they missed the 'big books' included in previous years' packs. Several mentioned that it was difficult to evaluate Booktime's success without feedback from parents/carers, which most had not obtained formally, although some mentioned positive responses. One Headteacher thought that Booktime should be made even higher profile and made into a nationally recognisable event or day, similar to World Book Day ('Booktime Day').

As mentioned above, some interview participants added that they could have done more themselves to take advantage of the resources, or could do more activities with parents/carers in future years, for example:

- *'There's more that we could do with the gift packs – some schools focus whole themes of work or a day of activity around the contents of the books...we haven't got to that stage yet, but have integrated with parent engagement activities'* (EYFS Leader/Manager)
- *'We need to focus on involving parents more with it...next year will be more proactive...will think of bigger and better ways to engage parents'* (EYFS Leader/Manager)

Frequency of reading-related activities

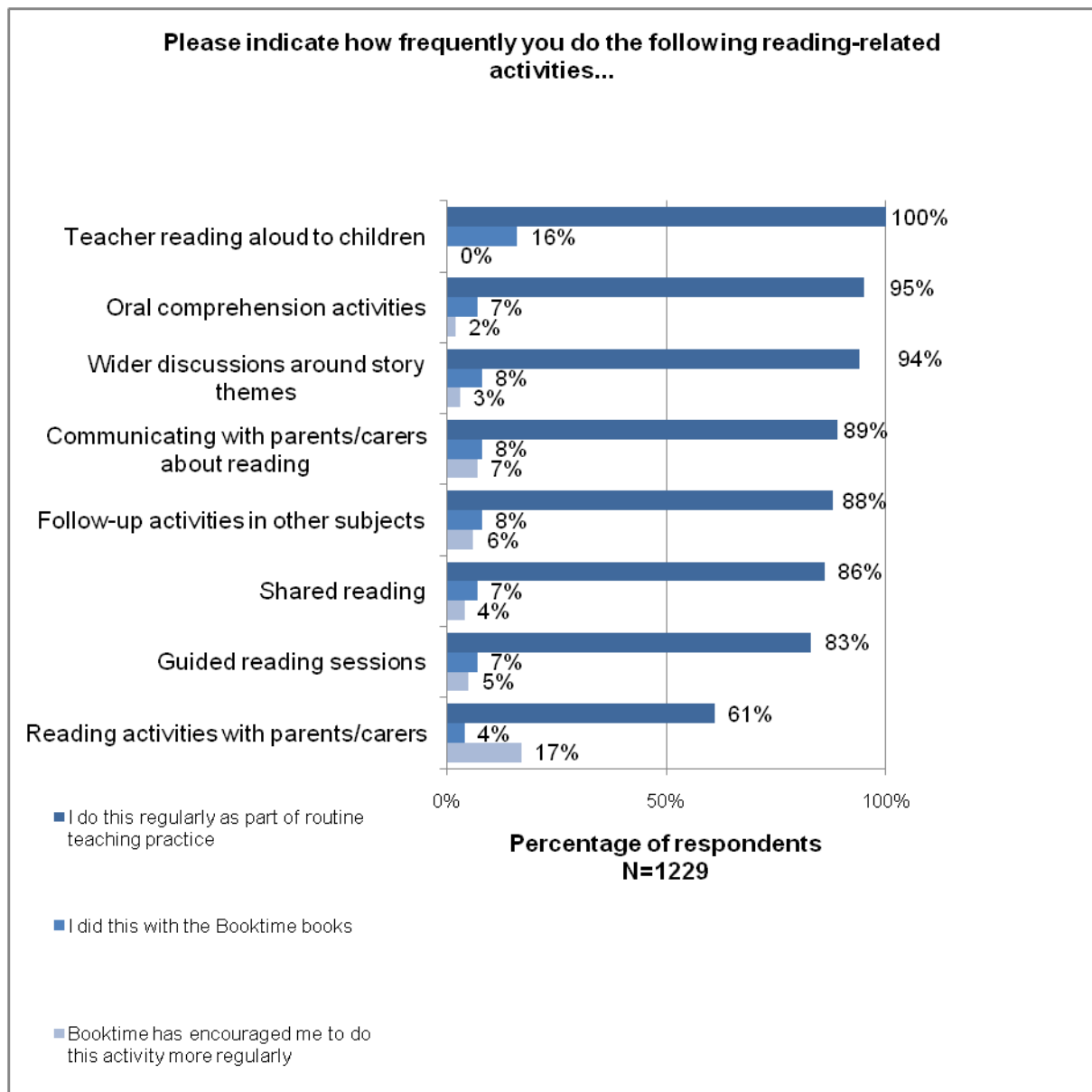
Reception Teachers, Literacy Co-ordinators and EYFS Leaders/Managers who had already distributed the Booktime books were also asked about how frequently they did a range of reading related classroom activities, whether they did these activities with the Booktime books, and whether Booktime had encouraged them to do these activities more regularly.

As Figure 4.3 shows, the majority of respondents did the listed activities regularly. *'Teacher reading aloud to children'* was the most common activity done with the Booktime books (16 per cent did this). The percentage of respondents saying *'Booktime encouraged me to do this activity more'* was low for each activity. However, it is important to note that these activities are generally activities that Reception Teachers are likely to be delivering frequently in their lessons.

Interestingly, the greatest influence of Booktime appears to have been on *'reading activities with parents/carers'*: although only four per cent did this with the Booktime books, 17 per cent said Booktime had encouraged them to do this more regularly, compared with two per cent for oral comprehension activities, for example.

This suggests that teachers do feel that Booktime has an impact in terms of encouraging them to deliver reading activities with parents and carers. This highlights a potential area of development for Booktime, and is explored further in the final section of this report.

Figure 4.3: Frequency of reading-related activities



Source: Q10 Booktime online survey

Chart does not include: 'no response', and 'I never do this activity and do not feel encouraged by Booktime to do it'.

More than one answer could be given so percentages may sum to more than 100.

A filter question: see Tables Q10A to Q10D in Appendix Three for full routing details.

5. Reading in schools

This section of the report explores reading in schools more broadly, rather than specifically in relation to Booktime.

Library facilities in schools

All survey respondents were asked about the physical spaces available for reading-related activities in their school. Table 5.1 shows that 90 per cent of respondents reported having either a school library or a designated book corner or reading area in each classroom.

Table 5.1: Physical spaces for reading related activities in schools

Which of the following does your school have?	N	per cent
School library	664	40
Designated reading area/book corner in each classroom	827	50
Designated reading area/book corner in several classrooms	154	9
One designated reading area/book corner for the whole school	6	0
None of the above	1	0
No response	4	0
Total	1656	100

Source: Q15 Booktime online survey, see Table Q15, Appendix Three

Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100

Respondents were asked to select just one response option

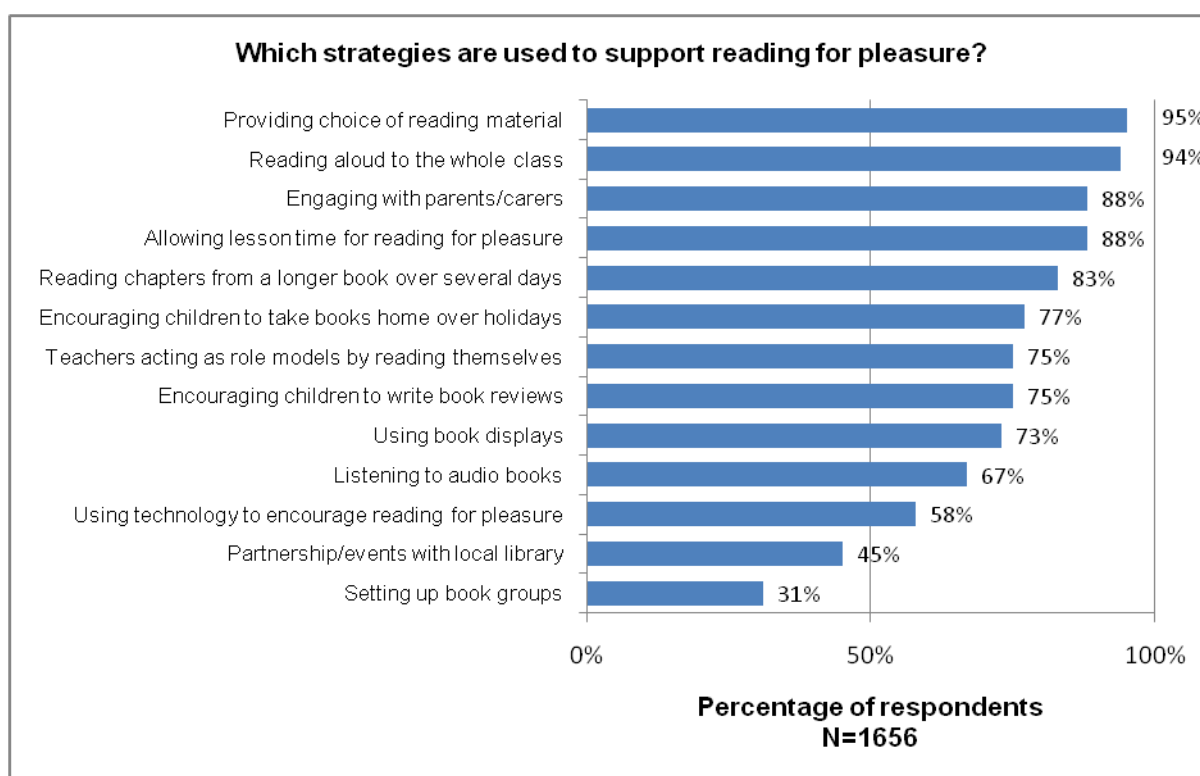
Further cross-tabulation analysis shows that although respondents who reported *not* having a school library more commonly mentioned resource barriers to promoting reading for pleasure, there was no association between having a school library and perceived success at promoting reading for pleasure (Tables 12 and 13, Appendix Four).

Strategies used to support reading for pleasure in schools

All survey respondents were asked about the strategies used to support reading for pleasure in their school. Figure 5.1 shows a broad range of reported strategies. The most frequently reported strategies used were: providing choice of reading materials for children (95 per cent) and reading aloud to the whole class (94 per cent).

Setting up book groups and partnership/events with the local library were less common responses. It is worth noting here that book groups may be less frequently used with reception pupils than with older age groups; and as the majority of respondents are Reception Teachers, this may have an effect on the responses to this option.

Figure 5.1: Strategies used to support reading for pleasure



Source: Q16 Booktime online survey, see Table Q16A, Appendix Three

Chart does not include 'no response'.

More than one answer could be given so percentages may sum to more than 100.

A total of 1653 respondents answered at least one item in this question.

Results from cross-tabulation analysis show that respondents who reported that they *did* engage in the following strategies tended to come from schools with lower average percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals (Tables 2 to 4, Appendix Four):

- Reading chapters from a longer book over several days
- Engaging with parents/carers about the benefits of reading for pleasure
- Encouraging children to write book reviews.

The survey also gave respondents the option to mention '*other*' strategies they may use in their school. Strategies commonly mentioned in the qualitative survey data included events such as:

- World Book Day
- Visiting authors
- Book weeks
- School book fairs
- Older and younger children reading together (reading mentors/partners)
- Competitions/award schemes
- Online resources, and
- Reading 'buddy'/volunteer schemes.

A few interview respondents also mentioned specific strategies to engage boys in reading, for example single sex reading groups where pupils were given a choice of texts. Providing children with a variety of new, interesting reading material seen as crucial by several interview respondents, and engaging parents/carers was mentioned by most.

Respondents who said that their school had a school library were asked about an additional two strategies used to support reading for pleasure:

- Fostering links with the school library
- Inviting parents to become members of the school library

Of the 664 respondents who said that their school had a library, the most common strategy used with the school library to support reading for pleasure was *'fostering links with the school library'* (58 per cent), and 16 per cent of these respondents reported that they invited parents to become members of the school library (See Table Q16B Appendix Three).

Creating a whole-school reading culture

The majority of respondents said that creating a whole-school reading culture was a priority within their school's aims and policies (87 per cent, see Table Q17 Appendix Three). Most interview participants said that their school had a reading culture or that this was something they tried to develop.

The qualitative data strongly highlights feelings regarding the importance of promoting a whole-school reading culture and reading for pleasure:

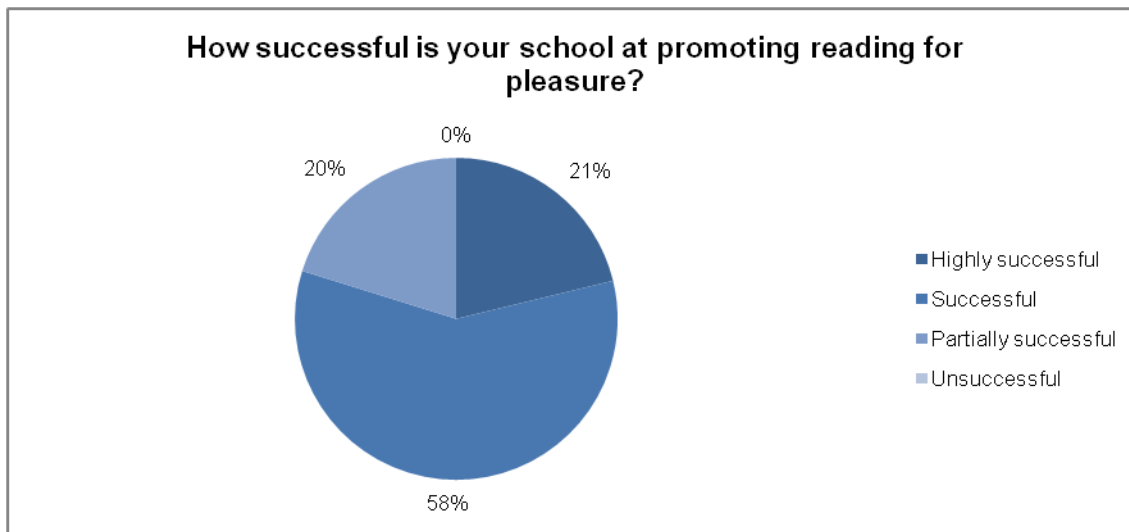
- *'It's just so important, somewhere to go to escape'* (Reception Teacher)
- *'Benefits for children who read for pleasure are really obvious, they do achieve more highly and this really shows, so we are glad that reading for pleasure is getting a higher profile'* (Headteacher)
- *'I think it's imperative that children should be allowed to read for pleasure'* (Headteacher)
- *'Need to help children to develop a love of reading so that reading for pleasure is second nature to them'* (Headteacher)

School success in supporting reading for pleasure

All respondents, except the minority who said that reading for pleasure had not been a focus in their school, were asked about their success in promoting reading for pleasure as a school.

Figure 5.2 shows that 21 per cent of respondents rated their school's success in supporting reading for pleasure as *'highly successful'*, and 58 per cent rated it as *'successful'*. Nobody responded that their school had been *'unsuccessful'* in supporting reading for pleasure.

Figure 5.2: Success in promoting reading for pleasure



N = 1589

Source: Q19 Booktime online survey, see Table Q19, Appendix Three

Chart does not include 'no response'

Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100.

A filter question: all those who answered [Q18_8<>1].

Further cross-tabulation analysis reveals that respondents who said they were '*partially successful*' or '*unsuccessful*' came from schools with a higher average percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals (Table 9, Appendix Four).

Challenges associated with supporting reading for pleasure

All respondents were asked about the challenges associated with supporting reading for pleasure. Almost a third of respondents had not experienced any challenges (Table 5.2). The most common responses were '*difficulty engaging parents and carers*' (43 per cent); and '*lack of resources*' (29 per cent).

This suggests that although a large proportion of schools (88 per cent at Q16) report '*engaging with parents and carers about the benefits of reading with their children at home*' as one of their strategies used to support reading for pleasure – many schools find this difficult.

Table 5.2: Challenges associated with supporting reading for pleasure in schools

What have been the greatest challenges associated with supporting reading for pleasure in your school?	N	per cent
Difficulty engaging with parents/carers	712	43
Lack of resources	473	29
I have not experienced any challenges	462	28
Lack of time	403	24
Difficulty engaging with children	74	4
Supporting reading for pleasure has not been a focus in our school	51	3
Difficulty engaging other members of staff	37	2
Lack of support from senior management	6	0
No response	16	1
Total =	1656	100

Source: Q18 Booktime online survey, see Table Q18, Appendix Three
 More than one answer could be given so percentages may sum to more than 100.
 A total of 1640 respondents answered at least one item in this question

The cross-tabulation analysis revealed that respondents who mentioned the following challenges came from schools with a higher average percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals, compared with those who did not mention these challenges:

- *'Difficulty engaging parents and carers'*
- *'Difficulty engaging with children'* (bearing in mind that only four per cent reported this overall)

Respondents who gave the following responses when asked about challenges came from schools with a lower average percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals:

- *'Lack of time'*
- *'I have not experienced any challenges'*

(Tables 5 to 8, Appendix Four)

Engaging parents and carers also featured frequently in the interviews as something that schools were aware of and addressing. Several interview respondents mentioned selecting and acquiring appropriate texts as a challenge – particularly texts of an appropriate level that would be of interest to children. Illustrative quotes on this theme included:

- *'We don't have as wide a range of texts as we would like...we have a wide range of different pupils and can't accommodate the texts we need for everybody'* (Headteacher)
- *'Boys are less likely to read for pleasure and we find it really hard to get low level reading books...to get them interested in reading in the first place.'* (Reception Teacher)

Another theme in the interviews was that children with higher reading ability are more likely to read for pleasure, as they are more confident and find it easier. This linked to the importance of Booktime being a universal initiative, which encourages reading for pleasure at all levels of ability.

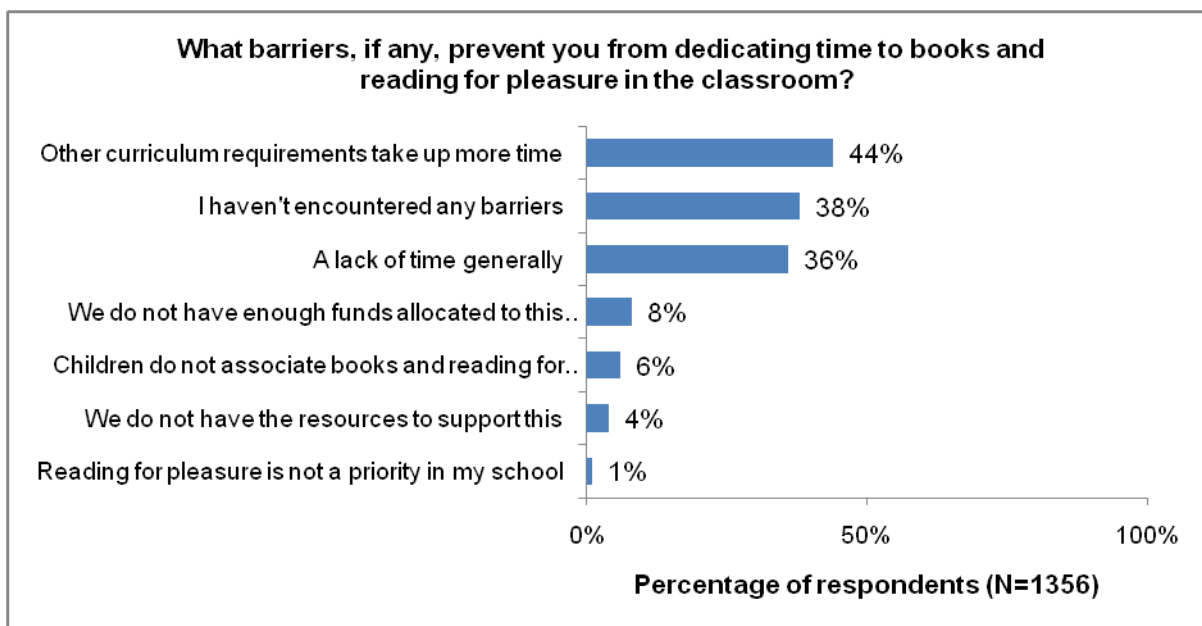
Lack of reading material at home was also seen as a barrier for some children, which links to the 24 per cent of survey respondents who said that *'lack of resources'* was a challenge (it is not possible to tell whether survey respondents were referring to lack of school resources or lack of pupil resources at home, or both).

Barriers to dedicating time to books and reading for pleasure in the classroom

Reception Teachers, Literacy Coordinators, and EYFS Leaders/Managers were also asked about the barriers to dedicating time to books and reading for pleasure in the classroom.

Figure 5.3 shows that the most common responses were related to time; a lack of time generally (36 per cent) and other curriculum requirements taking up more time (44 per cent). However, over a third had not encountered any barriers.

Figure 5.3: Barriers to dedicating time to books and reading for pleasure in the classroom



Source: Q21 Booktime online survey, see Table Q21, Appendix Three
 Chart does not include 'no response'.

More than one answer could be given so percentages may sum to more than 100.

A filter question: all those who answered [(Q1=1 OR Q1=2 OR Q1= 5)].

A total of 1342 respondents answered at least one item in this question.

Further analysis (Table 10 Appendix Four) showed that respondents who reported *'a lack of time generally'* came from schools with lower average percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals.

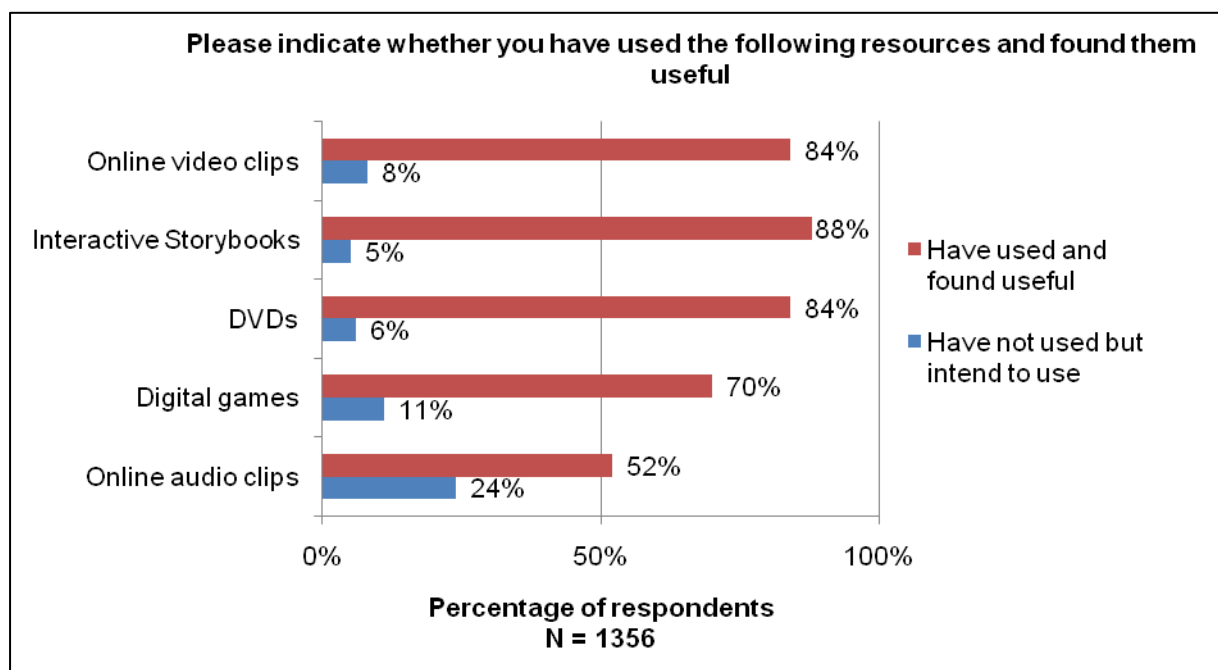
Respondents who said that ‘*children do not associate books and reading for pleasure*’ came from schools with a higher average percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals (bearing in mind that only six per cent of respondents overall reported this, see Table 11 Appendix Four).

Use of digital resources for literacy-related activities

Reception teachers, Literacy Co-ordinators and EYFS Leaders/Managers were asked about which digital resources they use for literacy and reading activities in the classroom, and, which they found useful. Please note, this refers to digital resources for literacy-related activities more broadly, rather than specifically referring to Booktime resources.

Figure 5.4 shows data for just the responses of ‘*Have used and found useful*’ or ‘*Have not used but intend to use*’ for the various digital resources. The data shows that the responses were broadly positive about digital resources, with the majority responding that they had used each resource and found it useful, or that they intended to use it. Online video clips, interactive storybooks and DVDs were the most positively rated digital resources.

Figure 5.4: Use of digital resources



Source: Q22 Booktime online survey, see Table Q22, Appendix Three
 Chart does not include ‘No response’. Other response categories not shown
 A series of single response questions.
 Due to rounding percentages may not sum to 100.
 A filter question: all those who answered [(Q1=1 OR Q1=2 OR Q1= 5)].
 A total of 1350 respondents gave at least one response to these questions.

Interview participants referred to the benefits of using a wide variety of resources, and of developing other skills alongside reading, for example, using interactive storybooks and video clips to develop visual literacy.

Interview participants mentioned that the appropriateness of digital resources depends on the activity, level and particular learning targets. Many found traditional books very useful for sharing in small groups, whereas large screens were thought to be useful for whole class work. A few interview participants mentioned the increasing use of tablets and that these could be useful for small group or individual work in particular. Some mentioned allowing children to use technology themselves, for example filming each other on small video cameras and watching the footage as a class, or using audio books independently in reading corners. It was mentioned as important that resources were interactive.

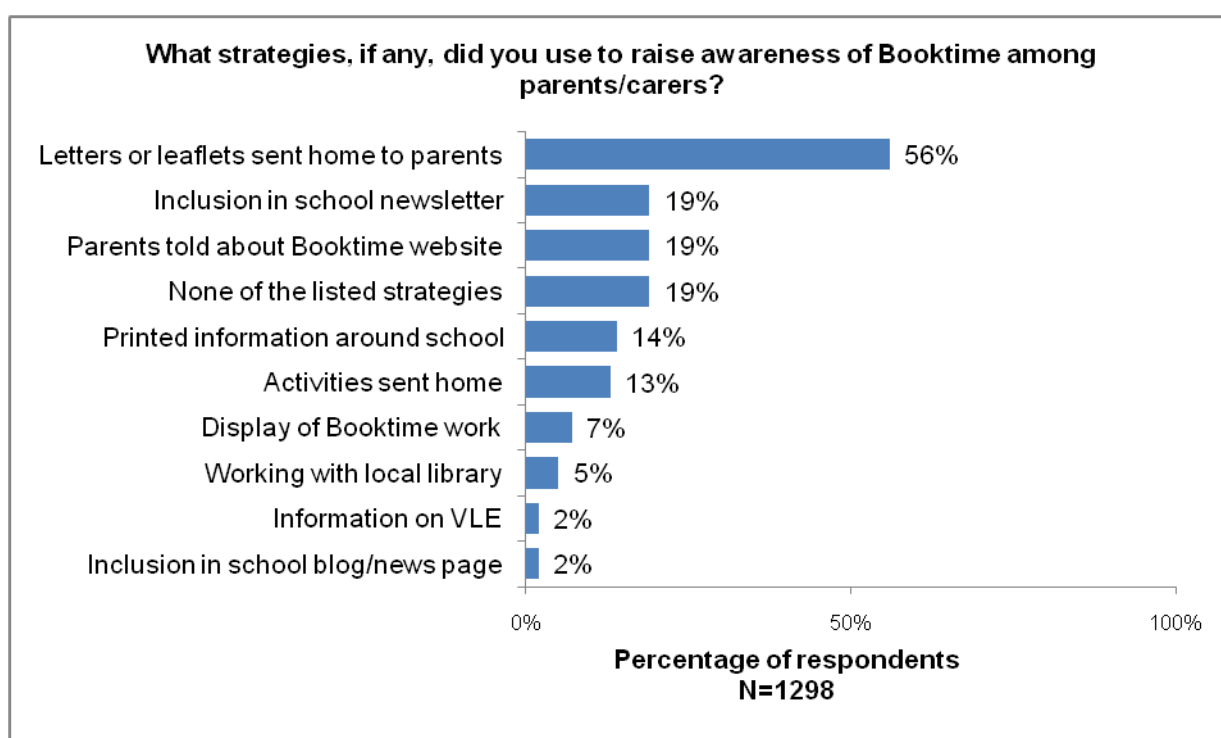
Cost and Information Technology (IT) facilities were thought to be the main barriers, and access to resources varied greatly across schools represented by the interview participants. Internet access at home could be a further barrier for some children.

6. Engaging with parents and carers

Strategies used to raise awareness of Booktime among parents and carers

Survey respondents who had already distributed the Booktime books were asked which strategies they had used to raise awareness among parents/carers. Figure 6.1 shows that sending letters or leaflets home was the most popular response. Awareness raising strategies using online facilities such as Virtual Learning Environments (VLE), blogs and news pages were the least common.

Figure 6.1: Strategies used to raise awareness of Booktime among parents/carers



Source: Q3 Booktime online survey, see Table Q3, Appendix Three

Chart does not include 'no response'.

More than one answer could be given so percentages may sum to more than 100.

A filter question: all those who answered [(Q2_6=0)].

A total of 1295 respondents answered at least one item in this question.

Reasons for not using strategies with parents and carers

Respondents who had not used any of the suggested strategies were also asked why they had not done so. The most common reason given was 'We had not thought of using any of these strategies', with 59 per cent of the respondents asked giving this reason. While 41 per cent said 'We already engage with parents/carers so did not need to do anything extra with Booktime'. Time and parents'/carers' interest were mentioned by only a small proportion of respondents (see Table Q4 Appendix Three).

This highlights a potential opportunity for Booktime to provide further guidance on this to schools; if a large proportion of respondents have not thought about using these strategies to raise awareness about Booktime amongst parents and carers, this is an area that Booktime can help schools to develop.

Interview participants who had not worked with parents/carers mostly recognised the importance of doing so, and expressed a desire to do so next time. A common theme in the interviews was that Booktime was an opportunity to engage parents/carers. For example, one Headteacher said: *'We've not been able to engage parents and carers in the past; Booktime helps with this'*.

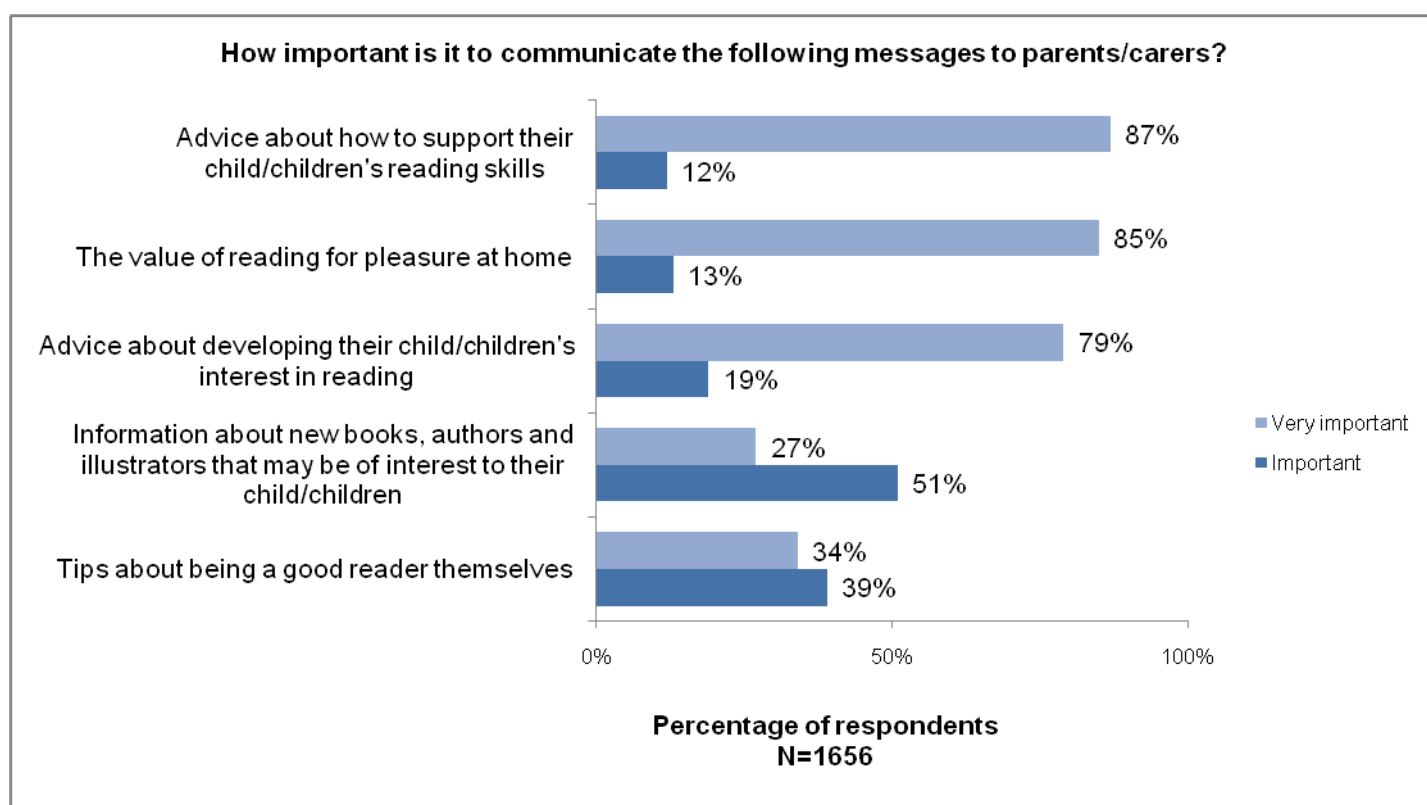
Qualitative feedback suggests that where schools had a high proportion of pupils with English as an Additional Language (EAL), communicating with parents seemed to be more challenging. One suggestion for mitigating this was the provision of letters to parents in different languages, which could help parents/carers understand the purpose of Booktime better.

Communicating with parents and carers about reading for pleasure

Survey respondents were asked for their views on the importance of communicating various messages about reading to parents and carers. Figure 6.2 presents the data for respondents considering the various messages to be either *'very important'* or *'important'*.

The majority of respondents considered all of the messages mentioned to be either *'very important'* or *'important'*. Advice about supporting children's reading skills, developing their interest in reading, and messages emphasising the value of reading for pleasure were more commonly seen as *'very important'*. For the other two messages, the more common response was that they were *'important'*.

Figure 6.2: Messages about reading to communicate to parents/carers



Source: Q20 Booktime online survey, see Table Q20, Appendix Three
 Chart does not include 'no response', 'neither important nor unimportant' and 'unimportant'.
 A series of single response questions.
 Due to rounding percentages may not sum to 100.
 A total of 1655 respondents gave at least one response to these questions.

The interview data confirmed that schools are more familiar with giving advice to parents about how to support learning, as this is the kind of support that parents ask for. Some schools have worked with parents on encouraging their own reading habits and awareness of literature, but it seemed that broader messages like this are more difficult to communicate. This could be an area where schools would appreciate Booktrust's guidance.

The majority of interview participants felt that most parents were supportive of the idea of reading for pleasure, but that they may be limited by certain barriers, for example:

- **Attitudes:**

'Some [parents/carers] just consider that school is where reading and writing happens and that it shouldn't happen outside school' (Headteacher)

'...it's not given the same level of importance as other activities' (Reception teacher)

- **Resources:**

'When they have the resources they are supportive and they are good at getting the children enthusiastic...Booktime is a booster for this' (Reception teacher)

- **Confidence:**

'Parents with low reading ability may feel intimidated going into book shops and libraries'
(Literacy Coordinator)

- **Children's attitudes and attainment:**

'Parents of keen children are the ones supporting reading for pleasure' (Reception Teacher)

Interview participants also mentioned that some parents were focused on developing their child's reading ability, to the detriment of reading for pleasure. For example: *'We probably hear parents saying less about reading for pleasure than we do about progress in reading, as that's where their concerns lie'* (EYFS Leader/Manager).

Schools used a range of strategies to try and combat these barriers, such as:

- School libraries working with parents, for example by providing adult books for them to borrow and helping them choose books for children
- Using parent helpers on visits to the local library
- Inviting parents in for reading or activity sessions
- Involving parents in reading award/recognition schemes, for example inviting them to assemblies where reading prizes are given out.

As outlined in Chapter 5, engaging parents and carers in reading with their children is seen as a challenge by many respondents, and is an area where Booktime can potentially provide further guidance.

7. Conclusions and recommendations

Key messages

The overall message from this evaluation is that Booktime is a well-liked and much respected programme, and schools that receive the Booktime book packs really value the resource. Perceptions of the books for 2012/2013 are extremely positive, and the books are well-used by schools.

- *'For some children in our school these books are the first books that they actually own and get to keep'* (Assistant/Deputy Headteacher)
- *'A very worthwhile scheme – particularly for schools like ours, where many of the children do not have books of their own at home'* (Reception Teacher)
- *'There is no better gift than a book!'* (Reception Teacher)
- *'Booktime is brilliant and fantastic and hope it continues'* (Headteacher)

Awareness of the online resources is not as widespread as awareness of the books themselves. However, the teachers that do use the online resources rate them very highly and find them very useful. Teachers miss the previous hard-copy resources provided by Booktime, such as the 'big books'.

In relation to reading for pleasure more widely, the research findings indicate that this is seen as a high priority for the majority of primary schools involved in the survey. Schools make use of a wide range of strategies to help promote reading for pleasure; the biggest challenge experienced with this is difficulty in engaging with parents and carers.

Concluding points

The conclusion is structured around findings in relation to the five specific aims of the research, as set out in Chapter One:

- How Booktime is used in schools
- How teachers perceive Booktime's impact, strengths and weaknesses
- How the online Booktime resources have been received
- How Booktime can efficiently use digital resources to support literacy, reading for pleasure, and home-school links, and
- Current approaches to supporting reading for pleasure in schools and associated challenges

Use of Booktime in schools

The Booktime books have been used by the majority of respondents; *'The Tale of a Naughty Little Rabbit'* was more frequently read aloud, and *'Tim's Din'* was more frequently used in guided reading.

Booktime book packs were mostly given out after sharing the books in class with pupils. A small proportion of schools held events with parents/carers. There are some examples of schools linking Booktime to wider curriculum activities.

Teacher perceptions of Booktime

Teacher perceptions of the Booktime books are overwhelmingly positive; the books are rated very highly on appropriateness, pupil enjoyment and excitement generated by the books.

Teachers report a range of impacts of Booktime on children; increasing children's enjoyment of reading and increasing the frequency of shared reading at home were the most frequently reported impacts of the programme.

Success ratings of Booktime in schools were high; respondents like the programme and think it works well in their school.

A number of suggestions for improvement came through in the qualitative data. Areas mentioned in which teachers felt Booktime could improve included: awareness, publicity, advance notice of when to expect the books to arrive, logistics (e.g. numbers of books being delivered, when they are delivered), more hard-copy resources provided, extending the programme to other year groups, and further guidance on engaging parents and carers.

Booktime online resources

A smaller proportion of respondents had used the website than had used the books; and there is a lack of awareness about the Booktime website and online resources. Time was reported as the biggest factor for respondents not using the Booktime website.

However, of the respondents that had used the additional resources, the feedback was positive; the majority of respondents found the resources useful, appropriate, and easy to use.

Respondents report that they miss the hard copy resources such as the 'big books', CDs and teacher folders.

Digital resources

Digital resources are widely used for literacy-related activities, especially online video clips, DVDs and interactive storybooks. Teachers use these resources and find them useful. The research findings suggest that these are resources valued by teachers, offering potential for Booktime to develop and use a growing range of additional digital resources.

Reading for pleasure more widely

Reading for pleasure and promoting a whole-school reading culture are seen as a priority in the majority of responding schools. This is something that schools value and the vast majority use a number of strategies to help promote and support reading for pleasure. Providing a choice of reading materials and reading aloud to the whole class were the most frequently-reported strategies used to support reading for pleasure.

Difficulty engaging with parents/carers is seen as the greatest challenge associated with supporting reading for pleasure in schools. This theme also came through in the interviews; respondents would like further guidance on this.

Other curriculum requirements and a lack of time are seen as the main barriers to dedicating time to books and reading for pleasure in the classroom.

Recommendations

The Booktime programme is extremely well-regarded, and the findings from this research are very positive. The key intended features of the programme are judged to be correct. As detailed in the proposal, one aim of this research was to develop recommendations for improving Booktime in future years.

Based on the research findings and areas for improvement as suggested by respondents, the following recommendations are suggested as areas where Booktime could improve even further and encourage schools to make the most of the programme:

- **Raise awareness of Booktime**

Raise the profile of Booktime in schools, and raise awareness of the online resources - promote these resources further with a key Booktime contact in schools.

- **Review logistics**

Areas to review include: consider sharing further details on when books will be delivered, accuracy in numbers of books provided to schools, and advance notification of deliveries enabling schools to plan ahead.

- **Provide guidance on working with parents and carers**

The survey findings suggest that this is an area in which Booktime has made a difference for teachers and they would welcome further information and ideas on engaging parents and carers.

- **Review resources provided**

Respondents greatly valued the previous hard-copy resources provided by Booktime, particularly the 'big book', this was seen as especially useful in making the most of the Booktime programme, and teachers miss this resource.

References

Department for Education (2012). *Research Evidence on Reading for Pleasure*. London: DfE [online]. Available: http://media.education.gov.uk/assets/files/pdf/r/evidence%20note%20-%20reading%20for%20pleasure_may%202012.pdf [21 November, 2012].

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