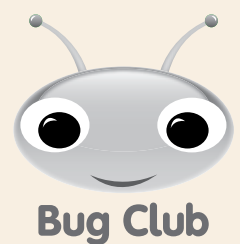




Creating a positive impact on learning

How schools are using Bug Club to develop a love of reading



Bug Club and Phonics Bug: Efficacy Research

As the world’s leading learning company, Pearson is committed to ensuring that everything we do delivers a measurable impact on improving children’s lives through learning.

Bug Club has been designed to appeal to a generation of children used to reading and playing online. It brings together printed books with an online reading world and is underpinned by a rigorous pedagogy and fine levelling.

As a reading service, it is now used in over 4,500 schools and by over 600,000 pupils. Children love it, parents enthuse about it and the results Bug Club delivers keep teachers using it every day.

But in a world of no-notice OFSTED inspections and increased accountability, you need to know that what you are buying really works and you need the data to prove it.



Saad Rizvi

Executive Director
of Efficacy
Pearson

So this Efficacy Guide to Bug Club and Phonics Bug pulls together the results and feedback from schools up and down the UK who are using Bug Club and Phonics Bug to great effect in their classrooms. It includes independent reviews, teacher and pupil quotes and detailed case studies on how schools are delivering real results with them.

Would you like to share your ideas and become a Bug Club Champion School?

Do you and your children love using Bug Club? Is it helping you to achieve great results in your school? Share your experience with other schools in return for a discount on your Bug Club subscription and printed books.

The **Pearson Champion School for Bug Club** is a brand new programme designed to recognise schools who are doing great things with Bug Club, and help them to connect with other Bug Club schools. As well as receiving a substantial discount, Champion Schools will have the chance to take part in special professional development courses, attend conferences and swap ideas with other Bug Club users.

Interested? Find out more at <http://bugclubnews.pearson.com>



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Bug Club works.

We know because teachers, children and parents tell us so

“ Phonics Bug helped 90% of my pupils achieve the threshold for the Year 2 screening check. ”

Claire Simon, Headteacher,
Bury and Whitefield Jewish Primary
School, Bury

“ Bug Club is amazing! The children in my class are so engaged when they use it. I love the Bug questions as they really help to develop their inference and deduction skills. We try to use Bug Club every day as part of guided reading and the children really look forward to logging on. ”

Vicky Walsh,
Ninelands Primary School, Garforth

“ Bug Club is fun because we get prizes for our bug! You can make your bug cool, which makes me want to read :) It is a fun website that encourages us to read! Our teacher keeps track of how many books we've read. Bug Club is the coolest website EVER! It's amazing. It's interesting. There's a story for everyone! ”

Hydra Class (Year 4),
Squirrel Hayes First School, Staffordshire

“ The children are so used to TV, DVDs and everything else, that getting them interested in reading is really hard. But Bug Club had children laughing, engaged and begging for more! ”

Wendy Jenkins, Literacy Coordinator,
Bangor Central Integrated Primary School,
Northern Ireland

“ Bug Club is great for children who don't have many books at home... All you have to do is log onto the computer and access your Bug Club account... Your teacher will have uploaded lots of funny, exciting and fun books for you to read... If you read lots of books you will learn lots... There are even rewards that you can win, by playing lots of fantastic, brilliant games... You have your own virtual tree house which you can decorate with your rewards and you can keep all your books inside it... You can read your favourite books as many times as you like because Bug Club keeps them safe in your tree house... You don't have to worry about your little brothers and sisters being naughty and ripping your books... Reading is so much fun on Bug Club and we love it! ”

Jupiter Class,
Ivybridge Primary School, Hounslow

“ The children are very excited about Phonics Bug. You just know they're going to be engaged and motivated every step of the way. ”

Sue Feneron, Year 1 Teacher,
Brookfield Infant School, Kent

“ Bug Club is absolutely AMAZING. The children love it, parents cannot stop talking about it and teachers use it every day. ”

Jeremy Hannay,
Three Bridges Primary School, Southall

“ From the moment I picked up one of the books and realised that the content inside more than lived up to the expectation created by the attractive covers, I knew that I had to make Bug Club a school priority. Then the books arrived, and the positive reaction from every single member of staff confirmed that this was an outstanding scheme. However it wasn't until I heard the reaction of the children in the class next door to my office that I realised what a special resource we have on our hands - each and every child was genuinely excited. Then, when the books went home, the response from parents was tremendous. Bug Club has been an inspiration to the whole school family. ”

Tristan Roberts,
Headteacher, Ysgol Kingsland, Holyhead

“ I am loving Bug Club, both as a parent and as a teacher. My P3 son is having so much fun collecting his points to tell his friends in school. My P1 class are enjoying the interactive bugs and having the lilac stories which they are familiar with to discuss at home and in school. ”

Irene McCool,
Holy Trinity Primary School, Belfast

“ It is great to see some of the boys, especially the reluctant readers, actually want to be the first to choose a book to read. Compared to traditional reading schemes, Bug Club is so much more advanced given that children can follow different characters and not the same ones week in week out; they can choose fiction, fact, or even comics to read, with all of it being reinforced at home in an interactive and fun way. ”

Sue Feneron, Year 1 Teacher,
Brookfield Infant School, Kent

“ Bug Club is the best thing since sliced bread to get the children moving with their independent reading. ”

Jacqueline Stevens, CLL Leader,
Hovingham Primary School, Leeds

“ Fun, interactive, engaging and most importantly, makes reading an experience that children can be proud of. ”

Kelly Holden-White,
St Mary's Primary School, Bicester

“ We love Bug Club because there are so many brilliant books (both fiction and non-fiction) that don't have crinkled corners and that no one has drawn on! ”

Rebecca Roe,
Ballywalter Primary School, County Down

“ Reception children love it with fabulous progress in phonics already – yippee!! ”

Heather Grimes,
Broadlea Primary School, Isle of Wight

“ The children love the different illustrations and the familiar characters. It really inspires the more reluctant readers. ”

Siobhan Mallon,
High Wych Primary School, Sawbridgeworth

“ Bug Club has helped get our pupils enthusiastic about reading again and raised its status in school. ”

Lynn Brewin,
Isebrook SEN College, Kettering

Synthetic phonics under the microscope

By Professor Rhona Johnston and Dr Joyce Watson

Phonics Bug authors Dr Joyce Watson and Professor Rhona Johnston are the duo behind the seven-year Clackmannanshire study into the effectiveness of synthetic phonics. Here they discuss what brought them to look into synthetic phonics in the first place; the process by which they evaluated the method against and alongside analytic phonics, and the astonishing results that have become so instrumental in bringing synthetic phonics to the forefront of education policy.

The forbears of phonics

The phonic approach, whereby children are shown that letter sounds are a guide to the pronunciation of words, has a long history. While in England it gave way for many years to a sight-word approach to teaching reading, it was re-introduced in the late 1990s via the then DfEE's Progression in Phonics.

In Scotland, the analytic phonics method had always been retained as a part of the reading curriculum. However, a study by Watson, reported in 1998, found that the pace of teaching analytic phonics had slowed down considerably, and the practice of teaching overt sounding and blending was diminishing. As a result, although they 'got there eventually', children were falling behind the expected results. It was interesting, therefore, that in a class where the teacher introduced 'sounding and blending' all the way through unfamiliar words early on, the children made much better progress than in the other classes.

Putting it to the test

It was this that led us to take a closer look at synthetic phonics, where sounding and blending is taught right at the start of reading tuition, before an initial sight-word vocabulary is established. This method was already being used in other European countries. Our initial studies, however, revealed that even when controlling speed of letter-sound learning, children taught by the synthetic phonics approach learnt to read words much faster than those taught by the typical analytic phonics approach.



Dr Joyce Watson

Professor
Rhona Johnston

We wanted to see if synthetic phonics teaching was effective when implemented by class teachers, and to examine whether teaching children phoneme awareness skills without a link to letters was beneficial for their reading and spelling development. So in 1997, we began our study in Clackmannanshire.

The method

Altogether we studied 304 children in 13 Primary 1 (Reception) classes in Clackmannanshire. Our interventions began shortly after the children started school at around the age of 5. We divided the children up into three test groups, in order to compare:

- synthetic phonics teaching
- a standard analytic phonics programme
- an analytic phonics programme supplemented by a phonemic awareness training programme.

As the groups could not be equated on social class given the available sample, the children from the most deprived areas, who had the worst prognosis, were placed in the synthetic phonics condition. All groups received their programmes for 16 weeks, with breaks for half term and Christmas.

Analytic phonics only group

Four classes were taught about the relationship between letters and sounds using an analytic phonics approach for 20 minutes a day. As was customary, they learnt letter sounds at the rate of one a week, introduced in the initial position of words.

Analytic phonics – phonological awareness group

Four classes carried out a programme where in addition to analytic phonics teaching for 10 minutes a day, children were taught how to segment and blend spoken words without the aid of print or letters, using rhymes and phonemes, for 10 minutes a day.

They also learnt letter sounds at the rate of one a week, introduced in the initial position of words.

Synthetic phonics group

Five classes of children were taught by a synthetic phonics approach, sounding and blending for reading, and also segmenting for spelling. The lessons lasted for 20 minutes a day. They learnt six letter sounds every eight days in initial, middle and final positions in words.

Astonishing results

At the end of the 16-week training period, the synthetic phonics group was reading words around seven months ahead of chronological age, and was seven months ahead of the other two groups.

The synthetic phonics group's spelling was also seven months ahead of chronological age, and was around eight to nine months ahead of the two analytic phonics groups.

In order to gain an exact measure of whether the gains the children experienced from the Primary 1 programme were maintained, we continued to follow these children's progress in word reading, spelling and reading comprehension right through to Primary 7 (Year 6). We found that for word reading and spelling the gain in skill compared with chronological age increased significantly over the years, even though the training programme had ended in Primary 1. In Primary 2, word reading was found to be 11.5 months ahead of chronological age, and by Primary 7 it was a spectacular three years, six months ahead. Reading comprehension was also significantly ahead of age expectations at this stage.

A major and lasting effect

Overall, we concluded that a synthetic phonics programme, as a part of the reading curriculum, has a major and long lasting effect on children's reading and spelling attainment. Their continued strides ahead of expected ability suggests that learning to read through segmenting and blending gives children a self-teaching technique that they are able to use throughout their reading education.



Phonics Bug is based on the Clackmannanshire study.

Independent Review

Phonics Bug: A multi-sensory approach to phonic development

Reviewed by Marc Bowen

There are different schools of thought on how best to develop children's phonic awareness and early reading skills. However, we can all agree that learning should be enjoyable - and the Pearson Phonics Bug programme, which engages children with reading and spelling by using a multi-sensory approach to phonic development, doesn't disappoint.

Phonics Bug is based on the principles of synthetic phonics and is intended to provide schools with a highly structured and supportive programme to ensure children are developing their phonic knowledge; enjoying themselves whilst they do so!

Teacher support

The teacher's handbook provides a wealth of information which is easily accessible for the busy teacher. Each of the units is accompanied by a detailed teaching plan, providing guidance on how to introduce the lesson, build on prior learning and then develop phonic knowledge through reading, spelling and writing - with advice on assessing progress. The detailed plans are also helpfully summarised in a quick-reference guide on each page, which is ideal for the teacher or teaching assistant during a hectic lesson.

Online resources

An excellent aspect of Phonics Bug is the way in which each unit is supported by electronic resources. Refreshingly, these resources aren't stored on a CD-ROM, which invariably gets lost or damaged; instead the electronic content is accessed through an online portal using a simple login. Once within the online resource there is access to an 'electronic magnetic whiteboard' offering the teacher an effective means of modelling phonic learning. It is recommended that this is replicated by the children on their own magnetic boards. The website also offers an interactive alphabet song, videos to support some units and a range of different games that can be used to reinforce phonic awareness beyond the highly structured lesson.

Whilst the resource is heavily focused on high quality teaching and learning during discrete phonics sessions, it also provides some opportunities to extend learning.

Within the electronic resource it is possible to access printable materials intended to support children in consolidating their phonic knowledge. The benefit of offering these resources electronically is that they are offered in a format which can be customised by the teacher to match the context and needs of each class.



Decodable readers

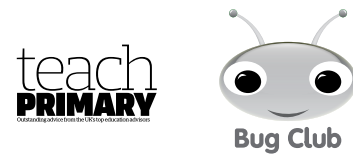
Additionally, beyond the direct teaching of phonic skills, the programme also offers a broad range of high quality decodable texts as a part of the broader Bug Club reading scheme. The books linked to the early phonic stages are filled with appealing illustrations and high quality photographs, covering both fiction and non-fiction. The start of each book provides pre-reading guidance for the adult - whether that be a teacher, teaching assistant or parent - on the phoneme focus within each text, and how to appropriately segment new vocabulary. There are also some supplementary follow-up activities suggested at the end of each book, which would be equally achievable at home or at school.

The verdict: Bitten by the bug!

The Phonics Bug programme offers a comprehensive phonic development package that can be completed in as little as 16 weeks, or extended to meet the needs of individual children and classes. The high quality resources offered as part of this programme provide invaluable support to help busy teachers ensure they are effectively developing phonics within their classroom and having a lot of fun at the same time.

Phonics Bug was reviewed by Marc Bowen for Teach Primary. Read the full article at www.teachprimary.com/tried_and_tested/view/phonics-bug





Independent Review

Bug Club: Teaching computer-savvy children to value reading

Reviewed by John Dabell

Teaching computer savvy children to value reading as an activity, to find pleasure in books of all kinds and become real readers is crucial but far from easy, but I think I know where to start. Bug Club from Pearson is a whole-school, phonically-based 24/7 reading programme which connects online eBooks with printed books to teach and inspire children to read. It's easily the best reading programme I've seen in 15 years of teaching and the perfect marriage of print and digital resources.

I accessed the free 90-day trial at the Bug Club website. This is a no holds barred full access offer, so pass the word and make the most of it.

Pupil eBooks

The Pupil Area of Bug Club is very easy to use. In 'My Books' pupils can select an eBook they want to read or have read to them. Some pages in the books contain hotspots which link to questions which children answer to earn points. This is a nice feature as it gives children an incentive to read with a purpose. This also doubles up for assessing children's comprehension. Children can zoom-in on the words and pictures for closer inspection and dip into another book if they choose. The accompanying hard copy books contain before and during tips for assessing understanding, checking vocabulary and reading the story. There are also after reading ideas and follow-up activities to consider. The books come as colour-coded bands from Reception to Y2, and there are stacks of phonic phase and reading

recovery titles to choose from – a mixture of fiction and non-fiction titles with over 200 books thoroughly and appropriately graded. With big names such as Wallace and Gromit, Dr Who and Angelina Ballerina on board, the odds of engagement are stacked in our favour.

Teacher resources

The Teacher's Area is similarly simple to use and comes with extra annotation tools for highlighting, writing and, in some cases, editing text onscreen. These can't be saved, but are useful to have. Tracking and assessment has never been easier. There are quiz questions linked to Assessment Focuses which feed directly into ready-made reports, levelling guidance charts which allow you to use specific titles as benchmark books for one-to-one reading and guided reading cards for structuring lessons. At a glance you can get an idea of pupil strengths and weaknesses. Real-time parental reports can be printed off for meetings about pupil progress. The Teacher's section contains an excellent facility for creating and managing classes and groups and a facility for searching and allocating books.



Whole-class teaching

Teaching Tools comprise a range of pupil games, a magnetic alphabet board, teaching guides, photocopy masters and graphemes. The lessons contain video clips linked to the BBC to practise sounds, and the writing tools are superb for practising letter formation. The Teaching and Assessment guides are written by Johnston and Watson, so we're in safe hands. I do have a couple of bugbears with Bug Club.

The eBooks can be read to the children at the click of a button, but it would have been great to see individual words highlighted as they were read. Also, the magnetic board in the whole class teaching software section might not suit children with visual learning impairments, and the letters on the magnetic board cannot change size or colour.

The verdict: Join the club

Bug Club deserves gushing praise for its design and innovation. This is a programme destined to lead the market and transform the way we teach reading from Reception to Y2. It will help children get the best possible start in their reading journey and enjoy page after page of reading success. This resource will make you glad you became a teacher and if you aren't teaching Reception, Y1 or Y2, you'll wish you were. It's not cheap, but you get what you pay for and this would represent a canny investment.

Bug Club was reviewed by John Dabell for Teach Primary. Read the full article at www.teachprimary.com/trying_and_testing/view/pearson-bug-club



Creating stimulating phonics sessions	
Phonics Bug case study: Brookfield Infant School	
School Name:	Brookfield Infant School, Kent
Number of Pupils:	180
School Type:	Community Primary (4-7 years)
OFSTED Rating:	Good (March 2011)
Why Phonics Bug?	Sue Feneron, Head of Early Years at Brookfield Infant School, on the outskirts of Maidstone, wanted to improve performance, particularly in reading. Around one third of the children had reading ages below their chronological ages and were struggling with phoneme and grapheme recognition.
The verdict	All of the children who used Phonics Bug retained 100% of the phonemes they were taught and went on to apply their newly acquired phonic skills to their reading and writing. One child said "I can read now, and write – sounds are fun now!"

Finding the right phonics programme

With the introduction of Bug Club, children within Key Stage 1 were becoming actively involved and engaged within their reading. I, as the Head of Early Years, and the other members of the school management, decided that the Foundation Stage classes should also become involved with the same style of engaging and stimulating learning when it came to phonics. We subsequently used a number of different phonics programmes to deliver three phonemes per week. Over a year, we monitored our children’s reading ages. It became apparent that around a third were unable to recall phoneme/ grapheme recognition, and were disappointingly at a level the same as, or below, their chronological age.

Phonics Bug to the rescue!

As we had been concerned about the performance of some of our children, I followed the progress of five children within my Foundation Stage class using Phonics Bug.

The selected children had been unable to retain the phonemes taught previously and our assessments showed that all of them could neither recall single sounds nor recognise the corresponding graphemes.

We have been delighted with the success of using Phonics Bug! It has enabled the children to access fast-paced and stimulating phonics sessions in a way that reflects their popular culture; using computers. Phonics Bug introduces the children to fun, animated characters, combined with clips of CBeebies videos. We have been able to use it with smaller groups along

with whole-class teaching sessions, using a range of aural, visual and kinaesthetic phonic activities.

“Just one more time!”

These Phonics Bug sessions became an instant success with our group of young children, and appealed to them all. We found that the teaching programmes, interactive games and fun activities enabled every child to be involved and actively participate within their learning.

Many complained that the session had ended and begged to repeat it; “Just one more time, Mrs Feneron, please!” - no mean feat with five year olds! We continued to introduce three sounds per week to our sample group, with every child continuing to look forward to each and every session.

The results

The results have been fantastic! All five of the children have retained 100% of the phonemes taught and all have been empowered to apply their newly-acquired phonic skills to all aspects of their reading and writing.



Turning reluctant readers into bookworms	
Phonics Bug case study: Bishop Henderson Primary School	
School Name:	Bishop Henderson Primary School, Somerset
Number of Pupils:	160
School Type:	Voluntary Controlled Primary (3-11 years)
OFSTED Rating:	Satisfactory (Jan 2010)
Why Phonics Bug?	Sandy Shepard, Year 1/2 class teacher, Advanced Skills teacher and Literacy Subject Leader at Bishop Henderson wanted to help a trio of reluctant-reader Year 2 boys to improve their reading confidence, raise their enthusiasm and help them progress with their reading and spelling.
The verdict	By the end of Year 2, Phonics Bug had helped all three boys make significant progress and all were well-placed to catch up with their peers. One boy, a virtual non-reader at the start of the year, was working within NC Level 2A by the end of the year and achieved 2B in writing.

A trio of reluctant readers

In Year 2, we had a group of boys who started the year with reading and writing skills that were well below the expected level for their age. David lacked confidence and knew that other children of his age were much better readers. John had refused to read at home and had been very reluctant to read and write in school. Simon sometimes read at home but had made very slow progress and lacked enthusiasm for reading and writing. All three boys had very poor spelling skills and were not able to read independently.

How Phonics Bug was used

We decided to use Phonics Bug as an intervention in addition to the regular whole-class sessions and daily individual reading and writing intervention groups. Phonics Bug decodable readers were used to get David, John and Simon engaged. They were able to access their books online at home and for the first time their parents reported that they were keen to read.

In school, Phonics Bug was used for individual and group sessions. The structure and flexibility of the resources enabled the teacher to select activities at the appropriate level and focus on the areas that were a priority for each of the children. All of the children looked forward to the sessions and loved the videos that introduce each phoneme and make them memorable. The feedback from the character when they succeeded or needed encouragement to have another go supported them and made the sessions lively and fun. They found they were regularly experiencing success in small steps and this motivated them to work hard even when they met challenges.

Tailoring learning to each child

Phonics Bug was particularly successful in allowing the teacher to assess and meet the children’s individual needs. When using the programme it was immediately apparent where the children had strengths to build on and weaknesses that had to be addressed.

David, for example, knew individual letter sounds but was slowly sounding each individual letter to try and read words. He responded quickly to being able to move the letters together on the whiteboard to blend the sounds. It was very helpful for him to hear and see the word being blended before blending and reading words independently. John had particular difficulty with spelling, so boxes for phonemes focussed him on how many sounds there were in the word and supported him in segmenting.

Turning boys into book worms!

At the end of Year 2, the children have all achieved Level 2B in reading;

David, who was virtually a non-reader at the beginning of the year, and working within 2A has achieved 2B in writing.

John and Simon both achieved 2B in reading and now read with enjoyment and enthusiasm. Although still slightly below the expected level in writing (2C) both made huge progress and were well placed to catch up with their peers very quickly.

The children, their parents and their teacher were delighted with their progress!

Tackle the summer dip in reading

Bug Club case study: St Mary's Academy

School Name: St Mary's Academy, Suffolk
 Number of Pupils: 328
 School Type: Academy Primary (4-11 years)
 OFSTED Rating: Outstanding (July 2010)

Why Bug Club? St Mary's Academy is a two-form entry primary school in Suffolk. Like most schools, it generally finds a 'dip' in reading progress between the end of one year and the next. In the summer of 2012, Kate Ruttle, the SENCO at St Mary's Academy carried out an action research project to see if access to Bug Club would impact on the 'summer holiday dip' between Year 2 and Year 3.

The verdict Although the sample group was too small to be statistically significant, none of the children using Bug Club dipped during the summer months. 56% of them made reading progress and Kate's results suggested that access to Bug Club online made an educational difference to the children involved.

The research premise

Our Year 2 classes were well balanced, with children in both classes achieving National Curriculum levels ranging from 1B to 3C in their Year 2 SATs. The APS* for Class I was 15.2 and for Class C it was 15.5.

We adopted Bug Club in May 2012 but deliberately delayed introducing it to all of our classes until September of that year, because we first wanted to carry out this specific research project. We wanted to determine whether access to Bug Club during the summer holidays could mitigate the summer dip in reading we so often see between Years 2 and 3.

In July 2012, we designated Class I our intervention class, giving them access to www.bugclub.co.uk. Class C, the parallel control class for this research project, did not have access to www.bugclub.co.uk during this period.

Measures of reading progress

In order to find out whether Bug Club had an impact on the children's reading levels, we put in place two measures to assess all of the children's reading abilities prior to and following the summer holidays:

- progress in NC levels between June and November 2012, for the whole cohort (Classes I and C); and
- progress as measured by PERA** for six children in each class, as measured in the fortnight before and the fortnight after the summer holidays.

* Average Point Score, calculated by converting National Curriculum levels into numbers and finding the average for a class.

** Phonics and Early Reading Analysis, Hodder, 2012

The results

Against our first measure - progress in NC levels between June and November - the results for Class I were encouraging whilst the results for Class C were more typical of the experience we have with other cohorts in the school. The results showed that:

- in Class I (the class using Bug Club), no children 'dipped' and 56% made reading progress
- in Class C (the class not using Bug Club during the summer months), 11% 'dipped' and 46% made reading progress.

To determine progress as measured by PERA between July and September, we tested a boy and a girl from each class whose reading profiles were high



(level 3C), mid (level 2B) and low (level 1A). A total of 12 children were tested in this way, or 22% of the cohort. The results according to this measure showed that:

- in Class I (the class using Bug Club), all PERA children made reading progress of between +1 and +7 months
- In Class C (the class not using Bug Club during the summer months), all PERA children 'dipped' by between -1 and -5 months.

Feedback from the children and parents

In addition to the tests, we asked the children in Class I and their parents about their experiences of using Bug Club online during the summer holidays. Parents' comments included:

"It was good to know that we were practising reading books at the right level."

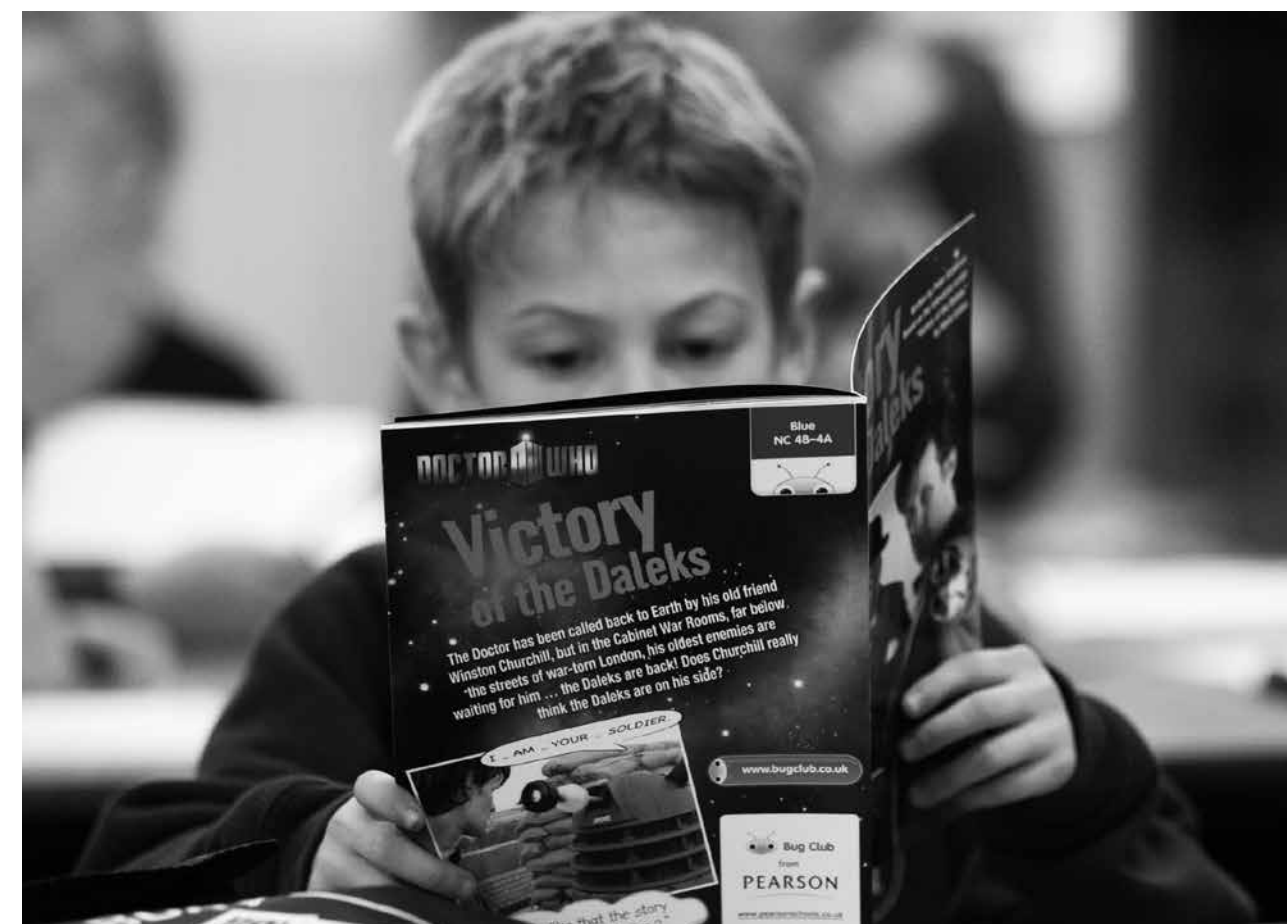
"The summer holidays are too long without changing reading books. This was much better."

And the children liked it too. As one of them said:

"Sometimes in the holidays, I forget how to read, but this time I didn't."

Our conclusions

Although the sample used in our project was too small to be statistically significant and the number of other variables at play prevent us from proving beyond doubt that access to www.bugclub.co.uk had a positive impact on our children's attainment, these results do suggest that access to Bug Club online made an educational significance to the children in Class I. As teachers, we saw much to give us confidence in Bug Club. Our Class I children were better prepared on their return to school in September and were more confident in their reading abilities. And the feedback from the children and their parents who used Bug Club online certainly showed the resources were well-used and valued during the long summer break.



Build a 'reading for pleasure' culture

Bug Club case study: Bangor Central Integrated Primary School

School Name: **Bangor Central Integrated Primary School, Bangor**
 Number of Pupils: **577**
 School Type: **Community Integrated Primary (4-11 years)**
 ETI Rating: **Very good (May 2011)**

Why Bug Club? Wendy Jenkins, the Literacy Coordinator and Deputy Head recognised that getting children who are used to TV and DVDs hooked on reading was a real challenge so she took part in trialling Bug Club as it was being developed.

The verdict Bug Club had the children "laughing, engaged and begging for more" and Wendy believes Bug Club is the answer to the tricky issue of turning her reluctant boys into enthusiastic readers.

Targeting reluctant readers

Wendy Jenkins, the Literacy Coordinator and Deputy Head Teacher at Bangor Central Integrated Primary School, Northern Ireland, took part in the trialling of Bug Club books and software as they were being developed. She involved all of the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 teachers and children in the trialling, and the team at Pearson have really enjoyed working with them all. The feedback the children gave us has been invaluable in helping us to create exciting, engaging books that are pitched at just the right level.

Creating a buzz about reading

Wendy has become one of Bug Club's most enthusiastic advocates. "The children have loved trialling the books," she says. "They loved the diversity of characters they came across in Bug Club. Instead of seeing the same characters in every book, they read about lots of different characters. This led them to use much richer language when they were talking about the books."

Wendy's focus is on promoting reading throughout the school. The Foundation Stage teachers assess all the children for reading readiness when they start school. Quite a few of the children are not used to handling books, so Wendy found the lilac level wordless books in Bug Club really useful for them. "A particular favourite was the Trucktown series – the boys loved the trucks and the girls loved the fact that there was a girl truck just for them!"

The teachers at Bangor usually find that getting children hooked on books is a real challenge. "They

are so used to TV, DVDs and everything else that getting them interested in reading is really hard. But Bug Club had children laughing, engaged and begging for more!"

When Sharon Heasely, a teacher at the school, read *Chase in New York* with her pupils, she was impressed. "The children really enjoyed the book and I was so impressed, it was great! The illustrations were exciting and informative. They stimulated a lot of discussion about an aeroplane journey, the city of New York, landmarks of New York and visits to the zoo. It was a really interesting and very clever story told in just a few pages. Completely suitable for this level. I would thoroughly enjoy using this book as a story book with my children."



Turning boys into book worms

Like many Literacy Coordinators, Wendy is faced with the tricky issue of how to turn boys into enthusiastic readers, but she feels she has found the answer with Bug Club. She told us about a little boy who read one of Bug Club's Jay and Sniffer books, *The Missing Masks*.

The boy began the trialling process by saying that he was bored. But once he started to read, he really connected with the story, wanted to read it and laughed at the pictures. Later, Wendy overheard him animatedly retelling the story and describing the pictures to some other children who had not been involved in the trialling process. His final comment was "It's really funny!"

Helping parents join the Club

Like many schools, Bangor found that when children start school their parents are very keen to read with them, but the older the children get, the less they read with their parents and the more the school has

to work with them. The school runs workshops with parents and sends parent activity sheets with the books that go home. Wendy felt that the help parents are offered on the inside covers of Bug Club books would be really useful. She was pleased to hear that Bug Club software offers parents extra support and ensures teachers can how much children are really reading at home.

Wendy's conclusions

When asked what teachers most liked about Bug Club, Wendy said that she loves the diversity of books with the great variety of genres in fiction, non-fiction and comics.

In the books, Wendy feels that there is a good balance of context words, high frequency words and phonically decodable words in all the books. She is also really looking forward to using the eBooks on her interactive whiteboard to model reading and during shared reading.



Build a ‘reading for pleasure’ culture

Bug Club case study: Great Heath Primary School

School Name:	Great Heath Primary School, Suffolk
Number of Pupils:	200
School Type:	Community First (3-9 years)
OFSTED Rating:	Satisfactory (Dec 2009)

Why Bug Club?	Too many children at the school were not achieving level 2 in their Year 2 SATs which was leaving them at a distinct disadvantage by the time they entered KS2. So Kate Ruttle, SENCO at Great Heath decided to try Bug Club.
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The verdict	The small steps in Bug Club gave the children who were falling behind the confidence to learn, to try out the strategies they have been taught, and to enjoy reading. One child moved from being a very un-confident P8 to level 2B by the end of one school year using Bug Club
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The background

Kate Ruttle, SENCO at Great Heath Primary School, discusses the impact of Bug Club on reading at the school in this study.

Too many children in our school don’t get level 2 in their Year 2 SATs and these children are at a clear disadvantage as they enter Key Stage 2. We had already made the decision to train a teaching assistant to follow the FFT programme*, when we received the Bug Club books. Since the books are so carefully levelled, and they are all unfamiliar books, we decided to use them with our children. We did the FFT training in early October, so we have only been following the programme for 6 weeks as of the middle of November.

Initially, we decided to select two children who are already well behind at the beginning of Year 2:

- Child A is a summer born girl. Initial teacher assessment put her as reading at about a level P8 which we decided to match to Bug Club level Red C.
- Child B is a summer born boy. He was virtually a non-reader so he started reading the Pink A books.

The programme follows the basic structure of Reading Recovery with alternate writing days and reading days. Children read each book a minimum of three times: it’s introduced on a reading day, re-read on a writing day and re-read again as a familiar text at the beginning of the next reading day. The children each have 20-25 minutes a day 1-1 support for reading and or writing.

Child A: from P8 to 2B in one year

Part of Child A’s problem with school has always been confidence. She joined the school nurture group when she was in Reception in order to boost her confidence and this was largely successful, but A always finds it hard to start a new class with a new teacher. She has been assessed by the Educational Psychologist who thinks that A is potentially an able child who is under-performing.

At the beginning of Year 2, the reading observation was again that A had lost ground from a 1C back to a P8 and wasn’t really doing much in class at all. After the first couple of sessions of FFT, we decided to move her back to Red A in order to give her some confidence. This approach worked and she soon began to look forward to her daily sessions. Within a week, she was reading confidently back at Red C – and she has continued to make amazing progress. Six weeks into the programme, she is now reading confidently at Green A and will move to Green B next week. This is a jump from a struggling P7/8 to a confident 1B in a matter of weeks.

Child A has obviously been supported by the daily reading sessions and the opportunity to develop a trusting relationship with an adult in school. However, the small painless steps in Bug Club have been invaluable because she has had the confidence to learn, to try out the strategies she is being taught and to enjoy reading. Her confidence is already impacting on her general class work too, and her Mum is thrilled that A is reading and re-reading all of the books in her online Bug Club world at home.

When A is reading securely at Green C – which should be before Christmas – we will gradually withdraw the programme, but make sure that the TA reads with her at least once a week. By the beginning of the Spring term, A will be back on track and her end of year predication are now a level 2B which was unthinkable only a few weeks ago, but now seems like a real possibility. From P8 to 2B within one school year is very good progress!

Child B: enjoying becoming a reader

Child B is a very active little boy who has always been unwilling to sit down, to read and to write. Assessments suggest that he has low average receptive vocabulary (BPVS standardised score of 89 in July 2010) and a poor short term memory. By the end of Year 1, he was realising that he was falling behind his peers and his behaviour worsened. This pattern continued at the beginning of Year 2 and we were hesitant about taking him into the FFT programme because of it. However, we made the decision that since he needed to learn to read, we would see what impact the programme might make.

For B, one of the big draws to the programme was the familiar characters in some of the books. Although he couldn’t yet read the Star Wars books or the Wallace and Grommit books, he understood that if he worked hard, this might happen.

Initial assessment showed that B was still at an early stage of learning phonics: although he recognised most of the letter sounds, he wasn’t blending successfully. All of the children in school have daily phonics sessions in attainment sets. B was doing the phase 3 work for the third time because he hadn’t made the progress we had hoped. This had previously been put down to his behaviour but it quickly became apparent that part of B’s difficulty was that he didn’t ‘get’ the point of phonics.

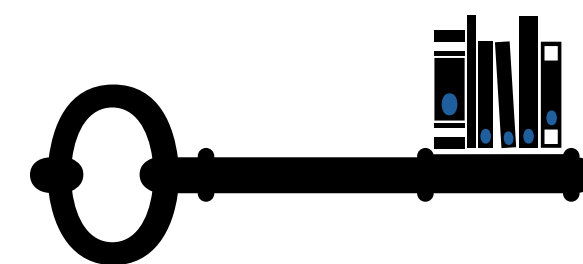
We started B reading the Trucktown books, starting with Lilac and quickly progressing through Pink A and Pink B. Once B realised that he could use his phonics to work out the words in the text, he took off. We revisited the Harry and the Dinosaurs books at Pink A and Pink B to ensure that he was secure reading at these levels and then moved onto Red. Six weeks into the programme, B is now reading the Yellow books and he will soon be ready for Blue.

For B, the value of Bug Club is twofold: the small steps are allowing him to make progress without fear of failure, and the clusters of books are giving him incentives to move on. The pattern of his progress has continued to be that he will read all three books in a cluster, then go back a couple of sublevels and read all three books in the next cluster. In between times, he reads some of the non-fiction books. Although reading the third book in a cluster can be a trial – so we read it with him – by the time he has already read through two clusters at the same level, he is easily able to read all three books in the next. The motivation of reading another book about a character has proved to be sufficient to spur him on and given him the incentive to try. As an additional incentive, he is sometimes allowed to read his familiar book on the computer (he doesn’t have internet access at home).

Child B’s behaviour is now much improved and he is generally willing to make an attempt at anything that is offered to him – including writing which was once a significant trigger for temper tantrums. Once he realised why he was learning phonics, he discovered that he had been inadvertently learning the phase 3 graphemes after all and he was promoted into the Phase 4 group. He will move to Phase 5 after Christmas.

The results

We will continue to work with B for at least another three months in order to see if we can achieve a level 2 by the end of the year. It’s a tall order, but we are optimistic that he will at least gain a level 2C at the end of this year. Although he is still working behind the expected level for his age, B is now learning to learn and enjoying becoming a reader.



* The FFT provides results analysis to schools and LAs in England and Wales.

Building a 'reading for pleasure' culture

Bug Club case study: Lent Rise Primary School

School Name:	Lent Rise County Combined School, Buckinghamshire
Number of Pupils:	414
School Type:	Community Primary (4-11 years)
OFSTED Rating:	Outstanding (July 2010)

Why Bug Club?	Lent Rise is a popular school in an area recognised by the DFE as one of deprivation. Typically, pupils have low levels of pre-schooling and many enter the school at age 4 with below average attainment. Jill Watson, Head teacher at the school, introduced Bug Club to help children develop a passion for reading, to drive up standards, and in particular, to develop stronger home-school learning links.
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The verdict	By February 2011, the school's comparative Early Years Foundation Stage e-profile scores for reading and letters and sounds showed a noticeable improvement compared to previous years. Jill believes pupils are progressing at a faster rate with their phonic decoding and sight recognition. Parental feedback has been overwhelmingly positive, as has that of the pupils. Now, Early Years co-ordinator Katie Penney and Bug Club co-ordinator Emma Whorton continue to incorporate Bug Club into the school's teaching.
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Jill Watson, Head teacher at Lent Rise, started using Bug Club in school in September 2010. She began by using Bug Club's online reading world with the school's 60 Early Years pupils, then extended its use to the whole of Key Stage 1.

Preparing Early Years pupils for their journey towards becoming fully-fledged readers is a key priority at the school. "Parents are given guidance on supporting reading prior to the children starting school" explains Jill. "All pupils begin home readers on entry to school and are taught phonics and reading skills daily through a variety of approaches."

Jill realised that Bug Club could help her Early Years pupils develop a passion for reading as well as improve reading standards across the school. "Our vision for Bug Club was to use it to develop home-school learning links and parental confidence alongside our own learning platform. We also wanted to use Bug Club's eBooks and printed books to enhance our existing reading resources," says Jill.

"We use Bug Club's online reading world and teaching resources in a variety of ways," explains Jill.

- Teachers and pupils regularly use the interactive whiteboard activities within whole class, group and one-to-one sessions.
- Pupils access their personalised online reading world at school, working one-to-one with a

Teaching Assistant which helps each child's reading development and enables the TA to continually assess their reading.

- Pupils have 'self choice sessions' with Bug Club where they choose what they'd like to read. "In these sessions, the children show their interest and enjoyment in reading and often share the books they're reading with their friends" says Jill.
- Pupils access Bug Club at home. "We encourage them to log on to their personalised online reading world at least once a week, to complement their home reading," explains Jill, "but we find many children log on more than this!"



What pupils say

Pupils at Lent Rise are unanimous in their praise for Bug Club.

- "I like Bug Club because it is fun." Madison, age 4.
- "I like Bug Club because I like playing the games." Fin, age 5.
- "It will help me learn to write too." Stanley, age 5.
- "I like looking at the books." Brian, age 6.
- "I get lots of points!" Charlie, age 4.

"We use the Bug Club printed books as well as the eBooks" says Jill. "The children enjoy finding their past and future reading books in their online reading world. They really look forward to accessing or receiving particular books that they have enjoyed together using a different medium. They enjoy discussing in school which books they have read before and which ones they enjoyed the most."

What the parents say

Parents are just as positive about Bug Club and the impact it is having on their children's reading. "They have generally found the site easy to use and they are happy and confident to use it," explains Jill. "Parents have liked the way we have provided a link to the site from our learning platform and that the individual usernames and passwords have been adapted to match existing pupil usernames and passwords. Many parents have asked if they can share the programme's website address with friends and family," she adds.

Mrs A, parent of five-year-old Alfie says: "This is the breakthrough I have been after for Alfie. I couldn't make reading fun – I tried, but it was just not getting him into it enough to want to learn more, but this computer reading is fab! Alfie cannot get enough of it. He actually wants to read the next book so he can answer the questions and get the applause! Just brilliant! I'm so happy!"

And Mrs W, parent of five-year-old Boris says: "One thing to praise is the variety of books available and the way they provide my husband and I with ideas for fun and educational activities to do at home. For instance, Boris has really enjoyed several of the factual books which instruct you on making something. How to be a Cress Barber was a definite favourite, for example, and we did go on to make the cress heads, with Boris reading out the instructions he needed to follow from

the online book. Boris certainly does think reading is fun – he can't get enough of it."

What teachers say

Jill and her colleagues are similarly positive about Bug Club and the impact it is having in school and on their teaching. "The teaching tools are easy to use, particularly the class monitoring page where you can check which books the children have been reading, alongside the date that they last logged on," explains Jill. "This page also shows quite clearly which children are due to run out of books so that you can allocate them before they run out."

The staff also find the pupil interface very user-friendly, commenting that the bugs theme and a mixture of different topics ensure it appeals to both boys and girls.



Thumbs up for Bug Club

Jill is full of praise for Bug Club and the results it is delivering at Lent Rise. "The children are keen to read the Bug Club eBooks and play the educational games linked to them. Teachers have found the resources very helpful for whole class and group teaching as well as one-to-one work and at this stage it appears that pupils are progressing at a faster rate with their phonic decoding and sight recognition."

Indeed, by February 2011, five months after they started to use Bug Club, the school's comparative Early Years Foundation Stage e-profile scores for reading and letters and sounds showed a noticeable improvement compared to previous years.

Jill's final thoughts? "Bug Club is valued tool and I would recommend it to any primary school!"

Raise attainment using eBooks

Bug Club case study: Glebe Infant School

School Name:	Glebe Infant School, Gloucestershire
Number of Pupils:	100
School Type:	Community Infants (4-7 years)
OFSTED Rating:	Good (March 2013)

Why Bug Club?	The school's reading levels were well below the national average at 2b+ and at level 3. Andy Taylor, English Coordinator and teacher at the school realised they needed to develop the children's inference and deduction skills and give them more opportunities to engage with a wider range of books and genres.
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The verdict	Before they started using Bug Club, only 65.9% of pupils were reading at 2B or above. At the end of KS1 assessments, 76% of children were recorded as 2B or above with 45% reaching level 3 in reading.
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Andy Taylor, English Coordinator and Teacher at Glebe helped Pearson trial Bug Club as it was being developed and Glebe is now an advocacy school for the programme.

Between 2008 and 2010, Glebe's reading levels had been well below the national average at 2B+ and at level 3. The school had been using *Letters and Sounds* for three years and whilst this had improved the number of children achieving level 2C+, it hadn't had a significant impact on 2B+. In 2010, only 65.9% of pupils achieved level 2B+, compared with a national average of 71.0% and a Gloucestershire average of 76.2.

Andy realised they needed to develop the children's inference and deduction skills and give them more opportunities to engage with a wider range of books and genres if they were to turn around the school's reading attainment.

Familiar characters encouraged children to read

Andy explains how Bug Club made a difference with his class, "As the paper materials began to arrive I noticed a large number of trademarked characters such as Ben10 and Angelina Ballerina. Instantly the children I was trialling the books with wanted to read these stories, particularly the boys! The familiar characters encouraged them to want to read the books and really grabbed their attention.

Whilst the texts were engaging, it was the online element we were particularly interested in as it asked

the children questions about the texts that they had read and rewarded them with points when they got the answer correct. The questions addressed different AFs and became more complicated as the levels of the texts increased."

The online reading world was a real hit

"As children earn 'Bug Points' for successfully answering questions, they earn rewards (a healthy incentive to keep them reading). The rewards differ depending on the year group, but I found that even though some children completed all the rewards they could get, they still kept on reading and accessing the books. This was particularly the case with the boys in my class who were competing to see who's dragon (the Year 2 reward) would grow the biggest. Although I worried initially that the children only wanted to read to earn points to make their dragon grow, the fact that I had boys reading between 3-5 extra books a week and answering questions on them soon calmed that fear."

Detailed online assessment tools

Andy was particularly impressed with Bug Club's teaching tools. "As a teacher you can view a screen for each child. It shows you their level of accuracy for each AF for each book they have read. Green means right first time, orange is right after two or three attempts, and red is wrong after three attempts. The grey 'blobs' are AF6 questions and have a written answer you can see when you hover over them. You can also bring up a graph that shows their level of competency at each book band level," he explains.

"Initially we gave the children login details and we used it as homework up until February half term. This was the most time-consuming part, although relatively easy to do, for each child only their first name, surname and year group are required and the website generates passwords (animal names) for them."

"At Christmas I sent out questionnaires to receive feedback from parents which was overwhelmingly positive except for the fact that they would like the opportunity to turn off the read to me option on the texts so that the children can't just rely on the book to read for them. Then from February half term we began to use Bug Club in the classroom as a guided reading activity. This gave children who may not have had regular access at home the chance to access

Bug Club in school. This completely re-energised the programme and children were electing to go on Bug Club during free choosing times and when the computers were on in the classroom before school started!"

The results speak for themselves

"By the time we made it to the end of KS1 assessments I was excited to see the impact that Bug Club had made on our 2B+ children. Our 2B+ levels were recorded at 76% and a staggering 45% reached level 3 in reading, with 28% of our boys achieving level 3! The next step for us is to maintain this momentum and utilise the AF data that Bug Club produces more fully to enhance our APP assessments in reading."



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