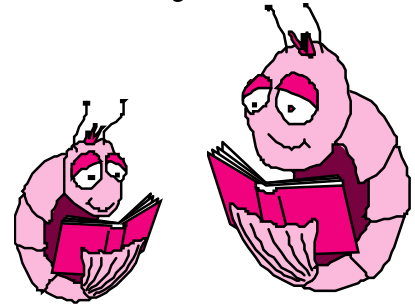


Building Bridges in Literacy

Case Study

2003 -2004



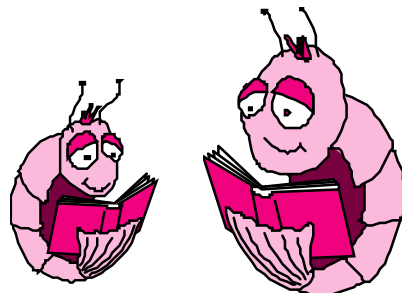
SHRIMP

SHARED

READING

INVERGORDON &

MILTON PROJECT



Building Bridges in Literacy P6-S1

Context:

Invergordon Academy is a 6 year Secondary School of 420 pupils on the shores of the Cromarty Firth in Ross-shire in the Highlands, about 25 miles north of Inverness. It serves the town of Invergordon, the villages of Milton and Kildary and the rural area of Newmore. The school's catchment area is compact with only four associated primary schools. Milton Primary has 86 pupils and is situated in a housing estate near the small village of Kildary about 6 miles north of Invergordon.

The population of the area could be classified occupationally as predominantly manual. This area used to be one of high employment in industries such as the aluminium smelter and the oil fabrication yard but has suffered from the decline of these industries. Many families moved into the area from the Central Belt in the boom time and remained here even when the jobs disappeared. In recent years, there has been an increase in the number of families moving up from England in search of a better quality of life. Invergordon has a free school meal rating of 20% and Milton has a rating of 60%.

Key Focus of Project:

The overall aims of the project were:

- to raise and sustain achievement in literacy in P6-S1.
- To involve Parents/Carers in the learning process with their children.
- To raise the profile of reading and the library amongst pupils.

Milton Primary School and Invergordon Academy worked together on this project which involved pupils, teachers, parents, carers, subject specialists, school auxiliaries, school librarians and Highland Region's Principal Schools Librarian. The project was supported by national funding and local authority Development Officers.

At the start of the project, the Home Reading Initiative leaflet reminded us that :
"Reading with your child works wonders. It boosts their confidence, fuels their imagination and gives them a head start at school. Best of all, when you read together, you grow together."
It was felt that a shared personal reading programme would benefit pupils from both schools because:

- A number of pupils in P6, P7 and S1 were at Level A, B and C and had limited engagement in personal reading.
- Reading was seen by many as an isolated activity which was a disincentive for pupils.
- Limited ability to read is a barrier to learning in other curricular subjects.
- Interest in the Power Readers' scheme in the Academy was not extensive.

It was decided to name the project SHRIMP for **Shared Reading at Invergordon and Milton Project**

Regular meetings took place to decide on a course of action. It was agreed that those involved would be pupils from P6 and P7 in Milton Primary School and S1 pupils in Invergordon Academy and one adult for each pupil. Adults could be nominated from parents, carers, relations, friends, or school staff. Pupils would choose a book from the library and take two copies of the same book, one for the adult and one for the pupil. Reading could be shared at home and in school. Three social evenings would take place. Social evenings would involve a guest speaker, discussion of the books and refreshments. At the last social evening we would choose a favourite author and send him/her a certificate of appreciation.

Action Plan

To achieve this, an action plan was drawn up.

- before starting the project, a survey to be carried out to find out the reading habits of pupils in P6, P7, S1
- control group to be identified

- books to be chosen: twelve authors fiction, ten categories non-fiction
- books to be selected to suit a wide range of ability, and different genders
- two of each title to be ordered, one for the pupil and one for the adult
- books to be divided into three groups in order to ensure that people would have some books in common for the group discussions
- Invergordon Academy and Milton Primary School to launch the project, in their own school, two weeks before the October holidays
- Letters to be sent out asking parents/carers to nominate an adult
- Volunteers to be found from the schools to read with pupils without an adult
- Dates for three social evenings to be organised to take place at Invergordon Academy in January, April and June
- Milton pupils and adults to be taken by bus
- hall to be themed, author/storyteller to be invited, food to be provided, prizes organised for most books read, most effort made, lucky ticket
- evaluation forms to be given out at social evenings
- final social evening- groups of pupils to give presentations on chosen authors and non-fiction category, voting papers to be given out, favourite author to be sent a certificate of appreciation
- at the end of the project a survey to be carried out to find out if reading habits in P6, P7 and S1 had changed

Research Methods:

In the initial surveys many answers in both Invergordon and the control school were similar but the main differences were as follows:

	Invergordon Academy	Control School
Number of books read in previous year Six or more:	48%	30%
Choice between book or TV Book	24%	12%
Do you discuss what you read with anyone at home? No	64%	75%
Do you discuss what you read with your friends? No	61%	75%
Attitude to reading Keen/very keen	45%	27%

The conclusions drawn were that at the beginning our pupils seemed to have a more positive attitude to reading than the control school.

Development of Project

- Adults were nominated. 15% of the pupils could not nominate an adult. Volunteers included school auxiliaries, LS staff, and staff from a variety of subjects ranging from Graphic Communications through Maths to RME. All pupils were matched with an adult.
- A laminated worksheet of questions was sent home to help to begin discussions
- Books were read at a variety of paces.
- Extension books were available from the main school library
- Groups changed books after each social evening
- In the Academy, the computer programme Accelerated Reading was purchased so that the quizzes would help to check if books had been read.
- Adults checked books for which no quizzes were available
- First Social Evening: January 20th -invitations issued - turnout about 55% -local author John Ward followed by group discussions followed by refreshments and awards-
 - Results of questionnaire:
 - How many books have you read together? More than 3: 13%
 - Do you read more since SHRIMP began? Yes: 63%
 - Adult questionnaires also showed:
 - What have you enjoyed about SHRIMP so far?
 - Sharing what I read 84%
- Second Social Evening March 16 -invitations issued- turnout about 53% storyteller Andrew McIntosh group discussions etc.
- Michael Morpurgo, one of our chosen authors, came to the Academy to give a talk to pupils, adults and staff from both schools

- Jacqueline Wilson, another of our chosen authors, did a book signing in Inverness which was attended by Milton pupils
- Third Social Evening – Tues 15 June -invitations issued- turnout about 55% - pupils did presentations on favourite authors – vote taken – Michael Morpurgo was favourite fiction author and Horrible Histories favourite non-fiction series

Impact of the work done:

Feedback from pupils: taken from oral responses and questionnaires

- The food was great!
- Social evenings were great!
- Pupils enjoyed having access to new books and finding new authors
- An author now is not just a name on a front cover; an author is a real person
- The majority of pupils had a very positive response
- Some of the more able pupils in the Academy felt that they were being held up by their parents who were not reading as fast as they were
- Pupils wanted more books
- A small minority found it difficult to cope even with adult help

Feedback from parents: : taken from oral responses and questionnaires

- parents reported they enjoyed sharing a book, something they might not have done since their child was small
- many dads acted as partners
- parents reported the project gave them a common interest with their child at a time when their interests were going in different directions
- many parents said that they had come back to reading after a long time – they did enjoy the books – (However, one dad was heard to say , “Do I have to read another Jacqueline Wilson?”)
- a small minority of parents gradually opted out and the pupils were acquired by staff

Feedback from staff: taken from oral responses

- the adults enjoyed working with the adults in the other school, building on existing good relationships
- there was a lot of informal talk; everybody spoke about SHRIMP, books they had read, the social nights and when the next one would be
- relationships were established with pupils which would not normally have happened, especially for teachers from other subjects e.g. Maths, Biology
- most of the staff who volunteered last year are willing to do so again
- the fact that the venue for the social nights was Invergordon Academy gave Milton Pupils the opportunity for more visits. The project brought them in contact with more of the adults there, adding to the planned transition programme

To what extent were the main aims achieved?

- The first aim of the project was to raise and sustain achievement in literacy P6-S2. Records of books read during the project and results of the survey carried out at the end of the project showed that pupils had read many more books through being involved in the project. National Assessment results in reading showed an increase of 12 % in Invergordon Academy and an increase of 1% in Milton Primary. It cannot be claimed that this was entirely due to SHRIMP but it was a contributing factor. At Milton Primary School, for the first time, some pupils in P7 sat level F in reading. At Invergordon Academy, for the first time, some pupils in S1 completed Bronze, Silver and Gold Power Readers.

- The second aim was to involve Parents/Carers in the learning process with their children. This was achieved, with very positive feedback from the parents. They enjoyed the social element in their visits to the school.
- The third aim was to raise the profile of reading and the library amongst pupils. Pupils are now much more aware of books and authors and the number of books borrowed from the library by these year groups has increased.
- The final survey shows that :

	Invergordon Academy	Control School
Number of books read in previous year	Six or more: 65%	N/A
Choice between book or TV	Book 22%	N/A
Do you discuss what you read with anyone at home?	No 43%	N/A
Do you discuss what you read with your friends?	No 43%	N/A
Attitude to reading	Keen/very keen 45%	N/A

Conclusions: Pupils have read more books and are more willing to discuss them at home and with friends. Unfortunately , the number of pupils who would now prefer to watch TV has increased slightly so we obviously have not solved all the problems!

Implications

Attainment has been raised. SHRIMP has played a part. How do we sustain achievement? Grant funding from Scottish Executive Home Reading Initiative will be used to carry on the project with the same schools focusing again on P6, P7 and S1. The challenge will be to take the success of SHRIMP and make just enough changes to keep the enthusiasm going.

- A wider range of fiction authors will be selected
- It will not be necessary to have groups – the discussions ranged widely so it is not essential that participants have read the same texts
- An arrangement will be made with the most able readers to ensure that they do not feel they are being held back

Milton Primary School will further develop the project in their setting by taking it into P4/5 as little SHRIMP and into the infants and nursery as PRAWN: Parents Reading a Wee Novel. Invergordon Academy will further develop the project in their setting with S2 by continuing to promote personal reading and extending Power Readers to include a Ruby award.

We are also pleased to add that Merkinch Primary School in Inverness has requested information in order to implement the project in their school.