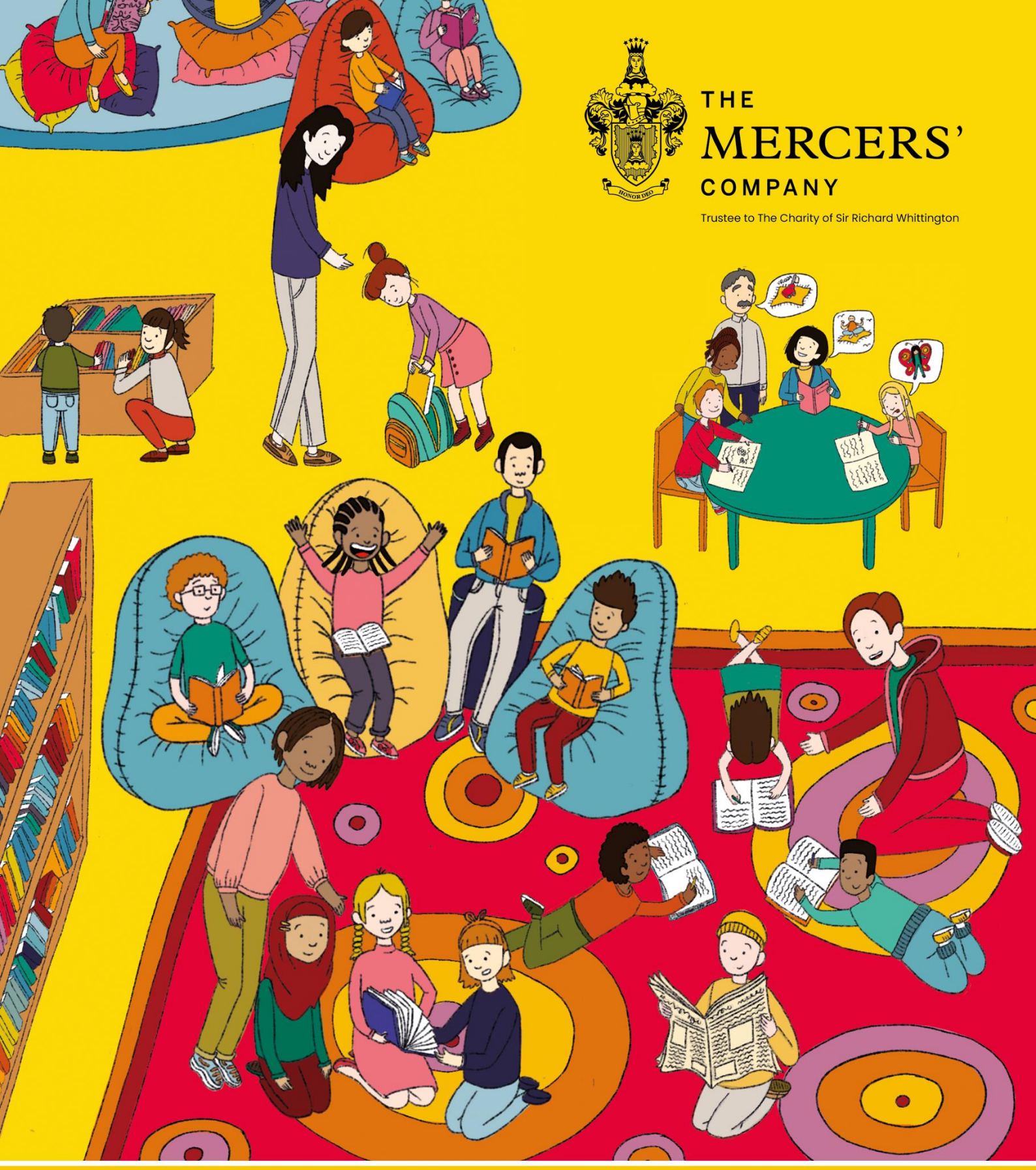

THE MERCERS' COMPANY

Trustee to The Charity of Sir Richard Whittington

Reading and Writing for Pleasure:

The Report on the Mercers' Company Literature Special Initiative (2020 – 2023)

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and Dr Sarah Jane Mukherjee for their contributions.

READING FOR PLEASURE

CENTRE FOR LITERACY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

The Open University

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1 Introduction

Reading for pleasure (RfP) and writing for pleasure (WfP) matter. Research indicates that regular volitional reading is associated with beneficial outcomes – whether academic, emotional or social (OECD, 2021). Similarly, choosing to write is linked to enhanced academic development and higher levels of mental wellbeing (Clark et al., 2023). Yet, UK and international studies of children and young people's attitudes towards reading and writing indicate that enjoyment in reading and writing is declining (Clark, Lant and Riad, 2022; Mullis et al., 2023). This decline warrants concern and attention.

This three-year Special Initiative on Reading and Writing for Pleasure (2020 – 2023), commissioned by the Mercers' Company and funded by the Charity of Sir Richard Whittington was supported by an Open University team as the research partner. The OU Team was tasked with '*identifying the approaches and methodologies that seem to be effective in inspiring and encouraging children and young people to read and to write for pleasure*'.

In order to do so the OU Team undertook three main tasks.

i) Reviewing and synthesising existing research literature.
ii) Collecting and analysing research data from the six London-based literacy programmes. These were led by Doorstep Library, Literacy Pirates, Ministry of Stories, Primary Shakespeare Company, World Book Day, and the National Literacy Trust together with The Reading Agency, who jointly led 'Get Islington Reading'.
iii) Examining if and in what ways these might be connected.

The reviews of existing literature focused on research related to volitional reading and choosing to write for children and young people, predominantly between the ages of 5 and 13 years old. Two separate reviews were ultimately produced. The Open University team then identified themes within, and synergies across, these two reviews in relation to the Special Initiative's focus on identifying effective approaches capable of supporting reading and writing for pleasure (R and WfP).

In addition to conducting two comprehensive literature reviews, the Special Initiative included collecting and analysing research data. The process of data collection involved working with the six literacy programmes, all of whom were concerned with enriching young people's pleasure in reading and /or writing. The data collected and analysed were comprised of programme documentation, focus groups, interviews and observations. Analysis of the data involved understanding the approaches and methodologies of the six programmes and identifying key themes and commonalities in terms of the approaches used across the programmes.

Findings from the data analysis were cross-referenced with the insights gleaned from the literature reviews. This cross-referencing was concerned with identifying approaches and methodologies, common across both, that seemed to be effective in inspiring and encouraging children and young people to read and to write for pleasure. These

commonalities in approaches and methodologies led to the creation of the Reading and Writing for Pleasure Framework for Practice presented at the end of this report.

This report is comprised of four main sections. Following this Introduction, an overview of the Research Design is provided. This provides additional detail about the process used for the Special Initiative and identifies Activity Theory as the conceptual framework underpinning the research process. Next the Executive Summary of the research literature related to reading and writing for pleasure is provided. The Executive Summary identifies the following key themes related to R and WfP: literate identities; motivation; text access, time and choice; social interactions; role models and connected communities. Following this the Data Collection and Analysis section is presented. The data are presented through four key themes: expectations, community, roles and resources. The report closes with the Reading and Writing for Pleasure Framework for Practice. In order to support accessibility, and to reduce repetition, the Framework operates as a summary to the report. The Framework for Practice provides the key insights from the three-year study and offers recommendations for literacy organisations and the education profession who seek to enable more young people to read and write for pleasure.

2 Research Design

This section provides an overview of the research design for the Special Initiative. Specifically, it outlines the following: the process used to engage with the overarching research question of the Special Initiative; the ethical approval process for the data collection methods; the use of Activity Theory as the conceptual frame underpinning data collection and data analysis; the methods used for data collection processes; and the use of a collaborative data analysis approach.

2.1 The process used for the Special Initiative

The Special Initiative included two key components – i) reviewing and synthesising existing research literature; ii) collecting and analysing research data – and examining if and in what ways these are connected.

A key outcome of the Special Initiative was the development by the OU team of a Framework for R and WfP. This Framework is concerned with addressing the overarching research question for the Special Initiative: *What approaches and methodologies seem to be effective in inspiring and encouraging children and young people to read and/or write for pleasure?* The creation of the Reading and Writing for Pleasure Framework involved drawing together insights from existing research literature and from data collected throughout the Special Initiative. A visual overview of this two-pronged process for the Special Initiative is provided in Figure 1.

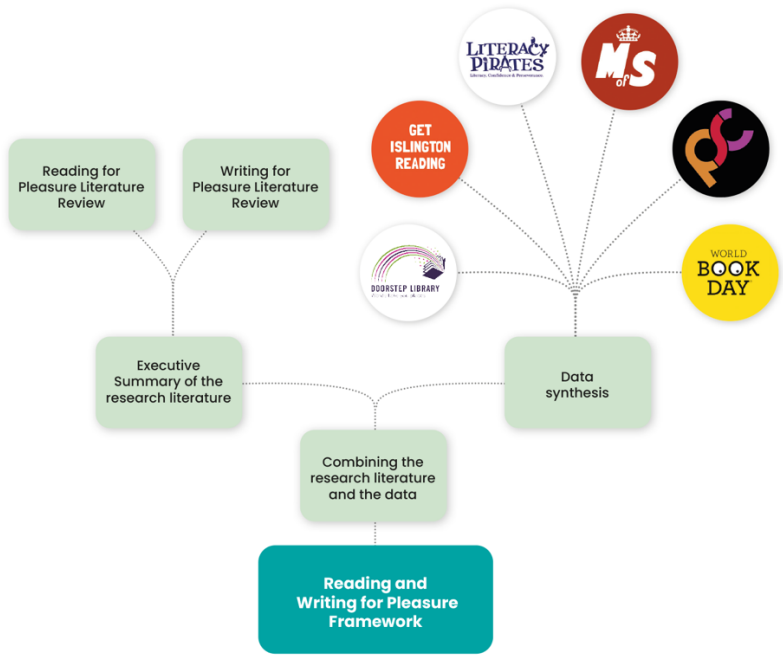

Figure 1. Overview of the process used for the Special Initiative

Two separate literature reviews for the Special Initiative were generated, one literature review comprised of existing research literature related to RfP and the other related to WfP. Both reviews used comprehensive database searches, using several different research indexes,

including for example, the British Education Index, the Education Resources Information Centre and Web of Science. Within the indexes a combination of terms were used to support the sourcing of a wide range research related to the Special Initiative. For the RfP literature review the terms included 'reading for pleasure', 'reading for enjoyment', 'volitional reading', 'voluntary reading', 'independent reading' and 'recreational reading'. For the WfP literature review, the terms included 'writing for pleasure', 'writing for enjoyment', 'volitional writing' 'voluntary writing' 'independent writing', 'recreational writing' and 'free-choice writing'. A key search parameter involved focusing on international, peer-reviewed research. This priority was selected to ensure the included studies aligned with the Special Initiative's focus on evidence-based practices. In addition to focusing on peer-reviewed research, the search parameters for the two literature reviews were set to include articles related to children of primary and early secondary school age, i.e. aged 5 – 13 years. A team of Open University researchers rigorously reviewed the articles from the databases searches, comparing insights gleaned from this process with known, key studies from published research- based across the last 30 years, in order to produce two comprehensive reviews.

At the start of the third year of the Special Initiative, through a sequence of team meetings, the OU researchers reviewed the content of these two literature reviews in order to identify synergies across the two bodies of existing research related to the research question. These synergies have been articulated in the Executive Summary of the Research Literature on R and WfP in section 3 of this report.

During the same period that the literature reviews were being generated, preparations were made for collecting research data. Each member of the OU research team was assigned a programme to work closely with. This programme became their 'link programme', which enabled a close relationship to be established between the researcher and the programme. This understanding relationship enabled the logistics surrounding collecting research data to be empathetically organised. The research data informing the creation of the Framework covered the approaches and activities of all six programmes, using a wide range of data collection methods (as outlined below). The data analysis process is also outlined below. The data collected, like the literature reviews, were repeatedly reviewed and discussed among the OU team members in order to create a synthesis of the collected data.

The summaries of the two literature reviews and the synthesis of the data were then considered alongside one another to identify commonalities, differences and challenges in terms of approaches and methodologies seen to be effective in encouraging children and young people to read and / or write for pleasure. Cross-referencing between the summaries of the literature reviews and the synthesis of the data sets led to the creation of the Reading and Writing for Pleasure Framework, which is shared in section 5.

2.2 Ethical review

All research conducted at the Open University is first subject to a rigorous ethical review by the Human Resources Ethics Committee (HREC). Given that the Special Initiative was taking place over three years, working with multiple programmes and involving varying interactions with a broad range of individuals (programme staff, creative practitioners, volunteers, school staff, children and their families) a phased approach to ethical review was adopted. This

phased approach involved seeking an initial ethical review for the overall Special Initiative study and then subsequent reviews for specific aspects of the study. Conducting multiple, staggered reviews for specific aspects of the initiative enabled the team to develop the precise focus of the data collection tools (e.g., interview questions) based on the emerging insights drawing on the ongoing programme interactions and the iterative analysis. Such an approach proved particularly useful during the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, which necessitated switching from in-person data collection methods to online approaches. By using a phased ethical review process, we were able to adapt our original research plan without disrupting the progression of the research.

The interactional restrictions created by the COVID-19 pandemic not only had an impact on the nature of data collection activities, with some interactions taking place on-line instead of in-person, but also had an impact on the manner in which participants consent was sought. For instance, we were unable to distribute and collect consent forms through in-person interactions. Instead, we created online information and consent forms for prospective participants. A crucial part of this approach involved working with the programmes to tailor the presentation of information to ensure it was accessible to the participants. This concern was motivated by our understanding that a number of families involved in the programmes had varying levels of confidence with reading and accessing documents in English. This consideration, when combined with the remote methods of communication necessitated by the pandemic, meant we had to ensure information about the projects was as clear and unambiguous as possible.

The phases of the ethical review process are listed below:

i) Before initial contact with the programmes, full details of the research aims, approaches, proposed data collection methods, potential participants and proposed project milestones were shared with the HREC panel. A favourable opinion for the Special Initiative was granted at the start of year 1

ii) A subsequent ethical review application was submitted at the end of year 1 of the Special Initiative to the HREC ahead of interviews and focus groups with programme staff as well as teachers and volunteers aligned with the programmes;

iii) In year 2, an additional ethical review was sought for a round of programme visits, scheduled for Spring 2022, which involved interviews with programme staff, volunteers and teachers who were aligned to the six programmes

iv) In year 2, an ethical review was submitted for focus groups with children and young people who take part of activities provided by the programmes. These focus groups took place in the summer term of 2022

v) Towards the end of year 2, a final ethical review was sought for a second round of programme visits, to supplement the previous visits, which included interviews with practitioners, educators and volunteers. These activities took place in autumn 2022.

2.3 Activity Theory: the conceptual framing of the research design

The conceptual framing underpinning the research design was influenced by third generation 'Activity Theory' (Daniels 2004; Engeström 2008, 2011). In Engeström's (1987) model of Activity Theory, organisations can be conceptualised as 'activity systems' where, individuals

('**subjects**') engage in activities motivated by individual and shared purposes or '**objects**'. The **outcome of the interaction between subject and object is mediated by different activity system elements**. Conventionally, these elements are referred to as 'community', 'division of labour', 'rules' and 'artefacts'. For the Special Initiative we re-labelled the last three of these elements to better reflect the nature of the programmes. Accordingly, we saw the outcome of the interaction between subject and object as mediated by the **community**, comprised of other individuals and their corresponding **roles** (formerly 'divisions of labour') and **expectations** (formerly 'rules'), as well as by the availability and suitability of **resources** (formerly 'artefacts').

Combining these elements, we saw each R and WfP programme as an 'activity-system' with children and young people as the intended **subject** and the intended **object** (or goal) being enabling children to become motivated and volitional readers and writers. To an extent, the hoped for **outcome** of these activity systems is similar to the intended **object,** whereby the work of the programmes leads to engaged readers and writers. Whilst the focus of the Special Initiative was not to evaluate outcomes, through the stages of data collection, in particular through the focus groups with children, we were able to glean qualitative insights into the impact of the programmes on the young people's identities as readers and writers, in the form of their sense of confidence, competence, value and belonging within the programmes reading and writing provision.

Adopting an activity system approach enabled us to analyse how the elements of each programme interact to shape children and young people's R and WfP. Our understanding of the activity system elements and how they relate to the programmes within the Special Initiative are listed below. The relationship between these elements them is visualised in Figure 2:

- **Subject**: the 'target' audience for the programme (e.g., reluctant readers and / or writers)
- **Object**: the programme aims and objectives (purpose and motivation)
- **Outcome**: programme specific outcomes related to reading and / or writing for pleasure, impact on children and young people
- **Resources**: the books, plays, stimuli for writing, programme specific documentation, language and environment
- **Expectations**: codes of conduct, rules and routines
- **Community**: engagement and relationships between education managers, delivery staff, volunteers, school staff, parents, family, children
- **Roles**: responsibilities before, during, after the programme for education managers, delivery staff volunteers, school staff, parents, family, children

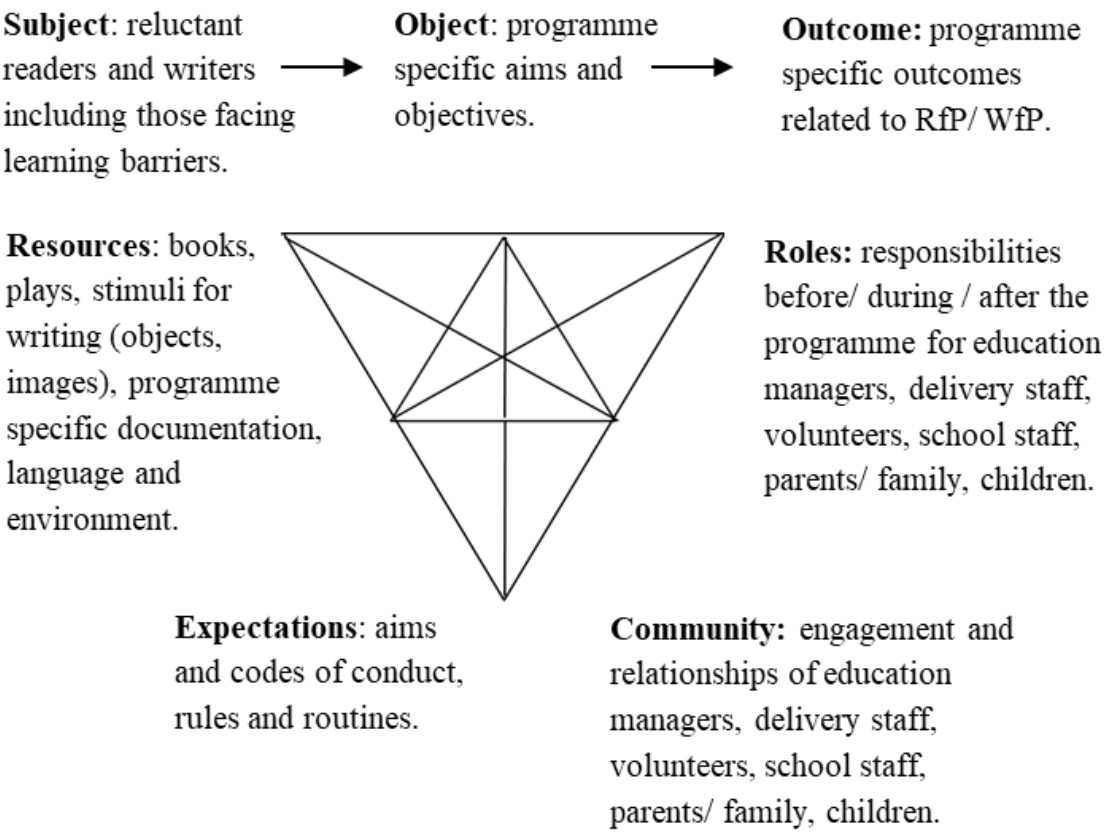

Figure 2. Activity system elements as used within the Special Initiative

The benefit of using activity system elements for the conceptual model for the Special Initiative was that these elements offered the research team a systematic and rigorous route to identifying effective approaches and methodologies at both the individual programme level *and* across the programmes. Accordingly, the research team were able to investigate commonalities across the programmes, for example: the ways that books are used, what books and how they motivate readers and writers (**resources**); routines that encourage children's choice and independence in reading and writing (**expectations**); the relationships that delivery staff develop with children that nurture R and WfP (**community**); how the educational managers manage a shared pleasure-focused vision with their team (**roles**). Through these common elements, we were able to explore both a single programme in depth and one element across the six programmes. Accordingly, using activity system elements offered insights without needing to compare or evaluate the programmes. This approach was crucial to this Special Initiative, given our recognition that the six programmes are exceptionally diverse in form, nature and scale, and the focus of the Special Initiative was neither to compare nor evaluate the six programmes.

The commonalities and any differences noted through the use of data collection and analysis based on the above elements of each programme activity system were then combined with the insights gathered from executive summary of the literature review before informing the construction of the Reading and Writing for Pleasure Framework.

2.4 Data collection methods

During the Special Initiative data were collected from all six programmes. The methods of data collection used were, as follows: programme-specific documentation; interviews with programme staff; cross-programme meetings with representatives from each programme; interviews with practitioners, teachers and volunteers involved with programmes; focus groups with teachers and volunteers involved with programmes; visits to individual programme activities; focus groups with children receiving programme activities.

In year 1, the initial focus of the data collection was on gathering and analysing programme specific documentation in order to begin to develop an understanding of the six programmes' approaches and methodologies. The programmes shared varying documentation particular to their work. This range in number and types of documentation was because of the differing foci of each programme. The full set of documentation was read by the OU linked researcher, and for consistency in the starting analysis, a decision was made to select a set of four pieces of documentation common to all programmes that would be analysed using activity system elements. The documents selected were: the Programme funding application to the Mercers' Company, an evaluation report, a business/strategic plan, and a volunteer handbook (where this was available, or another document which offered structural /organisational information regarding staff). These documents were selected to give a common and rounded view of the programmes from different perspectives.

The second stage of the data collection, in year 1, was an **interview with the programme lead and education manager** for each of the programmes. All programmes committed time to this and brought two members of staff to the meeting. In order to be able to explore key elements across the programmes, a single interview schedule was created following the close reading of the programme documentation provided. The interview was organised in such a way as to align with the team's interest in the interactions between **subjects**, in this case children and young people, and **objects**, referring to programme aims, and possible **outcomes**, namely, R and WfP. Thus, the questions probed, in more depth, for an understanding of the programme including: the aims, the children involved, the outcomes in relation to R and WfP, where the programme takes place, the people involved and how those people engage with the young people. These interviews were audio recorded and transcribed ready for analysis.

The purpose of data collection in year 2 was to build on our understanding of the six programmes' approaches and methodologies, gained through year 1. Critically, we sought to widen the perspectives we were listening to, involving a more diverse group of stakeholders, so as to develop our insights into the programmes. This involved meetings, observations, interviews and focus groups with volunteers and teachers aligned to the six programmes, as well as the children and young people who engage with activities provided by the programmes. In a similar manner to year 1, the focus of these data collection methods was aligned with activity system elements. Accordingly, observation prompts, and interview schedules were created that focused on individual's experiences of the **expectations, communities, roles and resources** associated with the programmes.

Through year 2 we undertook two cross-programme focus groups, one with programme volunteers and one with teachers aligned to the programmes. The first focus group was held in February 2022 and was attended by seven volunteers representing five programmes. The second focus group was held with teachers aligned to the programmes, also in February 2022. This session was attended by six teachers representing four programmes. It was anticipated

that focus groups with several attendees would support richer conversations about individual's experiences and involvement with the programmes. At the two focus groups, in terms of our interest in activity system elements, we were particularly keen to hear about volunteer and teacher perspectives on **roles** within the programmes – both their own roles, as individuals, and the roles of programmes – and the **resources** they use within and around the programmes. The meetings were framed in such a way as to elicit this. Audio recordings were generated from these two, two-hour meetings, which were transcribed for coding and analysis.

In addition to focus groups with volunteers and teachers, the research team carried out observation visits to five of the six programmes. World Book Day does not run regular programme sessions in a way parallel to the other five programmes. Accordingly, we agreed instead to analyse the five most downloaded resources developed for World Book Day 2022 from their website, in place of a programme visit. Observation visits included interviews with a programme lead or organiser from the six programmes. The focus of the observation visits, in accordance with the aforementioned activity system elements, was on interpretations of **community**, to enrich our understanding of the methods and approaches the programmes use to support children's R and WfP. For instance, we scrutinised how community is defined, whether multiple layers of community are at play and who is within and outside of these communities.

The early stages of the Special Initiative took place during the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic, when there were restrictions on and hesitancy around in-person interactions, meaning some of the early data collection had been online. In order to ensure a rich set of in-person data was collected, an additional round of programme visits was organised for the autumn of 2022. These visits included interviews with individuals involved with the programmes, which were focused on their experience of their **role** and how the programmes provided **resources** or created **community** to support them in their roles. Notes were made from all visits, and the interviews were transcribed. Notes and transcribed interviews were then coded for analysis.

Year 2 also saw the team organise a sequence of focus groups with children and young people who attend programmes or receive services and activities from the programmes. In total, 40 children across nine focus groups representing five programmes were involved in this work. For consistency across the programmes, a consultant researcher with experience in researching children's engagement with literacy practices and resources was recruited to run the focus groups. This had the additional advantage of reducing any form of bias or insider knowledge regarding the programmes from the linked OU researchers. The focus group conversations were arranged where possible to coincide with the children's attendance at regular programme sessions. This decision meant limited additional logistical demands were placed on the children, or their families, to be in a different place at a set time. The structure of the interview schedule, influenced by the overarching interest in activity system elements, attended to the children's understanding of the **roles** of individuals involved in programmes, their interactions with **resources** associated with the programmes and how these elements impacted on their feelings towards reading and writing, as an **outcome**. However, although the interview schedule had this focus, it was designed to be flexible to the needs, interests and perspectives of participating children and young people. Accordingly, questions were phrased to allow the children and young people to share their experiences of the programme.

Moreover, the consultant researcher was briefed to follow the interests of the participants. Consequently, during these focus groups, the children and young people shared what stood out to them as key features of programme sessions and how their engagement with the programmes had impacted on their attitudes, behaviours and activities outside of the programmes. Transcripts of the focus group conversations were created and coded for analysis.

2.5 Data analysis methods

In the first year of the Special Initiative, the OU research team set the foundations for our data analysis across the project, including: a decision on computer assisted qualitative data analysis software, a structured analytic plan, the agreed operationalisation of the activity system elements. The latter component involved the gradual and collaborative creation of common subcodes across the programmes related to the elements of **resources, roles, communities and expectations.**

The team selected the **collaborative web-based application Dedoose** for the facilitation of the data analysis. Dedoose was selected as a suitable application as it allows different types of documentation (e.g., text, image, interview transcripts, field notes, etc) to be uploaded and analysed by a team. The collaborative nature of this software means that each member of the OU research team had access to the data of their linked programmes and all the other programmes. This deliberate approach enabled rigour in the coding as the team are working with the same agreed definitions of the activity system elements.

The development of a structured analytic plan offered a systematic and rigorous approach to the data analysis across the programme data. The plan was a phased approach to each activity system element in each of the sets of data.

In **Stage 1**, and working with the programme's documentation initially, the OU research team coded for **all the activity system elements – subject, object, outcome, community, roles, resources and expectations** – with a focus on creating common understandings and definitions of the elements. **Stage 2** involved a closer, more in-depth analysis. This stage involved working with programme documentation and the interviews collected in year 1, to **create codes and sub-codes for the following four activity system elements: expectations, roles, community and resources**. The construction of these sub-codes involved rigorous discussions among the members of the OU research team. These discussions involved scrutinising data examples as possible evidence for the sub-codes, considering the appropriateness or uniqueness of the sub-codes in relation to the other programmes. This collaborative approach meant that the team was working with the same understandings of the activity system elements and the same structured analytical plan to approaching the data. The resulting codes and sub-codes for the four elements of expectations, roles, community and resources are providing in Figure 3, with the elements listed in bold at the top of each column, codes listed in green boxes and sub-codes listed in orange boxes:

Figure 3. Elements, codes and sub-codes for analysis in Stage 2

Stage 3 of data analysis involved applying the codes and sub-codes developed in Stage 2 across the rest of the data corpus as it was collected throughout year 2. This third stage, **continued to be iterative and rigorous** with regular meetings between members of the OU research team as parts of the data corpus were coded to enable continued reflection upon and scrutiny of the appropriateness and accurateness of application of the codes and sub-codes.

Once the data corpus was coded, one research team member generated a document from Dedoose for each of the four overarching activity system elements– roles, resources, community and expectations – collating all coded extracts for that specific theme across all datasets. These collations included visual overviews of the occurrence of codes and sub-codes. This overview provided insights into the frequency, and possible salience, of a code or sub-code in relation to a programme or a data collection activity, such as an interview or a focus group. Additionally, a visual overview was provided of code co-occurrence, via a symmetric, code-by-code, matrix. This matrix enabled the possibility of observing expected or unexpected patterns in which two codes were (or were not) used together (Figure 4).

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L
		Resources	Intangible, i.e. resource characteristic	Choice and interest	Signposting, selecting and transforming	Tangible, i.e. physical resources	Artefacts	Interaction	Place, space, environment	Practical objects	Totals	
2	Resources	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
3	Intangible, i.e. resource characteristic	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
4	Choice and interest	0	0	0	1	0	4	5	1	1	12	
5	Signposting, selecting and transforming	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	
6	Tangible, i.e. physical resources	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
7	Artefacts	0	0	4	0	0	0	4	2	1	11	
8	Interaction	0	0	5	0	0	4	0	2	2	13	
9	Place, space, environment	0	0	1	0	0	2	2	0	1	6	
10	Practical objects	0	0	1	0	0	1	2	1	0	5	
11	Totals	0	0	12	1	0	11	13	6	5	0	
12												
13												
14												
15												

Figure 4. Co-occurrence code matrix

An additional advantage of using Dedoose for analysis of the data was the application's ability to generate visualisations of the data, such as code occurrence word clouds (Figure 5). These visualisations provide a valuable overview of the data corpus, at the end of the coding process, and helped to inform the teams understanding of the programmes work as a whole and helped in the iterative development of the Reading and Writing for Pleasure Framework.

Figure 5. Code occurrence word cloud

Through discussion, and for consistency of presentation, the OU research team agreed a process and structure for analysing and writing up an analysis of the codes across the four activity system elements. Each OU research team member was assigned one element to focus

on. Each team member then read all coded extracts for their allocated element, for in-depth exploration of what the data were showing with regards to the approaches and methods used by the six programmes to support R and WfP. Each team member produced a written analysis of the element assigned to them as well as a synthesis of the insights generated from the data analysis. This final stage of the data analysis resulted in the presentation of data provided in section 4 of this report.

2.6 Reflecting through cross-programme meetings

An important aspect of the Special Initiative was to facilitate the sharing of principles and practices between the programmes in order to foster relationships and Reading and Writing for Pleasure networks. To this end, at the bid stage of the project, the research team designed and proposed a forum entitled 'cross-programme meetings' to be attended by the OU research team, two or more key members from each organisation (across the six programmes) and representatives from the Mercers' Company. An average of two cross-programme meetings were scheduled for each year of the Special Initiative. The meetings offered an update of the research to date to the programmes and provided a particular research related focus. The research related focus was provided as a prompt for programme staff to reflect upon, share their experiences and understandings of the issue. These prompts provided a wide range of opportunities for the programmes to share insights with one another as well as for the OU research team to reflect upon their understanding of the literature and data to date and to learn more about the programmes.

Year 1 of the Special Initiative saw two cross-programme meetings. Both meetings were held online due to the Covid-19 restrictions on face-to-face meetings. While this adjustment was successful, the OU research team, in agreement with Mercers' Company, reviewed and changed the design of the session. In the first instance, the team reduced the time of the meeting to accommodate the demand of large and long online meetings. Secondly, the team asked the programmes to limit attendees to two programme members to make the online context slightly more manageable. Finally, it was decided not to use these cross-programme meetings as an opportunity to collect data due to the onerous nature of numerous switches between breakout rooms. This had the added advantage of enabling relaxed meetings, and the OU team emphasised sharing and interaction as key to the time together and sought ways to ensure this.

The focus of the **first cross-programme meeting** was two-fold. First, to articulate the aims of the project and introduce the OU team to all the programmes. Second, to allow the programme members to meet each other, widening knowledge about each other and the six selected programmes. The OU research team shared their view of the challenges and opportunities in relation to R and WfP in the wider educational context. The programmes all offered a summary of their work and the programme activities under focus in the Special Initiative. In total, 13 key members from the organisations attended the meeting, with the four OU research team members and representatives from The Mercers' Company.

This second cross-programme meeting was similarly well attended, with 14 members from the programmes, the OU research team and representatives from the Mercers' Company. A key component of the agenda of the **second-cross programme meeting** included a response

to a concern that the OU team's work as research partner, not evaluator was not yet fully understood. Developing an evaluation of the programmes was not the aim of the Special Initiative. Indeed, given the exceptional diversity of the six programmes, in form, nature, scale and focus, an evaluation would have been inappropriate. Accordingly, in addition to an update on the research work so far, an overview of the overlaps and differences between 'research' and 'evaluation' was presented by Teresa Cremin and the programme leaders offered a resume of the different forms of evaluation tools and approaches used in their work. Separately, within the second cross-programme meeting, the programmes were invited to consider the ways in which they hear and attend to the voices of the children and young people in their work. In particular, following a presentation by Liz Chamberlain, they were asked to ponder the questions:

- What do you currently do to get closer to children's experiences within your programme?
- What have you thought about doing but haven't quite managed to include?
- Where are the opportunities within this project to get closer to children's experiences?

Attending to the challenges of fostering discussion in large, online meetings the OU research team used a range of interactive approaches, including different members of the OU team presenting, asking the programme leaders to prepare and present, inviting discussions on points to ponder, small groups breakouts and using Jamboard, an online, interactive noticeboard, which allows individuals to create, share and post 'e-post-its' for the purposes of discussion. Figure 6 is the output of one of the Jamboard discussions from the first cross-programme meeting in response to a breakout room discussion around **practical challenges and opportunities and understandings of R and WfP.**

Figure 6. Jamboard from cross-programme meeting November 2020

In year 2 of the Special Initiative, three cross-programme meetings were held, each of which was conducted online due to ongoing COVID restrictions. As in year 1, we organised one cross-programme meeting for key staff within the programmes (November 2021). On this occasion, 12 programme leads attended, representing all six programmes. The meeting was also attended by representatives from the Mercers' Company, so that they were well informed as to how the Special Initiative was progressing. In addition to a cross-programme meeting for programme staff, two addition meetings were organised, one largely with teachers and one largely with volunteers, which enabled the collection of the focus group data discussed in the data collection methods section.

Continuing the structure from year 1, all three meetings involved an update of the research to date, and a particular research-related focus, around which people shared their experiences and understandings. For the cross-programme meeting with programme staff, the meeting agenda was particularly focused around the concept of disadvantage and considered different ways of framing disadvantage. Again, the research team used a Jamboard to encourage and enable discussion in the online meeting space (Figure 7). The OU research team sought to help programme leads to **explore and uncover what 'disadvantage' might mean for each of the six programmes** as interpreted by those leading the programme objectives and direction, and to encourage the interchange of perspectives across programmes. This focus had been identified as an area for development and discussion during year 1, through discussions with the programme staff. The resulting discussion suggested this meeting focus proved to be a valuable conversation, which both challenged and, in some cases, widened programmes' consideration of the issues.

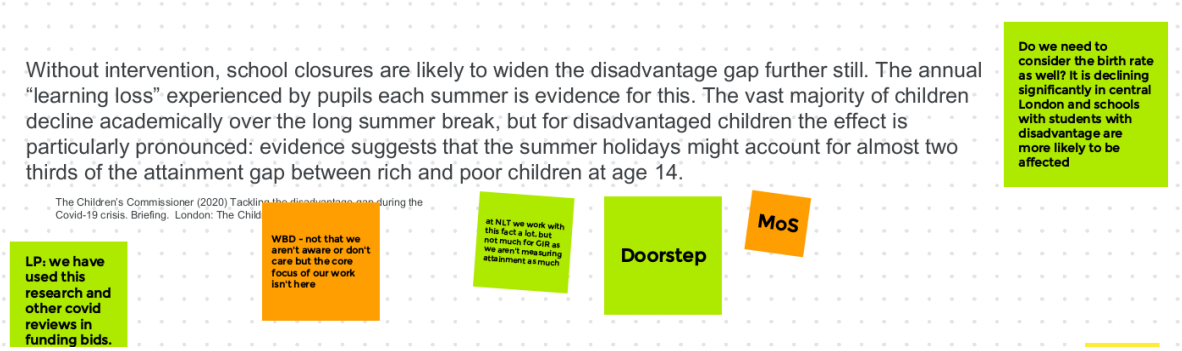

Figure 7. Jamboard extract from cross-programme meeting, November 2021

In addition, in response to an identified need and developing thinking from the cross-programme meeting from year 1 about understandings of R and WfP, **time was spent reflecting on the nature of R and WfP**. The attending programme staff were invited to reflect on the meaning of these terms and their interpretation of them within the context of the different programmes. A short summary from the draft RfP literature review was offered as prior reading by the programmes. The review provoked considerable discussion. Later in year 2, in response to requests from three of the programmes, this extract was designed and polished in order to be shared with programme team members and, more widely, with volunteers and teachers.

Year 2 also saw the organisation and hosting of two separate cross-programme, **focus group meetings as spaces for thoughtful discussion with volunteers and teachers** involved in the programmes. We met with seven volunteers representing five programmes in the morning,

and with six teachers aligned to four programmes in the afternoon. Representatives from the Mercers' Company also attended and participated in both of these meetings. The design of the cross-programme meetings with volunteers and teachers was mindful of the fact that this would be the first occasion that people were meeting those from other programmes, as well as with the OU research team. Additionally, in some cases, those attending had not met the other representative from their own programme. Thus, time was factored in for meaningful introductions – to each other, to the different programmes, and to the Mercers' Special Initiative leaders – to feel comfortable in sharing perspectives, and to reassure participants the OU team were not evaluators of the programmes or of their individual practices. For these two cross-programme focus group meetings, the agenda and activities were structured to explore how **resources** and **roles** are instantiated within programmes. These elements of Activity Theory were explored through the use of prompts on Jamboard as listed below:

- What do you consider to be two key resources in your work on the programme?
- Why do you think these resources are important?
- Who do you work with the most in the programme?
- How do you view your main role in the programme?
- What are the main activities?

These prompts provided the volunteers and teachers with a valuable opportunity to reflect upon their involvement in the programme. In turn, the OU research team were able to collect additional data to feed into their analysis of the programmes as activity systems.

In the third year of the Special Initiative a cross-programme meeting was organised for the six programmes (summer, June 2023). On this occasion, eight individuals attended, from across five of the six programmes, due to illness. The lower number of individuals attending meant that the OU research team conducted follow up discussions with each programme, through email correspondence, to reflect upon how the Special Initiative has influenced their thinking about as well as their approaches to fostering R and WfP and offered an additional meeting (September online) for those programme leaders unable to attend. The June meeting was conducted in person and, as such, the OU research team incorporated a number of creative and collaborative activities to encourage further sharings and reflections across the programmes.

By the time of the cross-programme meeting, the two literature reviews had been completed and all data collection and analysis had been carried out. Accordingly, the OU research team had been engaged in collaborative writing to produce the executive summary of the literature and to create a draft of the Reading and Writing for Pleasure Framework. Thus, the focus of the June and September meetings was on providing an overview of the executive summary of the literature and introducing to the draft Framework. Prior to the meeting, the programme staff had been provided with a draft excerpt from the executive summary of the literature. This excerpt related to the proposed theme of 'literate identities' and how this was dependent on the concepts of autonomy, competence and relatedness. During the meeting, programmes were invited to share their views on this draft document. The excerpt was received with interest and enthusiasm, with one programme representative saying "I feel seen", going on to talk about how the excerpt clearly identified the overlapping and complex components involved in supporting children's R and WfP. Those attending also commented

on how the concept of relatedness encouraged them to expand their understandings of who was involved in their programmes, whether children, families, librarians, community members, volunteers or more. In addition to engaging in discussions about the excerpt, those attending were invited to reflect upon their interpretation of the key terms and to consider how these terms related to their programme, by designing a poster that illustrated how their programme's work related to supporting children and young people's literate identities by nurturing their autonomy, competence and relatedness (Figure 8).

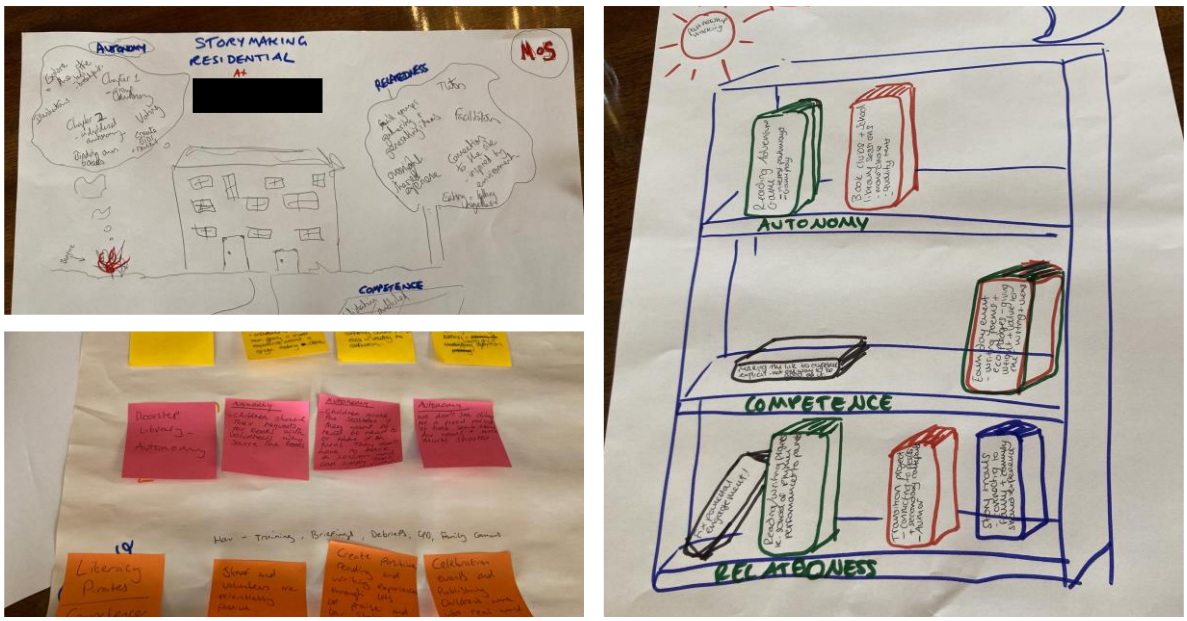

Figure 8. Posters of how programmes nurture autonomy, competence and relatedness

In addition to reflecting on aspects of the executive summary, the programme staff were provided with an overview of the draft Framework and invited to share their thoughts about the proposed components identified as effective in inspiring and encouraging children and young people to engage in R and WfP. The reflections of the programme staff made in June were noted by the OU research team and reflected upon in the final refinement of the Framework. A key comment related to the salience of social and individual approaches, as depicted in the draft Framework. Representatives from the programmes commented on how the Framework **accurately reflected the efforts made by the programmes to get to know the children**, so as to connect with them, in reading and writing practices, on their own terms. Discussions also orientated around the possible **value of the Framework** as a document that could be used by internally by the programmes to ensure they **develop shared expectations and a shared voice related to their approaches.** Additionally, those attending the meeting commented on how the draft Framework gave them confidence and pride in what they were doing and could be used to help them validate their approaches to external stakeholders as well as develop and challenge their work. This was also recognised in the September meeting with programme leaders voicing the view that the Framework offered a tool for endorsement and extension.

3 Executive Summary of the Research Literature

3.1 Introduction

This Executive Summary of the evidence on reading and writing for pleasure was commissioned by the Mercers' Company as part of their three-year Special Initiative (2020-2023). It sought to establish '*the approaches and methodologies that seem to be effective in inspiring and encouraging children and young people to read and/or write for pleasure'.* The existing research literatures on motivating readers and writers aged 5-13 years were undertaken separately[1], and then themes were identified within, and synergies across, these two reviews in relation to effective approaches.

For the purpose of the reviews, in alignment with the body of research literature on reader motivation and engagement, the concepts of reading and writing for pleasure were framed as volitional practices, often undertaken in children's own time, and shaped by their own purposes and interests, including social and relational ones, in anticipation of some kind of satisfaction. Internationally, the term writing for pleasure is rarely used in policy, practice, or research contexts and there is far less research on motivating writers than motivating readers. Furthermore, in some countries, including England, reading for pleasure is mandated (DfE, 2014) and internationally, a discourse around developing a love of reading in childhood is emerging.

A substantial body of research reveals that being a keen young reader has benefits; it is associated with academic, social and emotional outcomes, including for example, enhanced comprehension, enriched vocabulary and narrative writing, wider knowledge of the world, and better learning outcomes (e.g. Jouhar and Rupley 2021; McQuillan 2019; Torppa et al., 2020; Troyer et al., 2019). It is recognised that the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) '*data consistently shows that engagement in reading is strongly correlated with reading performance and is a mediator of gender or socio-economic status'* (OECD, 2021, p. 28). Writing research also evidences strong associations between motivation, self-efficacy and writing performance (Graham, 2017). Furthermore, reading and writing for pleasure are associated with enhanced wellbeing (e.g., Clark and Teravainen-Goff, 2018; Kennewell et al., 2022; Sun et al., 2023) and are valuable practices in their own right. Young people's volitional reading and writing matter.

However, children and young people's enjoyment in reading and writing is sharply declining. In the last Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) less than half of the ten-year-olds (42%) reported that they liked reading (Mullis et al., 2023) and 18% were categorical that they did not. In the UK, only just over a third of 8 to 18 years old indicated that they enjoy writing in their free time (Clark et al., 2023). In addition, such large surveys persistently indicate that more girls than boys and those from higher rather than lower socio-economic backgrounds voice positive attitudes to reading and writing. So, understanding the extant research literature on approaches that effectively nurture reading and writing for pleasure is critical.

[1] For the full Reading for Pleasure Review, see:……..for the full Writing for Pleasure Review, see: ……..

In what follows, five key synergies are presented in turn. These synergies were identified after scrutinising the individual themes arising from the research literature, related to reading for pleasure and writing for pleasure. For a full account of the methodology, the databases searched and terms used, please see the full reviews. The first key synergy relates to the construction of **young people's literate identities.** This attends to children and young people developing a sense of themselves as readers and writers through their social interactions with others, whether at home, at school or with peers. The second synergy illustrates the connection between **motivation, time spent reading or writing and self-efficacy**. In particular, this synergy highlights the importance of enabling young readers and writers to feel a sense of agency, competence and social connection through reading and writing**. Text access, time and space** represent the third synergistic set of connections identified from the research literature and draw attention to the importance of being able to access and produce a range of personally relevant and affectively engaging texts as part of reading and writing for pleasure. The fourth connection underscores the importance, as identified within the research literature, of **social interaction.** This synergy identifies the role that sharing and talking about texts plays, whether written or read, in non-assessed relaxed contexts which are mainly learner-led and enable teachers to get to know their readers and writers and act responsively. Such social interaction nurtures enjoyment and builds relational connections between readers and/or writers. The final synergy identified is entitled **role models and connected communities**, and recognises the importance of significant others, such as teachers, parents and peers in taking on and sharing their literate identities and how children, as members of various affinity spaces and literacy kinship networks are supported. In addition, this synergy outlines the importance of positioning reading and writing for pleasure as a communal, collective and relational practice. By so doing, research suggests, connected communities of engaged readers and writers can be cultivated.

The Executive Summary examines each of the five synergies in turn, offering evidence from within both bodies of literature and closes with a brief summary of the synergies and recommendations for future research. For a fuller examination of the nature of claims made, discussion of the research methodologies deployed by the studies reviewed and the lacunae in the evidence base, see the separate full reviews.

3.2 Young people's literate identities

Children and young people's sense of themselves as readers and writers is constructed and re-constructed by the literacy activities in which they engage, (both voluntarily or in response to request), at home (e.g. writing text messages, homework), at school (e.g. reading at break, written comprehension), and in wider 'community' contexts (e.g. fan fiction writing online, visiting the library).Their literate identities are thus always in flux, influenced by the environment, the text, their past and present experiences of literacy and by the identity positions as readers and writers that are made available to them by parents, peers, teachers and others, and those they choose to adopt (Collier, 2010; Moje and Luke, 2009; Wagner, 2023).

In this sense, each young person is always in the process of becoming a reader/writer or learning how to be a reader/writer in different contexts, actively shaping and reshaping their identities and being positioned as particular kind of readers/writers by others. Positive literate identities are widely seen to be desirable. Existing studies indicate they play a significant role

in children and young people's wider sense of self, and their motivation and desire to read and write for pleasure.

3.2.1 Readers' identities

Even before they start school, each child's **family's attitudes to reading**, **reading practices and interactions around texts** position children as readers in particular ways. Studies indicate diversity in parents' attitudes and reading practices (Levy, Hall and Preece, 2018), and that their preference for print rather than digital texts influence young readers differently (Kucirkova and Littleton, 2016; Nicholas and Paatsch, 2017; Strouse and Ganea, 2017). Additionally, social interactions with grandparents and siblings are seen to support the habit of recreational reading and a positive sense of self as a reader (Cliff-Hodges 2018; Knoester and Plikuhn 2016).

Readers' identities are commonly associated with their perceived and received sense of 'ability' and self-efficacy (Adelson et al., 2019), which in turn predicts reading attitudes and frequency (Guthrie and Davis, 2003; Schüller, Birnbaum and Kröner, 2017; Weber, 2018), and supports recreational reading. So positive reader identities matter – they can lead to and are derived from reading for pleasure - and are thus associated with many benefits (e.g., Schugar and Dreyer, 2017; Sullivan and Brown, 2015; Torppa et al., 2020).

Young people's sense of competence as readers are in part **shaped by their understanding of what it means to be a 'reader'**. Contrasting perceptions are reported. Some studies show that 'readers' are perceived to be children those who want to read, who know their own interests and preferences, and regularly read for enjoyment in their free time (McGeown et al., 2020b; Scholes, 2019a). Other studies indicate that children see reading and being a reader as merely a matter of proficiency- a set of skills (Clark, Osborne and Akerman, 2008; Fletcher & Nicholas, 2016; Hall, 2012; Hempel-Jorgensen et al., 2018). In many of this latter group of studies, 'good readers' were viewed, often by both staff and students, as those who read accurately, fluently and at speed and who demonstrate high levels of reading attainment. This had negative consequences for those children who were deemed to be 'struggling'; they were not supported to develop a love of reading since practice was primarily focused on skill development (Hall, 2012; Hempel-Jorgensen et al., 2018). Thus, they retained a low sense of self-efficacy as readers and remained positioned as disengaged readers.

Teachers' conceptions of reading and being a reader and the resultant models, texts and practices offered in school impact on students' reading identities. Those teachers who view literacy as a social practice, shaped by text, context and interactions, tend to have a more expansive view of reading and writing, and are, the evidence suggests, better placed to appreciate and reinforce children and young people's identities as readers and writers within and beyond school (Brady, 2009; Cremin et al., 2015; Taylor and Clark, 2021).

Studies also indicate the marked **influence of gender**, and its interaction with social class, ethnicity, texts and time for social interaction around reading, as well as teachers' and parents' gendered expectations of students (e.g., Hempel-Jorgensen et al., 2018; Jang & Ryoo, 2019; Scholes, 2019a; Scholes, Spina and Comber, 2021). These factors combine in complex ways, creating both barriers and opportunities for the development of positive attitudes and reader identities.

In addition, **young people's social networks** have a strong influence on individuals' identities and can shape their relationship with reading (Compton-Lilly, 2006; McFarland and Pals, 2005). In exploring teenagers' reading identities, Sellers (2019) identified four perspectives on reading in their social groups, namely: 'resistant', 'indifferent' 'outsider' and 'social' reader, each of which shaped the young people's reading habits and practices. These and other studies demonstrate the power of peer relationships and community connections to impact on reading for pleasure. The relational nature of reading is discussed further in the full review[2].

3.2.2 Writers' identities

Research similarly highlights how children's experiences of writing (at home, in school and beyond) not only play a role in constructing their identities as writers, but also their expression of self (Ryan and Barton, 2014; Ryan, 2017). Through the act of writing, individuals are able to think through their ideas and make choices, also considering if and whether they wish to share their writing. Accordingly, **writing can be seen as a social mechanism for constructing and performing identity**. Research suggests that the effective expression of ideas through writing is dependent on positive associations with writing and identifying as a writer. Those who are more self-assured as writers are more likely to engage with writing, persevere with the challenges associated with writing and, consequently, succeed in expressing themselves (Graham, Berninger and Fan, 2007; Pajares, 2003). Thus, creating positive writer identities matters - they support the construction and expression of self.

Writer identities are heavily **influenced by school experiences,** with research showing that teachers' interactions impact upon young people's views of what it means to be a writer (Baker and Cremin, 2017; Bourne, 2002; Dyson, 2009; Rowe, 2009). In turn, as in reading, these interactions are shaped by the views teachers hold about writing; some retain limited conceptions of writing, seeing it as a creative aptitude (McKinney and Giorgis, 2009; Norman and Spencer, 2005) or a set of skills (Lambirth, 2016). Teacher feedback on children's writing (Graham and Harris, 2016; Marrs et al., 2016) and their perspectives are mirrored by children, who cite their compositional (Gadd et al., 2019), behavioural (Wray, 1995) and imaginative competencies (Bearne et al., 2011) as indicative of their status as writers. Narrow understandings of writer identities can be detrimental to children who perceive they cannot match such images, potentially resulting in negative attitudes and identities as writers (Clark et al., 2023). The use of ability groupings for writing also impacts on writer identities, with those children in 'lower' groups having a weaker sense of self-efficacy and, consequently, often avoiding writing (McCarthey, 2001; Kervin, Comber and Woods, 2020).

Research does indicate, however, that **some teachers hold more holistic views of writers and writing,** see writing as a social practice (Ivanič, 2004; McCarthey, Woodard and Kang, 2014), and recognise the challenges experienced by writers in the process of composing (DeFauw, 2018). Additionally, when teachers and professional writers model these processes, they construct more nuanced writer identities that involve fluctuations in competencies (Cremin

et al., 2020; DeFauw, 2018; Woodard, 2017). These indicate to the young that their writer identities are not fixed (Collier, 2010). Indeed, research shows that children can cultivate flexible beliefs about their writing competencies and identities (Limpo and Alves, 2017).

Social interactions with peers can positively impact on students' writer identities. Opportunities to be apprenticed as authors alongside others (Cremin, 2020) and discuss writing choices and challenges helps children reflect upon their writing, develop a sense of self as a writer and appreciate their peers as writers (Hawkins, 2019; Harmey, 2021; Jesson, Fontich and Myhill, 2016). Additionally, writing in different social settings can help young people re-position themselves as competent writers, and members of online communities (Black, 2005; Olin-Scheller and Wikström, 2010).

To summarise, positive reader and writer identities are widely agreed to be a desirable starting point and a sustained goal for children and young people, they influence their wider literacy engagement and learning. Nonetheless what defines a 'good' reader or writer and what counts as 'good' reading or writing is dependent on context and negotiated and co-constructed through interaction in different social environments.

3.3 Motivating readers and writers

Motivation matters. There are myriad reasons for choosing to engage in reading and writing, but despite increasing expectations to be seen to 'enjoy' them, adults cannot require children and young people find pleasure and personal satisfaction in these literacy practices.

> Learners have to discover, in their own ways, what reading and writing are good for, what is in these things for them. They have to want to read with desire and to write with intent beyond that of pleasing adults (Meek 1991, p.77).

Reading motivation is a complex concept (Baker and Wigfield, 1999; De Naeghel et al., 2012; Watkins and Coffey, 2004); it encompasses intrinsic motivation (encompassing involvement and curiosity), extrinsic motivation (encompassing competition, recognition and reading for grades), and social motivation, (encompassing the sharing of texts and meanings gained from reading with friends and family) (Wigfield and Guthrie, 1997). Research persistently indicates that **intrinsic motivation is more closely associated with reading frequency and skill than extrinsic motivation** (e.g., Becker, McElvany and Kortenbruck, 2010; Hebbecker, Förster and Souvignier, 2019; Marinak, et al., 2015; McGeown et al., 2012, 2016; Miyamoto, Pfost and Artelt, 2018; Wang and Guthrie, 2004). Even in the early stages of learning to read, **reading competence and intrinsic motivation are mutually reinforcing** (Schiefele, Stutz and Scaffner, 2016; Vaknin-Nusbaum et al., 2018). Studies also highlight other dimensions of reading motivation, including involvement, environmental factors, (such as the way the classroom is organised socially), the nature of the texts, relationships and readers' personal preferences (Cantrell et al., 2017; McGeown et al., 2020b; Neugebauer and Gilmour, 2020).

Writing studies also show complex nuanced relationships between **motivation and positive attitudes towards writing**, **self-efficacy and writing skills** (Graham et al. 2017; Zumbrunn et al., 2017) and the presence of four key motives for writing: social recognition, curiosity,

competition and grades (Ng et al., 2021). Also, for example that autonomous writing motivation makes a positive contribution to students' writing performance (De Smedt et al., 2018) and that highly motivated writers hold multiple motives for writing, whereas weakly-motivated writers are focused on grades (Ng et al., 2021).

One framework often used to conceptualise and promote motivation in educational contexts **is self-determination theory** (SDT) (Ryan and Deci, 2000; Jang, Reeve and Deci, 2010). This highlights the fundamental human need for autonomy, competence, and relatedness and suggests that teachers who support these needs will create classroom cultures that encourage students to engage in various tasks. SDT has been used as a lens to explore readers' intrinsic motivation, it is also used, although less commonly, to understand young people's motivation to write.

3.3.1 Developing readers' autonomy, competence and relatedness

Research reveals that supporting young people's autonomy, competence and relatedness as readers is advantageous. Reading for pleasure pedagogy which explicitly encompasses attention to these human needs has been shown to successfully motivate both elementary-aged readers (De Naeghel et al., 2012; Orkin et al., 2017; Kennedy and Shiel, 2010) and adolescent readers (De Naeghel et al., 2012, 2014; Neugebauer and Gilmour, 2020). Multiple other studies, whilst not connecting explicitly to SDT, also identify **autonomy and agency, self-efficacy, relatedness and sociality as critical to the development of recreational readers** (Boyask et al., 2022a; Cockroft and Atkinson, 2017; Cremin et al., 2014; Ivey and Johnston, 2013; Kennedy, 2018; Moses and Kelly, 2018, 2019). Collectively, these studies show that when adults focus on supporting the development of young readers' agency and choice, plan structured opportunities that are responsive to their needs and interests as readers, and build interpersonal connections and relationships with them around reading, this impacts positively on their identities as readers.

Wider educational evidence suggests that if teachers share control in the classroom with their students this leads to increased intrinsic motivation, participation, and enthusiasm for learning (Zhou, Ma and Deci, 2009). Reading research also indicates that finding ways to **nurture children's agency and autonomy as readers** is fundamental to enabling recreational reading. As examined further in the full review, studies show that by offering a choice of texts, getting to know readers, and involving them in decisions, teachers enable children to exercise control over their reading lives (e.g., Alexander and Jarman, 2018; Cremin et al., 2014; Ivey and Johnston, 2013; Kennedy, 2018; De Naeghel et al., 2014; Ng, 2018; Reedy and De Carvahlo, 2021). Some of these studies also highlight that autonomy-supportive teachers explore what counts as reading, its relevance in their students' lives and their rights as readers.

Young people who see themselves (and are recognised by others) as able and assured readers, tend to read more frequently and have more positive attitudes to reading than their peers who do not consider themselves to be 'good' or confident readers (Lindorff, Stiff and Kayton, 2023; McGrane et al., 2017). Moreover, motivated readers develop a stronger sense of their own self-competence and confidence and vice versa (Kennedy, 2018; De Naeghel et al., 2012). Enhanced assurance increases students' willingness to persist in the face of challenges and

their ability to discuss texts (Cantrell et al., 2017; Ho and Lau, 2018; Moses and Kelly, 2018). In terms of fostering children's **sense of success, their competence, self-esteem and self-efficacy as readers**, studies show the marked value of adult guidance (in choosing books of interest at the right level for instance) and positive messages and feedback about students' growing efficacy as readers. They also indicate the contribution of a planned and structured, yet informal approach to nurturing recreational readers, through relaxed engagement in reading time, as well as through shared read alouds, booktalk, and recommending and responding to texts (e.g., Cremin et al., 2014; Kennedy, 2018; Moses and Kelly, 2018; De Naeghel et al., 2012, 2014; Nolen, 2007; Weber, 2018).

Young people want and need to feel connected to and accepted by others and are thus more likely to engage as readers if those around them value the activity and relate to them through reading. Studies evidence that connecting to peers (Sellers, 2019), parents (Merga and Ledger, 2018), librarians (Cremin and Swann, 2017; Merga and Ferguson, 2021) and book characters (Gabriel and Young, 2011) can enrich students' pleasure in reading and desire to read. Many studies highlight the positive influence of **teacher involvement;** the impact of adults who invest in their relationships with young people as readers. Such educators participate in discussions, engage affectively and show, through their behaviour, that they are interested in and appreciate the young people's perspectives (De Naeghel et al., 2016; Neugebauer and Gilmour 2020). Perceived teacher involvement in reading has been identified as more strongly associated with teenagers' intrinsic reading motivation than autonomy or competence (De Naeghel et al., 2016). This involvement can also include explicitly positioning themselves as adult readers and developing reciprocity in reader relationships with the young (Cremin et al., 2014; Merga, 2016).

3.3.2 Developing writers' autonomy, competence and relatedness

In a similar manner, studies show that children who experience agency over their writing experiences are more intrinsically motivated to write (Cremin, 2020; Kissel and Miller, 2015). Such **autonomy takes various forms,** for instance being able to make choices over content, process, purpose, audience, the environment and the written output. Writerly autonomy is particularly keenly desired when children are engaged in creative narrative writing; they value the freedom to control the fictional worlds they have created (Healey, 2019; Nolen, 2007), but for complex institutional reasons, often linked to assessment and cultural conceptions of writing, authorial agency is often somewhat constrained in school (e.g., Kervin, Comber and Woods, 2020; Cremin and Myhill, 2012; Peterson et al., 2018; Yoon, 2015).

By contrast, studies reveal that **writing by choice at home supports independence** (Puranik et al., 2018; Skibbe et al., 2013). Children are not only able to make choices about what they write, but also about the amount of time they spend on writing and whether they wish to share it with others (Chamberlain, 2019). Such insights hint that the increased autonomy associated with home writing may be associated more with satisfying internal desires than external expectations, and thus is likely to impact on children's desire to write. By ensuring children have regular supported opportunities to write, free from the assessment pressures in school, young writers can be enabled to exercise their authorial agency (Chen and Rutherford Vale, 2020; Cremin et al., 2020; Lines, 2020).

For children to feel comfortable as autonomous and agentic writers, studies indicate that they need to feel that they are capable writers (Pajares, 2003; Graham, Beringer and Fan, 2007). There is a **reciprocal and reinforcing relationship between autonomy and competence**: the more confident and autonomous children feel about writing, the more writing they do, the more competent they become, which feeds back into their confidence (Graham, Berninger and Fan, 2007). However, the inverse relationship also exists with children with a reduced sense of self-efficacy avoiding writing (McCarthey, 2001; Kervin, Comber and Woods, 2020). Differences in feelings of self-efficacy often arise from the feedback of trusted or authoritative others, such as friends, teachers, and professional writers (Bourne, 2002; Cremin et al., 2020; Graham and Harris, 2016; Marrs et al., 2016). The evidence therefore highlights the need for supportive writing environments where constructive feedback enables children to feel competent. This can be enhanced through writing support for ideas generation (Gadd et al., 2019; Cremin et al., 2020) or reassurance in the face of writing challenges (DeFauw, 2018). Additionally, studies show that offering real world writing activities and a focus on audience, can provide opportunities for children to engage with and succeed at writing, supporting their sense of writerly competence (Cummings, McLaughlin and Finch, 2018; Chen and Rutherford Vale, 2020).

Through writing, ideas are shared with readers, hence, a key motivation for writers is **creating connections with others and maintaining these reader-writer relationships** (Myhill, Cremin and Oliver, 2021; Ryan, 2017). Studies indicate the value of collaborative writing practices (Collier, 2010; De Smedt et al., 2019; Aguilera, 2021), sharing extracts from children's free writing regularly with peers and teachers' positioning themselves as writers alongside their students to help build connections between writers (Baker and Cremin, 2017; Connolly and Burn 2019; Zumbrunn et al., 2019).

To summarise**,** research indicates that to motivate the young as recreational readers and writers, it is vital to offer them agency, enable them to feel competent, and provide opportunities for them to engage socially in a culture which profiles and values reading and writing for pleasure. Additionally, their access to texts, time to read and the nature of the social interactions involved influence their engagement, as well as the presence of adult role models and the opportunities to participate in and become members of connected communities of readers and writers. Research into each of these influential factors is now examined.

3.4 Text access, choice and time

To support volitional reading and writing, studies indicate that issues of access, choice, time and space need to be addressed and supported. Empirical research also indicates the importance of range and diversity both in reading (e.g., Moss and McDonald, 2004; Guthrie et al, 2007; Hempel Jorgensen et al., 2018; McGeown et al., 2020b) and in writing (e.g., Barrs and Horrocks, 2014; Fletcher, 2016*;* De Smedt et al., 2018; Zumbrunn, 2019). Studies emphasise that leisure reading and writing is choice-led and access to a wide range of texts is essential, enabling children to exercise their agency and rights as readers and writers.

3.4.1 Text Access

Research reveals a clear **link between text access and reading for pleasure**, whether in schools (Kennedy, 2018), libraries (Nielen and Bus, 2015), neighbourhoods (Neuman and Celano, 2012) or at home (Lindsay, 2010). Additionally, there is strong evidence of a relationship between book ownership and reading attainment, with the volume of reading being seen to impact on reading stamina and motivation (Evans et al., 2010; Lindsay, 2010). Parents' positive attitudes to reading also influence children's access to texts and their subsequent engagement with reading (e.g., Evans et al., 2010; Gilleece and Eivers, 2018; Ho and Lau, 2018; OECD, 2021). However, studies highlight that in areas of poverty, children experience significantly reduced access to print resources and that these '*book deserts'* have consequences for the wellbeing of families and development of positive readerly dispositions (Neuman and Celano, 2012; Neuman and Moland, 2016). **Resource inequalities** in many countries have led to multiple book distribution programmes which are generally seen to make a valuable contribution. Research into these interventions illustrates that some not only directly increase children's access to texts, but also increase parental engagement with reading activities (de Bondt, Willenberg and Bus, 2020; Neyer, Szumlas and Vaughn, 2021; Ridzi, Sylvia and Singh, 2014), which in turn impacts on children's reading competencies (Skibbe and Foster, 2019). The factors seen to mediate these findings, include the duration of involvement in the programme (Tura et al., 2021), and the quality and quantity of interactions offered to the caregivers who are encouraged to read with their children (de Bondt, Willenberg and Bus, 2020).

Studies suggest that the **calibre and nature of the available texts impact on the sustained engagement and enjoyment of readers**, with edgy, affectively engaging high-interest books being seen to entice many readers (e.g., Ivey and Johnston, 2013; Kim et al., 2016; Troyer, 2019; Westbrook et al., 2019). A reciprocal relationship between being able to access such challenging texts and being intrinsically motivated to read has been noted (Schaffner, Philipp and Schiefele, 2016). However, other studies identify concerns about young readers being demotivated by reading overly demanding texts or 'classic' texts that they may perceive they cannot connect to with ease (Hiebert, Wilson and Trainin, 2014; Locher, Becker and Pfost, 2019; Trudel, 2007). These studies point to the role that teachers can play in mediating access to appropriately challenging and relevant texts, with research showing feedback and encouragement support children as they access stretching texts (de Naeghel et al., 2012). Additionally, adults can provide proxy access to such texts through shared readings, with research suggesting this is particularly motivating for 'struggling' readers (Westbrook et al., 2019).

Fewer studies examine the relationship between **access to texts and volitional writing**. However, research does indicate a mutual relationship between reading for pleasure and engagement in writing; between positive experiences in reading and the desire to replicate such sensations as a writer and use writing to make sense of the world (Barrs and Cork, 2001; Fox, 1993; Sénéchal, Hill and Malette, 2018). Additionally, research shows that the wider a child's reading repertoire the broader their range of writing styles, with some indication that increased confidence and competence towards writing in such styles accrues from their text preferences as readers (Taylor and Clarke, 2021). This relationship, some studies suggest, is dependent on identifying text features while reading so as to use similar features when composing (Fitzgerald and Shanahan, 2000; Graham, 2020; Lines, 2020). In so doing, children

may become more aware of their own authorial choices, fuelling their motivation to write (Marinak et al., 2012; De Smedt, 2018). However, it can be challenging to make connections between reading experiences and writing opportunities, and research notes the role of supportive and knowledgeable adults in enabling this (Graham and Perin, 2007; Graham, 2020; Lines, 2020).

3.4.2 Choice and reading

Multiple studies attest that **enabling children to choose texts** is **critical in supporting young people's engagement in volitional reading** (Moss and McDonald, 2004; Guthrie et al, 2007; De Naeghel et al, 2016; McGeown et al., 2020b). Choice is enabled by access and ensuring children are afforded the autonomy and appropriate support needed (Cockroft and Atkinson, 2017; Ives et al., 2020). Research indicates that young people feel they would be more interested in reading at school if they knew there was a choice of texts, that reflected their lives, interests, and home-based reading preferences (e.g., Cantrell et al., 2017; Clark and Teravainen-Goff, 2020a; Reedy and Carvalho, 2021; Scholes, Spiner and Comber, 2021; Wilhelm, 2016). Moreover, they report feeling validated when they can access personally relevant texts and motivated by bringing texts from home (Ng, 2018; Vehabovic, 2021).

Studies clearly demonstrate the positive consequences of **adults finding out about young people's reading** interests, identities and attitudes and honouring and responding to these. Routes to establish such knowledge documented in research projects include discussions (Ng, 2018), surveys (Reedy and Carvalho, 2021), home visits (Cremin et al., 2015), interviews (McGeown et al., 2020a; Webber et al., 2022) and reader self-reflection activities (Cliff-Hodges, 2018; Cremin et al., 2014). Studies indicate that those educators who are seen to effectively support reading for pleasure, seek young people's perspectives, listen to and respect their views, discern how they would like to be supported and then tailor they practice accordingly. Their responses are not, however, only individually focused but are often planned for groups and the wider collective.

School library research additionally highlights **the need to recognise readers' diverse preferences** and that these vary over time in response to trends, changing interests and inclinations (Rudkin and Wood, 2019; Hartsfield and Kimmel, 2021). Scholes et al (2021) underscore this, noting that individual reader's identities are not fixed. Additionally, studies indicate that to reflect children's contemporary preferences, a wide range of texts and formats, including digital and audio is helpful (Jang and Ryoo, 2019; Clark and Picton, 2020; OECD, 2021). Also, that to support young people's identity investment in reading, the range needs to include both culturally relevant texts (Clark and Fleming, 2019) and enticing **fiction**, since this affectively engaging genre plays a significant role in supporting reading for pleasure (Jerrim and Moss, 2019; Leino et al., 2017). Studies highlight that narratives evoke emotions, and cue memories that help readers make connections, thus fostering deeper engagement which often drives further reading (Kuzmičová and Cremin, 2022; Mar and Rain 2015). There is less research examining non-fiction and its relationship to recreational reading, and a debate about gender-based preferences persists, with some studies indicating boys prefer non-fiction texts (OECD, 2010; Ives et al., 2020), whilst others show this is not necessarily the case (Scholes et al., 2021). This suggests that educators must resist gender stereotypes that

can negatively impact on authentic reader identities (Hempel Jorgensen et al., 2017, 2018; Scholes, 2021).

Enabling relevant and engaging text choices is seen to involve **adult support** (Weber, 2018). Research indicates this involves creating a balance between offering a range of appropriate text recommendations and stepping back to let children make the final decision (Ives et al., 2020; De Naeghel et al., 2016). This strategy is particularly important for less-experienced readers who may struggle to make effective, independent choices of texts (Graham and Perin, 2007). In such instances, children value the recommendations of trusted adults (Guthrie et al., 2007) who need to be well-informed readers of children's texts, able to offer guidance and tailored recommendations. Researchers thus argue that educators have a professional, social and moral responsibility to know a wide range of texts that reflect children's contemporary realities, although the evidence suggests this remains a significant professional challenge (e.g., Adam 2021; Clark and Teravainen, 2015; Conradi Smith, Young and Yatzeck, 2022; Cremin et al., 2008a, 2008b; Cremin et al., 2023; Farrar 2021).

3.4.3 Choice and writing

Writing research also indicates that **young people enjoy being able to exercise their agency as writers** and choose the content and form of their writing (e.g., Collier, 2017; Cremin, 2017; Dyson, 2010; Kissel and Miller, 2015; Barratt-Pugh, Ruscoe and Fellowes, 2020). Studies indicate that young people take considerable pleasure in the autonomy, creativity and self-expression associated with making such choices and are motivated by being offered such authorial agency (Barrs and Horrocks, 2014; Fletcher, 2016; Zumbrunn et al, 2019). However, for some, choosing what to write can present difficulties, with research identifying ideas generation as sometimes in need of adult support, although much depends on the context and wider school practices (Gadd et al., 2019). When children have little control over the texts they are writing, this can create adverse responses and trigger anxiety (Marrs et al., 2016; Zumbrunn et al., 2017), but choice and being able to participate in genuinely purposeful real world writing activities can motivate writers. Children and young people appear to develop an increased desire to write when they come to appreciate the use, value and relevance of writing in their own lives and are enabled to write for their own personal purposes (Brady, 2017; Bruning and Kauffman, 2016; Colognesi and Niwese, 2020; Gadd and Parr, 2016; Young and Ferguson, 2021).

Several studies show that young people particularly appreciate and enjoy being free to **draw on their own cultural resources** and integrate their lives and text experiences into their compositions (e.g., Barratt-Pugh, Ruscoe and Fellowes, 2021; Boscolo, Gelati and Galvan, 2012; Graham and Harris, 2016; Parry and Taylor, 2018). Unsurprisingly therefore, the importance of teachers getting to know the children and young people they work with is highlighted, in order to understand their existing writing habits and practices and wider personal interests (Chamberlain, 2019; Hull and Schultz, 2002).

Outside of school, research reveals that when young people choose to write, they compose a range of purposeful and personal texts, linked to their own contexts and interests (Brady, 2017; Chamberlain et al., 2020; Connolly and Burn, 2019). Some view themselves as regular writers through choosing to write online on social media platforms (Clark and Dugdale, 2009),

and, drawing on their own cultural resources, exercise their agency and choice in fanfiction spaces for instance (Curwood et al., 2013). However, their home writing choices are not necessarily known in school, which can reduce their pleasure and desire to write in the classroom (Gardner, 2013; Lenhart et al., 2008).

3.4.4 Time to read and write

Approaches to support reading and writing for pleasure require consideration of the time afforded to young people to immerse themselves in reading and/or composing texts and interacting with others around these practices (Cremin et al., 2020; Moses and Kelly, 2019; Ng, 2018). **If time to read is intentional, well-planned and supported as part of a wider comprehensive approach** it can make a contribution to developing volitional reading and positive reader identities (Cremin et al., 2014; Cuevas, Irving and Russell, 2014; Kennedy, 2018; Merga and Mason, 2019). These and other studies commonly demonstrate that offering time to discuss texts with others as part of reading time is of value, alongside periods of quiet. Furthermore, research shows children are socially motivated to read, driven and encouraged by their relationships or desire for connections with others, so time and space for social interaction around reading is supportive (Neugebauer and Gilmour, 2020; Wilhelm, 2016).

Physical and social spaces also influence children's engagement in reading for pleasure. The co-creation of an invitational, low stakes and often social reading environment, is seen as supportive, whether in classrooms, libraries or the wider school building and grounds (Cremin et al., 2014; Kennedy, 2018; Reedy and De Carvahlo, 2021; Stewart, 2018). Research indicates that young people appreciate being involved and value reading spaces and libraries designed to accommodate different uses: as comfortable quiet reading spaces; as forums to meet with peers, to participate in clubs and use technologies; and as contemplative oases (Loh, 2016; Merga and Ferguson, 2021; Willis, Hughes and Bland, 2019). Online spaces too can create opportunities in which agency and autonomy are exercised as well as peer-led interactions (Jerasa and Boffone, 2021), thus motivating further reading.

There is less research that tracks the nature or consequences of **setting time aside for writing for pleasure** in school. However, some studies acknowledge that if children are to develop as competent and motivated writers, time for exploration and innovation are needed, as well as direct teaching and scaffolded instruction (De Smedt et al., 2018; Gallagher and Kittle, 2018; Graham, Harris and Santangelo, 2015). Other studies indicate that offering time to choose to write, at writing tables in the early years, in writing journals and in 'just writing /free writing time', as well as by integrating choice-led writing into play, drama, storytelling and multimodal activities can support children's intentionality and desire to write (e.g. Cremin, 2020; Dyson, 2010; Nicolopoulou et al., 2006; Rowe, Shimizu and Davis, 2021; Rowe and Neitzel, 2010; Rumney, Kuksa and Buttress, 2016). Research also indicates that some children make time at home to write (Brady, 2017) and suggests that online spaces in which they can engage in their own time support young people's volitional engagement in writing (Lammers and Marsh, 2015).

To summarise, to nurture reading for pleasure young people need access to a wide range of enticing texts that are culturally relevant and diverse. Well informed teachers and other adults, with strong text repertoires can support students, by getting to know them as unique

readers, supporting their choices, and mediating any particularly challenging texts. Young writers too, develop an enhanced desire to write when teachers get to know them, offer authorial agency and choice, enable them to write for personal and real-world purposes, and draw on their cultural practices and experiences. Research suggests assigning time and space within the curriculum and creating a supportive environment, both physically and socially, can help to motivate volitional reading and writing.

3.5 Social interaction

Historically, reading and writing have been characterised as individual solitary activities, often undertaken in privacy or isolation. More recently however, their profoundly social nature has been recognized (Barton and Hamilton, 1998; Brice Heath, 1983). Research examining reading for pleasure highlights the significant social interaction involved in being a reader and in making sense of texts (e.g., Boyask et al., 2022a; Cremin et al., 2014; Ivey and Johnston, 2013; Maybin, 2013; Merga et al., 2018; Neugebauer and Gilmour, 2020; Ng, 2018; Sellers, 2019). In a not dissimilar manner, young people's engagement in writing and sense of themselves as writers is influenced by opportunities for interaction (e.g., Dyson, 2003; Fisher et al., 2010; Myhill and Newman, 2019; Myhill, Newman and Watson, 2020). Writing studies though, tend to focus more on talk as a tool for deepening students' understanding of writing, than on developing their desire to write.

Qualitative research studies indicate that in classrooms and other settings where choice-led reading and writing for pleasure are foregrounded, the environment is a highly social one. In these contexts, multiple facilitated yet relaxed interactions and spontaneous conversations around texts occur, many of which are student-led. For example, with students sharing and discussing texts (their own compositions, those of their peers and published works), recommending published texts to one another and engaging in related interactive literacy activities (e.g., Cremin et al., 2014; De Smedt, Graham and Van Keer, 2019; Fisher and Frey, 2018; Harrington, Milne and Boyask, 2021; Kennedy, 2018; Moses and Kelly, 2018; Ng 2018). In such environments, some students come to value reading or writing for the social connections and affinity networks created (Dyson, 2020; Merga, 2017; Sellers, 2019). Thus, the available research indicates that reading and writing for pleasure are nurtured and enriched by social interaction; as Britton (1983, p. 11) enigmatically observed, '*reading and writing float on a sea of talk'*.

3.5.1 Social interactions around reading and writing for pleasure at home

In homes, reading interactions and conversations take multiple forms with varying intentions, such as practicing decoding skills, comprehension, relaxation, motivation and enjoyment. Research indicates that home reading interactions can become dominated by school set expectations and routines (Marsh, 2003; Thomson, 2002), with parents, concerned to 'get it right' once their child starts school (Levy, 2009). Studies also indicate that a range of **unique, culturally related interactive reading and literacy practices** are part of daily life in families, and that these are not always recognised or valued by schools (e.g., Cremin et al., 2015; Gregory and Williams, 2000; Levy, Hall and Preece, 2018; Little, 2021).

Significantly, **shared book reading is positively associated with children's attitudes and enjoyment of reading** (Anderson et al., 2019; Boerma, Mol and Jolles, 2018; Vuong et al., 2021). This is often child-led and supportive of parent child relationships (Levy, Hall and Preece, 2018), although some parents may be unsure about the value of reading in their home language and inadvertently restrict children's multi-literate identities and opportunities to enjoy home language texts (Hu, Hao and Yang, 2021). Other work on shared reading interactions, highlights the value of 'non-immediate talk', which goes beyond the information in the book, making connections to past experiences, other texts, the wider world, and encompasses socio-emotional talk (De Temple and Snow, 2008; Schapira and Aram, 2020). Studies of book gifting programmes also indicate that a focus on frequent quality caregiver interactions substantially contributes to their impact (de Bondt, Willenberg & Bus, 2020).

Scant studies exist in relation to interactions around writing at home, but studies of volitional writing online suggest that for some young people the social interaction around writing - afforded by fanfiction or engaging with a writing mentor for example- are highly motivating (Connolly and Burn, 2019; Curwood, Magnifico and Lammers, 2013; Olin-Scheller and Wikström, 2010). Additionally, in exploring children's out of school literacy-linked activities, Cummings, McLaughlin and Finch (2018) found that whilst several factors influenced their engagement, social interaction was salient, related to a desire to maintain relationships and share enjoyable moments with others.

3.5.2 Social interactions around reading for pleasure at school

Multiple empirical studies indicate the positive **influence of school-based opportunities to talk about books on motivation, engagement and recreational reading,** although much depends upon the nature of this interaction (Ho and Lau 2018; Hudson 2016). These opportunities emerge in the context of common practices to support reading for pleasure, such as reading aloud, time to read, and activities oriented around informal book talk. Such activities often involve guidance in response to challenges and positive messages about students as readers, increasing their willingness and ability to discuss texts in depth and enhancing their desire to read recreationally (Moses and Kelly, 2018; De Naeghel et al., 2012, 2014).

Reading aloud to children for the purpose of pleasure offers opportunities for self-expression, dialogue and social interaction that can create connections between readers, deepen understanding and fashion a sense of community (e.g. Batini, Bartolucci and Timpone, 2018; Leung et al., 2018; Moffat, Heydon and Iannacci, 2019; Torr, 2007). Interactive read-alouds frequently involve modelling the dynamic engagement of a reader, encouraging children to think and talk about the text through open-ended discussions and co-constructing meaning and making intertextual connections (Batini, 2022; Maloch and Beutel, 2010; McClure and Fullerton 2017; Zucker et al., 2021). Studies tend to indicate that read aloud interactions are relaxed and conversational and can advance children's engagement and enjoyment.

However, **the impact of read aloud on young people's recreational reading** has not been the focus of research attention. Indeed, relaxed book blether may be viewed as 'luxury' by some educators, since it is not focused instructional time. Adults who read to children may need

help to value such book chat (Preece and Levy, 2020; Moffat, Heydon and Iannacci, 2019) and more research is needed to understand the kinds of read aloud interactions that optimally nurture the follow through to independent reading.

Opportunities for informal book talk can support children's desire to read and positively shape their attitudes to books and reading (Merga 2018; Moses, Ogden and Kelly, 2015; Neugebauer and Gilmour, 2020). Both planned and spontaneous, informal book talk is recognised as influential in nurturing recreational readers (Batchelor and Cassidy, 2019; Coakley Fields, 2018; Ivey and Johnston, 2013; Mottram, 2014). While such talk includes teacher-led book promotions and recommendations to the class and individuals, it also encompasses child-led opportunities to endorse, critique and discuss texts, and participate in wider conversations about recreational reading and being a reader. Characteristically informal, and voiced in non-assessed contexts, this talk is dialogic, free-ranging and perceived to be less hierarchical or teacher-led than the traditionally conceived and documented discourse of instruction (Cremin and Swann, 2017; Fisher and Frey, 2018).

Research studies show that young readers' informal interactions and conversations about texts tend to coalesce around common interests, connections, affective and personal responses and peer recommendations. Researchers reveal that young people value this **talk which is triggered by texts and their social relationships** (e.g., Alexander and Jarman, 2018; Francois, 2013; Ivey and Johnston, 2013; Maybin, 2013; Mottram, 2014; Neugebauer and Gilmour 2020). Notably, some of the studies of informal talk about texts and being a reader, show that these interactions not only influence children's later reading choices, but are also associated with increased agency, motivation, persistence and reading volume. Whilst teacher feedback regarding children's choice-led reading appears not to have been specifically examined, it is implicit in the relaxed reader-to-reader relationships documented, and the positive and affective stance adopted by educators, some of whom position themselves as fellow readers with views of their own (e.g., Cremin, 2010; Ivey and Johnston, 2013; Merga, 2020; Neugeberger and Gilmour, 2020; Ng, 2018; Reedy and Carvalho, 2021). Social interactions around reading are seen to shape positive reader relationships among peers and children and adults, which not only widen young people's reading networks, but can contribute to a re-visioning of reading as communal and collective experience.

3.5.3 Social interactions around writing for pleasure at school

Interaction and peer collaboration are also widely recognised as supportive of writers and research indicates that teachers harness **talk to help young writers generate and test ideas, work together, reflect on their writing and respond to the writing of others** (e.g., De Smedt, Graham and Van Keer, 2019; Dobson and Stephenson, 2019; Myhill, Newman, and Watson 2020). Talk is also used to help them consider their identities as writers. Drama and improvisation are seen to be valuable ideational tools, contributing to more positive attitudes and motivating writing as well as to the quality and quantity of children's writing, in part through inhabiting another point of view in role (e.g. Bearne and Grainger, 2004; Cremin et al, 2006; Dobson and Stephenson 2018; Dunn et al., 2013). Children's participation in oral storytelling and enactment of their own tales can also trigger the desire to write, draw and scribe others' narratives with authorial agency and intentionality (Cremin et al., 2017; Nicolopoulou et al., 2006).

Research further reveals that **talk and collaboration during the process of writing** can be motivational (Graham and Harris, 2016) and that children's desire to engage in social relationships often serves to prompt informal interactions around writing (Dyson, 2000, 2001; Dyson and Dewayani, 2013). Additionally, opportunities to collaborate through co-production ('distributed authorship' and 'peer-assisted' writing) foster young people's need for connection and relatedness and appear to positively impact on their writing motivation and engagement (e.g., Aguilera 2021; Cremin, 2020; De Smedt, Graham and Van Keer, 2019; Myhill and Jones 2009). The interactions which are seen to be most supportive in developing engaged writers, are largely learner-led not teacher-led, demonstrating the teacher's interest in the child's writing, respect for their authorial agency, and enabling the young writers to take control of the compositional process based on affirmative feedback and critique (e.g., Graham et al., 2014; Harmey, 2021; Harmey and Rodgers, 2017; Hawkins, 2019). These studies suggest that talk serves to engage and motivate young people as writers and contributes to self-regulation and enhanced self-efficacy which not only influences their pleasure in the process, but positively shapes their literate identities. However, studies do not track relationships between such supported informal interaction at school and the frequency or nature of children's volitional writing at home.

To summarise, opportunities to support children as positively engaged readers and writers, benefit from being highly social and interactive. These invite and sanction open-ended discussions about texts, both those being read and composed, and enable learners to position themselves relationally, facilitating interaction and collaboration that motivates and engages them and supports the development of positive attitudes to reading and writing. Sustained opportunities for social interaction around reading and writing, whether at home, school or online, contribute to the formation of networks and connected communities which can in turn stimulate and sustain young people's engagement as readers and writers.

3.6 Role models and connected communities

In literacy environments, **adults can adopt (or be assigned) multiple identity positions**, for instance as gatekeepers, curators, mentors, monitors, assessors or fellow readers and writers. Research suggests that those adults who are engaged readers and writers themselves can become role models and, in this position, positively influence young people's engagement in volitional reading and writing (e.g., Kucirkova and Cremin, 2017; Ng, 2018; Rowe, Shimizu and Davis, 2022; Woodard, 2017; Zumbrunn et al., 2019). By reflecting on their own experience of reading and writing, studies indicate that adults can come to re-vision schooled or received perceptions, question what counts as reading and writing in their context and take a broader view.

Research studies additionally indicate that young people are supported by the creation of connected communities of readers and writers. These communities allow for student and teacher agency, different views and perspectives and recognise the social and relational nature of literacy (Cremin et al., 2014; Boyask et al., 2022). A sense of social connectedness

is evident in the literacy networks, subgroups and communities that nurture and sustain young people's engagement as volitional readers and writers that exist within and beyond schools.

3.6.1 Reading role models

Parents who read or show reading enjoyment at home shape children and young people's motivation. By role modelling their engagement, and reading, singing songs and rhymes together, visiting libraries, discussing texts and making life to text connections, parents demonstrate the value they assign to reading for pleasure (Scholes, 2019b; Wiescholek, et al., 2018). Significantly, teenagers whose parents report enjoying reading the most, (and are thus likely to model their engagement) have a higher index of reading enjoyment than those whose parents report not enjoying reading (OECD, 2021). Support for such modelling has been found to impact positively on families' shared reading practices and children's resultant engagement (Anderson et al., 2019).

Few studies of librarians focus specifically on their readerly identities, but when young people's views are sought, some do view their **librarians and teachers as readers**, since they are seen to model and share their affective pleasure in reading, participate in discussions and make text recommendations (e.g. Cremin, 2010; Cremin and Swann, 2017; Merga, 2016, 2020a; Merga and Ferguson, 2021; Methe and Hintze, 2003). The young people report being influenced by these reading role models. Teachers who ascribe the most value to reading in their own lives, appear to set more time aside in class for children to read and discuss their chosen texts, recommend books, and share reflections from their own reading far more frequently than their peers who ascribe less personal value to reading and who do not position themselves as fellow readers (Cremin, 2019; McKool and Gespass, 2009). Teachers who are readers in their personal lives and committed to developing recreational readers in their professional ones, are described as Reading Teachers- they position themselves overtly as reading role models (Commeyras, Bisplinghoff and Olsson, 2003; Cremin et al., 2014; Simpson and Cremin, 2022). It is argued that these 'Reading Teachers' reflect upon reading and being readers themselves, find out about the children as readers, and adjust their practice to make the experience of reading more relevant, relational and authentic, adopting 'pedagogies of re-connection' (Comber and Kamler, 2004). In this way, they both model and support reading for pleasure.

3.6.2 Connected communities of readers

Whilst research has not examined **families as connected communities of readers** directly, studies do highlight that family reading practices are often child-led and thus relationally responsive to the young people's needs and interests (Levy, Hall and Preece, 2018). Also, parents appreciate the interpersonal connections that shared reading offers (Brown, Westerveld and Gillon, 2017; Merga and Ledger, 2018). Additionally, neighbourhood reading interventions have increased children's recreational reading by drawing in families through summer reading programmes, library events and public read-alouds (Compton-Lilly, 2016; Mahasneh et al., 2021).

Libraries represent a safe space for reading and can create communities of belonging that enable reading for pleasure to be a communal experience, at least for those students who identify as readers and wish to engage with others around texts. Formal clubs, informal book chats, and relaxed encounters in the library are seen to encourage volitional reading (e.g. Cremin and Swann, 2017; Cremin et al., 2018; Merga and Ferguson, 2021; Willis, Hughes and Bland, 2019).

The renewed attention given to **classroom or school wide connected communities of readers** affirms the significance of staff learning about young people's reader identities, profiling their autonomy and participating themselves as adult readers, although not always explicitly (Milne, Harrington and Boyask, 2022; Vanden Dool and Simpson, 2021). Studies show that educators who create connected communities of readers intentionally offer sustained social and relational opportunities to nurture recreational reading as a collective. For instance, they may do so through establishing books in common, inviting and offering text recommendations and valuing and supporting spontaneous book blether and discussion about being a reader- in these and other ways, educators create connections between individuals and groups of readers – between adults and children, and children and children (Boyask et al., 2022; Cremin et al. 2014; Batini et al., 2020; Lenhart et al, 2017). In the process kinship groups around particular texts or series or networks around a shared communicative purpose for writing may iteratively develop and a new sense of sociality and community around reading will be built. Such communities, characterised by reciprocity and interaction, are connected by reader relationships not by routines, and evidence a strong sense of social connectedness (Boyask et al., 2022; Cremin et al., 2014; Ng, 2018).

3.6.3 Writing role models

Some a**dults position themselves as fellow writers in the classroom**, to offer children living demonstrations of how, what and why they might write. Through engaging reflexively in the experience, research suggests that these teachers adopt an insider's perspective on the writing process and operate as writing role models (Baker and Cremin, 2017; Rowe, Shimizu and Davis, 2022). Studies also indicate that teachers' investment in writing can enhance their students' experiences as writers. Writing alongside pupils, sharing and discussing writing with them can support positive attitudes to writing amongst the young and has the potential to make the writing process more enjoyable (Augsburger, 1998; Cremin et al., 2017; Zumbrunn et al., 2019). Even teachers who lack confidence as writers can support children's motivation to write by taking on a visible writing identity, sharing their own challenges and relating to the children as writers (Cremin and Baker, 2010; Gardner, 2014; Woodard, 2017). A review of related literature suggests teachers' histories, identities and confidence as writers, appears to shape their practice, influencing whether they follow skills-based models or offer more reflective, writer-oriented community-focused approaches (Cremin and Oliver, 2016). Extended opportunities to write and consider the experience are seen to impact upon teachers' self-confidence and approaches, which in turn, can lead to changed practices which foreground agency and purpose in writing, and impact on children's motivation to write (Cremin et al., 2020; Gardner and Kuzich, 2022).

Professional writers too, whether on residencies or standalone visits, often position themselves as role models, sharing their enthusiasm for the art form, their commitment and determination to write and the strategies they find successful (Owen and Munden, 2010; Xerri, 2017). Additionally, by modelling their challenges, offering an authentic audience for

children's writing and finding way to integrate writing into a wider real-world collaborations, studies show professional writers appear to increase children's writing confidence and desire to write (DeFauw, 2018; Rumney, Kuksa and Buttress, 2016). Research also indicate that teachers can learn from professional writers. By adopting the craft knowledge and pedagogical practices demonstrated by professional writers, offering children choice and agency, valuing personal non-assessed writing, positioning students as authors, and writing alongside them, studies show increased students' enjoyment and engagement as writers (Cremin et al.,2020; Myhill and Cremin, 2019; Myhill, Cremin and Oliver, 2021). Such approaches highlight children as authors with rights and choices, not merely as producers of school writing.

3.6.4 Connected communities of writers

Young people participate in different writing networks at school (Dyson and Dewayani, 2013; Elf, 2017), online (Curwood, 2013) and at home (Brady, 2017; Chamberlain, 2019). To serve their own purposes and in response to their interests, they may also choose to write with others in the local community (Chamberlain et al., 2020). In school, if writing is framed as a personally purposeful, imaginatively engaging and socially supported experience, this can create a sense of belonging and community (Cremin et al., 2020; Dobson and Stephenson, 2017, 2019; Zumbrunn et al., 2017).

Studies indicate that some teachers and professional writers seek to create communities of writers in which the young are enabled to move with assurance between personal and social spaces for writing (Baker and Cremin, 2017; Connolly and Burn 2019; Thomson, Hall and Russell, 2006). In recognition of the social nature of writing and learning, such communities seek to be inclusive and support the young as they orchestrate the demanding challenge of becoming authors. Additionally, research indicates that in connected writing communities, young people's writing is often published - through performances, plays, debates, the production of anthologies, and the co-creation of diverse digital resources as well as through focused attention to their real-life readers- the audience for their writing (Dobson and Stephenson, 2019; Chen and Rutherford Vale, 2020).

To summarise research indicates that adult involvement and authentic demonstrations of the experience, pleasures and challenges of being a reader and/or a writer can positively influence children's own literate identities. Through role modelling and the creation and support of various connected communities, adults involve young people, support the development of positive dispositions and may enhance their volitional engagement as readers and writers. Nonetheless, more work is needed to understand the diverse needs and interests of the different groups, to consider those members only peripherally engaged and explore wider communities of connection that encompass families and local community members.

3.7 Conclusion

The research literature that examines children and young people reading and writing for pleasure is uneven; there are far fewer studies which attend to children's volitional engagement in writing. The review was limited to studies involving 5–13-year-olds. The existing studies focus primarily on classrooms, few track differences in pleasure and engagement over sustained periods of time and even fewer consider children's literate

identities in the round or the relationship between their identities as readers and writers. Notwithstanding these limitations, synergies were able to be identified within and across the two separate reviews about the approaches and methodologies that inspire and encourage children and young people to read and write for pleasure.

Multiple factors shape children's lived experience of reading and writing and influence whether they choose to read and write volitionally in their own time. Across both reviews the significance of developing young people's literate identities is foregrounded. Those children and young people with a positive sense of self as readers and writers, enjoy and engage in reading and writing more frequently than their less assured peers, so building positive literacy histories and positioning children as readers and writers matters. This links to the second synergistic connection, the relationship between motivation and self-efficacy and the value of enabling children to experience a sense of agency, competence and social connection to others through being a reader and a writer. Studies also commonly show that educators seek to ensure texts of cultural and emotional relevance are available to choose from or be inspired by, and that guidance for text selection is given. Also, that children's choices as readers and writers are respected, and time and space is set aside for them to read and compose texts that serve their own personal as well as real world purposes.

Another synergy identified in the research literature, involves the provision of multiple opportunities for supported social interaction, for relaxed conversational engagement around texts in non-assessed contexts, often linked to read alouds, time to read, ideas generation, and enabled by collaborative writing and frequent sharing of compositions. Such interactions are the research indicates socially motivating. The adults facilitating these learner-centred, autonomy supportive approaches, not only work to get to know the children as readers and writers, but listen to and act upon their views, tailoring their practice in response. In addition, the evidence suggests that some are involved as fellow readers and writers, role modelling their engagement and building relational connections that positively impact on young people's dispositions, desires and literate identities. This final synergistic relationship identified between the two bodies of literature, indicates that through positioning reading and writing for pleasure as communal, collective and relational practices, educators can enable the creation of networks and connected communities of readers and writers that actively support reading and writing for pleasure.

The Executive Summary reveals there are several gaps in the research into approaches that nurture young people's volitional reading and writing, areas which would benefit from closer examination. The most significant include research that in focused detail addresses the motivational climate of writing contexts, at school, at home, in extracurricular and online spaces; the role that social motivation and affect play in the experience of being a reader/writer; the reading-writing connection and the interplay between children's literate identities since '*experience in reading is intrinsically bound to experience in writing*' (Parry and Taylor, 2018, p.109) and research that seek to characterize, describe and understand young readers' and writers' identities and their cognitive, affective, social, and behavioural engagement. Such work could help the profession develop a richer and more rounded picture of young readers and writers with potentially positive consequences for responsive and supportive practice.

The insights from this Executive Summary of the approaches which encourage reading and writing for pleasure, have been combined with the data from the six literacy programmes involved in the Mercers' Company Special Initiative in order to create a Reading and Writing for Pleasure Framework for Practice . The Framework provides a research-informed basis for developing the individual, social and relational practice that nurtures young people's volitional engagement as readers and writers.

4 Data collection and analysis: understanding the data

4.1 Introduction

In this section of the report, attention is turned to the analysis of data collected from the six programmes. The conceptual framework guiding this analysis drew upon *Activity theory* (Daniels 2004; Engeström 2008, 2011). This framework involved seeing each programme as an 'activity system' in order to analyse common elements of each system (see Figure 1).

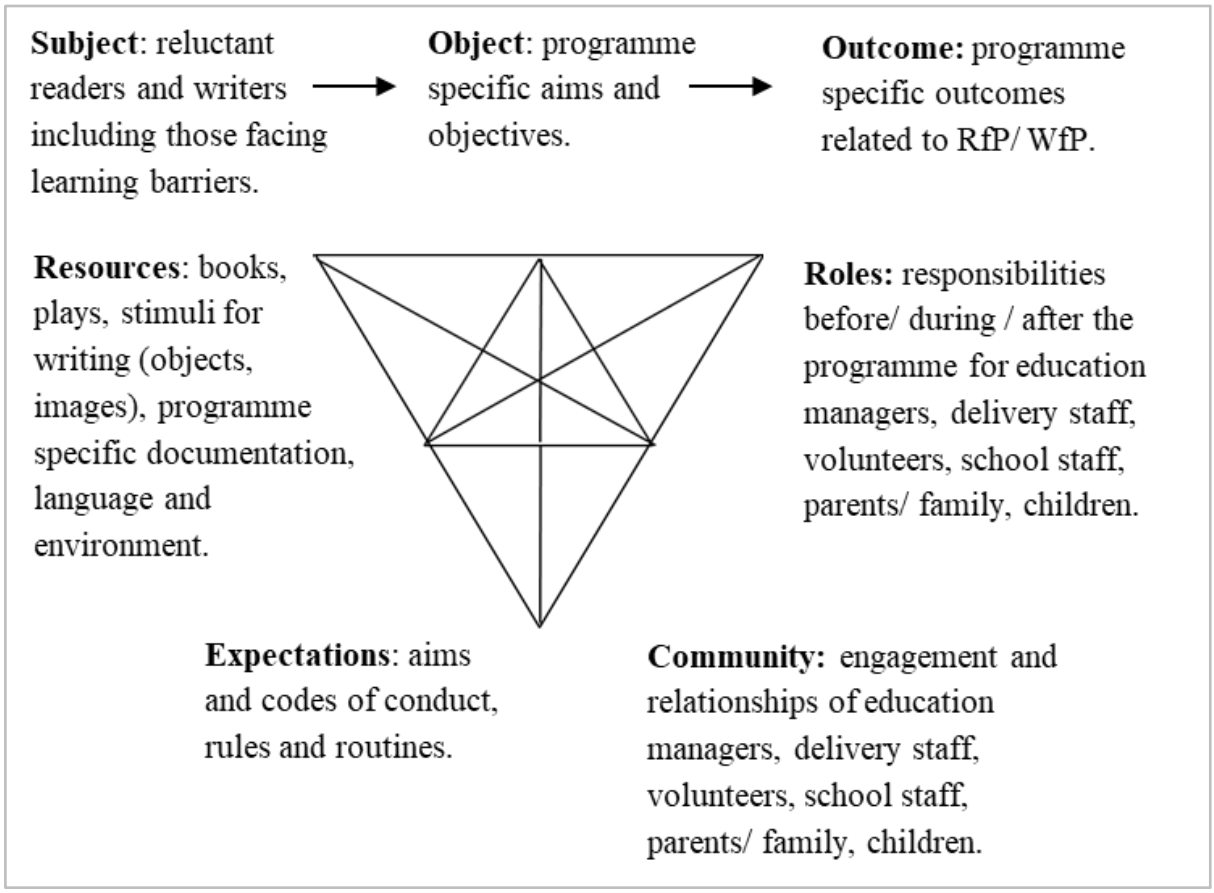

Figure 9. A diagram to show the programmes as activity settings seeking to nurture reading and writing for pleasure

The analysis of the data involved mobilising Activity Theory (Hashim and Jones 2007; Holt and Morris 1993; Engeström, 1987), as discussed in the Research Design section of this report. Using Activity Theory, each organisation was understood to be an 'activity system' where individuals (**'subjects'**) interactions with programme activities (**'objects'**) are mediated by elements. These elements are **'expectations'**, '**community', 'roles'**, **'resources'**. Our analysis of the data focused on these elements. This focus was based on an understanding that the 'subject' of all the programmes was already defined by programme aims as being children and young people. Similarly, the 'object' of all the programmes was already defined as the provision of reading and writing activities according to the aims of the organisations. Finally, although the 'outcomes' in terms of impact on pupil R and WfP were anticipated through analysis of the aforementioned elements it was not part of focused data collection as we were not evaluating the impact of the programmes.

Data analysis involved collaborative scrutiny of the data corpus using an online coding platform. Through experimental and rigorous analysis, codes were generated, negotiated and agreed upon by the OU research team for each activity system element. However, recognising the complexity of some elements of activity theory, some codes were further divided into sub-codes. An overview of the resulting codes and sub-codes in relation to the four elements of **Expectations**, **Community**, **Roles** and **Resources** are provided below (Figure 2). The elements are listed in bold at the top of each column, codes are listed underneath in green boxes and sub-codes are indented underneath these in orange boxes.

Figure 10. Overview of Activity Theory elements, codes and sub-codes arising from data analysis

In the sections below, the four individual elements of *Expectations, Community, Roles* and *Resources*, and their associated codes and sub-codes, are discussed in turn. Each section ends with a synthesis of the data so as to move towards understanding the dataset as a whole and towards constructing a framework for R and WfP.

The discussion of the four elements involves direct references to the data corpus, which included a wide range of data gathering activities related to with the six programmes, such as through observational visits and discussions with those engaging with programmes. An overview of the types of data included in the data corpus is provided in Table 1.

Table 1 Overview of data corpus

Data type	**Participants**
Programme documentation	Not applicable
Focus groups	Children, teachers, volunteers
Interviews	Programme staff, practitioners, volunteers
Visit observations	Programme staff, teachers, practitioners, volunteers

The following abbreviations are used throughout this section to refer to the six programmes:

- DSL: Doorstep Library
- GIR: Get Islington Reading
- LP: Literacy Pirates

- MoS: Ministry of Stories
- PSC: Primary Shakespeare Company
- WBD: World Book Day

4.2 Expectations

The first of the four elements, *Expectations* covers content related to the aims of each programme and the intended codes of conduct, rules and routines associated with each programme in order to realise these aims. These aims are what are hoped for, not necessarily what actually happens. Ten codes were identified in the analysis in relation to the element of *Expectations* – the definitions developed by the team related to these codes are detailed in Table 2 (below).

Table 2 Definitions of codes within Expectations category

Positive reading/writing engagement	*Statements that this is an expected element of programme experience, where it is observed in children and how it is facilitated by volunteers and teachers*
Building a programme framework	*Evidence that this is an intention of programme activity, mention of what kind or content of a framework is sought, or how this is done through programme activity*
Codes of conduct	*Mention of what rules programmes have in place, how they are communicated and monitored, and how they are experienced by volunteers, teachers and children, to ensure consistency and desired running of programmes*
Developing understanding	*Statements that evidence a desire to understand more about something, from multiple perspectives*
Evaluation	*As embedded into programme activities, to know if their work is achieving their aims*
Imagination / choice / engagement	*Mention of encouraging children and young people's imagination, having and exercising choice of activity/resource and willing engagement as a core element of programmes*
Interactions	*Mention of how these are prescribed and experienced by programmes to support reading and writing for pleasure*
Respect, kindness	*Statements that indicate assumptions about respectful and kind behaviours between individuals – whether children, practitioners, volunteers or teachers*
Routines	*Expected or anticipated ways of doing activities that are understood and shared between those involved in the programmes*
Whole school change	*How programmes support this process*

4.2.1 Expectations: Positive reading or writing engagement

'Positive reading or writing engagement' denotes statements that this engagement is an expected aspect of programme experience, referring to where it is observed in children and how it is facilitated by volunteers and teachers.

To perhaps state the obvious, **enabling positive reading and/or writing engagement were at the core of all programmes' expectations**. For some programmes this involved reflecting on

how their activities have previously been perceived and shifting the expectations to bring reading and/or writing for pleasure to the fore:

> *So what we're trying to do is take the moment of celebration, which is World Book Day, and add a depth of meaning and evidence-based engagement*. (WBD Interview 1, Programme staff)

The need for programmes' existence however exposes that this is not always straightforward. Programmes identified **barriers** to children experiencing this:

> *So, a mixture of not having someone reading to them and they all talk about loving being read to. That fundamental association of skill and reading and then being bad at it and then not wanting to go anywhere near it because they're bad at it. And then not finding a book that speaks to them, so why would I bother?* (WBD Interview 2, Programme staff)

Programme leads identified positive reading or writing engagement as an instantiation of programme aims and expectations, in ways that can be felt by children and observed by programme teams (linking back to a need for programme evaluation):

> *We want to see children's reading confidence levels increase and that they display increased positive attitudes towards reading*. (GIR Interview 1, Programme staff)

Additionally, programmes considered the **wider ripples, or impact, of this engagement:**

> *That feels like a truth in terms of getting children to engage with reading for enjoyment, that it's the whole picture, it's engaging everybody and building those relationships with the community and having the sense that everybody thinks that reading is something that should be enjoyed and treasured. (*Teacher/ Volunteer Focus Group)

> *Thinking about not just reading confidence, but confidence in general really and social wellbeing, social connections, so thinking about the way that sharing reading and reading together, whether it's with a family or with peer groups, can help enable those outcomes.* (GIR Interview 1, Programme staff)

Children expressed positive reading and writing engagement in terms of **fun, enjoyment and relaxation:**

> *Doorstep Library makes me enjoy reading because they have lots of interesting books, facts books, children's books, bigger books that I literally love reading over and over again, so it just gives me, it just helps me relax sometimes.* (DSL Children's Focus Group 2)

Moreover, they correlated this enjoyment with an increase in confidence in their **perceived reading and writing efficacy,** seeing the programmes as having given them the skills and imagination needed to engage effectively in a wider range of reading and writing activities:

It makes me more liking writing because you get to like, we describe stuff and the way that we do Shakespeare, if it's something like grimy it helps me a bit more, so I enjoy it more because I get to write better. (PSC Children's Focus Group 2)

It has expanded my knowledge in writing and it makes it more easy for me to write more. (GIR Children's Focus Group 2)

I think I just got more ideas in my head and more feelings about stuff that I really wanted to write down. (MoS Children's Focus Group)

So, I think it helps me writing and reading. So, my writing is kind of bad and every time I come here it improves by like 2 and on my reading, it improves like 4. So, every time I learn a new word, it's new and I try and solve it with the text and if I can't do that, I ask the adult and my reading gets better every day. (LP Children's Focus Group 1)

This last quote indicates the important role of adults, as perceived by the children, in the programmes. In turn, the programmes also focused on the **social element of engagement** as a sign of success, where positive reading or writing engagement is salient through children supporting this in other children:

When you see other children encouraging children. … reading through each other's writing and suggesting editing … where the children were not afraid to read their writing. I had so many more children happy to read their writing out and so many more children proud of what they'd done because I think they'd been able to talk through it with some people they felt comfortable with. (Teachers' Focus Group)

This barrier of being 'afraid', linked above to the notion of 'being bad' at something, was clearly something programmes felt they needed to break through. This sometimes involved changing the frame of accessing reading and writing:

For many children who aren't engaging with reading for pleasure, the very fact that they have to do all the decoding effort and then find an adverbial, and then write three pages afterwards in the same style that puts them off the whole thing in the first place. (WBD Interview 2, Programme staff)

We want young people to want to write. So, it's about those experiences and that purpose and that motivation. And then the more formal elements of writing, of grammar or SPaG stuff comes as part of that process, but later, …. But if you don't want to write about something, then you're not going to. (MoS Interview 1, Programme staff)

In both these examples we see the **emphasis is on engagement, not accuracy**. For children, involved in programmes like Literacy Pirates and Get Islington Reading, they similarly emphasized their engagement, instead of technical competencies, focusing on how long they were able to sustain engagement on an activity . Often this sustained engagement was assessed by the children in terms of how many pages were read or how many paragraphs were written:

> *I used to write like a paragraph or a little like four lines, but now that when I go Pirates it makes me write like a page or like three paragraphs.* (LP Children's Focus Group 2)

> *I didn't really like to read, and I didn't like to read books, but every week I was actually doing it and I liked it more and more.* (GIR Children's Focus Group 2)

Engagement was the driver also for Literacy Pirates, and this enjoyment was seen to be used as a vehicle across reading and writing to support school-validated achievement:

> *For kids, it's about making sure that it is positive and relentlessly positive and fun to be in, but at the same time there's this rigour because we deeply feel that children need to succeed at school and so we're not taking kids who enjoy writing and making them into creative writers.* (LP Interview 1, Programme staff)

This quotation does identify a challenge for programmes who are trying to both nurture recreational enjoyment and engagement and support children with the 'rigour' of curricular structure and assessment. At times, the children also made connections between positive reading engagement and their **experiences of reading and writing at school**. Some children noted their confidence to '*level up*' (PSC Children's Focus Group 2) with new book choices, as suggested by their teachers, while other children spoke of their ability to sound out words independently, like at school, and how they could use their expanded vocabulary in school (DSL Children's Focus Group 1).

4.2.2 Expectations: Building a programme framework

'Building a programme framework' refers to evidence that is interpreted as an intention of programme activity or mentions what kind or content of a framework is sought, or how this is done through programme activity.

Data were largely in interviews with programme leads, reflecting **strategic intention**. This could be specific (e.g. around reading for pleasure), whilst allowing unexpected learning and shifts in direction through engagement with stakeholders to guide programme activity:

> *This is a three-year programme and so what we're looking to do is understand how we develop over time. … what we have outlined in our project plan is an iterative backwards and forwards, which starts with a framework that's based on evidence… which then we can turn into resources that are used by schools and children.* (WBD Interview 1, Programme staff)

A key aspect within the data was the understanding that building a framework should not be seen as an end-point, but a **transferrable foundation** to build programme strength, for example:

> *With a view to building a framework that we can use in work within other disadvantaged communities.* (GIR Interview 1, Programme staff)

Additionally, programmes recognised that frameworks took time to develop and time to embed, benefitting from using clearly **identifiable steps** (WBD Visit Observation 2). Programme staff also recognised the importance of creating clear structures for programme activities, while allowing for reasonable flexibility within delivery frameworks so that volunteers, practitioners and teachers could exercise some agency over activities:

> *We give them, because there's a time period and a framework of these seven workshops, we give them quite a strict holding form that they can improvise in between. We tell them how long it needs to be cut down to. We give them free rein in cutting down the script.* (PSC Interview 1, Programme staff)

Frameworks also serve as a **springboard to communicate** with teachers and other partners what programmes are about, but critically why their aims and expectations are important, for instance supporting them to build on programme activity outside of scheduled programme sessions:

> *I would hope that they [teachers] would start to use some of the techniques and would feed those into their classroom practice and that that would become, … part of what they did pretty much on a weekly basis.* (PSC Interview 1, Programme staff)

Similarly, a '**quality assurance** framework' was referenced in World Book Day's business plan, to be tested and developed through 'work with practitioners and pupils' (WBD Programme documentation). World Book Day's interest in developing a quality assurance framework involved recognising and critically reflecting upon their own assumptions related to reading, so as to clearly communicate this understanding with schools:

> *And, so, what we're building is a more sophisticated definition I guess in terms of behaviours that can be part of the quality framework so that we really are clear about what we think reading for pleasure looks like.* (WBD Interview 1, Programme staff)

The success of such frameworks as communicative springboards seemed to be dependent on recognising the needs of teachers and other partners. One such need appeared to be **clear and accessible expressions of what the programme is trying to achieve**, so that teachers, partners and facilitators can develop a shared understanding of the programme and implement the programme confidently:

> *It might seem like chaos but it's really not, it's very well planned out and structured.* (LP Visit 2, Interview, Practitioner 3)

The above extracts refer to how programmes worked to build frameworks for programme activities and the kinds of frameworks being built. Through our engagement with programmes, leads have also told us how frameworks have had to change – notably due to COVID-19 – and how changes have offered opportunities for embedding expectations in new ways:

> *[Regarding DSL's shift to online sessions] It was kind of a pilot and we were supporting them [volunteers] in different ways the first few months as best we could… And at some point, it just seemed to work as a format and I thought well actually we can take this*

> *further. So now we've branched out into two completely separate sections of programme delivery.* (DSL Interview 2)

Alongside these broader frameworks, programme leads also referred to a need for frameworks that supported the day-in, day-out of programme experience for children attending sessions:

> *[…] to reward or recognise the efforts that children and young people are making in kind of developing their reading for pleasure.* (GIR Interview 1, Programme staff)

Building frameworks, to support and communicate programme expectations, thus allowed programmes to spread their evidence-based work through and beyond direct involvement, to innovate in the face of challenge, and to acknowledge the importance of programme experience for those for whom programmes are designed. Such frameworks also offer a foundation for rules, or codes of conduct.

4.2.3 Expectations: Codes of conduct

'Codes of conduct' refer to mentions of what rules programmes have in place, how they are communicated and monitored. Additionally, it refers to mentions of how they are experienced by volunteers, teachers and children, to ensure consistency and desired running of programmes.

Programme leads raised this when discussing volunteer training: communicating expectations of behaviour, the core ethos of a programme, and any 'non-negotiables' of programme facilitation. Codes of conduct or rules were often influenced by safeguarding practices. The efficacy of observing appropriate safeguarding practices was dependent on volunteers feeling that programmes would provide timely and sensitive support to volunteers if challenges arose, '*She's always there. You can always ring her up'* (DSL interview, Volunteer).

Some referred to 'rules' such as expectations of behaviour and engagement with children attending sessions, to facilitate positive programme experiences (e.g., Literacy Pirates; the Primary Shakespeare Company). This was more in the school-based programmes. In contrast, home-based programmes such as Doorstep Library reminded volunteers – as part of their code of conduct – that programme activity and engagement was at the discretion of the family and child being visited; thus, children's behaviour was not within the code of conduct (though noting family or child engagement as part of record-keeping was an expectation on volunteers).

Programmes reported different **mechanisms for monitoring** the implementation of codes of conduct – ranging from relatively informal 'constant dialogue', through to more formal 'annual supervisions' with volunteers (DSL Interview 2). Codes of conduct to frame and monitor programme expectations were thus implemented differently across the six programmes, to reflect their different approaches and contexts for supporting reading and writing engagement and enjoyment. What was important across programmes, however, was that relevant codes were communicated and understood amongst volunteers, children and families. Additionally, monitoring the implementation of codes of conduct was focused on

developing **positive and reciprocal relationships** between programmes, volunteers, teachers, families and children, instead of imposing fixed outcomes and performance metrics:

> *It's difficult because how can you know that it's the volunteer not performing, versus a family that wouldn't engage … It's more around if there are issues that arise or thinking about whether we need to swap a volunteer pair because something's not clicked with the family* (DSL Interview 2, Programme staff)

4.2.4 Expectations: Developing understanding

'Developing understanding' is used to refer to statements that evidence a desire to understand more about something, from multiple perspectives. The code of *developing understanding* reflected the importance of **building relationships** for each of the six programmes and breaking down assumptions or negative attitudes toward reading or writing. This could be at the level of interaction between facilitators and individual children or groups, e.g.

> *[at a first visit to school] [children] arrived and they saw my badge saying World Book Day, they were like oh my god, are you going to make us read? And some of them were actually trembling….* (WBD Interview 2)

Additionally, assumptions could be directed towards the programme itself:

> *Useful to have why reading is important on front – to counter perspective that WBD is about one day and dressing up. (WBD Visit 2, Observation)*

Breaking down assumptions about reading, writing and programmes helps to feed into the bigger picture – both for individual children, for the relationship between children and their teacher, and for the work programmes can do to facilitate development of such understandings about individuals:

> *And then he sat down with his book cover and drew a footballing book. And she's [class teacher] like I literally had no idea that that's what he was passionate about …. Just asking him what he wanted has unlocked something for that child.* (WBD Interview 2, Programme staff)

Notes from programme observations with Doorstep Library also evidenced similar **listening and tailoring** of resources through developing understanding over time of each child as a reader:

> *[A volunteer] asked what he liked, and he said football books, so a note was made after the visit to look for football books for the next visit.* (DSL Visit 1, Observation)

Recognising the child as a unique reader was complemented by the need to recognise the needs of parents and / or carers of children as **unique adult readers, with their own enthusiasms and hesitancies** surrounding reading and writing. Thus, World Book Day recognised the need for parents to develop an understanding of themselves as proactive readers to their children (WBD Visit Observation). Observation notes from a researcher visit

to a Doorstep Library session also indicate how these personalised understandings fed into the wider programme understanding of families, for sharing with other volunteers and for monitoring engagement:

> *[At the end of the evening's visits] all volunteers returned to base, put the books back and completed notes on an app re the families visited and engagement. This served a number of purposes: to keep logs of which families have been visited and when; to identify interests and make sure choices can be tailored; to check DSL processes are being followed (e.g. who chooses books).* (DSL Visit 1, Observation)

For programmes engaging with larger groups such as through schools, leads mentioned the importance of teacher input into resource development to build understanding through their expert positioning of what is useful for their direct work with children:

> *Our resources this year are designed by six teachers that we've worked with, seen their work and the resources have changed because they know how to produce stuff for children a lot better than we do at the moment … So, it is a full collaboration.* (PSC Interview 1, Programme staff)

Thus, maintaining an open ethos to developing understanding, underpinned programme activity at various points: to reach children through awareness of their interests, and work collaboratively to facilitate voluntary engagement. For children, they developed an expectation that the programmes offered a different range of experiences, related to reading and writing, than what they normally or previously experience at home and at school:

> *Mostly in Primary Shakespeare we do acting and this involves moving and speaking in a different way to how you usually would.* (PSC Children's Focus Group 2)

These experiences would offer opportunities to **develop understandings about themselves** that they may not have had opportunities to do during their traditional, school-based reading and writing experiences. For instance, children accessing the Primary Shakespeare Company activities talked of being able to experience and express a wide range of emotions through activities:

> *I feel like one of the other best bits is like the experience that you get to have, so you could be performing in front of other people and showing them what you've got inside, like acting* (PSC Children's Focus Group 2)

Additionally, children held expectations that the activities would enable them to **develop understandings about others**, whether that be understandings of friends, teachers, volunteers, creative professionals or the characters they encountered through programme activities:

> *Also like when we're acting it out and if you're acting something out, after a while if you really like it you can just start to feel how the characters feel and that can help with reading and writing so you can actually feel how the characters are feeling and what they're most likely going to say, because in English sometimes we do diary reports and stuff like that.* (PSC Children's Focus Group 2).

Additionally, in the Focus Groups with children, there was an acute awareness that they were accessing different texts and activities to those usually accessible in school. The children held an expectation that they would encounter a range of different texts and activities as part of these programmes and, in so doing, they **developed a more nuanced understanding of what reading and writing can do**.

> *In Literacy Pirates we would do sometimes technical stuff, as in we would research for information, like since you do research, we would research things for what we're writing. As an example, we had a thing where we made a speech, we got information from the iPad, then we got the most important things, we made it into like a speech and then we're going to be telling all of it today, I think.* (LP Children's Focus Group 2)

4.2.5 Expectations: Evaluation

The term 'evaluation' is used here to refer to intentions and actions embedded into programme activities, to know if their work is achieving their intended aims and expectations.

Programme leads commented on pairing **'baseline'** assessment of children's attitudes around enjoyment of writing or reading (PSC Interview 1), followed by an 'exit' assessment (PSC Interview 2, Programme staff). Such attitudinal evaluation was often paired with observations of behavioural changes, such as children choosing their own books as indicative of reading engagement (DSL Interview 2, Programme staff). Moreover, some programmes already referenced an 'evaluation tool':

> […]to look at how young people develop as writers against five areas: imagination, exploration, independence, voice and craft. (MoS Programme documentation)

Similarly, GIR referred to a 'reading outcome framework toolkit, to evidence the **outcomes** of our joint approach' (GIR programme documentation). Thus, formal evaluation was arguably deemed important across programmes, in terms of whether, how and to what extent programme engagement facilitated children's enjoyment of reading or writing.
Considering **different perspectives on evaluation,** such as in the form of a teachers' evaluation day (WBD Visit 2) was identified as important, as well as time away from routine programme activities to reflect on what was or was not working well (DSL Interview 3, Programme staff). Time was seen to play a role, alongside developing understanding, in changes to self-evaluation:

> *Young Pirates often get it 'wrong', as in, I was really confident at the beginning, oh no, I could tell you I'm more confident now, but I can't show you because I put 10 at the beginning. And parents tend to overstate the improvement because they tend to be very grateful …* (LP Interview 1, Programme staff)

Despite acknowledging the importance of particular evaluation methods, programme leads also critically reflected on their approaches to evaluation as they were keen to ensure they gathered **honest reflections**:

> *I'd be interested to get some advice about this… which is how you have those conversations with children … they're going to tell me that they love World Book Day, because that's where I've come from.* (WBD Interview 1, Programme staff)

This mirrors the reflection above, that parents may be grateful for programmes and not critically engage with how programme engagement has impacted on their child's enjoyment of reading or writing. Similar comments were made in interviews with the Primary Shakespeare Company. This identifies a challenge for meaningful evaluation, and underlines the importance of a 'multipronged' approach drawing on data across different stakeholder perspectives (e.g., child, parent, teacher, volunteer), through different methods (survey, observation, interview, anecdote, work, assessment marks, 'retention rate'), at different points in time.

The children's evaluations of the programmes were often implied via their own **self-evaluations of their reading and writing behaviours**. These self-evaluations often referred to changes in quality and quantity, related to reading and writing:

> *When I came to secondary school, they gave me the Reading Road Map and I think, personally, it has expanded my knowledge in writing and it makes it more easier [sic] for me to write more. (GIR Children's Focus Group)*

> *I think before I didn't really read much books except for [xxx], but now I think I read more books and I find more books more interesting (MoS Children's Focus Group)*

However, some young people expressed a desire for more ways to **provide feedback** so as to share their evaluations:

> *So, say at the end of every year, if a form went out from the Reading Road Map with specific genres to follow on and to stick to and give us a range of books where students vote on what ones (GIR Children's Focus Group 1).*

4.2.6 Expectations: Imagination / choice / engagement

'Imagination / choice / engagement' refers to mentions of encouraging children and young people's imagination, having and exercising choice of activity/resource and willing engagement as a core element of programmes. The data allocated to this code revealed an emphasis on encouraging and using **children's input within sessions** through:

> *An arena of creativity – children can create, children are watching the story they are not aiming to 'do Macbeth'.* (PSC Visit 1 Observation Schedule)

> *[Children] were given the opportunity to be playful, to interact with one another, to use their own ideas generated in previous weeks and to link to their story list and plans thus far… Their agency and choice was asserted as writers and … they were expected to rely upon their own resources.* (MoS Visit 1, Observation Schedule)

In turn, the children deeply valued **collaborative imaginative efforts**, involving either their peers or the adults they were working with, for example in Ministry of Stories. Indeed, collaborative reading and writing experiences were seen as enjoyable, involving playful activities that they might not ordinarily associate with reading or writing:

> *It boosted our imagination, when we came, we went outside and we got into groups and we just went exploring with an adult and so my group, we found this fox and then it was like orange, so my group, we thought of the name the Fire Fox and then Troy said it in the actual like story.* (MoS Children's Focus Group)

> *Child 1: To be honest, at the start of it, like at the first week when we like wrote down the thingies and then it was sort of on the paper notes and it was anonymous, so then we made a song out of it.*
> *Child 2: Yeah.*
> *Child 1: That part was good, but the forest was better.*
> *Child 2: Yeah. Interviewer: Why was the forest better?*
> *Child 1: Because it was more inclusive to everyone sort of, because only some pieces of the notes got picked.*
> *Interviewer: OK, so everybody could take part in the forest or?*
> *Child 1: Yeah, everyone is part of it.* (PSC Children's Focus Group)

The creativity and imagination fostered by these programmes spilled out beyond the boundaries of the programme into the children's play, social interactions as well as self-initiated home-learning activities (PSC Visit 2 Observation). Moreover, in focus groups with children, there were frequent comments that connected **creative autonomy and enjoyment**:

> *And I feel that how it boosted our creativity is because while I used to think that writing and reading is you have to read a book, read the pages and that's all and like about history and stuff, that's what I used to think and then when it came to writing I just thought it would just be poetry but they expressed the writing in fun ways, so it didn't feel like writing, it felt like you're writing a magical story*. (MoS Children's Focus Group)

> *So, it's a piece of your imagination, it brings out your imagination and your focus and it's like creative.* (LP Children's Focus Group 2)

In Focus Groups with volunteers some recognised their role to enable children to experience enjoyment through imaginative engagement, particularly if the children were not able to foster this independently and how their engagement can feed **a cycle of choice and engagement**:

> *One thing that I think I'm always expected to do is bring energy and enthusiasm.* (Volunteers Focus Group)

> *There is nothing better than delivering a book to a child that they've asked for the week before.* (DSL interview 2, Programme staff)

The above quotation highlights the pivotal role of volunteers in creating expectations around imagination, choice and engagement. For Doorstep Library, volunteers facilitate children being

able to make choices by making **knowledgeable text choices** for children who may not have already texts in mind for future reading, suggesting that children's ability to choose may sometimes need some signalling or supportive choices by adults:

> *They [volunteers] pick their books, so they have complete choice over that and they also very regularly make requests for books they'd like to use with the children*. (DSL Interview 2, Programme staff)

Children involved in Doorstep Library seemed delighted in being able to make book choices and that their opinions and preferences as readers were respected, whether they express liking or disliking of a book:

> *I'm really lucky to have a Doorstep Library because the books they have are just amazing and you get to have all the books you would like and if you don't want this book or that book or if you have already read it, it's really nice just to tell them and tell them how you feel about this book.* (DSL Children's Focus Group 2)

During focus group conversations with teachers, there was a recognition of the value of children's creative and enjoyable engagement in tasks and how this can support participating children – hopefully in the moment and beyond, in school and at home:

> *We did a monologue as Romeo and some of the Shakespearian grammar they were using, it just blew me away, I wasn't expecting it. And so it was really, really positive and at that point there were children writing at home some playscripts of their own or designing, it really fostered a real love of that. And I think it means now when they go to secondary school Shakespeare's not this like daunting thing, they've had this positive exposure to it.* (PSC Teachers' Focus Group)

The children also commented on how their exposure to different texts, such as Shakespeare, had touched their **imaginative interest in different genres.** This exposure gave them **confidence to choose** books from a broader range and to write in a broader range of styles than previously (PSC Children's Focus Group 2).

Volunteers also noted that children seemed to derive **enjoyment from the freedom to choose** texts for themselves (LP Visit 2 Interview, Volunteer). However, young people involved in the Get Islington Reading programme emphasised that choice of texts can be restricted:

> *Usually, you'd pick all the ones that you wanted to read straightaway and then after, around like the third week, you might, like all the books that are left over you might not want to read it.* (GIR Children's Focus Group 2)

Some children also noted that a crucial aspect of choice involved choosing not to write to a set length (LP Children's Focus Group 2). This sentiment, regarding the benefits of refusal, was echoed in Get Islington Reading Focus Groups as children recognised that a crucial aspect of enjoyment involves being able to **choosing not to read:**

> *So, if the start doesn't intrigue me then I will just leave the books*. (GIR Children's Focus Group 2)

Also voiced were comments underpinning the critical importance of enjoyment in **identity as a reader, writer and learner,** and how curricular practices and processes tend to overlook this:

> *There are so few things where your skill at something is decided before you... before you start enjoying it. You don't … teach children how to do drills in football before you've shown them what a football game looks like. So why in school do we start with here we go, let's do some sounds and then have a book that only has those sounds in?* (WBD Interview 2, Programme staff)

These comments suggest programme awareness of the need to reconsider how children might be categorised as unengaged, and how we should approach this differently:

> *They're not reluctant to want to, but they haven't found the ways to access, or the right books and they don't have the right books at school necessarily. Or the reading that they are doing isn't being valued.* (WBD Interview 2, Programme staff)

Offering spaces to reframe, model, value and encourage volunteer, teacher and child expression of imagination, choice and engagement with reading and writing were therefore pivotal across all six programmes. In turn, in so doing, the children were observed to experience transformations in their imaginative and creative behaviours:

> *The sessions are, they are transformative, you do see children make extraordinary leaps of confidence and creativity, and I think that happening in the room, the impact of that is extraordinary and profound for the other people around it.* (PSC, Visit 1, Interview, Programme staff).

4.2.7 Expectations: Interactions

'Interactions' is interpreted as mentions within the data of how contacts between individuals are prescribed and experienced by programmes to support reading and writing for pleasure.
Programmes identified ways they orchestrated **interactions** between children and volunteers, and between children with their peers, to foster enjoyment of reading and writing. For Literacy Pirates, this was intentionally **with many volunteers to build relationships and confidence**:

> *We really try to provide … one-to-one mentoring at all the sessions, even online ones … we pair up the volunteers and the young pirates randomly, so you never get to work with the same kid in each group, even if you come back every week.* (LP Volunteers' Focus Group)

Volunteers within the Literacy Pirates programme expressed enjoying working with a range of children. Doing so, enabled them to develop their skills sets and learn more about the diverse behaviours and needs of children (LP Visit 2 Interview 3, Volunteer). Although this range of behaviours and needs can create challenges for volunteers, they felt well supported by the programme to **interact supportively** with the children.

Other programmes orchestrated interactions **to build trusting and consistent relationships with the same volunteers and families** around the child:

> *We really strive hard for consistency in the relationship so that that bond can really build up between the volunteers and the families.* (DSL Interview 1, Programme staff)

The importance of which was returned to in the third programme interview:

> *If they [children] have that relationship, … they'll trust them more with just more general chat. … They might be more willing to make mistakes while they're reading and more comfortable reading with you.* (DSL Interview 3, Programme staff)

In turn, the children expressed delight that they had dependable contact with **a regular adult who was interested in them as a reader.** For the children, reading and writing for pleasure is closely associated with the warm interactions they have with programme adults:

> *I really like how you get to read to them, instead of just picking the books and them leaving, you read to them so that you can finish off and we can continue reading the books and we know that we are interested in them.* (DSL Children's Focus Group)
> *Maybe I'm like happy or joyful because they like reading with me.* (DSL Children's Focus Group 1)

However, at times, the willingness to **interact and cultivate genuine relationships** between volunteers and children is not always mirrored in interactions between parents and volunteers, with some parents approached by Doorstep Library expressing **reluctance towards visits**:

> *The kids want it, but the parents don't, or you struggle to find them there and available at the right time when you're going each week… I guess maybe one of the bigger barriers is just that parental engagement and making sure that all the parents that we see… feel confident to be able to do what we do outside of our sessions.* (DSL Interview 2)

Interactions with parents (as well as reluctant teachers) were also identified by World Book Day as crucial to the successful implementation of the programme. However, **close attention and individual interaction with children** was identified as a crucial driving expectation across programmes:

> *Our aim with volunteering is that every young person over the course of a session gets one to one attention.* (MoS Interview 2, Programme staff)

Placing **children at the centre of interactions** was identified as specifically important when working with children who may have been categorised – and feel themselves boxed in – as reluctant readers:

> *It's a tricky introduction isn't it, because clearly, I do want them to read, so I'm not going to lie to them about that. But I said look, the reason I do my job is because I know that if you read for pleasure that you will have a better life and I want a better life for*

> *all of this country's children. … But I also know that you're experts in why you're not choosing to read, so that's why I'm here, because you're the expert and I need you to tell me.* (WBD Interview 2)

Despite different approaches to orchestrating programme interactions, it is clear individual attention to enable positive reading and writing engagement were a driving force. In addition to attending to interactions between adults and children, teachers and practitioners drew attention to the value of having **adult peer-to-peer interactions** (WBD Visit 1, Interview, Teacher). These interactions provided adults with opportunities to discuss how to implement programmes and ensure the longevity of programmes.

4.2.8 Expectations: Respect, kindness

'Respect, kindness' refers to statements that indicate assumptions about respectful and kind behaviours between individuals – whether children, practitioners, volunteers or teachers.
This code was primarily attributed to data from the children's focus groups. Although there were occasional references to respectful relationships in interviews with teachers and volunteers about engagement with other schools (Primary Shakespeare company and Ministry of Stories) and families (Doorstep Library), respectively.

In the focus group discussions, children frequently discussed the presence of respectful and kind **relationships with each other, with volunteers and with practitioners**.

> *Usually, we have to be patient with each other to get what we're doing done, so we have to be patient and communicate with each other to do what we're supposed to do* (PSC Children's Focus Group 1)

When talking about the practitioners, the children drew attention to and appreciated efforts made by practitioners to **be fair** to all those involved in the projects, by making sure that everyone has **an equal chance** to participate:

> *I feel like the best bits of Primary Shakespeare is when the lines, he doesn't give it to people who has like five, he gives it to the people that don't have anything and he doesn't make it unfair […] I think that you get to speak and it's like everyone as well gets a chance to speak by themselves.* (PSC Children's Focus Group 2)

Seemingly conversely, the children identified **feeling special** through the **time, help and attention** given to them by volunteers. However, the offers of help were available to all, based on need, in the moment, meaning perceptions of unfair attention were perhaps avoided. The offers of help from volunteers at the Literacy Pirates sessions created a **relationship built on trust**. However, this trust was fostered by **broader social interactions**, not just related to reading and writing, as the volunteers took time to connect with the children by informally talking and playing games together:

> *I think about the adults, that I trust in them because when I come in and some other people come first, like some of my classmates, but when I come, the crewmates come*

and I get to play with them, so that makes me trust them. (LP Children's Focus Group 2)

Children also expressed feeling respected when their **book interests were validated** by adults, in the form of books of favourite authors being brought to subsequent reading sessions:

I think I enjoy reading because normally when they come, they get prepared for my favourite books and my favourite books are Rainbow Magic books and I like Rainbow Magic books because they're like sparkly on the covers and when I read them they're very interesting and, yeah, good and there's goblins in the stories, so that's why I like the book. That's why I just like when they get prepared. (DSL Children's Focus Group 1)

Children also saw **kindness take the form of encouragement**, with adults modelling belief in children's writing abilities when they were challenged.

I think the teachers, as well as helped us, they inspired us to keep on writing and have fun, because even when it was the morning, after we had our breakfast, our teacher would boost our morale so we could write better. (MoS Children's Focus Group 2)

4.2.9 Expectations: Routines

'Routines' referred to statements indicating expected or anticipated ways of doing activities that are understood and shared between those involved in the programmes.
In focus groups with children, routines in relation to the programmes were discussed. At times, the children talked about the **reassuring predictability of programme structures**. For instance, the young people involved in Get Islington Reading had a good overview of the predictable structure involved in the Summer Reading Challenge and the Reading Road Map, being able to equate the number of texts read with the certificates they would be entitled to (GIR Children's Focus Group 2). Thus, for these young people there was a clear routine around reading volume and extrinsic validation:

They gave us like a booklet that said Reading Road Map on it and it was like a map and there was all like the different genres of the books so you could tick off the books and you could count how many you've done […] Yeah. There were a lot of books, I think 35.; R1: But for every book that you read you get two achievement points, for every completed book review you get two, so, all in all, if you do a book review and read the book you get four achievement points for it. (GIR Children's Focus Group 2)

In addition to the predictable structures of programmes, children and adults noted some of the **material, spatial and interactional routines of programmes**. In the case of Doorstep Library this orientates around the stool (DSL interview 2, Programme staff) and where the visiting adult sits in or outside of the child's home (DSL Children's Focus Groups 1 and 2). For Doorstep Library interactions, the **predictability of regularly exchanging books** seems to be understood by the children as contributing to a **relationship of trust,** where an adult can be depended on to provide text choices. Moreover, that adult, through the regular exchange of books, has developed a shared understanding of the child's identity as a reader:

> *When they come to our door, they don't get books that we don't like, they get books that we like and then we read them and we really like them, we give them back and then they come with more amazing books and if you ask for this book, they will bring it to you.* (DSL Children's Focus Group 2)

For Literacy Pirates, the routines for sessions involve clear transitions, often with piracy-inspired catchphrases, between different spaces in the 'ship', from the more spacious reception area at the start to the more secret, hidden activity area later on (LP Visit 2 Observation).

Children expressed **pride in continued involvement** in programmes. This expression was perhaps most notable in the Get Islington Reading and Doorstep Library Focus Groups, with children saying they have been involved for several years (DSL Children's Focus Groups 1 and 2):

> *Well, us, as a year group, we've been doing it for two years, so we started in Year 7 and then we stopped at the end of the year and then we started again at the start of this year. Correct me if I'm wrong, sir, but do we do it in Year 9 as well?* (GIR Children's Focus Group 2)

Children also talked about the refreshing break from other routines that some programmes, such as Literacy Pirates and the Primary Shakespeare Company, often offered. For example, in comparison to school routines:

> *It's a really nice change of pace, so usually at school we wouldn't do something this regular and this fun.* (PSC Children's Focus Group 2)

Within the programmes themselves, children expressed excitement in **trying out new activities**, or by taking part in celebrations or having special visitors:

> *And every new, not every new session, but we do everything new and every half term we do a different kind of project.* (LP Focus Group 2)

> *The Major of Islington came to our school and gave us a challenge over the half term to read as many books as we can and when we come back, we'd get a certificate for reading a lot of books.* (GIR Children's Focus Group 2)

> *In my view, it would be the celebration because you get to celebrate the authors for their achievements with writing their books and everything and then we get to celebrate ourselves because we had our names up on the screen for all the schools to celebrate like all of us that we've read the books and we've done the work behind it all.* (GIR Children's Focus Group)

Plus, some children expressed **boredom around repeated activities.** For instance, as part of the Primary Shakespeare Company activities, children expressed being bored at having to rehearse certain scenes multiple times. Moreover, adults associated with some programmes acknowledged that not all **activity routines** were superficially enjoyable to children. Yet, some

more challenging activity routines were seen as beneficial in the long term for children's relationships with reading and writing:

> *I think the continuity for the kids coming back and sort of almost being forced to develop that perseverance and beginning with a blank page and ending up with a product I think to see something through I think it's quite important*. (LP Visit 2 Interview 3, Practitioner)

4.2.10 Expectations: Whole school change

'Whole school change', as a code, was applied to data extracts that indicated how programmes supported this process of change.

Not all of the programmes work at the school level – for instance, Doorstep Library works more individually with children and families; some work nationally but through local links, such as World Book Day. For those that do, however, their expectations around whole school change were evident as **empowering schools and teachers to showcase change**:

> *I've tried to step aside and get my class teachers to show how they use drama. Because again I just don't want my expertise or my identity as a drama specialist to get in the way of teachers believing that they can use this practice.* (PSC Interview 1, Practitioner)

and **equipping schools to lead change:**

> *We're hoping to work with subject leaders to broaden their, maybe their approaches or their understanding to approaches to creating writing. So, using some of the Ministry of Stories methodology to see how that can support them to lead English and specifically creative writing in their schools.* (MoS Interview 1, Programme staff)

Additionally, for those programmes that do work at school level, the children involved in these programmes were able to see how activities connected to various aspects of their school life, suggesting an enhanced understanding of **reading and writing as relevant** outside of English lessons:

> *It links to every topic, for example, humanities, literacy, reading and more.* (PSC Children's Focus Group 2)

4.2.11 Synthesis of the code 'Expectations'

Various ways to **evaluate** the extent to which children experienced the programmes in ways that were intended, were deployed, and parent perspectives on what their children gained from being involved were also sought in some programmes. Programme leads were mindful of potential limitations of **evaluation practices**, seeking ways to monitor authentic impact of their work, through planned and unplanned activities, from different perspectives and over

time. Leads voiced awareness that if fundamentally successful – if all children felt **a strong desire to read or write**, and teachers felt empowered to give time and attention to fostering this – they would render themselves redundant; it was acknowledged however that access, as well as engagement, to reading and writing as enjoyable was still largely inequitably distributed and experienced. The passion and drive to make a dent on this inequity was however strongly voiced across programme leads, volunteers and teacher stakeholders, reflecting programme expectations.

Thus, a core expectation of programme work was to **develop understanding** – for the programme and aligned teachers and volunteers – of where support to access and experience enjoyment of reading and writing is most needed, and to give non-judgmental, encouraging attention to participating children. Programmes located their work in diverse ways and contexts – physically on doorsteps, in schools or libraries; in and out of school time; aligned to and explicitly outside of curricular framing: developing their understanding and USP of what they contribute and why it is important.

Across the codes and data from the six programmes, within the element of **Expectations**, it is clear that focused attention to children, often one-to-one, is key to supporting **enjoyment and engagement with reading and/or writing.** Attention was structured through building trusting relationships and safe spaces to explore ideas and make 'mistakes' – in some cases facilitating consistent relationships over time with the same people; for other programmes, interactions were purposefully shared amongst many people. This personal and tailored focus was emphasised in various ways to encourage teachers, volunteers and parents to listen to children – to really notice what they perhaps had not had time to previously – and for children to talk and listen to each other's ideas and insights. Such an approach arguably served to validate identities and contributions, and to spark creativity, by recognising the multi-faceted frames of and access to reading and writing.

From the perspective of the children, a key expectation related to behaviours, or relationships, between themselves and the adults involved in the programmes. The children seemed to take pride in being involved in the programmes and greatly enjoyed being able to develop trusting and genuine relationships with a broad range of adults, who they often respected for their creative abilities. In addition to the children's expectations of the adults, they also developed expectations related to the break from the norm that the programmes offered, either in terms of given them agency over creative activities, their text choices, or the way they could engage with a text or writing task.

4.3 Community

The second of the four elements, *Community,* relates to the engagement and relationships involved between the people and organisations that are part of the individual programmes both internally and externally. In this sense, community refers to education managers, programme delivery staff, volunteers, school staff, parents / family and children. In the analysis, sub-codes were identified that reflected the key members of the community, the diverse expertise therein, the ways in which the needs of the community were understood, and strategies deployed to construct a sense of community around reading and writing (see Table 3 below). Community creation was also identified as an expressed value.

Table 3 Definitions of codes in the Community category

Membership		The range of people involved in the programme's community and the organisational structures deployed to manage them
	Diversity and expertise	The breadth of expertise involved in the community delivering the programme
	Historical and local relationships	Ways of working which build on local and historical relationships
	Needs analysis	The attention paid to understanding the needs, interests and current practices of the target community of children, young people and parents
Community creation as a value		Commitment to ways of working that build communities of connection around the programmes and R/WfP
	Creating inclusive communities	Strategies deployed to draw children and children, and children and adults together into a wider programme community
	Creating communities as a legacy	Strategies and intentions that focus on seeking to foster and sustain a sense of community locally

4.3.1 Community: Membership

'Membership' denotes the range of people involved in the programme's community and the organisational structures deployed to manage them. The range of people involved in the construction, delivery and evaluation of the programmes are very varied, most were named in the bids to Mercers, some were brought on board subsequently, through new appointments and networks.

In the Ministry of Stories, Primary Shakespeare Company and Get Islington Reading programmes, teachers are involved in the planning and iteration of the initiative and as part of stakeholder groups. In Literacy Pirates, teachers are critical in the referral of the children, as they are in part for Doorstep Library particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. For World Book Day, a group of teachers from six school settings are involved 'to test and develop the quality assurance framework, education materials and £1 Book criteria' (WBD Programme documentation).

Three of the programmes include **volunteers** (reading and writing supporters and mentors) who work with the young people in schools (MoS), in their local communities (DSL), and in an after-school centre /pirate ship (LP). The volunteers who mainly appear to respond to adverts and are mostly local, or are recruited from the corporate world as part of a commitment to corporate social responsibility initiatives. Three programmes operate without the direct involvement of official volunteers (GIR, WBD and PSC). In the case of Get Islington Reading, members of the local community are involved in a voluntary manner but are not positioned as programme volunteers.

The remaining people and organisations involved in each of the programmes vary in response to the different nature of the work. The range encompasses programme education managers and core programme staff who are paid. This group includes for example, composers, actors, musicians, writers, playwrights, puppeteers, and ex teachers and arts practitioners. In addition, some programmes involve older students working with younger ones (MoS). A wider

group of local authority personnel are also involved, for example public librarians, as well as other members of the local community, such as the Mayor of Islington (GIR). In addition, the programmes in the Special Initiative have different degrees of involvement from wider supporters, individuals, donors, corporates and Trusts and Foundations and public relations teams.

All programmes include **different organisational structures** through which the programme community's expertise is utilised, for example through a 'strategic advisory group, a board of trustees, an education forum' (WBD Programme documentation). These structures mostly pertain to the charities or organisations themselves, and are also applied, though not always specifically, to the programme's work as part of the Special Initiative.

> *So, the World Book Day trustees are, as they do with all elements of World Book Day's work, overseeing, guiding, ultimately accountable and holding the direction of this particular piece of work… We also have an advisory group. So, this is not a formal part of our governance structure, but includes a range of people, all with different expertise. So, they're librarians, they're booksellers, they're people who come from a research background, from different charities and so on. They will help us steer and develop the work. But other work too, not only this*. (WBD Interview 1, Programme staff)

4.3.2 Community: Diversity and expertise

'Diversity and expertise' refers to instances in the data that mention the breadth of expertise involved in the community delivering the programme. It is widely recognised by the leaders that the range of people involved in their programmes represents a potentially **rich resource in terms of expertise and experience.** This breadth and diversity appear to be characteristic of the programmes who do not seek to 'go it alone' as organisations, but rather seek to capitalise upon their networks and wider community.

> *We knew that we needed to bring in some expert voice to develop credibility of this work, and also to give us our location in the landscape. Because what World Book Day does is provide the initial layer, but what we're not ever going to try to do is to replicate what organisations like the OU or the NLT or CLPE do*. *…For us there's a tremendous amount of value in having their different inputs and expertise and perspectives.* (WBD Interview 1, Programme staff)

> *The partner organisations were all suggested by Islington Library Service and we let them very much lead on that. So, we trust their expertise. They know who the people on the ground that are best to engage. We very much see ourselves as facilitating new engagements and facilitating new ways of taking this forward, rather than doing it ourselves.* (GIR Interview 2, Programme staff)

The programmes not only draw in **experts from different sectoral spaces, i**ncluding libraries and the arts and involve, in some cases, specific professional skills and experience. An observed visit of an activity for Get Islington Reading involved a workshop led by a theatre in education company. Whilst others drew on dramatists and authors:

> *We have paid theatre workshop leaders who deliver the programme. We have paid musicians who do the actual project*. (PSC Interview 2, Programme staff)

> *The facilitator in the room is the professional and we would expect them to have those writing skills and that professional writing practice.* (MoS Interview 2, Programme staff)

The programmes also draw on a range of skilled volunteers, some of whom are '*both loyal and regular'* and many of whom show '*strong commitment'* (LP Interview 1, Programme staff). Several of the education managers noted that the adults involved, whether paid or volunteers, value the opportunity to participate in the programme offer and benefit as learners themselves. For example:

> *So, we have teachers and TAs who give up their weekends to come and volunteer with us. …quite a few trainee TAs who are looking for that experience of working with children and young people in a slightly different environment. Then we've got a whole raft of people who work in writing and publishing related industries…. journalists, copy writers who I think really enjoy that creative counterpoint to their more formal work. So, I think they're feeding off the energy and the imagination and the creativity of the young people at the same time as being able to offer their skills and experience.* (MOS Interview 2, Programme staff)

The variety of skills and networks within the programme communities enable the **young people to encounter a range of individuals** with different roles, work and life experiences. Many are working within the arts and cultural sector, but by no means all, as volunteers come from many other work contexts. As one education manager noted, they seek to ensure the children experience as much diversity as possible:

> *The children go with a different volunteer every week, we definitely think there's a benefit to the children meeting someone new every week and that they will meet a student, a professional from the city, someone who's going back into work, a whole range of people, so that's a competence aspect. It's also an inclusion and diversity aspect that we want them to see lots of people mirrored so we have set targets around non-white crew mates and also male crew mates because basically white women dominate volunteering otherwise*. (LP Interview 1, Programme staff)

The expertise of the other adults involved in the programmes encompasses the skills to give 1:1 attention to the children; for example, '*actually your role is to be there for those three or four children'* (LP Visit 2 Interview 3, Practitioner), to sensitively support and encourage children's reading and writing. This focus on **supportive child-led interaction** was essential for the adults, whether teachers, artists or volunteers, and this was seen to be something that could be developed through training:

> *The expectation isn't they are writers or that they've got lots of experience of working with young people. Actually, it's that they have the interests, the skill and commitment around the mentoring. So can they make really accurate good listeners to give people their undivided attention. Those are the things that we're really looking for*. (MoS Interview 2, Programme staff)

Supporting adults described themselves as **'relentlessly positive'** but they also highlighted the sensitivity that they needed to motivate children who might come to a session with varying levels of confidence and enthusiasm:

> *There's a flexibility and open mind that the mentor has to have in just gauging the relationship as it builds, like reading the room*. (Teachers/ Volunteer Focus Group)
> *Sometimes, yeah, it is a lot of work because they could come in after a long day at school and then you really have to keep them going and then give them ideas and prompt them*. (Teacher/ Volunteer Focus Group)

In addition, the **adults' expertise included the skills of modelling reading and writing practices** for parents and children, in ways that were both accessible and informed. This was an important as a means to challenging and changing relationships to reading and writing:

> *It would be very awkward for us to send someone into a home to read stories in English to families where actually if they couldn't confidently do so themselves it would be very difficult to do that. And obviously we want our volunteers to be role modelling to the parents.* (DSL Interview 2, Programme staff)

> *I think there's always quite a lot of modelling from the facilitator and they always quite vocally set the expectations of what they need or the adults in the room to do*. (MoS Interview 2, Programme staff)

In observed sessions, the supporting adults narrated and modelled their own thought processes as readers and writers to facilitate children's thinking and a sense of community:

> *[xxx] leads the session – there are 16 participants in the [online] room. [xxx] talks about the book they've been reading and reminds the children of the strategies of summarizing, evaluating, inferring, and predicting. She frames her responses around 'thinking about opinions', and gives an example, 'Would I choose to read it, or similar books'. So, I'm asking about your opinions. She then invites responses from the children, 'Can anyone summarize? Who can help? Lots of hands go up on screen, and she invites contributions ... The children are enthusiastic and are responding to [xxx]'s energy. The other volunteers join in but on mute – there is a sense of community and shared experience in the room*. (LP Observation 1)

The children's focus groups indicated that the young people too were aware of the diverse expertise of the adults working with them noting, '*next time when we practise, they're going to bring in some like music people, was it like a French horn and like?* (PSC, Focus Group 2) and in some cases felt honoured by this:

> *I would describe it like they're really, I'm being honest right now, they're really intelligent, they're really fast, they take their time sometimes and they just bring amazing books like every day*. (DSL Children's Focus Group 2)

I like [xxx], [xxx] and [xxx] because, honestly, I like [xxx] because she's really good at song writing, I like [xxx] because he's funny and I like [xxx] because she's like the main one, she's like the computer guy. (PSC Children's Focus Group 1)

4.3.3 Community: Building on historical relationships and local partners

'Historical and local relationships' *is used to refer to ways of working, within the programmes, which build on local and historical relationships.* Most of the programmes, in developing their work for the Special Initiative, sought to build on previously established contacts and historical relationships with schools, libraries and others in the target community. These are likely to have enabled a shared commitment to the enterprise. In the context of the pandemic in particular such **longer-term local relationships** will have enhanced the speed of planning and the capacity to cope with the challenges. As volunteers noted:

Both of us have been involved in a council initiative called Islington Reads, which was set up after a Fairness Commission about 12 years ago, which actually identified reading for pleasure being a key indicator in people's life chances. … so there was already capacity to do joined up partnership work around reading for pleasure. (Teacher/ Volunteer Focus Group)

Whether capitalising on their local knowledge or developing new knowledge, **programmes built their work around geographic hubs**, in part in response to the Mercer criteria as part of this Special Initiative. This enabled them to link to their wider localised offers (e.g. Literacy Pirates, Doorstep Library and Ministry of Stories), draw in a group of primaries and their feeder secondary schools (Get Islington Reading), and work with local school groups or federations (Primary Shakespeare Company and Ministry Of Stories). In gathering schools together in a local area, some programmes found already established helpful relationships between English subject leaders and teachers.

Because a lot of the schools know each other already there's quite a strong sense of partnership between them. So, it feels like we're not starting from scratch in building those relationships and that's a positive. (MoS Interview 2, Programme staff)

In addition, some programmes offer open access community programmes and actively '*want that cross section'* [of children attending] (MoS Interview 2, Programme staff). This desire for diversity was also noted by Literacy Pirates and Doorstep Library in relation to their pool of volunteers. A **commitment to place based delivery** and local community expertise was evident in programmes whose centres are physically situated within particular boroughs and with an extended history of working in these, as well as in most of the other programmes.

So, over the years there have been hundreds of volunteers who create a supporter base and a good half of those are local, which is really important to us because actually having the local people and their connections and even local businesses. (LP Interview 1, Programme staff)

In Get Islington Reading there were plans to involve many different organisations in Islington, both through campaigning and through collaboration. In the former as their application stated:

> *Key to the campaign will be the forging of relationships with the local media and a range of community-facing media channels. This will raise the profile of the campaign, garner coverage of activity and case studies and disseminate messaging.* (GIR Programme documentation)

In relation to **local collaboration,** there was also clear awareness of planned new partnership involvement, for instance the engagement of six local organisations was sought, such as the Institute of Physics based in Islington, and Key Changes, a local music charity, in '*promoting each of the different adventures*' in various ways (GIR). As the GIR team noted they sought authentic partnerships and did not see themselves as imposing from beyond the locality:

> *We're working really closely with local partners, so that we're aware of what's happening in Islington and that we are not two national organisations bubbling into a local area and that it is genuinely collaborative with those local partners, so that's something we definitely need to be really careful around*. (GIR Interview 1, Programme staff)

In the case of Doorstep Library, parents are linked to a number of local organisations in order to offer them wider personal support beyond book reading. This is recognised as a key element of the programme in order to foster '*a happier less stressful life'* in which '*parents can take time to relax and reading is more likely'* (DSL, Interview 1, Programme staff). It also offers an example of needs analysis, done subtly and responsively within each visit, which represents another characteristic of the programmes' communities and is explored next.

4.3.4 Community: Needs analysis: Understanding community needs

'Needs analysis', as a code, refers to the attention paid to understanding the needs, interests and current practices of the target community of children, young people and parents. Each of the programmes engage in different ways with some form of **community 'needs analysis'** in order to understand the environment in which they are working. This enables some to plan and shape their work responsively, tailoring this to specific needs (of children, teachers and parents) and in the light of local expertise (in terms of volunteers, community offer for instance). As noted above, with Doorstep Library, through their 'bespoke service' (DSL Programme documentation) the needs and worries of parents are heard or observed in order that they can *'begin to feel empowered to become involved on their own terms – no matter how long this takes'* (DSL Programme documentation). In other programmes, the focus is at the level of the school and involves **clarifying the children's/teachers'/ school's needs and then acting flexibly** and responsively and often co-designing the work with the adults involved.

With regard to the children, this awareness of need was common, for instance:

> *And I think also the fact that we go into their homes, you develop a different, a kind of relationship with the families, and you see them week after week, and so that means you can get to understand the needs of the children. And you can therefore aim the books can't you and find which will encourage them to read because you're putting them in the direction in which they are enjoying*. (DSL, Interview 3, Programme staff)

There is clearly **a balancing act** here between teachers, schools and librarians' expectations, their own perceived needs, the evidence the educators draw upon to state these needs and the skill set and expertise of the programme team. The process for some involves considerable negotiation on the journey, as the following quotes indicate.

> The charity will work collaboratively with each school to co-design a programme of work between the school and its writers. These programmes will draw reference from the wealth of creative content and resources that MoS has developed over the last 10 years but will be tailored in response to each of the schools' needs. Consequently, depending on the challenge each school is looking to address, the lead teacher may choose to prioritise a target demographic of students or opt for an approach that will have wider benefit across the student body. (MoS Programme documentation)

> *It's slightly different to a lot of engagement in projects where you're going in with a training offer, or going in with, you've got a product already. It genuinely is a conversation at the beginning and that was really working in terms of getting them on side, because you're not telling them what to do. You're asking how can we work together?* (WBD Interview 2, Programme staff)

Helping the teachers identify an area of need (personal or school-wide) through **self-reflection using an audit and/or through related CPD** enabled programmes to encourage practitioners' participation in the shaping of their own development. For example, '*we're trying to bring those teachers together to focus on the specific area -the bits that they've identified in the audit -as being the area for improvement*' (GIR Interview 1, Programme staff). Additionally, recognition of staff skill-sets and the need to build from this were commonly referred to, for example '*my whole remit is to work with teachers and how they teach writing as we know this is a centre of so much expertise* (PSC Interview 1, Programme staff). Attention to staff needs was followed through in an intensive and bespoke manner by some organisations, through examining WBD previous resources with staff for example and creating new ones tailored to need.

> *Our in-school session is a new one-on-one with the teacher, and then a focus group with the children, and then last year I went away and created the resources in response. So, then I had a further conversation with the teacher, and created the resource in response. So, each school essentially got a resource that spoke to what they'd talked to me about*. (WBD, Observation Visit 2, Interview, Programme staff)

The significance of understanding the local community sector context was also noted, for example:

> *Islington Council are in their final year of a three-year reading strategy that recognises the importance of reading for pleasure. However, they lack a borough-wide approach*

> *of integrated education and community resources to address their local literacy challenge. Last year, Islington Education and Library Services ran a Year of Reading campaign, which they accept has failed to engage the number of young people as hoped. They are recording declining young library reader numbers and have identified an appetite for a more integrated approach.* (GIR, Programme documentation).

4.3.5 Community: Community creation as a value

'Community creation as a value' refers to the programme's commitment to ways of working that build communities of connection around the programmes and R/WfP. The programmes worked to develop a sense of community on the regular occasions that the diverse membership gathered in classrooms , homes, training spaces and/or libraries and also in the more transient context of a theatrical performance or end of programme celebration event. Community creation was frequently expressed **both as a goal and a core value by programme staff**. This involved commitment to working to develop communities of connection around the programmes themselves and around reading and writing:

> These resources would be based on educational research findings and support schools in embedding reading for pleasure pedagogies and creating vibrant communities of readers. (WBD, Programme documentation)

In response to an understanding of writing as a social, not a solitary act, Ministry of Stories identified creating communities of writers as a core aim, in their documentation and in interview. This was also observed in action, through the use for instance of a co-created shared 'story contract' which was modelled in the classroom and reflected respect for all writers' ideas. (MoS Observation Visit 1)

> *So, what we're trying to do is create communities of young people, or community of adults sometimes, of writers who work and support each other together, that you can share ideas, you can bounce. You don't have to be writing something on your own, you might be part of a team writing something together, but it's that communal experience and that communal act that creates that community of writers*. (MoS Interview 1, Programme staff)

Whilst voicing the construction of community as a goal, **staff recognised the contextual challenges involved**, for example one volunteer noted that whilst he preferred to work in a circle – a more communal approach, the expectation was to work at tables in the classroom and he found that '*really difficult and limiting*' and that '*it impacted negatively on the children's writing'* (Teacher/ Volunteer Focus Group).

> *[Online sharing during COVID-19] … doesn't destroy the project, but it takes away that sense of community, so we've got to find a way to get that sense of community back into the project'.* (PSC Interview 1, Programme staff)

> *I think we've got a community here in [xxx], and that community includes our volunteers and our families, and hopefully that feels inclusive. … we don't want to be*

official visitors coming with clipboards or anything like that. That's obviously what we want to avoid. (DSL Interview 3, Programme staff)

Some of the young people involved in the programmes also reflected an implicit sense of community and connection to the volunteers as the following quote indicates:

*The last project I had, well I don't see them anymore, but I had two kids, every week they ….and apparently they still ask about me… Oh wow. That's nice. And we used to get, they had their birthday cake and just sometimes you make a real connection and that's very heart-warmin*g. (DSL, Interview 3, Volunteer)

4.3.6 Community: Creating inclusive communities

Strategies deployed to draw children and children, and children and adults together into a wider programme community.

The strategies used to develop these inclusive communities of readers or writers orient around **developing relationships, as well as a high degree of social interaction and support for one another**. This attention to inclusion of all involved was also noted in the Ministry of Stories collaborative planning and reviewing meeting observed, with the 6th formers who were volunteering being integrated into the work with ease and treated as equal members (MOS, Observation visit 2). Also on the part of World Book Day there was an awareness of the need to include all teaching staff in sharing their reading identities, in order to *'normalise different routes into reading'* (WBD, Observation visit 2) and thus support all young readers.

Programmes often plan for young people to work in groups and support each other, invite the young people to respond to each other's writing in supportive and caring ways, and encourage them to converse about their reading. The relational context in which most of the programmes' work, and the **environments** created in public libraries, classrooms, and after school clubs, is commonly an **enabling and relaxed one in which a sense of kinship, connection and comfort** was often commented upon and observed:

I think that social element of it was important and some of them wrote that, they did evaluations and they wrote that, I got to sit next to my friend, and it was quiet, so it wasn't like we were just sitting around chatting, we were doing the project, but I think they felt a sense of enjoyment and relaxation in that setting. (Teacher/ Volunteer Focus Group)

We ended up doing a lot of co-rehearsal where instead of just running through the play every time we rehearsed, they would go off into little groups and support each other and encourage each other and performing speaking and listening. Or in their writing …reading through each other's writing and suggesting, editing and there just became this really nice positive progression that happened where the children were not afraid to read their writing. I had so many more children happy to read their writing out and so many more children proud of what they'd done, because I think they'd been able to talk through it with some people they felt comfortable with. (Teacher/Volunteer Focus Group)

This perception that the young people valued the opportunity to connect with others around literacy activities offered by the programme was borne out in the focus group interviews. Fun was frequently mentioned, mates and a sense of a bond with others, although these positive feelings were not always explicitly linked to reading or writing, they are likely to have been associated with it.

> *I think the best experience is that we were bonding with our friends, and we felt really mature because we could sleep by ourselves in a room together.* (MoS, Children's Focus Group 1).

> *I think the best part of it was the actual writing the chapter one, like all together and just putting in everyone's ideas* (MoS, Children's Focus Group 1).

A contrast was also drawn to school contexts, '*The crewmates here, they help us more and they make things more fun, yeah, and in school it's a bit different because they don't really like to joke around*' (LP Children's Focus Group 1). A **highly positive and affirmative attitude on the part of all adults** to the children and young people was frequently both referred to by the adults involved and was consistently observed. Peer feedback was also seen to serve the purpose of encouraging the young writers.

> *Children read their writing aloud – they read together and talk of 'making sense of the writing together'. They correct as they go, and the crew mate says 'What do we need to do here?' There is a sense of shared ownership in the writing. What do we need here… In the final plenary the children have chosen their sentence and it is on the screen in front of them. They read their sentences aloud and are praised by everyone. – the children all enjoy the session, no one leaves or doesn't engage. At the end the crew mates and children all give 'shout outs' – they talk of people who've helped them.* (LP, Observation 1)

In observing one group of three young people and a mentor writing, a strong sense of fraternity was evident with intense conversations about writing, and considerable affirmative feedback for example '*withholding information is powerful -good job'* and discussions about books they'd read and the book their teacher was reading to them currently (MoS, Observation 2). The focus groups indicated that such positive encouragement was noticed and valued by the young people, for instance:

> *Say, we were scared to do something, they would like encourage us to do it and help us do it better* (PSC, Children's Focus Group, 1)

> *…Something which is important for me is when we say thank you, because once they take their time to say things it feels good to empty everything out and say thank you*. (LP, Children's Focus Group 2)

This appreciation of them and their work is likely to have supported the confidence and assurance of the children as readers and/ or writers. It will also have helped build connections and a sense of an inclusive community. In addition, many of the young people voiced the view that the adults on the programmes were listening to them, were connected to them as

humans not particularly as 'pupils' perhaps and had faith in them and trusted them. This was also noted in comments by volunteers and highly evident in observations:

> *The volunteers like X and Y and the other people, like crewmates, they tell us, do you need help, and if we answer with a, yes, they'll read it out to us, which will make us feel kind of special because we're having help and they take their time to help us* (LP, Children's Focus Group 2).

> *I think a successful session from me is one where I feel like there's children can see their own involvement in what we've created. And that they're very invested in the development of the piece. So, I think … what I always hope to achieve, I don't always, it doesn't always happen in every session, but what I always hope to achieve is that they leave the lesson feeling invigorated,* ***feeling listened to****. Also feeling like we are working on something as a whole team, that I'm not telling them what to do, that we're kind of co-creating together, but that they feel that with the other children in their class as well, I think it's very important for them, and I do notice it on the project like it's always really exciting when you feel the sense of the class cohesion is improving as you go through.(*PSC, Visit 2, Practitioner interview)

With those programmes that involved some kind of final celebration or event, opportunities were seized **to widen the community of appreciation**. On these occasions, parents were often involved, the red carpet was rolled out (PSC), and a broader sense of community was sought. Although this may be transient in nature, it was recognised by volunteers as of value: '*There's an audience. I think that's a very special part where their imagination and their work is celebrated, all without the pressure of a grade'* (Volunteer Focus Group). There was also a sense that at this moment, the young people were members of a wider school and local community. Moreover, the efforts and contributions made by different individuals and different schools were received respectfully and appreciatively. Everyone was rooting for each other:

> *I mean I think what's always really nice for them. I mean it's great for them to see other schools, they love seeing the other schools' performances. They're always really gracious as well. It's really interesting, I've never had an experience where you've had sort of sense of competitiveness. It's always just everybody's really wowed by what everybody else is doing. But I think they are often interested in the other adults in the room. (PSC Interview, Practitioner).*

As a teacher also observed, this community of appreciation stretched to include parents too:

> *We made a very definite point once the film was made that all the parents came and we had like a red carpet they all walked down and everyone celebrated the kids and they got to wear their premiere clothes, so whatever it was, and I think I was really, really impressed with the parents showing up for that, because it happened in school and so they maybe didn't get to see the progress or work that the children put in*. (Teacher/Volunteer Focus Group)

Other programmes sought opportunities to **share the young people's work publicly** also, in class, in assemblies and on screen, for instance: *'We had our names up on the screen for all*

the schools to celebrate like all of us that we've read the books' (GIR, Children's Focus Group 1). This sharing was part of an established routine: '*There's a slideshow in the morning every Monday and some of the best reviews are put there, so we read them out'* (GIR, Librarian interview 2). The children also noticed this routine and hoped it would encourage *others, 'like they see a review on the slideshow and … another student might like how it was structured so they might want to go and read the same book'* (GIR, Children's Focus Group 1).

Recognition of this wider community engagement was often mentioned by adults involved in the programmes:

> *The last thing is about engaging with our local community, and that could be about the school community more broadly, so how do peers celebrate the work that young people are creating in school, or what's the relationship with the teachers in the school, or the relationship with parents when we're sharing or presenting work*. *And we're not just working with that young person in isolation but sitting that work in the context of the younger person's life around the interactions that they're having.* (MoS, Interview 1, Programme staff)

Connections to homes in order to widen the community were also common. These varied and not only included involving parents in celebrations, but through weekly meetings with the same pairs of volunteers (Doorstep Library), sending books and activities home, themed around interests for children and adults (Get Islington Reading), and producing resources to support family interaction around texts (World Book Day). These connections to homes helped to widen the reach of the programmes and appeared to boost the confidence and engagement of parents with reading and writing for pleasure activities:

> *Essentially it (Share a Story Corner) is about developing confidence with parents who've got very young children and don't really see the point of reading with them… we're producing video content of early years literature, which will include prompts for reading together.* (WBD Interview 1, Programme staff)

> *We saw three families today where the adult was very much engaged, but that's not always the case. So, there are adults who just, you know, they're in the kitchen or something and they keep, they are not so involved. Which is a shame, but then you do feel actually that you are doing something because even if the adult is not involved you are interacting with the child*. (DSL Interview 3, Volunteer)

In addition**, links to the local community** were sought, and were planned to enable teaching opportunities linked to out of school activities such as attending mosque or being a scout and spreading the word through grassroots football, rugby, netball, athletics, and gymnastics club, so taking it out of the schooled reading space (WBD, Observation 2). In addition, as one volunteer noted, '*we looked at the book to start with and they chose their own women who had inspired them from their community, from people in the public eye'*(for their chosen writing topic) (Teachers/Volunteers Focus Group). Another programme planned a parental engagement campaign, to '*reinforce that messaging so it's coming through school and the local supermarket and it's just part and parcel of what it means to live in Islington and to be part of that community*' (GIR Interview 2, Programme staff). Doorstep Library viewed this as

essential, '*we need to make sure that that family is supported by the local community'* (DSL Interview 1).

Observational evidence also highlights the potential of this work to support the family community, children often chose books that their younger siblings might enjoy, and parents requested books for their younger children (DSL Observation 1). A sense of the collective engagement of some families was noted:

> *He had three books, and told his mum that he would read one, his mum could read another, and he would read the third to his little brother. He and mum said the little brother had enjoyed one particular one last time because it had some glow in the dark bits*. (DSL Observation 1)

4.3.7 Community: Creating community as a legacy

'Creating community as a legacy' refers to the strategies and intentions, identified in the data, that focus on seeking to foster and sustain a sense of community locally.
Programme staff often expressed a desire for some form of community legacy in the context of families, schools or more widely. The programmes recognised that creating communities not only helped with the delivery of their activities, but also helped with ensuring future activities could take place. This recognition meant that programmes dedicated time to building relationships with a wide web of individuals connected to the programmes, or the sites where they took place:

> *And then I think the headteacher in the schools, what's really, I think what always is a sign of a good relationship with the school is when you're able to meet the headteacher when a headteacher is kind of front and centre and they want to meet you. And they want to know what it is that you're going to be doing with the class. I think, so the class teacher, the TA, or TAs depending on how many they have, sometimes the deputy head can often be quite involved, which is always really nice, and even the receptionists. (PSC, Interview 2, Practitioner).*

This suggests their vision extends far beyond the programme per se and its potential consequences for the children's literacy:

> *This is an opportunity for all of us to learn and develop, no matter where we are in our services, around a common agenda, a common perspective about reading for pleasure. I think that's something I 'd like to see more of in Islington and certainly something which needs to be sustained further on after this project.* (Teachers/Volunteers Focus Group)

As another member of this programme noted a year later, the legacy was emerging, in part through reach, and building local relationships across groups.

> *It's gone out to the siblings, it's gone out to the extended family, it's gone out to all the teachers, it's gone to the governors and when you start to build all that together, the councillors and the mayor and directors, chief exec, you actually build, they'll do*

something probably at the school improvement English leads meeting and it just keeps rippling and that's what you want. (GIR, Interview, Librarian)

We don't see ourselves as providing a service to these schools, we see ourselves as establishing a network of increasingly likeminded educators. So that's what we're looking to achieve. … we were just tying together being a teacher and being an arts professional and leaving a legacy. (PSC, Interview 1)

Doorstep Library explicitly work to leave a legacy in homes such that parents '*see how simple and enjoyable it is just to pick up a story and read with your children*' and are aware of , connected to and able to '*receive additional support and have a happier less stressful life'* (DSL Interview 1). Additionally, they note the potential for wider community benefit over time:

So, it really is bringing that community together and breaking down some of those barriers of who each other is. You know, you know I lived in Fulham, I never would have walked through the estates, but you start to realise actually everyone's human and we all want exactly the same thing. We want what's best for our families and for our children. It's just that some of us have, you know, a bigger boost in life earlier on perhaps. (DSL Interview 1)

One education manager noted that he not only sought to build classroom writing communities, but also aimed for create something wider and potentially longer lasting, that was expressed as '*building communities in a borough*' , he noted that '*I'm trying to do something a little bit more holistic in terms of our work in the borough and the community of that borough.'* (MoS Interview 1)

4.3.8 Synthesis of the code 'Community'

The **wide range of people and organisations involved** in the individual programmes comprises a talented community. Whilst **the size of these communities varies** across the programmes, the **breadth and diversity of expertise** of community members is a notable strength. None of the programmes operate in isolation, **all seek out diverse range of partners** with capability to work towards their aims. In this respect the programmes are outward looking, they position themselves as enabling learning organisations and do not see themselves as the privileged holders of knowledge or expertise in this space. Rather they work to develop partnerships with colleagues from schools, libraries and the wider arts and cultural sector. Several of them also involve local volunteers who themselves work in different sectors.

Programme leads recognise, value and respect the proficiency and skills of those beyond the in-house staff team - both those who volunteer and those who are paid- and work to capitalise upon this expertise and weave it thoughtfully into the work in order to ensure high quality provision. Many of the programmes **draw on strong historically established relationships** with individuals and organisations **and local knowledge**, enabling local community involvement. Where local connections and networks do not exist, these are often built to support the work.

All the programmes, in different ways, **seek to understand the needs of their community**. Those working directly or indirectly with schools, find ways to identify the needs of specific groups of children and teachers, or work to establish an understanding of the wider context nationally or locally, in order to tailor their programme plans. This results in most cases, in programmes being shaped in culturally responsive ways for the young people and their parents.

Those involved in the programmes **frequently voice their desire to create communities around the work; it is a core value**. The societal and educational challenges involved are widely recognised, yet core members of the programme teams remain determined to build communities and micro-communities- collectives- whether class based or home based or in in-between spaces of readers and writers.

A range of strategies are used, consciously and unconsciously, to **develop communities of connection and engagement in classrooms, after-school clubs, homes and libraries**. In many cases the sense of community established is likely to have been transient, nonetheless it is seen to involve positive relationships, a high degree of social interaction and very supportive affirmative attitudes which honour the children's interests and celebrate their choices as readers and writers. **Communities of appreciation and support exist** and frequently and persistently opportunities are taken to celebrate the children's achievements. The young people perceived the programmes afforded them the opportunity to make relational connections with each other, bonds even and commented upon the positive connections with the adults involved too, whom they believed listened to them and respected their choices and ideas. A sense of a level playing field which was inclusive of all was evident in their comments and those of the volunteers and practitioners. This appeared to have helped shape a sense of pride, belonging and commitment on the part of all involved. **A desire to create a more sustained community legacy** both in the immediate context and in the wider local community is common.

4.4 Roles

The third of the four elements within the Activity System, *Roles*, relates to the responsibilities and tasks – before, during and after the programme – that different members of the project, such as education managers, delivery staff, volunteers, school staff, parents / family and children have. For example, an education manager might identify schools to work with, explain the project to them, meet with them monthly to support implementation, and work with analysts to devise evaluation. Two main codes were identified: 'management / strategic steering' and 'supporting adults'. Three further sub-codes of 'management / strategic steering' were identified relating to recruitment, partnership and evaluation processes. With regards to 'supporting adults', two further sub-codes were identified related to 'flexibility / autonomy' and 'values'. The definitions for each of these codes and sub-codes are detailed in Table 4 (below).

Table 4 Definitions of codes within Roles category

Management/ Strategic steering	Tasks involved in the overall establishment and running of the programmes. Leadership and organisation of partners and supporting adults

	Recruitment/training	How participants and organisations are identified and recruited to join the programme.
	Partnerships	Ways of working based on history, relationships, open communication e.g. GIR works with the school improvement service to identify schools able to participate and needing support and also to align with current initiatives/ get feedback on their work.
	Evaluation	How evaluation is organised by programme leaders and what this involves, formative, iterative and summative.
Supporting adults		The adults who work directly with the children in the programmes and their roles in the programmes including: teachers, librarians, authors, other creative experts, lead facilitators, mentors, volunteers.
	Flexibility/ autonomy	The relative importance and balance between flexibility and prescription experienced in these roles.
	Values	How supporting adults' roles are framed by the programme's values and ethos.

4.4.1 Roles: Management

'Management' referred to tasks involved in the overall establishment and running of the programmes. Leadership and organisation of partners and supporting adults.
The code of *Management/ Strategic steering* included the sub codes recruitment/ brokering, partnerships, evaluation and facilitation. The analysis highlighted that an essential role in programme management involved both recruitment and training of volunteers or other staff involved in implementing the programmes, and recruitment of schools or families and children to participate in the programmes.

4.4.2 Roles: Recruitment and training

'Recruitment and training' refer to statements within the data indicating how participants – children, volunteers, practitioners – and organisations are identified and recruited to join the programme. Understandable amounts of care were taken when recruiting and training supporting adults to ensure they would be able to appropriately support children. The availability and quality of supporting adults was described as a 'perceived risk' (DSL Application) to some programmes and so measures were established to '**quality assure' this role**:

> Potential volunteers first have to attend an information briefing to ensure they fully understand the commitment and then are invited to apply. They are interviewed, have Enhanced DBS checks and references taken up. Following a day's training delivered in-house, they are paired with an experienced volunteer and have to undertake three trial sessions before they are recruited. (DSL Application).

The expertise needed to lead drama workshops for the Primary Shakespeare Company was an important factor in their recruitment processes:

We have a core of practitioners who have been with us pretty much from the beginning and we initially recruited because we had worked alongside all of them when we ourselves were freelancers. So we knew the quality of their work intimately … from there we've engaged in a sort of, in a number of different processes to expand that pool… we'd go and observe them leading, you know, if they were working on another programme we would go into schools and watch them (PSC Interview 2, Programme staff)

However, recruitment of volunteers also relies on **soft skills and dispositions**, and in the case of LP, the ability to link to the wider community:

We do recruit for ethos and fit before skills because we think we can train a lot of skills. We're trying to bring a diverse group of people into the organisation who have got lots of lovely and different perspectives as well as experiences. (LP Interview 1, Programme Staff)

While the diverse range of expertise drawn upon was valued, viewed as a strength, and capitalised upon, the programmes also offered their arts partners', teachers' and volunteers' **induction, training and /or support** as appropriate to their roles in order to enrich their knowledge and skills. For example:

We've done practitioner training already this year, … we meet with our 25 or so freelance directors. We take them through what schools will be doing. We take them through our ethos and ways to work. We bring in professionals to upskill our [arts] practitioners, they are all primarily directors and none of them have been teachers before... Then we do days of insets with the teachers too. We take them through the expectations of the project and through some group planning together of things that they might do. We provide them with a full five-week curriculum for literacy, maths, science, art and music. (PSC Interview 1, Programme staff)

Our freelancers are invited to attend any training the organisation is running, and that could be things like behaviour management, safeguarding refreshers, and we'll try and programme that based around what people say they need some support with. ….So I think we're learning where people's strengths and areas for development are the more we work with them, and then that will inform what training we bring in as well. (MoS Interview 1, Programme staff)

Whilst seeking to build on an understanding of the groups they are working with, programmes also made clear the remit of the work; **laying out their expectations and the commitment of all involved** in accompanying paperwork and through engaging senior leaders in meetings. In this way they seek, where applicable, to help schools understand what they can offer and how to make best use of this:

We've also absolutely got to have the head on board, which is why I spend quite a lot of time establishing relationships with heads and senior leadership…we will ask school's heads to fulfil [certain conditions] before we're prepared to give them this very, very heavily subsided project, so for what they pay they get an amazing amount of

value, but we will say things like you have to commit to integrating the project into your medium-term planning (PSC Interview 1, Programme staff).

Teachers working with PSC reported valuing hearing the experience of practitioners who had worked with them previously during the training and that reading the 'framework of expectations' document before the training 'really helps give you a sense of what's expected' (PSC Interview 3)'. For the programmes working directly with schools, **recruitment relied on local knowledge, historical relationships and programme partnerships.** Recruitment was targeted towards schools that were known to the programme to demonstrate indicators of disadvantage, or were recommended to the programme by trusted partners:

I have to say we specifically targeted it because it's in the poorest ward of the borough and the… pupil premium was big. The school in [this area] that we work with, has a significantly larger than average… number of SEN children on roll … these are schools and heads … that we choose within our own sort of network, schools where we saw need and where we felt that we would make the most difference. (PSC Interview 2, Programme staff)

We're working really closely with the School Improvement team in [this area] … we worked with them to recruit the schools and that was absolutely critical really. (GIR Interview 1, Programme staff)

A noticeable thread running through the programmes' recruitment strategies was drawing on a range of other sources of information and organisations and **trusting others to direct them**. For examples where referral of individual children to programmes was needed, schools were used as trusted partners:

We think that teachers help us get to the kids who need it most. If it was just families finding the centre then… we'd only be including families with the time and capacity to do that. So, we get schools to choose them, for falling behind and having fewer opportunities. (LP Interview 2, Programme staff)

Doorstep Library combined local knowledge and partnerships with other organisations to support them in targeting particular locations from which to recruit families, and they also considered the safety of these locations for their volunteers:

We've turned some estates down because we didn't feel that our volunteers would be safe … Sometimes speaking to the Safer Neighbourhood teams, we try and make sure we've got those connections as well. And just finding out from other local service providers what's it really like once you're on the estates. (DSL Interview 2, Programme staff).

As World Book Day wanted to work with teachers to develop new resources, they adopted an open approach to recruiting a range of participants including new teachers as well as those who were more experienced. They stressed the equal relationship they wanted to establish:

> *It genuinely is a conversation at the beginning and that was really working in terms of getting them on side, because you're not telling them what to do. You're asking how can we work together*? (WBD Interview 2, Programme staff)

4.4.3 Roles: Partnerships

Extracts assigned this code referred to ways of working based on history, relationships, open communication e.g., Get Islington Reading works with the school improvement service to identify schools able to participate and needing support and also to align with current initiatives and get feedback on their work.

A key role for all the organisations involved partnerships, whether forging new ones or drawing on existing relationships. These are sometimes at the level of organisations, sometimes between individuals involved in programme delivery. In all instances sensitive **collaboration and flexibility** seemed to be key in planning and delivering the programmes in partnership. The programme leaders offered instances of developing their work to respond to the time constraints of partner organisations whilst still meeting their own goals and they took time to really **listen and adapt approaches**. For example, Ministry of Stories planned sessions with the teachers to meet the needs of the children building on what they were told about the children's starting points:

> *Pupils have missed out on a lot during KS1. The teachers would like them to have confidence in their creativity and support with structuring their thinking. They are strong on sentence starters but struggle with past tense.* (MoS Observation 1)

Whilst Get Islington Reading brought the librarians, teachers and authors together and offered twilight sessions that created '*a better [mutual] understanding'* and a '*platform to explore'* projects and plan collaboratively (GIR Interview 3). The change in emphasis from normal relationships between schools and the library was described as *'not so much of a support role to schools … it's much more what are **we** doing **together** and delivering it*' (GIR Interview 3). Programme sessions were also used to reinforce the expectations of the partnership such as in a Primary Shakespeare Company online session with teachers where the team set out the plan for visits but also set the tone and built relationships to support programme delivery:

> *There is laughter, enjoyment and talk and in the first break it's impossible to tell which teacher is from which school, as they all mix together. This continues into the planning session where teachers are mixed up on different tables.* (PSC Observation 1)

Partner organisations were used to **identify and connect** with children and families, helping with knowledge of the local area and gaps in reach and provision:

> *Mapping some of the relationships that the public libraries have with the community sector and making sure that we are reaching children who might not engage with this project through school, but might engage through a different channel, through the libraries or through possibly some of the relationships with art organisations in the borough who work closely with the Library Service.* (GIR Interview 1, Programme staff)

Furthermore, these partnerships required **trusting relationships** in which the lead organisations knew when to delegate tasks and were open to different perspectives to guide their work:

> *For me, the fundamental thing is about the trust. The schools know their students, teachers know the challenges that their students are facing. So actually, in terms of are we reaching the right young people, we have to trust that the school know, have that knowledge of their students, and have the self-evaluation tools in place to have reflected and identified where they need most help with those needs*. (MoS Interview 1, Programme staff)

> *For us, there's a tremendous amount of value in having their different inputs and expertise and perspectives. So, while we need to get to a place where there's a coherent World Book Day stance that's taken in all of their recommendations and expertise, we're never looking for them to come together in a way that is the World Book Day way of doing things*. (WBD Interview 1, Programme staff)

Teachers also put trust in the expertise of the organisations they were working with such as one working with the Primary Shakespeare Company:

> *You do take a step back as class teacher and leader of the project within your school. Because they are the professionals within the theatre with the lighting, the sound and getting everybody into position … that was a huge relief actually because they obviously do it so much better and then we were able to learn from them.* (PSC Visit 2, Teacher Interview)

Commitment and the ability to **lead others** were also elements of the different partnerships. The lead organisations placed trust in their school partners and delivery staff to lead changes to reading and writing practices:

> Each school will nominate ambassadors to lead the project (one for primary and up to five for each secondary). These teachers will be responsible for coordinating audits, attending training, championing initiatives and running school specific projects in the second and third year of the project. (GIR Programme Documentation)

> *From a teacher perspective, we're hoping to work with subject leaders to broaden their, maybe their approaches or their understanding to approaches to creating writing. So, using some of the Ministry of Stories methodology to see how that can support them to lead English and specifically creative writing in their schools. And so bring about that cultural shift or that cultural change in their schools so there's a leadership element.* (MoS Interview 1, Programme staff)

In practice, effective leadership between the organisations and their different partners relied on excellent communication and commitment *'having a very proactive lead, within the school or setting, who wants to make it happen as well and is making time for this and is giving it some priority'* (GIR Interview 3, Programme staff).

To work with and respond to different perspectives, valuing the expertise of multiple partners, the organisations demonstrated a **focus on negotiation**, leading and maintaining an overview whilst being flexible enough to listen and adapt. These interactions were described by more than one organisation as 'conversations':

> *There's typically a planning meeting between the facilitator and the teacher, which would be project managed by [xxx]. She's again the creative voice in that conversation, three-way conversation, where usually the facilitator will be bringing, 'Oh I think we'll do this piece of work really nicely', but then there's a fine-tuning that happens alongside the teacher who says actually this might work better, or knowing my children this might be a better emphasis*. (MoS Interview 1, Programme staff)

In on the ground delivery, most of the organisations continued this view of their role, as facilitators who were continuing to learn. They offered structured resources and ways of working that could facilitate a change in practice, but then these were **negotiated and adapted responsively** by and with the supporting adults:

> *Every year it is shaped by head teachers and teachers, and we've never ignored a suggestion … we're fully aware that we have some skills but that we don't know everything. So, it is a full collaboration.* (PSC Interview 1, Programme staff)
> *So, the school lead in each case is responsible for developing that whole school reading culture. The way that they do that is entirely dependent on their context, probably their interest to an extent and we're shaping that through providing them with research and a support network and ideas and activities and best practice type things in the engagements that we have with them*. (GIR Interview 2, Programme staff)

> *Our role is to come in and work in collaboration with schools to enhance those experiences for their young people … it's always in collaboration with the school, we're not there in opposition to, and I think there's quite an important mentality about the partnership with schools*. (MoS Interview 1, Programme staff)

World Book Day also found that their role involved supporting less experienced English leaders though sharing ideas and bringing them together with other more experienced leaders. The new English lead reported they gained *'ideas that I have never thought of'* that '*moulded the kind of literacy lead that I've become'* (WBD Interview 3, Teacher)

4.4.4 Roles: Evaluation

'Evaluation' refers to how evaluation is organised, according to roles within the programmes, and what this involves, for instance formative, iterative and summative evaluation practices.
The roles, responsibilities and tasks associated with evaluation was approached differently depending on programme organisation. However, there was agreement that evaluation was **collaborative and multi-focused**, including impact on pupils, taking an overview of the programme development, or monitoring the work of individual volunteers. Predominantly the programmes were working on ways to track the impact on children, whether through observations and tracking from volunteers and teachers or through surveys and focus groups:

The volunteers might go and see between four and six families in an evening. They then come back to wherever we're storing the books, more often in the children's centre or local community centre and then they log on to our, we have a database that was built for us and then they report back. So, they've got a set of things they have to fill in for each family. So those things are marked against each child and against each family depending on what the question is. (DSL Interview 1, Programme staff)

The teachers are in every session as part of the process. So … it's the practitioner's remit to engage every child and it's kind of the teacher's remit to track the progress or unexpected outcomes in that session. (PSC interview 2, Programme staff)
Previously schools have been asked to track children's progress across the project. There will be an entry/exit assessment to capture attitudes and progress. We want you to identify children – those who are disengaged- track changes in them. A key aim this year is to prolong the impact of the project and to maintain writing beyond the half-term project. (PSC Observation 1)

The survey element of the evaluation will be supplemented by qualitative work to get a more detailed and deeper understanding of the changes that the programme brings about. The two partners anticipate conducting interviews and Focus Groups with pupils as well as librarians, parents and teachers. To mirror its longitudinal survey set-up, they will endeavour to speak to the same group of children over the three years. (GIR Programme documentation)

The volunteers are in pairs and we have very much an open door policy that we want to know if there's anything that anyone's concerned about with their volunteer partner. We do annual supervisions with volunteers and a chance to individually sit down with each one. (DSL Interview 2, Programme staff)

4.4.5 Roles: Supporting adults

'Supporting adults' refers to the adults who work directly with the children in the programmes and their roles in the programmes including teachers, librarians, authors, other creative experts, lead facilitators, mentors, volunteers. This code of 'supporting adults' included the sub-codes 'flexibility/ autonomy' and 'values', which are discussed below. Further details about the expertise deployed by these adults are recognized and examined as part of the third element, *Community*.

4.4.6 Roles: Flexibility/autonomy

'Flexibility / autonomy' refers to extracts in the data that outline the relative importance and balance between flexibility and prescription experienced in these roles. The roles of the different programme adults – volunteers, teachers and practitioners – in all instances worked within an **overarching structure and set of expectations** but left each individual **with flexibility** to adapt their approach to the needs of the children and the context of their work. This flexibility related both to how the programmes operated.

I think the flexibility and teachers feel like they're trusted to do what's right for their setting rather than a one size fits all. (GIR, Visit 1, Interview, Programme staff)
The answer is after initial consultation we trust them to just produce what they produce. (PSC Interview 2, Programme staff)

I think it's really important that we're not controlling the way that they interact with their children because of course teachers are the experts in their children, in their classes, so they know what's going to work for that group. (GIR Interview 1, Programme staff)

There are a couple of resources in the crew mate handbook to help them come up with the kinds of questions that they might want to ask about reading, but particularly when they've been coming for a while they're just reading and talking to the child about reading, they know the kinds of questions to ask. (LP Interview 2, Programme staff)

Volunteers confirmed the flexibility of interactions within the programmes:

When I'm asking them about their ideas, I don't feel like I'm like constricted. I'm like oh I'll just ask them anything, I'll challenge them about anything, and that kind of gets them going. (MoS Visit 2, Practitioner Interview)

The sessions are quite free in what happens in them. There's not a specific format. It's not about you must play these games, or you must read this particular book (DSL Visit 2 Observation)

I think it's about following the child, I feel, just giving that child the voice and even if it's totally random and different from last week, you've just got to go with it. (Teacher/Volunteer Focus Group)

In the case of Doorstep Library, volunteers were also flexible enough to get to know the families with which they were working and to signpost **families to other sources of support**:

They can signpost families to relevant local support and services, either preventatively or during a time of crisis, and start to break down the isolation felt by many of these disadvantaged families. (DSL Programme documentation)

The supporting adults talked about how they can **celebrate children's reading and writing** with the time and **freedom from assessment expectations** that may limit children's feelings of achievement in school:

Part of what we do is trying to be doing the thought process again that you wouldn't have time necessarily for in a school, to think about, OK, if they like that, … oh, they might like the next one, and having the time and thought to do that. (Teacher/Volunteer Focus Group)

I am interested in this idea of children having varied writing experiences, so having different inputs and different experiences around writing so that it's not, they don't always associate writing with the same format. (Teacher/Volunteer Focus Group)

> *I asked two to three teachers if [xxx's] work with the children was the same as their teaching. The common thread here was that this was very different from their teaching of writing in a number of ways, including "Using the journal which can get messy – this allows the children to be more free. It seems they're more willing to write everything their thinking and go off on off piste in the journal." "Our lessons are far more focused we use a specific structure with lots of modelled writing and far less imaginative opportunities".* (MoS Observation)

The supporting adults, therefore, often expressed values framed in contrast to or as complementary to those perceived to be central to education currently, namely attainment and the standards agenda. This was seen as limiting by many of the programme teachers and volunteers, but interestingly less so by the education managers:

> *Whilst we know that those skills are fundamental to children accessing books and also that we know that they need to write and using text as an example is helpful, actually that's not the purpose of what we're trying to achieve. And for many children who aren't engaging with reading for pleasure, the very fact that they have to do all the decoding effort and then find an adverbial, and then write three pages afterwards in the same style that puts them off the whole thing in the first place*. (WBD Interview 2, Programme staff)

> *We haven't got the pressures that they have at school to reach targets and get to certain levels. We can just solely focus on enjoying a book and sharing a book with the children and with the families. I don't think schools, I know they would like to do that, I don't know if they always really have the time to actually focus on the enjoyment of reading, they more have to get the children to certain levels at certain times, achieve certain targets. I think maybe Doorstep Library can come away from that a bit more and focus on the enjoyment of reading without the pressures.* (Teacher/Volunteer Focus Group)

Some staff, working in out-of-school contexts had found **ways around the limitations of schooled literacy**, by recognising the pressures the young people face in school and providing consistent positive feedback as a tool to support the young people when they try out reading and writing activities. Being able to provide this authentic positive feedback involved being flexible when children's engagement with activities might have deviated from the original instructions, valuing instead that the children participated:

> *So we, if a young pirate, and sometimes they do, they write something about Pokémon that makes absolutely no sense and perhaps isn't quite anywhere near the brief that we would have hoped, but their faces are beaming and it's going to be celebrated and supported and enjoyed and promoted in the same way and that's quite a niche part of the programme, but it is quite important.* (Teacher/ Volunteer Focus Group)

This supportive way of recognising all children's achievements was observed in programme visits:

Crew mates interact with the children, they read and appreciate their work and provide the encouragement for them to complete their writing. The session leader calls them incredible writers who deserve to be published. (LP Observation 2)

4.4.7 Roles: Values

'Values' as a code indicates how supporting adults' roles are framed by programme values and ethos.

The values expressed by the members of the programme planning and delivery teams are multiple and are frequently expressed in a highly personal manner. The predominant values voiced as desires and evidenced in action include **prioritising social justice** and addressing inequities through the work and **involving and empowering children** and young people as individuals. This was evident in many of the voices of the volunteers and education managers. For example:

> *I chose 'children from lower socioeconomic backgrounds read less for enjoyment than children from more privileged classes', because I think it's a typical, not necessarily a misconception, but I think that it highlights… you can't write off a parent just because of their socioeconomic background and I think that's something we have to be really careful of, particularly at our school, we have a lot of children from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, but actually who have parents who are really involved and if we provide them with the resources they will do the work…so I think there's something to be said about involving parents in projects* .(Teacher/ Volunteer Focus Group)

> *I think that relationships underpin everything about reading and that facilitates the social justice aims of what, our aims of the programme and our aims in terms of reading for pleasure and equality in Islington.* (GIR Interview 1, Programme staff)
> *Not all of our parents can speak English, so let's make sure that feels good and not all of our parents have good mobility, so how are we making sure that they can come to that? Not all of our parents work, so how do we make sure…, it runs through everything and I think it comes through strongly actually, even into the volunteering, in training the first question you ask them when they settle, (I remember it was very specifically trained to me years ago) that you don't say, 'at work', you say, give me an example from your day or something that you do.* (LP Interview 2, Programme staff)

Involving and empowering children and young people as individuals was another core strand reflected in the voices of staff working in the various programmes. This was worked towards through building relationships, attending to their interests as readers and writers, valuing their ideas and enabling them to express themselves in various ways related to R/WfP. These people were determined not only to listen to children and support them as readers or writers, but to celebrate and respect their unique contributions -whatever their nature.

> So, *the whole thing is that you always get celebrated, you always get your work published and that's a key part of what we do and the children in particular, you might be surprised to hear, always really like the book. They like, even when we're like, you've*

just been to the Rio and you've had popcorn, you've seen yourself in a film, they're like, yeah, but I really like my book. (Teacher/ Volunteer Focus Group)
I would say I'm there to really encourage their own ideas, for them to feel OK about expressing their own ideas even if they're different from other people's and, yeah, to celebrate what they bring rather than, … So, I'm there to try and champion that really and make them feel confident as much as I can in their own abilities as writers. (Teacher/ Volunteer Focus Group)

We see the things that those children create are not an imitation, they're not a poor imitation of an adult art form, they are within their own terms, they are a valid piece of art to us. (PSC Interview 1, Programme staff)

The values expressed by the programme teams influenced specific ways of working. Adults were encouraged to **listen** to children and follow their lead, as well as reflecting upon and **sharing their own experiences:**

Questions, listening, listening is the most important thing … it's absolutely placing the young person and their ideas central, and their role is to support, nurture, encourage; not to impose. (MoS Interview 1, Programme staff)

I actually think it's the personal experience more that comes into it, they like having a human who, that makes mistakes and things … we get crew mates to share 'Oh at work I struggled with this'. (LP Interview 2, Programme staff)

None of the people who work for us would be able to do what they did if they didn't have a profound love of the process, and the process is facilitating children, children, the realisation of children's ideas. (PSC Interview 2, Programme staff)

When [xxx] takes their ideas, she offers very positive affirmation and invites the other children to comment on each other's suggestions. During this time one child asks [xxx] what's the story called? [xxx] replied "I don't know it's your story if you haven't got there yet that's not a worry". (MoS Observation 1)

The children also emphasised that they felt supported to try because they trusted the adults would help and value them. They noted that the adults responded to their individual needs and interests:

If you wanted to be better, like be the best you, I suggest coming here because there's always going to be someone or a few people who is there for you, they're going to help you and one of the most important things, if you're stuck they'll always be there to tell you it's OK to be stuck, you can just try again, because from a mistake you learn the answer. (LP Children's Focus Group 2)

I really like Doorstep Library because, they straight away realise if you're not interested in a book, they ask you and see if you want to change the book if you don't really like it or if you don't like your experience. (DSL Children's Focus Group 1)

Supporting adults frequently referred to their role as bringing fun, e**nergy and enthusiasm** and consistently giving **positive encouragement**. They explained that they wanted to create a safe space where children were not afraid to try, and they also wanted to make learning more meaningful by linking to children's interests and home experiences:

> *I'd say my biggest role is just being their cheerleader in a way, just really rooting them on.* (Teachers/Volunteers Focus Group)

> *Often, it's to play the fool and to show them that you can't go wrong, look, it doesn't matter what you do, what you say... I think a lot of great creativity comes out of people enjoying themselves*. (Teachers/ Volunteers Focus Group)

> *There's this thing about entering a **safe space** and they see somebody else have a go at something, take a risk.* (Teachers/ Volunteers Focus Group)

In addition to the supportive relationships created, teachers, children and volunteers explained that their **interactions encouraged high expectations**:

> *OK, so when they come, if they think that like, since they're the experts, they like make our lines better and that's the part that I, it makes me enjoy it more because it's like more exciting lines*. (PSC Children's Focus Group 1)

> *Because the drama gave it meaning, and the audience gave them purpose, their writing then just became, they were engaged to write like they weren't before.* (PSC Teacher Interview 3)

> *I think that's what the sessions do for them, is that they are not doing writing, they are writers*. (MOS Interview 3)

Building trust through supportive relationships was a key issue within focus group discussions with the adults involved in the programmes, whether teachers, volunteers or practitioners. A key component of these supportive relationships involved the adults **building respectful relationships** with families, asking about their views on the books that are being shared and accepting families as they are:

> *They don't judge if the child has a tantrum in the middle of a session and they have to stop it short*. (DSL Interview 1, Programme staff)

> *We have the same families so we can build up relationships with them and watch them progress and begin to enjoy books more and more as we visit.* (Teachers/Volunteers Focus Group)

For WBD, who worked with adults not children for this programme, they also wanted to create trusting relationships where teachers influenced their work:

> *I was keen that they were given that opportunity to feed back to me honestly about what they were seeing in our practice as well. And again, that was a trust building exercise and I am genuinely interested in what they've got to say.* (WBD Interview 1)

4.4.8 Synthesis of the code 'Roles'

Analysis of the roles within the programmes and how these were implemented reveal several common approaches. The programmes build capacity by drawing on **existing partnerships** and forging new ones with other local organisations. These enable them to access specific local knowledge about target groups and resources. Whilst the programmes take the lead, they establish mechanisms for frequent and genuine consultation and negotiation with their partners, whether in steering the whole programme, **identifying and recruiting child participants**, or in planning together with schools or other organisations to deliver the programme. They trust the expertise of their partners and delegate responsibility accordingly. Teachers also trust in the expertise of the programmes and benefit from the opportunity to learn from their expertise and different approaches. The process of the partner organisations working together it one of **dialogue and collaboration**.

Programme leaders ensure that **evaluation is built-in** at multiple levels including supporting adults tracking and reporting on children and families' engagement, steering group monitoring of programme implementation, ongoing dialogue and feedback and qualitative and quantitative research at the end of programmes. The priority for monitoring is children's engagement and the quality interactions between adults and children, rather than skills-focused outcomes. Programme management also involves **recruiting supporting adults** with appropriate soft-skills and commitment to the role as well as specific professional experience and expertise where needed. To ensure that these crucial members of staff uphold the programme values, recruitment may involve trial periods of working, skills focused training, observation in role, recommendations from partner organisations and targeting specific groups.

Enabling children to enjoy reading and writing is essential to each programme and this involves building a shared ethos around celebrating every contribution made by a child. For this reason, some supporting adults draw on expertise in creative fields to motivate and engage children but all **adults are sensitively observing and adapting their support** to meet the needs of individual children. Supporting adults work within structured guidelines that create a familiar routine, but **each programme allows them flexibility** within these to follow the child's lead. Supporting adults are also encouraged to reflect on their own experiences as readers and writers and share these with the children, as well as participating alongside the children modelling enthusiasm for reading and writing. All programmes encourage adults to link their work to children's interests and home experiences, some also work to recruit supporting adults from diverse groups within their programmes. There was strong agreement that the supporting adults had the time and freedom to pursue ways of working that were different from the perceived literacy experiences in schools, such as through varied stimuli and formats for writing or discussing and finding new texts and authors to enthuse a child. Supporting adults emphasized that they were free from assessment expectations which allowed them to celebrate all children's contributions without focusing on how to improve. Notwithstanding, programme volunteers conveyed positive, high expectations for individual children in terms of what they could achieve.

Perhaps most noticeably, **the programmes share essential values** which inform the way they work with partner organisations and supporting adults, as well as who is recruited and how they enact their roles with children. These were consistently reflected in all elements of the data collection with all stakeholders, so they seem to represent the reality of the programmes and include: building respectful trusting relationships with children, families and supporting adults, listening to children and responding to their individual needs and interests, providing safe spaces to 'take risks' and offering relentless positivity, energy and enthusiasm.

4.5 Resources

The final element within the Activity System, *Resources,* was scrutinised to understand the ways specific tools and/or physical objects were used by the programmes to support their specific aims, such as books, plays, stimuli for writing (for example, objects and images), programme specific documentation and environment. The element of *Resources* was also considered to include more intangible components, such as supportive interactions. Thus, two codes were identified within the data related to the use of 'tangible' and 'intangible' resources. Further sub-codes were identified, related to both of these codes. The definitions for each codes are provided below (Table 5 below).

Table 5 Definitions of codes in the Resources category

Tangible resources		Some projects provide tangible objects including books, book tokens and stationery aimed at the children, whilst other projects provided lesson plans and web resources for practitioners and/or parents or guardians. Tangible resources also relate to the outcome of the various projects, many of whom have some kind of end-of-project event where children's work is celebrated. The tangible code also refers to the learning environments created by the project, either the physical space/s or through virtual and/or online spaces.
	Artefacts	Final outcomes from the project which may be kept by participants/projects and referred back to. This includes book anthologies, published books, films/ film clips and applications.
	Place, space, environment	Where places and spaces were important to the activity taking place within projects. This could be a physical and/or online space. Some projects moved their activity into online spaces during the COVID-19 pandemic.
	Practical objects	Objects that are directly used within the project. This might include lesson plans for practitioners, a plastic stool, books given to children.
Intangible resources		In addition to physical resources, projects also provide further support/guidance for participants; for example, school or community library services. Whilst C*hoice and interest* don't fit neatly into this category, it is still felt to be an additional resource in its own right; for example, one outcome of *choice and interest* maybe a specific book chosen by a child.
	Choice and interest	The ways in which choice and interest directly impacted on engagement with the project by either practitioners and/or children.
	Interaction	The ways in which adults communicate with children and/or the way children communicate with each other in the course of reading and writing-focused activities.

	Signposting, selecting, transforming	Where additional information was either given or suggested to practitioners. The flagging of additional and/or supporting services, including community groups and/or library services.

4.5.1 Resources: Artefacts

'Artefacts' refers to final outcomes from the project which may be kept by participants/projects and referred back to. This includes items such as book anthologies, published books, films/ film clips and applications.

As noted against *Practical Objects* (see below), this code is differentiated by being the types of artefacts that remain at the end of the project, and which have been produced by the children as part of the project:

> *So, every half term our young pirates write towards a project that is published, be it published in a book, so that's our first or autumn term, published on a website or an audio podcast and published, they appear in a film that happens at the [xxx] Cinema in [xxx]*. (Teachers/Volunteers Focus Group)

The purpose of these artefacts was very much around the **celebration of children's work** and/or the role of celebration around reading and writing**.** Three projects in particular, Ministry of Stories, Literacy Pirates and Primary Shakespeare mention **child-led artefacts** as a key outcome of their projects, and all highlighted the role these artefacts played in **demonstrating children's engagement with reading and writing**. These artefacts were at times **collaborative** (MoS Programme Visit), with children involved in Ministry of Stories drawing attention to how everyone's ideas were included, whether in an improvised one-word story or the final book shared at a special event (MoS, Children's Focus Group 1). At other times, though, children were encouraged to **create independently**, by being given miniature, blank books to turn into their own poetry collection (GIR interview). On occasion, these small blank books become **cherished memorabilia** held onto by children, long after the programme has finished (GIR interview). Teachers recognised that for some children the desired outputs, such as a theatre production, may be hard for children to imagine, especially if they have not been involved in or attended theatre productions before. In such instances, teachers considered how to provide children with insights into the desired outputs of the project in the form of **documentation of previous years' accomplishments**:

> *They couldn't quite imagine it because it wasn't an experience they'd ever had until they had it… It would almost be really good this year if I showed my class this year the photographs from last year's cohort in the theatre. (PSC Visit 2, Teacher Interview)*

End products frequently referenced included films, an opera, apps, anthologies, podcasts, celebration events and festivals:

> *So, in the other two projects that I did last term, they both involved books. So, I worked with an after-school club of year 6s who had some challenges in literacy and we created a poetry book of their poetry and then the other project was with year 6s in a school*

> *creating a book, an actual story about Maya culture and Maya civilisation.* (Teachers/Volunteers Focus Group)

> *And the fourth one* [driver] *is around published projects, so the real- life tangible products that the children get and that can then be celebrated, so a book and a film, apps and it's their work is now out in the world and that we can celebrate that with their parents and with the teachers, schools and the wider public.* (LP Interview 1, Programme staff)

> *Informed by their classwork and watching the touring production of the play, children work with the composer, the director and the writer to produce the lyrics of the opera. Each participating class works on a different section of the piece and at the end of term at the festival performance, each class performs their section, so the piece becomes a complete opera.* (PSC Interview 1, Programme staff)

A notable element related to the code of artefacts was the creative range, with Primary Shakespeare Company engaging the children in creating different sorts of texts, such as songs, as well as artefacts not conventionally associated with reading and writing, such as costumes. The range of creative activities the children were involved in as a result was seen by teachers as allowing the children to learn more about each other and themselves (PSC Visit 2 Observation)

Additionally, projects stressed the importance of applying a professional standard to the artefacts, either by working with professionals or through **high production values of the published outputs** and/or celebrations.

> *We always work towards some sort of purposeful outcome. So, it might be a publication, we might publish a book or an anthology or some poetry, or it could be a performance or a reading or a presentation, but there's always that sense of working with purpose towards an outcome that has real value. And we try and present young people's work to professional standards, and we think their writing deserves to be treated in that way as much as any other writer. So, the production values that go into presenting young people's work are really high, and we treat it very seriously and with a lot of care and with a lot of respect.* (MoS, Interview 1, Programme).

In addition to creative, tangible outputs, young people in the Get Islington Reading focus groups frequently referenced the certificates they could receive for engaging in the Summer Reading Challenge and the Reading Road Map (GIR Children's Focus Group 2). Although it is recognised that these certificates are not produced or created by the children, they are still seen as tangible markers of the children's engagement with a reading programme and of importance to the young people based on the frequency of their reference.

4.5.2 Resources: Place, space and environment

This code refers to instances in the data where reference was made to places and spaces as important to the activity taking place within projects. This could be a physical and/or online space. Some projects moved their activity into online spaces during the COVID-19 pandemic.

This code was most frequently noted in the interviews with the project leads and through the programme documentation. The use of the **environment was important to all projects**, whether it was through the rearrangement of library spaces, the creation of an inspiring space where reading and writing took place, or through the reading spaces created.

> *We've created a really beautiful space [in the garden area], we've created drop-off points around the school where children can just sit on the sofa and pick up a book and that's where it started and then it's developed into a really strong pupil voice in our school around reading, what they want to read, what they're enjoying, what they're recommending to each other and we've seen particularly, we've seen a really big shift actually in terms of children's engagement*. (Teachers/Volunteers Focus Group)

> *OK, so you'd walk into a beautiful pirate ship, huge rooms, they're quite fresh in mind the first time I walked in, and you feel you've walked into a ship, there's a tunnel, a secret tunnel for the children to go through for their entrance into the learning part of the ship. There are books everywhere, so you see there's lovely shelves of books and the resources, such thoughtful resources all around the theme of pirates and nautical theme.* (LP Interview 1, Programme staff)

For children, being in **different places** was often interpreted as **an exciting break from normality**, especially when the different place offered larger spatial scales or more homely comforts than those available in classrooms:

> *So, then we can take in the big space and then literally there's going to be like a stage that we rehearse on to actually get like a proper practice at the place.* (PSC, Children's Focus Group 2)

> *I like the outdoor library because if, let's say, you're bored at playtime then you can just go in there. It's like a really comfy space, there's lots of pillows and there's benches and there's a whole cupboard full of books and it's really nice and the indoor library, it's decorated nice and it has lots of good books and that's why we enjoy it*. (GIR, Children's Focus Group 2)

Additionally, the children associated these changes in environments as enabling them to engage more positively with reading and writing:

> *I don't really read too much every night because like sometimes I don't read. It helped me because, as you might say, when we went to the Spotlight place, I was writing a lot, so I think it was because of the Gorsefield trip.* (MoS, Children's Focus Group)
> *I would definitely recommend this to my friends and family and anybody else who wants to do this because it really just boosts up your creativity and writing and learning.* (MoS, Children's Focus Groups)

The **environment also played a role in setting expectations** of the project being something different.

At times, the noticing of the environment as being different was remarked upon by adults as well as by children. For example, the unique pirate ship setting for Literacy Pirate settings was

seen as *'pretty cool'* by adults and helped to create a sense of excitement for volunteers (LP Visit 2 Interview 3, Practitioner). The children who attend Literacy Pirates were also aware of the unique layout of their space. For example, one child in a focus group setting proactively sought out the researcher's opinion on the space:

> *C: I thought you might ask if this place is made out of fantasy.*
> *I: Well, it's quite an exciting building.*
> *C: And plus, pirates are my favourite* (LP, Children's Focus Group 2)

The ways in which the places and spaces were designed shared positive and inspirational messages about the ways in which reading and writing was framed within projects:

> *So, the elements of that methodology is that firstly it's about creating inspiring spaces for learning to happen in, and that might be the culture or the type of relationship that young people with working with different adults, or it can be physical transformations of a space as well. So certainly, at Ministry we try and create that magic in the spaces that you're learning in to really inspire young people to want to learn. In school that's a bit more challenging. So it is about relationships and culture, as well as the physical space.* (MoS Interview 1)

> *The event has been organised as part of Science Week in the children's library which has been rearranged for the session.* (GIR Observation 1)

Doorstep Library inhabits spaces within the home and the **immediacy of that local environment** was considered to be impactful on the accessibility to books:

> *And it's in people's homes, it's very different, it's so accessible, here is a book in your hand, right here in your home, or online, and you can make a change.* (Teachers/Volunteers Focus Group)

Additionally, the delivery of Doorstep Library sessions **in the home space** provided volunteers with unique, holistic and rich understandings of the needs of the children, based on their involvement in the family setting (DSL interview). The COVID-19 pandemic created an interesting set of challenges for the programmes. Doorstep Library piloted various online provisions, which represented a significant departure from the focus on reading within the physical, domestic space. However, the pilot was found to have benefits and has led to the organisation creating an **online space** for shared readings.

4.5.3 Resources: Practical objects

'Practical objects' refers to items that are directly used within the project. This might include lesson plans for practitioners, a plastic stool, books given to children.

There was some overlap between the coding of *Practical objects* and *Artefacts*, so the decision was made to refer to *Artefacts* as those items that were outcomes of the project, whilst *Practical Objects* were designated as part of the ongoing delivery of the projects. This code was most frequently noted across all projects and through all data sources. Examples

referenced by projects and/or through documentation included, digital reading challenges, reading audits, maps and passports, book collections, book clubs/reading clubs. Doorstep Library, in particular, is defined by its travelling plastic stool and backpacks of books:

> *Volunteers work in pairs, carrying a backpack full of books and small stools to sit on. We have little plastic stools that we take out which volunteers use on doorsteps while the children use them, but the volunteers carry them, bring them along so that the children can sit on them on the doorsteps. Or sometimes when we are invited into a home even then the children really like them because it's kind of, their story stool. It sets up the scene.* (DSL Interview 1, Programme staff)

> *They're our story stools and they really symbolise good reading sessions and Doorstep Library coming round.* (DSL Interview 2, Programme staff)

In the Doorstep Library children's focus groups, children noted the presence of these stools as being part of the Doorstep Library experience, something that they had in common:

> *So, when the Doorstep Libraries come to our house, normally they go outside with these steps to sit on…: These stools. (DSL, Children's Focus Group)*

Books were also provided by the projects or donated to the project (as with DSL, WBD and GIR), and **book gifting and children selecting books** were all mentioned:

> *The library staff then come to the front and remind children they can join the library for free and come after school or at the weekend with friends and that there will be boxes of experiments they can borrow too. Children are given reading sparks bags with free books to take home.* (GIR Observation 1)

> *We also spent some of the money on making sure that we had a really good range of books, so we've got books with diversity of course, but also the types of books that we've got, comics, everything we can think of, poetry*. (Teachers/Volunteers Focus Group)

> *Schools will receive curated book collections that reflect local diversity, ensuring that children can identify with reading material and feel that it is relevant to their lives. These will be linked to the creation of reading for pleasure initiatives such as book clubs and reading maps/passports, providing opportunities for pupils to talk about their understanding and enjoyment of stories, sharing titles and broadening their viewpoints.* (GIR, Programme documentation)

> *We offer every child and young person – from 0 to 18 - the opportunity to discover the power of reading for pleasure by giving them the opportunity to have a book of their own.* (WBD, Programme documentation)

The use of book gifting as a strategy was expanded, in some instances, to include those connected to the children accessing programmes. So, the adults of children also received books as well as activities related to the books. This expansion meant that families could engage with each other over books and prompt activities:

> *I mean obviously the approach was also like a family reading approach. There was a book for the children, a book for the adults and then there were some activities around that and they were themed around interests. And so that seemed to be good, seemed to be positive.* (GIR Interview 2)

In addition, practical objects in the form of school-based resources for practitioners and parents were mentioned, and included lesson plans (written by teachers), Continuing Professional Development (CPD) resources and online resources through website access.

> The Charity will work collaboratively with each school to co-design a programme of work between the school and its writers. (MoS, Programme documentation)
> *We provide daily plans in literacy over 5 weeks to meet the year group learning objectives. We also provide full term plans for numeracy, science, art, DT. We're aware Ofsted framework does not encourage integrated learning, so we understand you have to be flexible with the provided planning.* (PSC Observation 1)

> *So definitely school resources to be used in school, but also, we're introducing a book club, which is about children understanding their own interaction and relationship to a book and developing their book checks. And we're also introducing something called Share a Story Corner, which is quite sweet. But essentially, it's about developing confidence with parents who've got very young children and don't really see the point of reading with them.* (WBD Interview 1, Programme staff)

The success of these practical objects and resources was dependent on how well the design of the objects seemed to understand the needs of children, teachers and practitioners. For instance, the teachers involved in PSC commented on the quality of documents on the PSC website and how **the documents seemed particularly suited to time-poor teachers**:

> *You can see the thought and intelligence behind it, the actual work that's gone into it… the way the lessons were plans and put on the website and we were able to access them… they were sequenced, lesson one, and then below that the resources for lesson one… those plans, because they were so well done, they were so easy to use.* (PSC Visit 2 Interview, Teacher)

There was also an interest in creating resources that were suitable in a wide range of settings and programmes sought to design resources that were accessible, but also flexible to needs:

> *So, I anticipate that if you target reluctant readers, most of these resources aren't going to be differentiated by input. Actually, they should work in a whole class scenario, but we might be inviting teachers to be specifically considering those children* (WBD, Interview 1, Programme staff).

Additionally, staff working with the programmes were keen to ensure that they had a robust overview of their resources and that they were suitable. This led to regular reviewing and revising of resources:

> The materials will initially be tested in a group of schools, providing WBD with feedback and learning that will allow the charity to develop them further. They will

then be tested more fully with a wider number of schools and education practitioners (WBD, programme documentation)

Projects also often mentioned their role in the **removal of economic barriers** that might impact on children's ability to engage with quality reading materials through the **provision of reading resources** to children and families:

> *Resources have become available to the school that we weren't necessarily able to afford and that has an immediate impact because we've been able to really think about the books that we're going to buy, really make sure that they're books that reflect our community, really make sure that they're chosen by children and that we've used children's voice to make sure that happens.* (Teachers/Volunteers Focus Group)

> *I mean it still completely flabbergasts me how many families just have no books at all, it's just not something that's in any way thought of as important or valued or seen as a source of pleasure and that, I think, is a massive thing, just to turn up with books and be passionate about books, or even online to be surrounded by books, and just show that passion and transmit that fun is a huge starting point and then the relationship comes I think.* (Teachers/Volunteers Focus Group)

> *We lend books to families as well, so they've got access to books in the home.* (DSL Interview 1, Programme staff)

4.5.4 Resources: Choice and interest

This code is used to refer to the ways in which choice and interest directly impacted on engagement with the project by either practitioners and/or children. This code was more likely to be referenced during the interviews where teachers and volunteers mentioned specifically the role of choice and interest within their projects, usually through a **wider discussion** about the practical objects provided by the programmes.

> *So I think if you came to us a year ago and we'd had this conversation, we'd probably have started with, the children are there in person and they get to choose the book that they want to read and that the choice of reading material was a really important part of that reading for pleasure, capital R, capital P, Reading for Pleasure, that they got to choose the stories and that it was at their pace and they could take the books home and they could stop if they wanted and change book and so forth.* (LP Interview 1, Programme staff)

> *So, we know that it's about, at a broad level it's about children choosing to read. Some level of volition of reading, some level of choice over what it is they're reading, and the point of the £1 books is that children have the opportunity to go and choose something that they want to read.* (WBD Interview 1, Programme staff)

Children noted that they enjoyed being able to **routinely access and choose** from a wide range of texts across several programmes, notably Literacy Pirates, Get Islington Reading and Doorstep Library:

> *They gave us like a booklet that said Reading Road Map on it and it was like a map and there was all like the different genres of the books so you could tick off the books and you could count how many you've done […] Yeah. There were a lot of books, I think 35.* (GIR Children's Focus Group 1)

> *And also there's like many, many books, like books for everyone, so there's even mystery books, there's like fantasy mystery books if that's what you like.* (GIR Children's Focus Group 2)

> *So, there's different books and there's a big library and you pick whatever books* (LP Children's Focus Group 2)

However, sometimes children's free choice was affected by the choices of others, with children having to **navigate sharing resources**:

> *My least favourite part of Hackney Pirates is sometimes when you go to the book corner, you want to pick one of the books, after someone comes bustling in and picks the books.* (LP Focus Group 2)

Being able to choose books for themselves not only seemed to increase their interest in reading, but also seemed to augment their **identity as readers**, with children taking pride in making and sharing their choices:

> *I think it's definitely given the children some ownership… that really elevated their status I think as readers.* (WBD visit interview, Teacher)

Although mostly children enjoyed having a choice of texts, some children noted that options were **not always appropriate to their needs and interests**, highlighting the need to consistently review reading lists and to keep pace with readers' interests and developments in children's literature:

> *Sometimes they bring the same books that I can sometimes read over and over again and sometimes I have to remind them that I've already read this book.* (DSL Children's Focus Group 2)

> *I wasn't really impressed with some of the selection this year, because of the fact that it just, some of them are like a primary school book still*. (GIR Children's Focus Group 2)

In addition, to children's choice over reading materials or book selection, projects had also included elements of **choice and agency within the reading and writing activities** of their programmes.

> *At the end of that session, they see their very own choice of words put into a song, which they then have to stand up and sing, and so they see the entire thing from birth to result and there's a performative element. So, they get a great feeling of their own*

> *agency by then singing the song which has the words that they have chosen themselves.* (Teachers/Volunteers Focus Group)

> *And the sorts of activities that you might do on World Book Day that might make something more different, so it might be instead of dressing up that you have a read aloud day where everybody just gets to choose and goes different routes, that kind of thing.* (WBD Interview 1)

Whilst reading and choice were mentioned more frequently, two projects that focus on writing (MoS and PSC) also mentioned the role of choice in writing:

> *Our project […] does largely happen in school hours' time. So, the idea of the writing for pleasure, I think we have to look at the motivation of those children that generally sit down and produce very little, but after our sessions they go back to the classroom and have a lot to say about the subject that they're discussing.* (PSC Interview 1)

Ministry of Stories also highlighted that, within activities, there was sufficient flexibility for children to choose to continue to write if sufficiently inspired (MoS, Observation visit 2).

4.5.5 Resources: Interaction

'Interaction' refers to the ways in which adults communicate with children and/or the way children communicate with each other in the course of reading and writing-focused activities.

There were multiple examples of interaction taking place across projects, either between the facilitator and the children and/or through the noted observations between children within the sessions. This code was most often recorded through the observations of projects, closely followed by what the volunteers and/or teachers said during the focus group discussions. As reflected in the code *Place, space and environment*, **engagement, and interaction with the places** where the projects took place was important:

> *And we'll do about 45 minutes of reading and each week they can pick a book that they like, there's a library at the ship and then we'll do reading out loud. It could be doing voices, acting and taking turn reading pages, for example, and then we'll move on to the creative writing part.* (Teachers/Volunteers Focus Group)

> *And a lot of them did say, because they'd chosen to come to the club, it was a voluntary thing, and a lot of them did say that they got to spend time with their friends. So that was important…. I think that social element of it was important and some of them wrote that, they did evaluations, and they wrote that, I got to sit next to my friend, and it was quiet, so it wasn't like we were just sitting around chatting, we were doing the project, but I think they felt a sense of enjoyment and relaxation in that setting.* (Teachers/Volunteers Focus Group)

This *Interaction* code also refers to the ways in which adults engaged with children. There are overlaps here with the code of 'Interactions' within the element 'Expectations'. However, the

subtle but critical difference is that *Interaction* in this element refers to the more **dynamic connection** and/or association with reading and writing:

> *We share the books with the children and we involve the parents and it's so nice to see them enjoying the books. It doesn't matter what level their reading is at, if they can't read the books that they want to read, then we'll read to them. It's a family of four boys and he's the first at the door wanting to choose his books and he reads to me more now, I used to read to him and now he joins in and is also choosing different books because his reading has developed and he can read a bit more now.* (Teachers/Volunteers Focus Group)

> *Then she reads her story aloud encouraging children to join in spontaneously, to come up with their own gestures and to finish her sentences. The children join in at different points with the song and the rhyme they have learned, one agrees to come to the front to take the part of one of the characters.* (GIR Observation 1)

> *[xxx] demonstrated highly personal positive human engagement with the children, she was interested in their ideas and genuine in her responses, sometimes using gestures, laughter and always direct eye contact, enthusiasm and praise about their writing throughout.* (MoS Observation 1)

> *I'm having lots more conversations with individual children about reading and what they like to read and they're coming and finding me and asking for books and requesting things. We've developed a really easy post-it note board with book recommendations. The kids just walk past it, write on it, put things up, so we've used that as a really quick way of getting children's ideas, but they have worked out that if they come and ask me for books they get them, so that's been a really, that's obviously been great.* (Teachers/Volunteers Focus Group)

A crucial aspect of these interactions is that they are **responsive to the needs of the children**, giving attention when a child wants it, but giving children space when they need that too (LP visit 2). Whatever the length or depth of these interactions, the adults focus on providing encouragement and appreciation of the children's efforts in reading and writing, **seeing them as accomplished readers and writers from the outset** (LP visit 2). Moreover, the practitioners involved in Ministry of Stories commented on the value of **genuine interactions with and interest in children:**

> *I try my best to get on the level with whoever's on the table with me… I mean patronising is one of the things I always think about a lot, like don't patronise kids because it's very easy for us as adults to do.* (MoS Visit 2, Practitioner)

> *[xxx] demonstrated highly personal positive human engagement with the YP, she was interested in their ideas and genuine in her responses.* (MoS Observation 2)

Interactions also focused on creating **safe opportunities for children to be creative**, with practitioners modelling making contributions, encouraging contributions and reassuring children that their contributions would be accepted:

> *She reassured the young people that it did not need to make sense and encouraged them to be wild.* (MoS Observation 2)

All the while, though, there was a **respectful acceptance when children were unsure** about or reluctant to contribute, recognising that sometimes children are not always able to engage due to shyness, emerging ideas or simply tiredness (MoS Observation 2).
The ways in which projects enabled **children to engage with each other in positive ways** where reading and/or writing was the focus of the interaction were also noted:

> *Something that's really nice is when you see other children encouraging children. […] I think there's always some ambassadors within your class that can work quite well as encouragers.* (Teachers/Volunteers Focus Group)

> *Children read their writing aloud – they read together and talk of 'making sense of the writing together'. They correct as they go, and the crew mate says 'What do I need to do here?' There is a sense of shared ownership in the writing.* (LP Observation 1)

Similarly, this code highlighted how children understood their peers as part of each other's reading experiences, recognising that reading can be a shared experience, such as when free reading takes place within a Literacy Pirates sessions: in this part of the session children can talk to each other, exchange books and move around (LP Observation 2)

Interaction was also referenced through the **modelling of positive reading and writing behaviours**:

> *I think you also just get to model being excited about reading and that bleeds into not just that child but the little child who hasn't started reading yet and the family and you show how easy it is to pick up a book and just have fun.* (Teachers/Volunteers Focus Group)

> *I had so many more children happy to read their writing out and so many more children proud of what they'd done because I think they'd been able to talk through it with some people they felt comfortable with and when you don't have extra adults, I think there's always some ambassadors within your class that can work quite well as encouragers.* (Teachers/Volunteers Focus Group)

4.5.6 Resources: Signposting, selecting and transforming

'Signposting, selecting and transforming' refers to instances where additional information was either given or suggested by practitioners. The flagging of additional and/or supporting services, including community groups and/or library services.

This code was more likely to be mentioned in the interviews with programme staff. There were fewer examples of this code in the focus group discussions and in the visits to projects. Get Islington Reading and Doorstep Library were the projects that talked the most about the importance of developing partnerships and signposting to other existing organisations or structures:

So, with libraries the Reading Agency are thinking about how to possibly replicate some of the services that previously existed but in a slightly different way for now. (Teachers/Volunteers Focus Group)

It's really important that we're signposting to what's already there because it's about working within that community and making sure that there are links between the groups that we're working with. (GIR Interview 1, Programme staff)

We have a website. There's a website which signposts any activity that's coming up, and resources that might be helpful. We tend to signpost things that we've mentioned explicitly during teacher twilights. (GIR Interview 1, Programme staff)

But we know that for us the books are just a small part of that so we signpost them to other services, we want them to feel like they're connected together with the community as well. (DSL Interview 1, Programme staff)

We provide resources for parents in terms of read around, here's some other things on that subject, here's some places to go, here's some things to do. (PSC Interview 1)
So, if there's brilliant things happening in the libraries we want to make sure that the schools know about it. (GIR Interview 1)

The process of **signposting was often strategic**, with programmes using knowledge of local services and local families to ensure that information was provided that was useful. Even though this signposting was strategic, it played a vital role in contributing to **developing supportive relationships with families**:

There was structured signposting to share with all families – a guide re vouchers from world book day last week, and a sheet regarding mental health day (DSL Interview 1, Programme staff)

And we give out regular signposting to parents, so local services, activities, what's on offer in the local area, trying to forge those connections with our families in whatever community. (DSL Interview 2, Programme staff)

However, the process of signposting also involved personal recommendations, such as Doorstep Library volunteers passing on book recommendations to children (DSL interview) or by experts involved in World Book Day flagging up CLPE resources (WBD visit interview). The **signposting of resources to families** became an important part of Doorstep Library's activities during the early stage of the COVID-19 pandemic, using newsletters to not only practically share activities but also to keep in touch, so as to **maintain relationships** already developed (DSL interview 2).

The *Transforming* element of the code was most widely referenced in the context of the ways in which reading and/or writing activities led to **positive changes in behaviour** and/or r**elationships around or with reading and writing**.

> Throughout the lifetime of the project, we will also deliver a range of events which will: Link teaching and public library staff to promote reading across settings. Support the links between primary and secondary schools and the transition process. Involve parents and families with reading activities promoting inter-generational reading. (GIR Programme documentation)

Such transformations often involved teachers working with 'experts' or practitioners who had unique insights into an element of reading or writing that a teacher then felt emboldened to share with a school's senior leadership teams (WBD Visit Interview, Teacher).

> *I think my dialogues with [xxx] have empowered me, so she's given me things that I can then go and use. She was the person that turned me onto the CLPE for example last year, and now we've bought into that entire scheme as a school. So even though that's not maybe a direct World Book Day reading for pleasure, it's called the Power of Reading. It has broadened our understanding of reading for pleasure throughout every aspect of the curriculum* (WBD, Teacher interview).

4.5.7 Synthesis of the code 'Resources'

All the programmes incorporated resources, these fell into two different categories, tangible and intangible, reflecting the various ways resources are used. Across the programmes it was evident that the range of resources led to **positive changes in behaviour** around reading and writing. All projects tailored their reading and writing offer around the resources, which included books and texts, the creation of child-led outputs, supporting materials for practitioners and resources and physical resources including reading stools and pirate ships. The main feature of the resources was that they were accessible and played a role in motivating young readers and writers.

Books and texts within programmes, were either bought to supplement engagement with reading and/or used as a thread within the programme. Books and texts were felt to lead to positive **relationships around or with reading and writing** and by providing them it was felt that it led to the **removal of economic barriers**. The positive impact of books and texts was framed around **book choice**, which in turn led to children making their own **choices within the connected reading and writing activities**. Books were tailored to children's choices, leading to talk, discussion and dialogue. Books and texts also played a role in firing imaginations and by encouraging children's reading choices they were perceived to develop the young people's confidence in reading and writing.

The **environment was important to all projects.** Programmes considered the physical role of the environment, with some projects inviting children into specially designed reading spaces, for example, Literacy Pirates and Ministry of Stories. Other projects took the environment to the children, Primary Shakespeare Company provided immersive drama environment, whilst Doorstep Library removed access barriers to reading by taking books into homes. Both Get Islington Reading and World Book Day operated at the more macro level through reading programmes that connect to children's home, public library and school environments. The **environment also played a role in setting expectations** and projects had considered how children would **engage and interact with those places.**

Volunteers were also a key resource across programmes with the **modelling of positive behaviours** considered a crucial role. Programmes variously involved professional writers, reading ambassadors, authors, poets, storytellers or narrators. There was also the signposting within programmes to different organisations including literacy organisations, public libraries, the Schools Library Service, theatre groups, community groups, and companies of actors. The way the volunteers **interacted** led to **dynamic connections** between adults and this in turn encouraged peer to peer interactions.

Crucial to a number of programmes was the role of artefacts, which became part of the legacy of many, including Ministry of Stories, Literacy Pirates, and Primary Shakespeare Company. All spoke of the **high production values of the published outputs** and the importance of creating appropriate time and space for **child-led artefacts.** For all programmes this **celebration of children's work** was considered fundamental in **demonstrating the young people's engagement with reading and writing**.

4.6 The programmes' organisational characteristics

During the process of analysing the data from the six programmes, common organisational characteristics were identified. These characteristics **underpin the organisations' holistic approach and shared values focused upon nurturing children's enjoyment and engagement in reading and writing**. The characteristics deserve attention and recognition. In relation to the activity system elements, the characteristics connected across and expanded beyond the four elements. This connectivity indicates how the elements of expectations, roles, community and resources both contribute to the approaches of organisations and are informed by the ethos of these organisations.

Four key aspects played a crucial role in the embedded values of each of the programmes: **nurturing partnerships; valuing diverse perspectives; seeking to improve; attending to legacy.**

Through their engagement with practitioners both in and out-of-school settings, programmes were engaged in reciprocal interactions designed to nurture, deepen and sustain partnerships. Such relationships hinged upon a commitment to capturing a range of diverse perspectives and voices and valuing the contributions of all stakeholders. This breadth of perspectives supported the programmes' commitment to ongoing improvement, both in their direct work with children and practitioners and in the ways in which they evaluated and reflected through formal and informal evaluations. Moreover, by operating in local community spaces, programmes were keen to attend to the legacy of their activities, and mindful of how they could create a lasting beneficial impact in relation to developing children as individual readers and writers.

We consider **these organisational characteristics to be pivotal in enabling and supporting the programmes in the delivery of their work.** However, within the academic research literature there is an absence of studies related to literacy charities' structural features. Accordingly, we have provided an overview of these enabling characteristics separately, here.

4.6.1 Nurturing partnerships

Cultivating relationships was an important and reciprocal element in developing **programmes' understanding of local and individual needs.** By working at a community level, programmes understood the specific context of their stakeholders and often sought out partnership level relationships to enhance their programme offer. In addition, the ability to tailor interactions and/or resources to local need created interest in the work, this often attracted the attention of locally based volunteers and their employers. When working collaboratively with partner organisations, programmes demonstrate an open ethos, seeking to listen to stakeholders' views to understand programme interaction and build forwards. This listening stance and commitment ensures that the organisations are both trusted and valued as active partners sharing the common goal of developing young people's pleasurable engagement as agentic readers and writers.

4.6.2 Valuing diverse perspectives

Supporting diversity through experience – with a range of people, trying a range of activities, hearing new ideas – was identified as important by all programmes, in seeking to ensure that no one face, or voice, dominates approaches and or perspectives. Valuing diverse perspectives involved seeking and including the voices of various stakeholders in expansive monitoring and evaluation activities and more. **A range of perspectives and voices were embedded in activities**, as a springboard for further interaction and development. Each programme's consultative approach to programme design also extended to **positioning individuals as the 'more knowledgeable other'** – in some cases this was the child, for instance by enabling them to share which types of books or writing they wanted to engage with. Volunteers were encouraged to share their own experiences of reading and writing to support children's understanding of what it takes to become an experienced reader and writer. Similarly, creatives were encouraged to utilise their unique skills, approaches and expertise so that teachers and children could experience literacy through a different lens. Programmes were mindful of where expertise and proficiency lay and found ways to harness these skills. For example, some practitioners involved with previous cohorts were invited to design and author resources for others, whilst others were invited to talk to new practitioners as part of training sessions/days.

4.6.3 Seeking to improve

Most programmes were adamant that they embraced a position **outside of and different to school assessment criteria** and created non-**judgmental spaces to foster enjoyment** for participating children, teachers and families. As learning organisations, they each used different tools to understand the value of their work – informally through ongoing interaction, and more formally such as through programme evaluations, surveys or audits, that in many cases now include seeking children's perspectives. Additionally, programmes regularly and consistently reflect on the appropriacy and efficacy of their training for volunteers and used review groups and annual appraisals of the impact of their programmes. The programmes

were felt to be in a **constant state of evolution and committed to improving, refining and developing** the ways in which they engaged with different levels of stakeholders. These activities were firmly rooted in ensuring that children were the key beneficiaries of the programmes, with the quality of the interactions between adults and/with children viewed as crucial to their success.

4.6.4 Attending to legacy

Programmes were keen that their interactions should have some **legacy or lasting impact**. Those involved **shared a commitment to developing children's attitudes and pleasurable engagement in literacy,** and many saw this as a core value, every child's right and a matter of social justice. There was also an impact on those who took part in the programmes to the mutual benefit of all involved. For volunteers there was a sense of community engagement, a desire to redress inequities and to give back to their local communities. For the creatives involved in some programmes there were other benefits in terms of sharing the love of their craft and seeking to instil that in the children, and in some cases, other practitioners. For a few of the programmes, having a performance or creating a tangible output like a published book or film, in itself created a legacy. This benefited the current cohort and served as an invitation to new cohorts. All programmes intended that their approaches would lead to lasting change in the ways children and adults viewed writing and reading.

4.7 Summary of the data

The data illustrated how the organisations involved in the Special Initiative all made use of the four elements of **'expectations'**, **'community'**, **'roles'** and **'resources'** to navigate the delivery of their programmes. Underpinning these four elements was a concern with **developing understandings of needs**, at the level of the individual and at the level of a community. Doing so, created the foundations upon which programmes could provide **responsive interactions and tailored support to the needs of individuals**, thereby **establishing genuine connections with the young people** and the communities of which they are a part.

Establishing connections pivoted around **creating, sharing and consistently reflecting upon expectations,** whether with staff, teachers, volunteers or children, regarding how programmes would operate and the core values of programmes. The various individuals involved in programmes, whether as providers or recipients of the activities, commented on the reliability and trust that was cultivated through shared expectations. These expectations related to creating and providing positive experiences of reading / writing for the young people and children, by ensuring i**nteractions were non-judgmental, nurturing and kind**. These respectful and often playful interactions consistently offered children agency over their reading and writing choices from within a reliable 'safe space', where they could have a go and make mistakes free from judgments.

The success of creating, sharing and establishing expectations was dependent on **working with a wide range of individuals from across a community,** whether parents, teachers, librarians, volunteers or other members of the local community. This diversity provided the

programmes with a committed and talented group of individuals who brought a unique range of skills and insights to the programmes. The programmes consistently **respected the contributions members of the community made to the programmes,** recognising that by doing so they were better able to understand the needs of the individuals and the communities that they were working with.

Working within and with communities helped programme leads to carry out key roles related to the management of programmes. Analysis of the data identified the importance assigned to the recruiting and training staff, volunteers and practitioners. Illustrating the programmes' consistent commitment to constructing shared values, **this process of recruitment and training was rigorous, but also respectful.** The programmes recognised the need to recruit appropriate individuals, and to provide responsive training, but also **valued the unique experiences individuals brought to the programme**s. Indeed, data related to the programmes frequently drew attention to supporting adults and their roles within the programmes. **Supporting adults were consistently presented as enacting the core values of programmes** through the way in which they interacted with children and young children. These interactions hinged upon **positive, respectful and trusting relationships, where children were listened to and responded to according to individual needs and interests.**

Developing a clear understanding of needs enabled the programmes to provide responsive support in the form of appropriate resources. These resources were identified as both tangible and intangible. All programmes provided tailored reading and writing materials, as well as tailored activities, based on an understanding of need. Indeed, a pivotal aspect of the data related to resources was that of choice. The programmes recognised that **children needed variety and the ability to make decisions related to this variety**, whether regarding where they read or what they read or chose to write. The data consistently drew attention to how **children were able to express their interests and have their interests honoured** so as to enable positive engagements with reading and writing activities.

Looking across the programmes and how they engaged with the aforementioned elements, the data evidenced **four key organisational characteristics which shaped the approaches and methodologies used by the programmes**. These four characteristics, referred to as '**nurturing partnerships**', '**valuing diverse perspectives**', '**seeking to improve**' and '**attending to legacy**', underpinned the organisations' holistic and relational approach towards nurturing children's enjoyment and engagement in reading and writing. Reflecting the programmes commitments to working with and building communities, **the programmes focused on nurturing reciprocal and respectful partnerships with a wide range of contacts**. This emphasis on building community connections was based on **an ethos that values the diverse perspectives of those already working with children and young people and those working in the community**. The programmes recognise that they can learn from these partnerships and the diverse perspectives individuals offer. Indeed, in recognising what they can learn from others, the programmes consistently position themselves – both when working with internal staff and when working externally with partners, volunteers and children – as **learning programmes**. They **consistently strived to develop their own understandings** and, in so doing, they were **continually seeking to improve what they offered** to the children and young people. The programmes were motivated to do so by their belief that offering meaningful and enjoyable reading and writing experiences to children and young people would **leave a legacy or lasting impact.** This attention to legacy was concerned with ensuring that children and young people

were given opportunities to develop their attitudes towards and engagement with literacy over the long-term. Moreover, by connecting with the community, by working with parents, teachers, practitioners, volunteers, librarians and many more, the programmes were able to build up and create new connections, existing beyond the initial activities provided by the programmes.

5 Reading and Writing for Pleasure: A Framework for Practice

Children and young people's enjoyment in reading and writing is declining; UK and international studies indicate considerable cause for concern (Clark, Lant and Riad, 2022; Mullis, 2023). Yet research reveals that the habit of reading in childhood is associated with academic, social and emotional outcomes and can mitigate educational disadvantages associated with gender and socio-economic status (OECD, 2021; Torppa et al., 2020). Writing research also evidences strong associations between motivation, self-efficacy and writing performance (Graham, 2017). Additionally, reading and writing for pleasure are valuable in their own right. They play a pivotal role in supporting all children's learning and development, particularly the less advantaged. Young people's volitional reading and writing matter.

Commissioned by the Mercers' Company as part of their Special Initiative on Reading and Writing for Pleasure (2020-2023), the Framework for Practice developed by The Open University (OU) draws together insights from the international research literature in these areas, and data from six London-based literacy programmes. These were led by Doorstep Library, Literacy Pirates, Ministry of Stories, Primary Shakespeare Company, World Book Day, and the National Literacy Trust together with The Reading Agency, who jointly led 'Get Islington Reading'. Within the Special Initiative, all the organisations worked on their specific programmes aimed at enriching young people's pleasure in reading and /or writing, mainly with primary aged children. Despite the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic, these organisations offered a rich range of literacy programmes on doorsteps, in homes, schools, local libraries, outdoor centres, their own premises and on websites, and always in collaboration with others.

5.1 The process

The Mercers' Company Special Initiative sought to establish:

> *The approaches that seem to be effective in inspiring and encouraging children and young people to read and/or write for pleasure.*

The creation of the Reading and Writing for Pleasure Framework involved drawing together insights from existing research literature and from data collected throughout the Special Initiative, as is detailed in Figure 11.

The OU team systematically reviewed the existing research literatures on reading and writing for pleasure (R and WfP) separately, and then identified themes within, and synergies across, these reviews in relation to effective approaches for 5-13 year olds. Whilst acknowledging the term writing for pleasure is rarely used in policy, practice or research, the OU team framed it as 'volitional writing', which, in line with notions of reading for pleasure, is seen to be driven by an individual's own goals and interests, often including social ones, in anticipation of some kind of satisfaction.

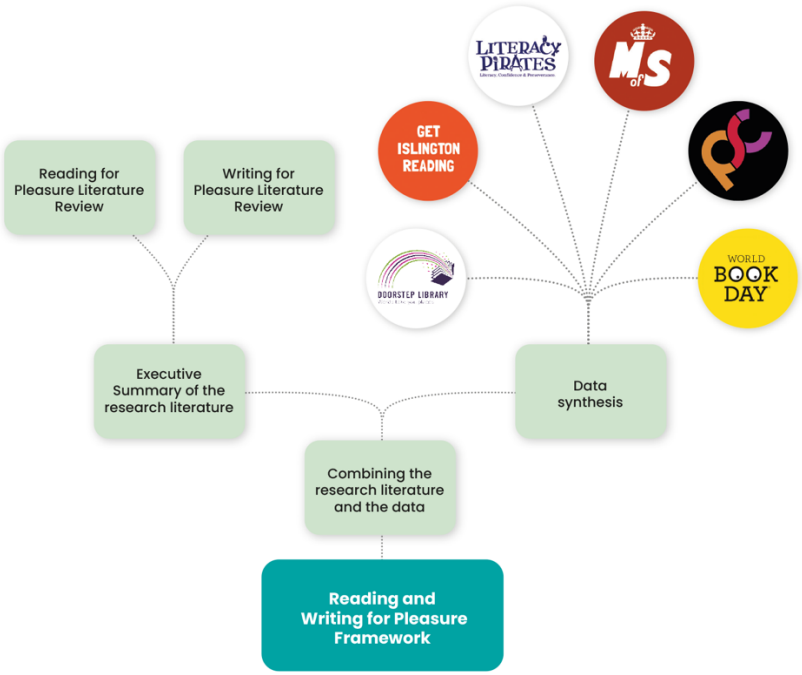

Figure 11. Overview of the process used for the Special Initiative

To understand the approaches used by the unique programmes that were involved in the Special Initiative, a range of data collection methods were used, including interviews, focus groups (with adults and young people), documentation gathering, cross programme meetings and observations of the diverse activities offered. In recognition of the complexity of the programmes, the data analysis was underpinned by concepts from Activity Theory (Engestrom, 2001; 2014), this led to the identification of both unique and shared ways of working across the programmes. These insights were cross-referenced with those gained from the literature reviews. Commonalities in approaches, identified in both the research literature and the programme data led to the creation of this practice-focused Reading and Writing for Pleasure Framework.

The programmes in the Special Initiative differed in many ways, for instance, Ministry of Stories and Primary Shakespeare Company worked in primary schools, Get Islington Reading in local libraries and KS2/3 school contexts, Literacy Pirates in their own centre, Doorstep Library in children's homes and World Book Day both online and in the schools involved in trialling resources for production. Across the programmes, volunteers, public and school librarians, teachers, creative partners and parents were involved, as well as staff from the organisations. In contrast, research into approaches that motivate children to R and WfP has predominantly been undertaken in 'traditional' classrooms.

Common features of practice were able to be identified across the six programmes, albeit some were evidenced unevenly. Each of the programmes used different tools to understand their efficacy in nurturing R and WfP. Whilst this was not the focus of the work, the data analysis indicates that all programmes impacted positively on children as readers and/or writers.

5.2 A Framework for Practice

Figure 12. A diagram of the Reading and Writing for Pleasure Framework for Practice

The Framework provides a research-informed basis for developing practice that nurtures young people's R and WfP. It includes the programmes' shared values and organisational characteristics that shape and support such work. These enabling features underpin their approaches to nurturing children's enjoyment and engagement as readers and writers and deserve recognition.

The R and WfP Framework indicates that a rich combination of individually and socially oriented approaches is optimal, mediated through the responsive involvement of adults. It highlights the child-led autonomy-focused nature of this work, and the ways that relaxed interactions around texts forge social and relational connections of value between readers and/or writers. To enable this dynamic combination to function successfully, text access and dedicated time and space are essential. The three layers of the Framework are now described.

5.2.1 Shared values

The programmes coalesce around their shared values and intent to nurture R and WfP, however this is far more than a common aim. Programme staff hold expansive understandings

of reading and writing; they recognise the importance of children's affective, creative and social engagement as readers and writers. Their conceptions, often linked to addressing disadvantage, are not limited by 'schooled' versions of reading and writing and they work to facilitate positive literacy experiences that develop young people's sense of identity as readers and/or writers. Significantly, the research literature shows that children's literate identities play a key role in their wider sense of self, and their motivation and desire to read or write for pleasure.

5.2.2 Organisational Characteristics

Four facilitating features underpin the programmes' approaches to developing young people's positive engagement as readers and writers. These include working to build partnerships, valuing everyone's perspective, and constantly seeking to enhance their offer and its legacy.

Nurturing partnerships

The organisations work to understand the specific local context and individual needs of their stakeholders. Demonstrating an open ethos, they tailor interactions and/or resources in response, and work collaboratively with partners with whom they build mutually beneficial relationships. Their listening stance and commitment ensure that they are trusted and valued by others as organisational allies who share the goal of developing young people's agentic engagement and pleasure in reading and writing.

Valuing diverse perspectives

The organisations draw on a range of voices through monitoring, evaluating, adapting and delivering activities. A consultative approach to programme design is taken, including finding ways to listen to and be led by young people. The expertise and skills of different members is recognised and capitalised upon. During programme delivery, a genuine dialogue about adults' diverse experiences as readers and writers is encouraged to support and motivate children and the expertise of creatives is harnessed.

Seeking to improve

These learning organisations continually seek to improve their programmes, variously using feedback from informal interaction, session notes, structured evaluations, surveys, audits and stakeholder review meetings. They plan an ongoing cycle of monitoring and refining their work that focuses on its impact on young people and contributes to developments in training volunteers. These activities help to ensure high quality interactions between adults and children linked to the programme aims of fostering enjoyment in R and WfP outside of school assessment criteria.

Attending to legacy

The organisations' values underpin their work on making a lasting impact. The adults involved are committed to developing children's attitudes to and pleasurable engagement in literacy, many see this as every child's right. Volunteers voice a sense of communal engagement, a desire to give back to their communities and redress inequalities. Creatives share a love of their craft and seek to instil this in children and in some cases practitioners. Published anthologies, films, author events and performances create other forms of legacy, alongside support for families. The organisations' approaches aim to lead to lasting change in the ways children, teachers', parents', or others' view and experience R and WfP.

5.2.3 Texts and time

Both the research literature and evidence from the programmes show that accessing texts and having time and space to engage with them are key to R and WfP. The importance of providing myriad opportunities for children to choose from a rich range of diverse texts is clear. This might include regular sharing, browsing, recommending, gifting, and lending texts as well as enabling text ownership. Children are more motivated when the texts available are culturally relevant and connected to their lives and interests.

When time is set aside - at home, in school, in a library, or as part of wider community events - and opportunities are offered to 'just' read and write, children are enabled to exercise their agency and make choices. They begin to expect, depend upon and look forward to this time which benefits from a carefully curated balance of familiar routine and flexibility, accommodating both extended periods of quiet, immersed engagement in reading and composing texts, and vibrant interactions with others about these.

The combined findings also point to the value of physically inviting and relationally informal environments which are often learner shaped and owned. Environments that are perceived to be safe, social, and non-judgemental, support young people to take risks as writers and to engage more deeply as readers, alone and through interaction with others.

5.2.4 Individually oriented approaches

Individually oriented approaches are a key feature evident in the research literature and the programmes examined, they comprise three strands, developing knowledge of the young people, and nurturing their autonomy and self-efficacy as readers and writers. These strands emphasise the volitional nature of R and WfP.

Adult foregrounding of the voices of children and young people and seeking to understand their unique interests, lives, and literate identities is evident in both the research and the work of the programmes. This knowledge is developed through prioritising adult child relationships and interactions, and offering opportunities that enable children to share something of themselves and their own personal, cultural, and literary experiences. When their views about R and WfP practices are sought, heard, respected, and most significantly, acted upon, this widens children's rights as readers and writers and enhances their involvement.

Nurturing young people's agency and autonomy as readers and writers is motivating and supports the development of positive literacy identities. Both the programmes and the research literature show that child-led text choice and access to personally relevant reading material that responds to individual and collective interests is vital. Enabling the young to discriminate and choose as readers also matters. Young writers too are motivated by being supported to exercise their authorial agency, write for personal and real-world purposes, experience the use and value of writing, and draw upon their lives and text experiences to express themselves.

Fostering young people's sense of self-efficacy and assurance as readers and writers is seen to be critical. Mutually reinforcing relationships exist between competence and motivation, and both the research and the programmes show that supportive environments, constructive feedback, and responsively structured, yet informal R and WfP opportunities can foster children's sense of self-efficacy as readers and writers. Drawing on personalised understandings of individual learners, adults build their confidence in one-to-one and group conversations and persistently celebrate their contributions, imaginative engagement and other successes.

5.2.5 Responsive adult involvement

Attuned and responsive adult involvement mediates and motivates young people's engagement as readers and writers, individually and collectively. Educators nurture connections and relatedness, engage affectively and show through their behaviour that they are interested in and appreciate the young people's perspectives. Their involvement can include support for text selection, affirmative feedback and guidance when encountering challenges, and the tailored provision of opportunities for children to be inspired by books read aloud, by recommendations, and by participation in informal interchanges around texts -written or read. Space may also be offered to consider the experience of being a reader/writer.

5.2.6 Socially oriented approaches

Socially oriented approaches to R and WfP are at the heart of the programmes' practice and are extensively evidenced in the research reviewed. These are facilitated by responsive adult involvement, and underpinned by social interaction, relatedness, and role modelling. They can enable the development of connected communities of readers and writers.

Social interactions around reading and writing that value children's interests and views and foster relational connections enable them to feel recognised and accepted as readers and writers. This can be intensely satisfying and motivate R and WfP. Studies indicate, and the programmes evidence, that non-hierarchical, trusting relationships influence and can even undo young people's assumptions or negative attitudes towards reading and writing. Such relationships are facilitated by conversational exchanges and spontaneous interactions around texts that are being written and read. Often, these are centred around young people's ideas and led by them, enabling individuals to make choices about how they participate and their reading and writing foci. Informal peer support, playful activities, and

reassuring structures around R and WfP that prioritise equality of participation and develop mutual respect, set the foundation for such interaction.

Adult role models demonstrate their personal engagement as readers and writers and thus encourage young people to R and WfP. The research and the programmes indicate that some adults share their experiences to enhance the authenticity, real-world relevance and pleasure to be found in R and WfP. Positioned as fellow readers and writers, these adults voice their personal and emotional response to texts, write alongside children and express their own compositional challenges and satisfactions. They invite the young people to do the same and sensitively build on their responses.

The creation of connected communities of readers and writers shape young people's literate identities and their desire to engage in R and WfP**.** Strongly evidenced in the programmes and increasingly documented in research, these connect children and their families, educators, school and public librarians, volunteers, authors, professional writers and other creative partners in diverse clusters and affinity groups. Operating in different spaces, offline and on, such connected communities not only widen young people's R and WfP networks, but can increase awareness of the communal, collective and relational experience of being a reader/writer.

5.2.7 Recommendations and implications

Reading and writing for pleasure urgently require a higher profile in education to raise both attainment and achievement and increase children's engagement as motivated and socially engaged readers and writers.

The R and WfP Framework, developed from the Special Initiative funded by the Mercers' Company (2020-2023), offers a strongly research-informed basis for practice in all contexts where the aim is to develop young people's R and WfP - these include homes, schools, public and school libraries, online literacy spaces and local communities.

The Framework reveals that effective approaches for nurturing R and WfP are framed by expansive understandings of literacy, which recognise young people as readers and writers and focus on them personally. The values-driven programmes in the Special Initiative, whose work is not defined by curriculum expectations, clearly evidence this egalitarian emphasis on children as experts, and respect their views, ideas and rights as readers and writers.

Access to diverse, relevant texts and dedicated time underpin these optimal individually and socially oriented approaches to R and WfP which are mediated through responsive adult involvement. Individually, in the sense that they are learner-centred, autonomy-focused and sensitive to young people's own interests, literate identities and wider cultural practices. Socially, in the sense that they include rich opportunities for informal interaction around texts that are inclusive, non-hierarchical, involve adult role models, and the creation of affirmative relational connections and communities of readers and writers. These approaches reflect relational pedagogy in action.

Literacy organisations and schools, teachers, student teachers and librarians can make use of the R and WfP Framework to affirm and celebrate, question and challenge their practice, and

in the light of this, identify priorities for development. Additionally, the Framework offers an opportunity to develop a shared vocabulary with volunteers, partners, stakeholders, funders, governors and trustees and to demonstrate to these and other colleagues, the value of current practice and the potential for enrichment and increased impact on young people as readers and writers.

It is recommended that within and across organisations committed to enriching R and WfP, all the adults involved are supported to:

1. Review their practice to develop positive literate identities for all children, consider their long term aims and the partnerships that could support these.
2. Widen their conceptions of literacy and what it means to be a reader and writer in the 21st century.
3. Ensure that young people have access to a rich choice of texts and dedicated time and space to read and write primarily for enjoyment.
4. Invite and respond to young people's views about R and WfP, developing their agency and supporting their self-efficacy as readers and writers.
5. Embed opportunities for relaxed and supportive social interaction around R and WfP, and authentically model their own pleasurable engagement and challenges.
6. Develop nurturing relational practices that construct connected communities of readers and writers.

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