

No ambling at Ambleside

Ambleside Primary School in Nottingham are the deserved winners of the Reading Champions School of the Year 2009/10 competition for a second year. Jantine Nusselder, Literacy Aspect Manager and class teacher, explains how the school has fully embraced the Reading Champions ethos and how the pupils take ownership of Reading Champions activities.

This year has been all about getting the pupils involved in the running and publicity of Reading Champions activities at Ambleside as much as possible. Our Reading Champions were very excited to be invited by our local councillors to the Council House to do a presentation about our Reading Champions project. We all worked hard on putting a presentation together explaining all the projects and activities the Reading Champions have been

involved in. The councillors were so impressed with all our work that we were awarded £1,000 to spend on reading materials for our school. Our Reading Champions team was also nominated for a GEM Award (Going the Extra Mile) and came runners up. The boys proudly showed off their trophy at school. Visiting the Council House boosted the Reading Champions' confidence and made them feel important and getting a nomination for the GEM Award heightened their interest in Reading Champions.



The boys spend their winnings at Waterstones

The Chris Ryan "Operation Read" competition was a real hit with many of our year four pupils and was a great way to get more boys interested in becoming a Reading Champion. The Reading Champions set up a swap box, which is now a regular weekly occurrence in the school playground. Pupils can bring a book to school that they no longer want and swap it with someone else. Jordan, a Reading Champion, enjoyed helping to organise the swap box. His mother wrote, "It gave him a sense of achievement. He has put extra effort into reading harder books. All the children look so proud when stood in line. It's given Jordan a sense to push himself a little further."

At Ambleside we are always keen to involve parents with reading and this year we particularly wanted to get male members of the pupils' families involved to raise their profile as male reading role models. So for World Book Day we held a "Bring a Man to School Day". Pupils brought their dad, uncle,

granddad or brother along with their favourite book. We had 21 men attending the event. Throughout the day, when the “reading alarm” sounded, everybody dropped what they were doing and read.



Reading with the literacy volunteer

Furthermore, we are lucky to have recruited a male literacy volunteer this year. He comes into the school for one afternoon each week and reads with boys on a one-to-one basis. He has a box of wonderful reading resources and the boys receive some quality reading time, which they love.

This year we have created lots of opportunities to help the Reading Champions to work towards their Reading Champion awards.

Three members of staff were involved in organising our Reading Champion Academy.

This gives Reading Champions the opportunity

to take part in lots of different activities and achieve the bronze, silver and gold awards. These activities include: designing new reading diaries; making reading games; designing PowerPoint presentations and posters; encouraging peers to read; reading with children in KS1; translating books into Polish for our Polish pupils and creating certificates for achievements in reading. Our local policemen have also attended these afternoons to offer support and are very effective positive male role models.

The Academy has been hugely popular and gives pupils the confidence and the skills to run projects independently; organise their teams, delegate tasks, put together resources and solve problems. They feel important when reading to younger children. Other pupils take more of an interest in reading when given a reading diary designed by the Reading Champions. Regular book competitions, organised by the Reading Champions, raise the profile of reading and encourage other pupils to become Reading Champions too. Importantly, this scheme has had an impact on the more reluctant and less confident readers who are now enjoying the opportunity of reading with younger pupils in school.

The impact our Reading Champions activities have had on the pupils this year has been superb. There has been an increased interest in books and libraries. All pupils now visit the library every half term. Parental involvement has been an important factor this year. It has boosted the parents' and carers' own confidence in reading and given them more skills to read with their children at home.

Parents of Reading Champions have really noticed a difference in their children. In a feedback questionnaire one mum wrote, “Becoming a Reading Champion has made Tyese a lot more interested in books. He has been going to the library and taking books out by himself. I have also noticed his reading has progressed”. Another commented, “For my 10 year old daughter, becoming a Reading Champion has had such a positive effect... to all aspects of her education. She really did not enjoy reading at all, until she became a Reading Champion”.

Feedback from the Reading Champions also reflects the enthusiasm we see on the ground. One Reading Champion summed up why he thinks it is important for the school to have Reading Champions: "If we didn't have Reading Champions, no one would enjoy reading". Another wrote that "becoming a Reading Champion has made me realise how important reading is". We have over 60 pupils with who have gained their bronze Reading Champions certificate and 13 their silver.

It is feedback like this that shows us how successful our Reading Champions project has been at Ambleside and how important it is we continue developing fantastic activities.