

Wood Green High School, Wednesbury

Lin Guest at Wood Green High School, Wednesbury describes their Reading Champions project.

Literacy has been a strong focus at Wood Green for several years. We have developed several strategies to ensure that boys see reading as ungendered. As a sports college, we often use sports as a way to install a love reading. The National Literacy Trust's champions read posters, featuring sports personalities, are prominently displayed in the sports halls. We have a sports wall in the library and we have increased the stock of sports fiction (both male and female) as well as boy's favourites, such as graphic novels, biographies and Warhammer. Also, our male reading role models take assemblies to promote reading.



We run a variety of small literacy projects during the year and these are voluntary activities. We have found that, as the whole-school strategy has developed, more boys than girls now actively seek a place on these activities. This is where we use the Reading Champions framework to reward and advertise boys' involvement. In the last 12 months we have had four main groups. We target Year 8 especially because of the well documented dip in achievement in this year group. Our groups have been:

- shadowing the Red House Book Awards
- an inter-school book quiz
- podcasting book reviews and a sports based storytelling project that is sports based
- based a joint venture between four local schools, West Bromwich Albion and the NLT.

The bronze award is used to reward participants; those that have participated in two ventures obtain their silver award. To date no-one has been eligible for gold but we hope to have some gold Reading Champions soon. Our Reading Champions wall displays the names of the participants (currently 19 boys and four girls) and photographs of the activities. We also actively seek press coverage of these achievements.

The pupils involved are not all in the top sets. Some of them have special educational needs, some excel at sport but are not considered academic, and some have difficulty



with the structure at school and exhibit behavioural problems. They are all excellent ambassadors for the school as they all have found a route through reading. The Reading Champions wall gives others the incentive to read as they can see that reading is for all as it provides an equal playing field in our school.

Reading Champions has given us a 'peg to hang our hat on' and provides an extra facet to our existing literacy work. It is a source of pride for young men who have taken part in the project and encourages participation from other male pupils.