



SCHOLASTIC

# Case Studies



Caroline  
Chisholm  
School



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Caroline Chisholm School, an academy in Northampton, has used the Scholastic Reading Audit to reinvigorate its approach to primary phase literacy after identifying a need to improve reading progress between Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.

Emma Langridge a Lead Practitioner at the school explained that whilst the school is well above national average in reading at Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, progress between the key stages is average. This was highlighted as a weakness by Ofsted in September 2017 and subsequently there was a need to review the school's approach to reading. “The Scholastic Reading Audit came along at exactly the right time,” Emma said. “Colleagues were questioning whether guided reading was the best approach and, as a school, we were considering dropping it and replacing it with whole-class reading. That didn't feel right to me and I needed to find some independent evidence for maintaining the guided reading strategy.”

The audit helps teachers to evaluate their school's reading performance across 12 types of reading – a simple ‘red, amber, green’ rating system highlights reading strengths and identifies areas for development. Having completed the audit, Emma shared the report with her Headteacher. “The audit was great – the report we received back mentioned whole-class reading but it also prompted different things around guided reading, especially new ideas around reciprocal reading and close

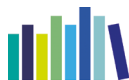
reading,” she said. “It explains what these are, how these can be implemented and subsequently their recommendations. The fact that an organisation with Scholastic's credibility outlined the best way forward with reading was hugely important. It gave me the evidence to make a case to our Head, at a time when many schools are moving away from guided reading.”

Caroline Chisholm has worked with Scholastic for many years and signed up to the Connectors programme in 2017. Connectors is a groundbreaking reciprocal reading series for peer-to-peer learning which sees children working in independent groups of up to six, as they read and debate a book together. Clear prompts show the leader how to focus the discussion and work with their team to predict outcomes, clarify issues, ask questions and evaluate content. This collaborative approach, recommended by the Education Endowment Foundation, develops teamwork as well as speaking, listening, comprehension and evaluation skills. Formal classroom trials of Connectors show children's reading age leaping forward by an average of 9.1 months in just 12 weeks.

“The books arrived at the beginning of this term, we have delivered training to all staff, and this is now being launched in the classroom,” Emma said. We are strict on measurement and will continually evaluate it but we have also introduced other whole-school interventions, as part of our strategy. At a time when we felt unsure about continuing guided reading, the Scholastic Reading Audit was great. It clarified valuable strategies to be used in guided reading and provided guidance on the areas we were falling short, such as the independent tasks. It was the springboard for us to revamp and embrace guided reading.”

Emma praised the role of Scholastic in helping to address some of their most pressing school improvement challenges: “I had not really explored Scholastic's resources or associated them with research prior to completing the audit, but both have been brilliant. Again, to have a respected body like Scholastic saying that guided reading is the right thing to do provided reassurance for me and helped me make my case for the continuation of this strategy.”

**Case study approved: October 2017.**



“The data allows us to pinpoint particular children, and with a better set of data we can make more informed decisions on how to improve.”

Kings Hill Primary School in Kent is one of the first institutions to complete the Scholastic Reading Audit, created by literacy experts to review schools' current reading provision and then develop an action plan for moving forward.

Fully matched to National Curriculum expectations, the audit helps teachers to evaluate their school's reading performance across 12 types of reading – a simple 'red, amber, green' rating system highlights reading strengths and identifies areas for development. It also gives schools the opportunity to access Scholastic's online research hub which links best practice and other information to support the teaching of reading.

“The Scholastic Reading Audit itself took less than 30 minutes to complete online,” said the School's Assistant Head and Literacy Lead, Charlotte Genç, who joined Kings Hill in 2004. “When I first heard about the audit, it seemed like an ideal platform to find out where our gaps are and how they can be plugged. The feedback was good, but it highlighted an opportunity to focus on our free readers and how we can push them on. It's an impressive tool and the follow-on report showed what we need to do next.”

Charlotte subsequently met with Scholastic to discuss the most effective approaches for supporting free readers. The school is now using Reading Pro, which assesses students' reading ability and comprehension. It combines a reading assessment that computes students' Lexile measures – a valuable piece of information about either an individual's reading ability or the difficulty of a text – with a reading management programme that includes thousands of quizzes to assess independent reading.

“We have a well-stocked library, but the challenge has been knowing which books work best for certain pupils and what free readers require,” Charlotte said. “Key Stage 2 children needed particular support, in particular pushing greater depth and mastery in comprehension skills, and as part of Reading Pro we now know individual pupils' Lexile measures and have a better range of books to support progress. The data allows us to pinpoint particular children, and with a better set of data we can make more informed decisions on how to improve – our strengths and weaknesses. It also helps us get parents involved, understanding what they can do to directly improve their child's reading.”

Graded 'Good' during an Ofsted inspection in July 2017, Kings Hill has worked with Scholastic for many years on a range of support initiatives. Charlotte said: “Scholastic is a respected brand, we utilise their services regularly, and our librarian has a great relationship with the company in terms of stock and resourcing book fairs. We find their representatives to be very knowledgeable and good to work with. Whilst we have achieved a lot, there are always small things to improve, and we look forward to continuing our relationship with Scholastic as we seek to provide very best education for our children.”

**Case study approved: October 2017.**



LEIGH  
Academies Trust



## Oaks Primary Academy

part of Leigh Academies Trust

Georgina Rawling is a Year 1 class teacher and English Lead at Oaks Primary Academy, part of Leigh Academies Trust. She is also an Improvement Officer at the Trust which encompasses 15,000 students aged 2–19 in 23 primary, secondary and special academies including one all-through and one grammar school.

Having joined Maidstone-based Oaks Primary from another school in the Trust in summer 2018, Georgina decided to audit the school's reading provision. "I needed to understand what we have, where we are at, and set up a baseline for progress – and, following a simple Google search, I came across the Scholastic Reading Audit which helps teachers to evaluate their school's reading performance across 12 types of reading," she said. "It is all online, so we were able to start straight away, and was very thorough. It sought different perspectives: staff, pupil and parent, and identified where can improve."

Having completed the audit in October 2018, Georgina met with Scholastic to discuss the findings and explore different intervention strategies. "Whilst our strengths were found to be in one-to-one and close reading, the follow-on report highlighted community and parental involvement in reading as areas for development," she said. "We talked through how certain approaches could help us to overcome these challenges."

**There is nothing like the Scholastic Reading Audit out there – it is like gold dust. It allowed me to step outside of my school and Trust roles and be more strategic. The audit directly informed my subject improvement plan and reading is at the heart of our curriculum.**

One outcome of the Scholastic Reading Audit was that Oaks Primary took the decision to sign up to the Connectors programme to support the reading strategy. Connectors is a reciprocal reading series for peer-to-peer learning which sees children working in small independent groups of up to six, each taking turns to be the leader as they read and debate a book together. Formal classroom trials of Connectors show children's reading age leaping forward by an average of 9.1 months in just 12 weeks. "Children across the school are reading independently – that is the biggest difference already – they are not relying on adults, and so far outcomes are improving term-by-term," Georgina said.

This is quite an impact, given that Connectors was only introduced in November 2018. "The key to our success is sharing Scholastic Reading Audit with the staff and giving them the ownership to improve reading in their classrooms and getting feedback from them and the children along the way," Georgina explained. "We continually measure pupil voice as well as harder outcomes. Other schools from within the Trust have been invited to see how we are approaching reading – and sat in on training – and we will be going out to other schools in the Trust to do the Reading Audit too."

Reading is taught daily in a variety of ways, including individual reading, group reading and whole-class reading – and, whilst parental engagement remains the biggest challenge across all schools, there is "a strategy to bring them on the improvement path". Georgina added: "Our relationship with Scholastic is great – the team is very knowledgeable and know their products inside out and how they can help schools in their improvement strategies. We use Scholastic to boost our library stock and the book fairs are always very good too. We will complete the Reading Audit again in 2020 and re-evaluate."

*Case study developed: July 2019*



## Whiteparish All Saints

### Church of England Primary School

Whiteparish All Saints Church of England Primary School, an 'Outstanding' school based in Salisbury, has used the Scholastic Reading Audit – which helps teachers to evaluate their school's reading performance across 12 types of reading using a simple 'red, amber, green' rating system – to ensure that its approach to literacy remains at the forefront of innovation.

Headteacher Kate Heathcote was introduced to the audit in summer 2018 when it was the topic of discussion in an online school leadership forum. "Reading is a major strength of our school, which is reflected in our Key Stage SATs results over recent years, and time is set aside every day for children to develop their individual and group reading skills," Kate explained. "We are keen to promote both the enjoyment of books and to develop fluent readers from an early age, and have reading corners in all classrooms. However, with a new English lead taking up post in 2018-19, **the Scholastic Reading Audit presented the ideal opportunity to undertake some external, independent, benchmarking.**"

Kate said the online audit, which highlights a school's reading strengths and identifies areas for development, "reiterated where we thought we were and clarified what needed to be done". She added: "Whilst we initially did it to see if anything was significantly missing, as a result of the Scholastic Reading Audit we have done a lot more to improve again. For example, whilst we do lots of reading for pleasure, the audit showed we were not making the most of our library space, were not properly set up with little reading areas, and not geared up for engaging parents. The audit also introduced the principle of reciprocal reading, which we were not previously aware of. Scholastic subsequently delivered a staff meeting on this which was very good and colleagues are taking on board ideas around it."

The school has also commissioned two Scholastic learning resources on the back of the audit – Pie Corbett's Reading Spine, which supports the teaching

of comprehension, drama and writing, and Barrington Stoke fiction books. "The Reading Spine is being used by children in reception through to Year 6 and when pupils read each set of books they get a certificate – we can directly measure the impact of Pie Corbett's books by how many children take up this challenge," Kate said. "The Barrington Stoke books have hooked pupils in with reading material that interests and engages them, from football to mountain biking. They are also proving effective for learners with specific learning difficulties such as mild dyslexia – especially boy readers – and these children are first to 'bagsy' them. As a school, our issue with reading is mainly groups of boys in Year 6 and in Year 5. None of the Year 6 had been reading fluently previously but the impact of our investment is reflected in our SATs results this year. The work with Year 5 is about preparing them for Year 6."

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Now with over 10,000 books in the school, many purchased through Scholastic, Kate said the relationship had been "very beneficial": "My experience of Scholastic has been entirely positive and we have seen the outcomes of that. The Reading Audit was really useful and, because it included questions that we had not thought to ask ourselves and the quality of information coming back was so high, it proved to be a good self-evaluation piece that I have recommended to other schools in our cluster."

*Case study developed: July 2019*