

Primary Careers Hub Pilot

Case Study title: Challenging stereotypes in EYFS and KS1

Key Stage(s)	EYFS/KS1	Target Group	Pupils/Parents/Staff/Employers
Participating school(s)	Park Mead, Buxted	Number of pupils involved	Park Mead 50, Buxted 80
Duration (terms)	Four	Date completed	June 2020

Issue or reason for intervention:

Through discussion with participating team members, we concluded that books (often book corners) served only to maintain restrictive ideas of what is suitable for boys and for girls. This was evident from colours, main characters, imagery, topics, etc. Many books in my class book corner had become outdated and uninspiring. The books had become wallpaper with no message or allure. Pupils often defaulted to choosing a familiar story which did not challenge stereotypes through reading. We wanted to have a go at changing this aspect of book corners; to make them more inspiring places which promoted discussion. We also felt that our case study needed to be relevant for the younger years and accessible for their level of understanding. Therefore, exploring books and the messages they gave was a good start.

Alongside exploring books and stories, my goal was to raise the profile of essential skills through 'Skills Builder' as a whole school initiative. As part of the case study, I wanted pupils to start using the vocabulary and relate these skills to themselves as well as book characters and narratives when discussing stories.

Plan to address issues:

The aim was to make classroom books and images more varied and gender balanced. We hoped that this would raise the profile of gender stereotyping to staff so we would all be more aware of the books, images and learning experiences we deliver to young pupils.

Planned actions (Books/reading and organised activities):

- Classroom audit of resources; clear the book corner of books unsuitable for this case study.
- Find and provide alternative traditional tales.
- Locate or purchase books with strong female leads
- Research and provide Careers hub with a comprehensive list of reading resources which tackle gender stereotyping through stories.
- World Book Day – who are the strong female characters in children's stories?
- Fire of London Learning theme Year 2 – Female Firefighter and a male baker to visit the school and talk to the children about their role, experiences and skills. (Was due to take place in March/April)

Planned actions (Develop understanding of Skills)

- Learning about the definitions and symbols through whole school/class assemblies
- Discussion of Skills during Circle Time and Student council
- Develop a 'Careers Corridor' where the 'Skills' are emphasized but also a place to raise the profile of female success stories through inspiring images, quotes and books. Provide a clear message of how important it is to 'redraw the balance'.
- KS1 STEM outdoor learning project for May 2020 with SO SUSSEX – re-designing of pond/garden area. Creating irrigation systems etc. To focus on what key 'skills' we use and need.
- Young reporter project – KS1 to focus on presenting 'share an interest'. Are girls and boys experiences different? In what ways are our hobbies the same?

Key actions:

- KS1 STEM outdoor project and Young Reporter project were cancelled due to Covid19.



- I did discover more suitable books (by looking around the school and going to Charity shops) that appealed to both girls and boys.
- Getting rid of books that did not challenge gender stereotyping or were outdated and uninspiring was necessary and overdue!
- The whole process raised my awareness of how we as staff talk to boys and girls and based on this, I can start addressing these matters.
- Organising a book corner within EYFS Classroom and speaking to the children about their favourite books.
- EYFS had a visit from female paramedics.
- Science week incorporated several female scientists and engineers.
- Discussion with other teachers about books they had used to challenge stereotypes within their teaching.

Resources:

- The resources we received from the Careers Hub meetings were brilliant. The STEM box and the posters particularly.
- There were suitable resources around both schools that we discovered by looking!

Outcomes:

- Development and revamp of books in KS1 book corners took place successfully.
- Children were inspired by the change in books and we found boys and girls reading more of the same ones.
- The Careers Corridor was developed and continues to develop further as I gather more books, posters, resources. It stimulates discussion and is a perfect space to promote and raise awareness of careers related learning to parents and pupils. Plus, myth-bust any gender stereotyping.
- Assemblies, circle time and student council – all timetabled plenty of Skill Builder learning and redrawing the balance clips. Plus 'This Is Engineering' which many found very inspiring.
- Displays were successfully created in all classrooms which really raised the profile of the skills and ensured that teachers would refer to them during lessons.
- It was noticeable how children had taken on these 'skills' as they were able to use them in discussion and be reflective about themselves in their end of year reports plus what they wanted to improve on next year.
- The 'Skills' also featured in our Park Mead planning and KO (part of our curriculum redesign)
- Staff are clearer on what we are trying to achieve in terms of 'careers related learning' and this sets us up in preparation for the next academic year.
- From Assembly discussions it was clearly evident that Primary age children are the crucial age group to target when it comes to careers related learning. Their interests, views of the world and of themselves are still fluid so they can be positively influenced through appropriate images, discussion and lots of encouragement.

Barriers or limitations:

The biggest barrier and limitation was lack of time to implement more change. More time to communicate and discuss matters with colleagues at Park Mead would have been great but this is not always possible. Similarly, at Buxted, we faced the same issues. Not being able to have time to all get together and work on the initiative together.

Our parents are notoriously difficult to engage so that will be my aim for the next academic year.

I feel this year has been a learning curve for me and classroom books and resources have been a great start.

Embedding Skills Builder as a whole school initiative has been a positive one.

Now I feel that the staff are on board, I will reach out to parents.

At Buxted, we were organised to host several trips and to hold a career's fair within the school, but unfortunately these had to be cancelled due to Covid 19. These will be rescheduled as and when we are allowed to go ahead with them.