



Evaluation of The Ant Club

For Booktrust

March 2014



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This research has been carried out
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I. Executive Summary

Introduction

Qa Research was commissioned by Booktrust to carry out an evaluation of The Ant Club programme for primary schools.

The Ant Club was launched in September 2011 and is a programme directed towards children in Reception and Year 1 classes, providing a range of free resources both printed and online. This special set of support tools aims to provide schools with an imaginative way of improving children's abilities in crucial areas of development; reading, writing, speaking and listening. The programme also aims to help the transition from Reception to Year 1 with familiar resources and exercises that can be repeated and enjoyed at home.

Eligibility of schools for free access to The Ant Club is dependent on the percentage of children who receive Free School Meals being at least 20%. Approximately 1,300 schools received The Ant Club resources in academic year 2013/14.

Aims & Objectives

The main aim of the evaluation is to establish how teachers use The Ant Club resources and the perceived impact of the programme on parents and children.

Within this aim there are specific key objectives to establish;

- Teachers' reflections on the programme as a whole as well as specific resources
- How resources have been used effectively in a sample of schools

Methodology

In January 2014, all eligible schools were sent a link to an online survey for teachers. Reminder emails were sent and follow up phone calls were also made to schools to remind staff to complete the online survey or to offer the option of completing the survey over the phone instead. From the database of 937 schools a total of 210 teachers completed the survey online or over the phone; giving a response rate of 22%.

To complement the quantitative data provided by the survey, schools that completed the survey were asked if they would like to participate in follow up case study research. A total of 10 schools took part in the case study research, three were visited and seven took part in an in-depth telephone interview, in February 2014.

Profile information

- A total of 210 teachers representing 201 schools completed the survey from across the English regions.
- Of the 210 teachers completing the survey, the majority were either reception class teachers or Year 1 teachers.

- The majority of teachers participating in the survey were experienced teachers who had been in post for over five years.

How The Ant Club resources are used

- Overall, The Rhyme Challenge for Reception (70%) and Booktime (69%) were the resources used by the most respondents. Year 1 Stories for Drama 'Stone Soup' (43%) and Create Your Own Book (52%) had been used by fewer teachers. Only 15% of teachers had used the Booklist.
- Respondents were asked if they had used the resources in the intended order and structure, using each resource in the term and with the year groups suggested by Booktrust. The majority (67%) had adapted the timing/structure in order to fit in with planning. A small minority (5%) were not sure how the resources were intended to be used.
- Ten per cent of respondents used the resources on an ad-hoc basis – this was mainly due to a general lack of time, and a need to adapt in line with the school's planning schedule and children's needs.
- Overall, 76% stated that other staff within the school were aware of the existence of The Ant Club resources, however 17% were unsure and 6% stated that others weren't aware.
- Evidence from the case studies illustrates that the resources are used flexibly and in a variety of different ways, including the use of active learning approaches, as part of World Book Days, as part of maths provision, and as a specific after-school club activity.
- The Rhyme Challenge, Reception Stories for Drama, and the Booktimepack appear to be have been particularly well received.

Using The Rhyme Challenge as a transition resource

- In total, 82% of respondents thought that the use of The Rhyme Challenge as a transition resource between Reception and Year 1 was a good idea.
- A small minority did not think that this was a good idea – the main reason being that they felt this was too similar to something the children had already done, it did not fit with school planning, or there were curriculum restrictions.
- Findings from the case studies suggest that views are mixed on the success (in practice) of The Rhyme Challenge as a transition resource; some schools felt that children were in need of something more advanced by the time they reached Year 1, while others had found it useful in helping children settle in and feel secure through familiarity with the materials.

Use of The Ant Club website

- Overall, 38% of respondents stated that they had visited The Ant Club section of the Booktrust website. The majority of these respondents stated that they found the additional resources and information either 'very useful' or 'quite useful' (82%).

- For the 62% of respondents who **had not used the site**, the main reason was lack of awareness (53%). A lack of time (35%) and not knowing the login details (23%) were also barriers to using the site.
- Evidence from the case studies also points to the online resources not being fully utilised within schools – largely due to a preference for hard copy materials.

Reasons for not using the resources

- Only 2% (4 respondents) stated that they had not used **any** of the resources; this was due to a lack of time or not teaching that particular year group.
- Respondents who had used some but not all of the resources were asked about their reasons for non-use. Positively, the teacher or the children not liking the resources hardly features at all in the responses given. The most common reason for not using them is simply the fact that the teacher does not work with the group that the resources are intended for (e.g. Reception or Year 1).
- However, the fact that the resource did not fit in with planning appears to be an issue for some respondents, particularly in relation to Stories for Drama ‘Chicken Licken’ (38%) and Stone Soup (27%).
- A lack of awareness of the Booklist resource was noted by 76% of non-users and 27% were unaware of the Stories for Drama ‘Chicken Licken’ resource.
- A number of respondents gave ‘other’ reasons for not using specific resources. Generally, reasons given related to a general lack of time, not receiving the resources until late in the term, intending to use the resources in the following term, or that the resources were not suitable for the children/abilities.

Parental engagement

- Encouragingly, **65%** of respondents stated that they **had made use of at least some of the take-home aspects** of The Ant Club resources to engage parents in their child's learning and build home/school relationships.
- The most popular way in which to do this was simply by sending the activities home with the children – with 71% giving this response.
- A number of respondents stated that they had organised ‘other’ parental engagement activities using the resources. These included running special assemblies, meeting with parents, and setting homework challenges.
- A number of those who **had not used the take-home aspects** offered to explain the reasons behind this. The key reasons appeared to be that they already used other methods of parental engagement; or there was a general lack of parental engagement within the school, or a lack of time/other commitments.

- Within the case studies several schools acknowledged the challenges they faced in engaging with parents within their areas. However, there are some clear examples of success particularly using the familiar rhymes in The Rhyme Challenge as a homework activity, as part of assemblies, and in engaging with parents with English as a second language.

Satisfaction with The Ant Club

- Respondents were asked how useful they found The Ant Club resources to be in terms of helping children to improve their listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. The majority of respondents find the resources useful in all the aspects; however the greatest number of respondents thought that the Ant Club resources were useful for improving **speaking skills** (92%), followed by **listening skills** (89%), **reading skills**, 82% and **writing skills**, 80%.
- Respondents were most likely to value The Ant Club for its high quality resources (96%), simply as a 'good service for schools' (92%) and for the way in which the resources complement the curriculum (82%). There was less agreement around learning about new authors (39%), improving teacher confidence with drama (48%), easing transition between Reception and Year 1 (53%), and engaging parents/carers with their child's learning (59%).
- In total, **98% of respondents rated The Ant Club overall as 'highly successful', 'successful' or 'partially successful' within their school.**
- Teachers within the case studies were generally very enthusiastic about The Ant Club resources and felt that they were high quality. Several schools had noticed specific improvements in children's confidence and speaking skills – a couple of schools had a strong focus on oracy and had found The Ant Club resources to be very useful in this respect.

Suggestions for the future

- Respondents were asked if there was anything that would help them to make more of The Ant Club within their schools and if they had any suggestions for improvement. A general request for more activities or resources was mentioned most frequently.
- Other comments related to needing more time to implement and sending the materials earlier, and a couple of requests for the resources to be more varied from year to year, e.g. to include more non-fiction resources and more resources for a wider range of year groups.
- Evidence from the case studies suggests that there could be some inconsistencies around when certain schools receive resources and whether some might have missed out on a particular resource. A couple of schools would like to see the resources changed more regularly.

Conclusions & recommendations

In this section we provide our conclusions and recommendations based on the key findings of this research. Please note we have only provided a recommendation where we feel we are able to do so, and some of these recommendations relate to an ideal scenario which would be dependent on the financial limitations of the programme.

Conclusion 1: It is clear from the survey and case studies that levels of satisfaction with The Ant Club are high and that it is a valued resource. The survey indicates that teachers have seen specific improvements in children's confidence and speaking skills – this has complemented the focus on oracy mentioned by several case study schools and has also been helpful for children with English as an additional language. The Rhyme Challenge has played a key role in this.

Recommendation 1: Continue to provide resources along the lines of The Rhyme Challenge, and/or stories with a repetitive format.

Conclusion 2: There is evidence to suggest that despite the difficulties faced in engaging parents in some of the more deprived communities, schools have effectively used The Ant Club resources to engage with parents in a range of ways. Schools mentioned that the familiarity of The Rhyme Challenge material was very accessible to parents and this enabled them to feel confident to help their child with homework. The sticker format of the Stories for Drama resources was felt to work well in that it was distinctive and less likely to become 'lost' amongst other homework sheets/resources brought home.

Recommendation 2: Continue to provide resources that are familiar to parents, particularly in a sticker or poster format that can be displayed within the home as a reminder/prompt for parent/child discussion.

Conclusion 3: The findings from the survey and case studies suggest that the online resources are not used as much as they could be due mainly to a lack of awareness and some teachers commenting that they did not know their log-in details.

Recommendation 3: A 're-launch' of the website would be useful in raising awareness alongside a reminder of log-in details.

Conclusion 4: Comments made in the survey and case studies suggest that some schools may have missed certain resources or have received them later than expected. As highlighted in the case studies there is a danger that resources can become 'lost' and consequently not used within the school if the key contact moves on.

Recommendation 4: Ensure schools have regular opportunities to update their contact details and consider issuing a follow up email to check that schools have received their resources by the specified date.

Conclusion 5: The majority of schools are not using the resources in the intended order and structure suggested by Booktrust, and several suggested that they would like to receive the resources earlier.

Recommendation 5: Consider if there is any way in which schools can select a different time to receive their resources.

Conclusion 6: The findings from the survey and case studies show that some teachers would appreciate a more diverse range of resources in terms of format (e.g. short animations/films)

Recommendation 6: Consider developing additional resources in other formats, e.g. short films/animations).

2. Introduction

Qa Research was commissioned by Booktrust to carry out an evaluation of The Ant Club programme for primary schools.

The Ant Club was launched in September 2011 and is a programme directed towards children in Reception and Year 1 classes, providing a range of free resources both printed and online. This special set of support tools aims to provide schools with an imaginative way of improving children's abilities in crucial areas of development; reading, writing, speaking and listening. The programme also aims to help the transition from Reception to Year 1 with familiar resources and exercises that can be repeated and enjoyed at home.

With each new term comes a new Ant Club package, an example of a resource for a Reception class is 'The Rhyme Challenge'. This nurtures talking, singing and learning, and parents are encouraged to make full use of the rhyme sheet their child will be given to take home. For Year 1 pupils, 'Create Your Own Book' inspires creativity whilst giving them an understanding of how books are written. For a full list and descriptions of The Ant Club resources, please see Appendix 8.1.

The Ant Club is also accessible via the website for schools, where registered teachers can log in and access lists of books and resources. Parents can also view what age appropriate books are available by visiting The Ant Club section of the Booktrust website.

Eligibility of schools for free access to The Ant Club is dependent on the percentage of children who receive Free School Meals being at least 20%. The Department for Education supports Booktrust and provided a list of schools which meet the criteria. These schools were then asked to become involved with the programme, resulting in 1300 (approx.) schools registered for the academic year 2013/14.

3. Aims and objectives

The main aim of the evaluation is to establish how teachers use The Ant Club resources and the perceived impact of the programme on parents and children.

Within this aim there are specific key objectives to establish;

- Teachers' reflections on the programme as a whole as well as specific resources
- How resources have been used effectively in a sample of schools

4. Methodology

Survey

In January 2014, all eligible schools were sent a link to an online survey for teachers including an option to enter a prize draw to win high street gift vouchers for their school. Three reminder emails were sent and follow up phone calls were also made to schools to remind staff to complete the online survey or to offer the option of completing the survey over the phone instead. From the database of 937 schools¹ a total of 210 teachers completed the survey online or over the phone; giving a response rate of 22%.

Using statistical rules, a sample of 210 completions (from the 937 schools) will ensure 95% confidence that the data has no more than a **+/-5.9%** variance overall which is an acceptable research industry standard.

Case studies

To complement the quantitative data provided by the survey, schools that completed the survey were asked if they would like to participate in follow up case study research. A total of 10 schools took part in the case study research, three were visited and seven took part in an in-depth telephone interview, in February 2014.

Schools participating in the case study research received a high street gift voucher to thank them for their time.

¹ Only schools who had been involved in the programme for over a year were asked to complete the survey, as those who had signed up this year would not be able to comment on the full range of resources.

5. Key findings – survey of schools

5.1 Profile information

5.1.1 Location of schools

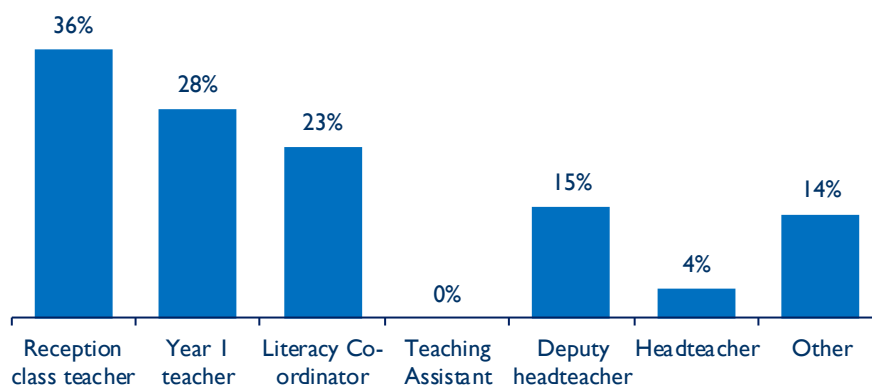
A total of 210 teachers representing 201 schools completed the survey. The following table shows the number of schools completing the survey (by area).

Table 1 - Schools by area

Area	No. of schools	%
London & South East	47	23
South West	20	10
Midlands & East of England	41	20
North East	50	25
North West	43	21
	201	100

5.1.2 Role at the school

Q2. What is your role at the school?



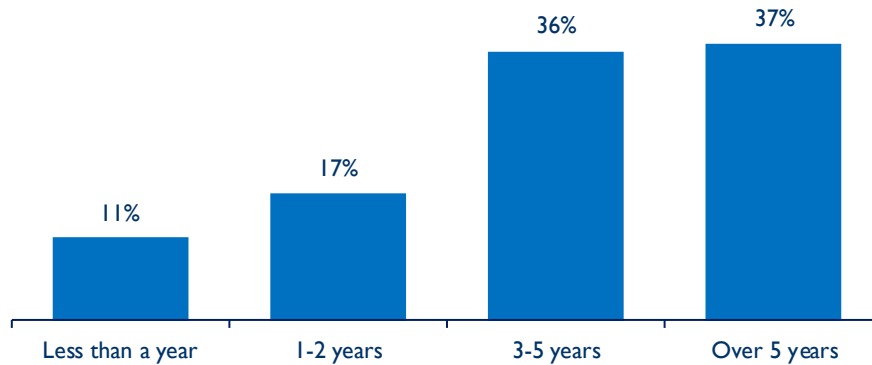
Source: Qa Research 2014 Base: 210 (all respondents)

N.B. Multiple response question

Of the 201 teachers completing the survey, the majority were either reception class teachers (36%) or Year 1 teachers (28%). Fourteen per cent stated that they had an 'other' role within the school. These included, Early Years Foundation Stage Co-ordinators, Key Stage 1 Leaders, Reading Recovery Teachers and Reading Co-ordinators.

5.1.3 Length of service at current school

Q3. How long have you been at your current school?

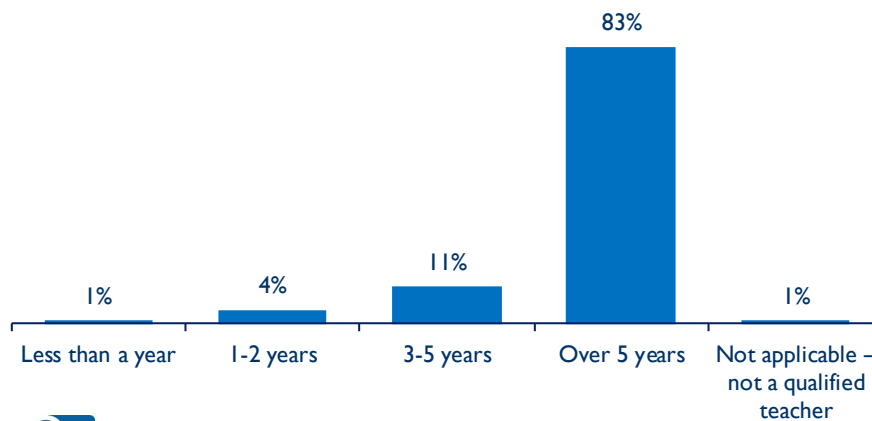


Source: Qa Research 2014 Base: 210 (all respondents)

As illustrated above, the majority of respondents had been at their current school for at least three years.

5.1.4 Length of time as a teacher

Q4. For how long have you been a qualified teacher?



Source: Qa Research 2014 Base: 210 (all respondents)

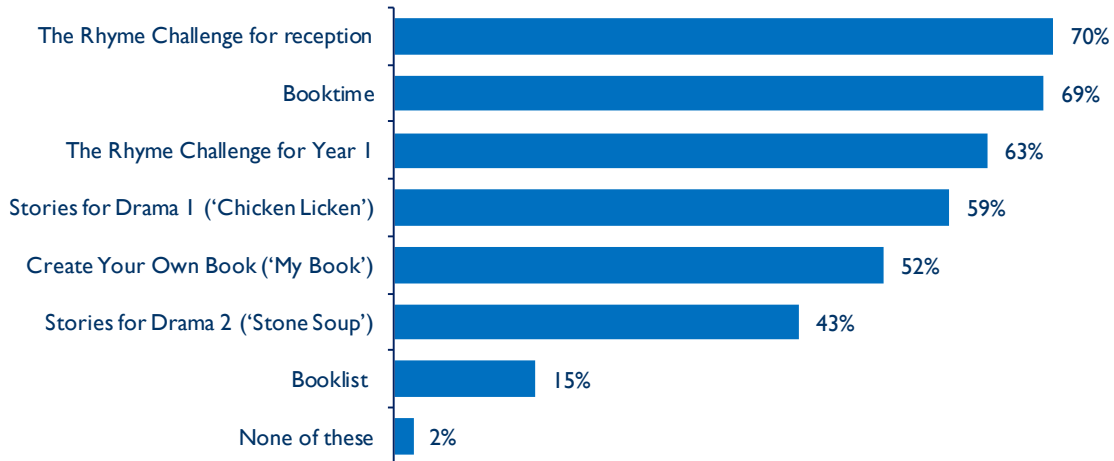
The majority of teachers participating in the survey (83%) were experienced teachers who had been qualified for over five years.



5.2 Use of The Ant Club resources

Respondents were asked which Ant Club resources they had used.

Q5a. Which of the following resources have you used?



Source: Qa Research 2014 Base: 210 (all respondents)

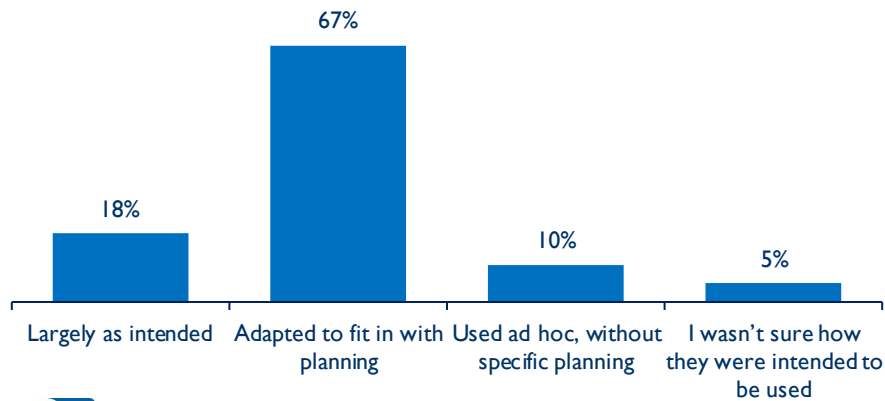
N.B. Multiple response question

Overall, The Rhyme Challenge for Reception (70%) and Booktime (69%) were the resources used by most respondents. Stories for Drama 2 'Stone Soup' (43%) and Create Your Own Book (52%) were used by fewer respondents. Only 15% of respondents had used the Booklist.

5.2.1 Order/structure in which the resources are used

Respondents were asked if they had used the resources in the intended order and structure, using each resource in the term and with the year groups suggested by Booktrust. As shown below, the majority (67%) had adapted the timing/structure in order to fit in with planning. A small minority (5%) were not sure how the resources were intended to be used.

Q7a. Would you say you have used the resources in the order and structure intended by Booktrust?



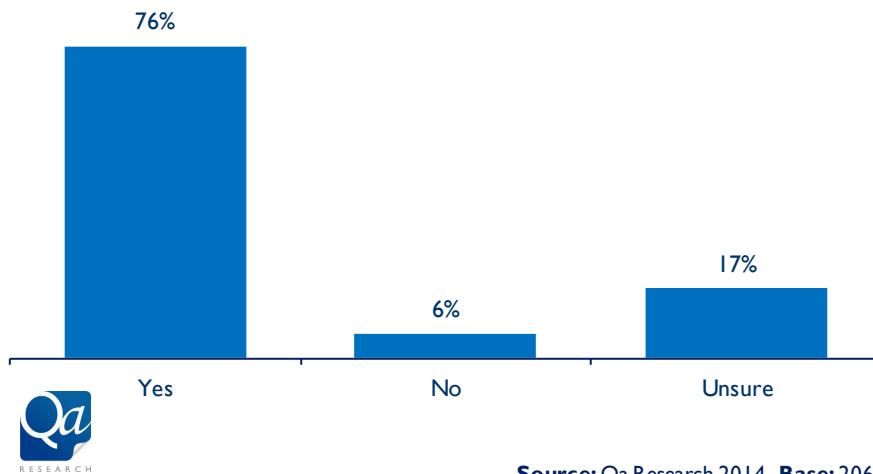
Source: Qa Research 2014 Base: 205 (respondents who have used resources)

The ten per cent of respondents who used the resources on an ad-hoc basis were asked why this was the case. A general lack of time and a need to adapt in line with the school's and children's needs were the main reasons, although two respondents stated that they did not always receive the resources in time to implement as intended.

5.2.2 Awareness of Ant Club within the school

Respondents were asked if other members of staff were aware of The Ant Club and the resources being used.

Q10. Are other members of staff aware of The Ant Club, and the resources being used?

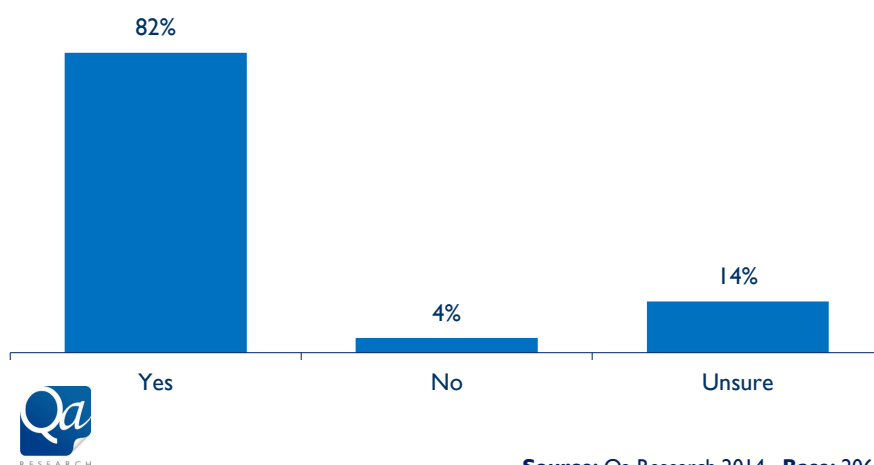


As shown above, 76% stated that other staff were aware of The Ant Club, however 17% were unsure and 6% stated that others weren't aware.

5.2.3 Using The Rhyme Challenge as a transition resource

Respondents were asked for their views on the use of The Rhyme Challenge as a transition resource between Reception and Year 1.

Q7c. There are two Rhyme Challenge resources; one intended to be used in the Summer term in Reception, and one intended to be used in the Autumn term in Year 1 to aid transition. Do you think this is a good idea?



As illustrated above, 82% of respondents thought that this was a good idea; 14% were unsure. Eight respondents (4%) did not think that this was a good idea –the main reason being that they felt this was too similar to something the children had already done, it did not fit with school planning or there were curriculum restrictions.

“We try to move our children away from nursery rhymes as they move into KS1.”(Literacy Coordinator, Hull)

“I feel with the heightened expectations of the new curriculum The Rhyme Challenge is not pitched at the right level for Summer Term of Reception Year, I think it is a lovely resource but we use it as a settling in mini topic as the children start in Reception. Our children come with low starting points; I cannot think that schools with children working at higher levels would be doing Nursery Rhymes in summer Term Reception. It would be better as a Nursery pack.”(Reception teacher, Leeds)

“Not different enough to engage the children.”(Deputy Head teacher, Derbyshire)

“Doesn't fit in with my planning.”(Year 1 teacher, Manchester)

5.2.4 Reasons for not using The Ant Club resources

Only 2% (4 respondents) stated that they had not used **any** of the resources; this was due to a lack of time or not teaching that particular year group. Respondents who had not used a specific resource were asked for their reasons for non-use; these are illustrated below.

Table 2 - Reasons for non-use of resources

Reasons for non-use	Booktime	Stories for	Rhyme	Rhyme	Stories for	My	Booklist
		Drama 'Chicken Licken'	Challenge Reception	Challenge Year 1	Drama 'Stone Soup'		
I have not worked with Reception class/Year 1	52%	28%	51%	68%	44%	56%	-
I do not like the resource	-	-	-	-	1%	-	1%
I don't think the children would like this resource	-	-	2%	-	1%	-	1%
The resource did not fit in with my planning	18%	38%	23%	11%	27%	16%	17%
I was not aware of this	23%	27%	14%	8%	20%	16%	76%
Other - please specify	10%	9%	16%	12%	8%	11%	6%

Base 57-172

As illustrated above, the teacher or the children not liking the resources hardly features at all in the responses given. The most common reason for not using them is simply the fact that the teacher does not work with the group that the resources are intended for (e.g. a Reception teacher may not have used the Year 1 resources).

However, the fact that the resource did not fit in with planning appears to be an issue for some respondents, particularly in relation to the Stories for Drama resources 'Chicken Licken' (38%) and Stone Soup (27%) - it may be that respondents are reflecting back to last year when the resources arrived later than they do now. A lack of awareness of the Booklist resource was noted by 76% of non-users and 27% were unaware of the Stories for Drama 'Chicken Licken' resource.

A number of respondents gave 'other' reasons for not using specific resources. Generally, reasons given related to a general lack of time, not receiving the resources until late in the term, intending to use the resources the following term, or that they were not suitable for the children/abilities. A selection of comments is included below:

Booktime

"Using the resources asked to by head of class." (SENCO, Gloucestershire)

"Time limitation." (Early Years Co-ordinator, Oldham)

Stories for Drama 'Chicken Licken'

"Haven't used it yet but plan to." (Year 1 teacher, Stoke on Trent)

"We are starting Talk for Writing² this term and are going to use the stories for this. (Deputy Head, West Sussex.)

"Planning on using it during up and coming Book Week."(Reception Teacher, Kent)

The Rhyme Challenge(Reception)

"We are going to use it during our Book Week."(Reception teacher, London)

The Rhyme Challenge(Year 1)

"Not really suitable for the ability of our children and didn't really fit in."(Year 1 teacher, Doncaster)

"Rhyme is very difficult for our children and has to be carefully planned and delivered as our children are deaf."(Year 1 teacher, Doncaster)

Stories for Drama 'Stone Soup'

"I am saving it for my work on Traditional Stories after Easter".(Reception teacher, Warwickshire)

My Book

"I do not feel my class are ready for this type of format."(Reception teacher, Warwickshire)

"This was used for some pupils but not within year 1 as we are a special school."(Deputy Head, Bolton)

Booklist

"Budget constraints."(Deputy Head, Cheshire)

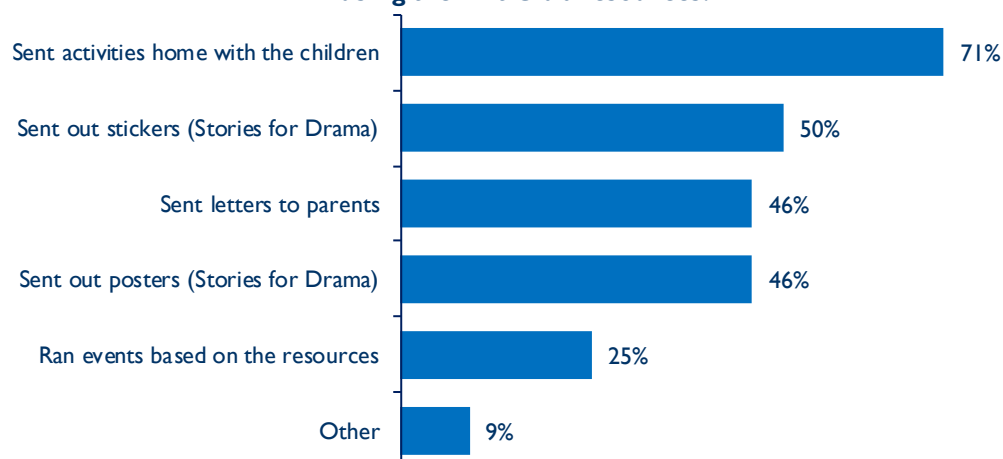
² Resources developed by Pie Corbett

5.2.5 Engaging with parents

Respondents were asked if they had made use of any of the take-home aspects of The Ant Club resources to engage parents in their child's learning and build home/school relationships - encouragingly, **65%** stated that they had done so.

As illustrated below, the majority (71%) of respondents had sent activities home with the children. Around half had either sent out stickers, posters, or letters to parents.

Q8c. What kinds of things have you done to engage parents by using the Ant Club resources?



Source: Qa Research 2014 Base: 132 (respondents using take home aspects)

N.B. Multiple response question

A number of respondents stated that they had organised 'other' parental engagement activities using the resources. These included running special assemblies and meetings for parents, and setting homework challenges.

"We had special assemblies with the local library's involvement to link and raise profile of reading at home as well as school."(Foundation Stage Leader and RE Co-ordinator, Manchester)

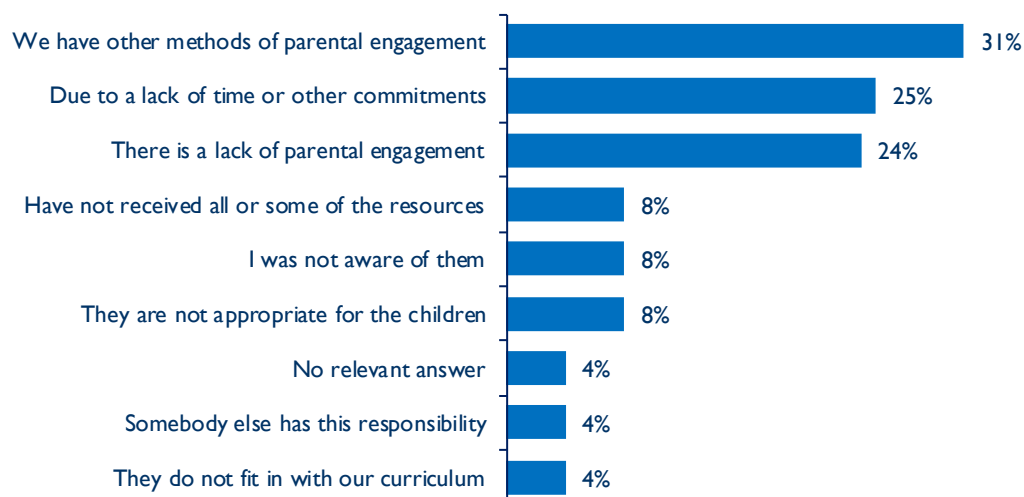
"We had a parents meeting to discuss resources and how they are used to support children's learning."
(EYFS / KSI Leader Senior Leader, Stockton)

"Cards with nursery rhymes on were sent home."(Literacy coordinator, Knowsley)



A number of those who **had not used the take-home aspects** offered to explain the reasons behind this. As shown below, the key reasons appeared to be that they already used other methods of parental engagement; there was a general lack of parental engagement within the school, and a lack of time/other commitments.

Q8b. Reasons for not using take home aspects



Source: Qa Research 2014 Base: 51 (respondents not using take home aspects)

A selection of example comments follows:

“We used them in school instead because the nature of our parents - the resources would not be used at home.”(Literacy Co-ordinator, Lancashire)

“Too many ongoing initiatives at the moment.”(Year 1 teacher, Derbyshire)

“Parental engagement is a massive and ongoing area of focus for our catchment area. Too much focus on home learning is not positive for our families, given adult literacy issues too.”(Key Stage 1 leader, Devon)

“We have had lots of story events based on our own class stories and didn't have time to fit it in this year.”(Reception teacher, Plymouth)

“We have engaged parents and carers through other home-school communication including a new Home Learning Challenge sent home each half term to be completed as a project.”(Literacy Co-ordinator, Manchester)

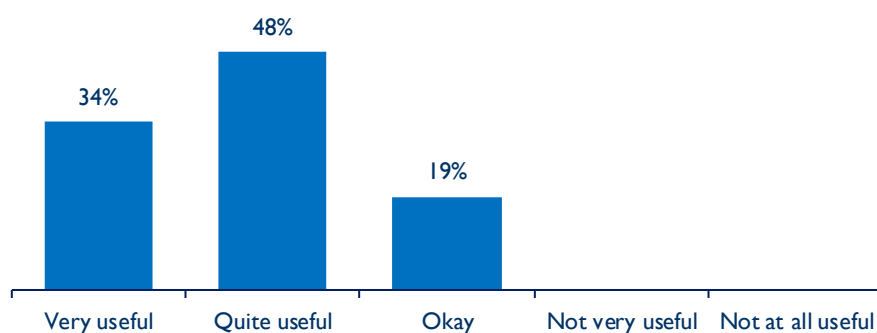
“Time management and difficulty engaging parents whom have English as an additional language.”(Year 1 teacher, Manchester)



5.2.6 Use of The Ant Club website

Overall, 38% of respondents stated that they had visited The Ant Club section of the Booktrust website. As shown below, the majority of these respondents stated that they found the additional resources and information either 'very useful' or 'quite useful' (82%).

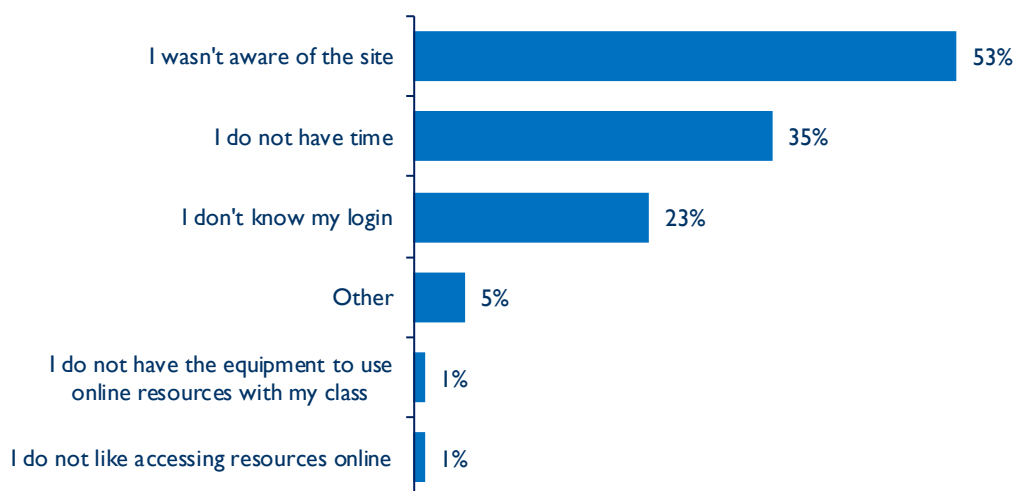
Q13. How useful have you found the additional resources and information featured on the Ant Club website?



Source: Qa Research 2014 Base: 80 (website users)

For the 62% of respondents who **had not used the site**, the main reason was lack of awareness (53%). A lack of time (35%) and not knowing the login details (23%) were also barriers to using the site.

Q12b. Is there a reason/s why you haven't used The Ant Club website?



Source: Qa Research 2014 Base: 129 (website non-users)

N.B. Multiple response question

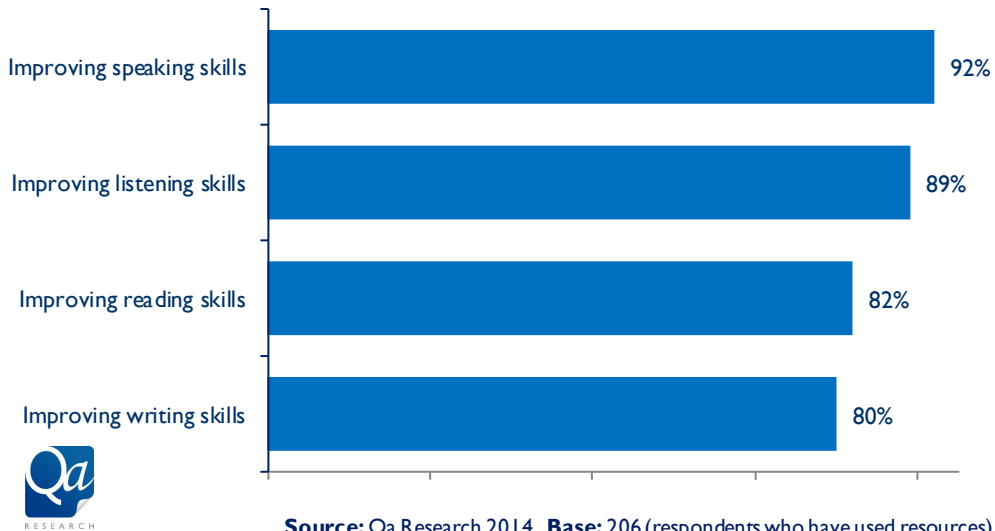


5.3 Satisfaction with The Ant Club resources

5.3.1 Views on how The Ant Club resources develop children's skills

Respondents were asked how useful they found The Ant Club resources to be in terms of helping children to improve their listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills.

Q9a. How useful do you consider The Ant Club resources to be, in terms of the following aspects? Net: very & quite useful



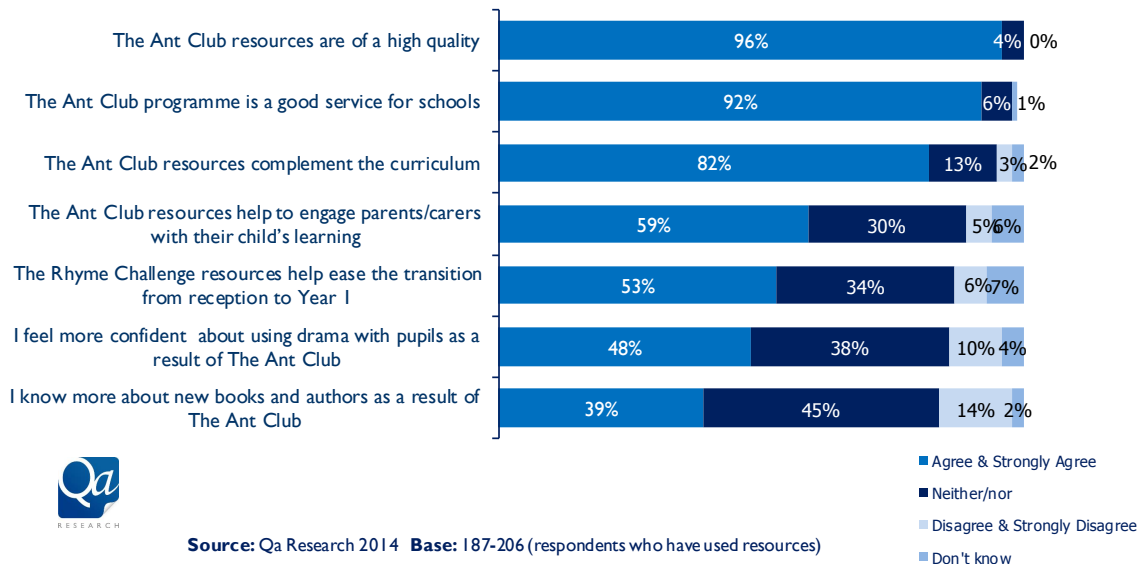
Source: Qa Research 2014 Base: 206 (respondents who have used resources)

As illustrated above, it is evident that the majority of respondents find the resources useful in all the aspects; however the greatest number of respondents thought that the Ant Club resources were useful for improving speaking skills (92%).

5.3.2 Teacher views on various aspects of The Ant Club

Respondents were asked for their views on various aspects of The Ant Club.

Q11. To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

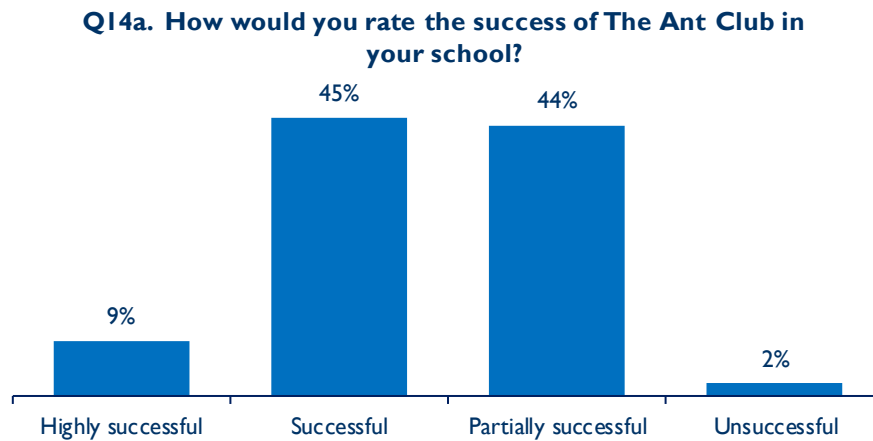


As illustrated above, respondents were most likely to value The Ant Club for its high quality resources (96%), simply as a 'good service for schools' (92%) and the way in which the resources complement the curriculum (82%). There was less agreement around learning about new authors (39%), improving teacher confidence with drama (48%), easing transition between Reception and Year 1 (53%), and engaging parents/carers with their child's learning (59%).

5.3.3 Overall success

Respondents were asked to evaluate the overall success of The Ant Club in their school.

Encouragingly, as shown below, 98% of respondents rated The Ant Club as either 'highly successful', 'successful' or 'partially successful' within their school.

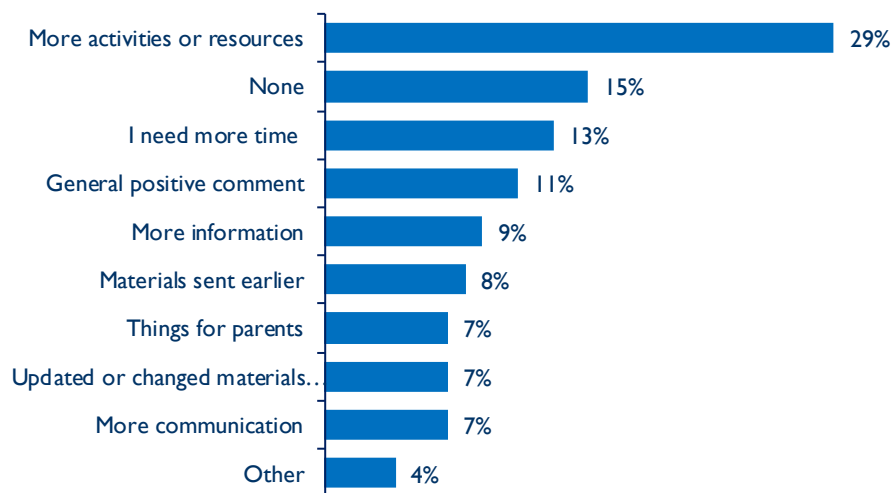


Source: Qa Research 2014 Base: 210 (all respondents)



Finally, respondents were asked if there was anything that would help them to make more of The Ant Club within their schools and if they had any suggestions for improvement.

Q14b. Is there anything that would help you to make more of the Ant Club programme?



Source: Qa Research 2014 Base: 90

As illustrated above, a general request for more activities or resources was mentioned most frequently (29%). A total of 26% of respondents made no comment or gave a positive comment. Other comments related to needing more time to implement and sending the materials earlier. A selection of comments is shown below:

“Starting The Ant Club in the final term of nursery so children moving into reception have a common understanding and parents are already engaged.”(Deputy Head teacher, Hertfordshire)

“Great resource” (Head teacher, Cornwall)

“The Ant Club and its resources and very much welcomed and appreciated. However, our school is a special school and it is at times hard to adapt the resources in order for them to be more applicable and usable with our pupils.”(Literacy Co-ordinator, Doncaster)

“I think the Ant Club project is fantastic and a brilliant resource for schools. It is my fault that it has not been fully utilised in my classroom due to time constraints. I do aim to use it with more structure.” (Year 1 teacher, Stoke on Trent)

“If the Ant Programme books/activities were topic based rather than being used alongside a topic.”(Reception teacher, Manchester)

“Perhaps receiving packs at the beginning of the year, so that we can use them when they fit in, as sometimes they have come after we have done a specific topic (or when we have done the half termly plan).”(Phase 1 leader, Sheffield)



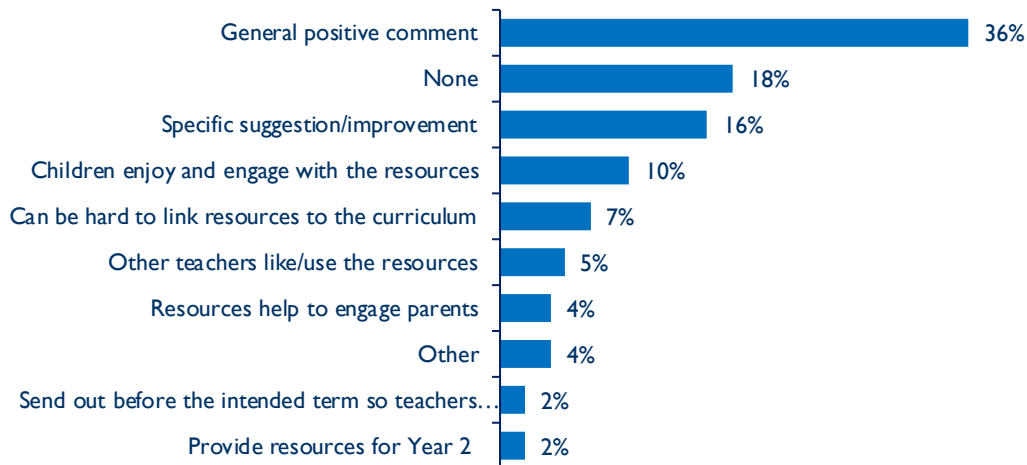
“More boy friendly resources and activities. Having 21 boys in my class, who love topics such as dinosaurs, superheroes, etc., they did struggle to focus at times with the rhymes set for The Rhyme Challenge. So including some exciting rhymes a bit more action-based/boy friendly would definitely help me.” (Year 1 teacher, Liverpool)

“Email reminders of what is going on/what is available/what is being sent - resources don't always get to the right people in schools and we do not always know that we should be getting them!!” (Reception teacher, Leeds)

5.3.4 Suggestions for improvement

As shown below, when asked for any other comments or suggested improvements most feedback was generally positive, along with some specific suggestions for improvement.

Q14c. Finally, do you have any other comments you would like to make about the Ant Club programme or suggested improvements?



Source: Qa Research 2014 Base: 83

A selection of comments is included below:

"I think it's great that we get to send 'real' books home for the children to enjoy and keep for themselves." (Deputy Head teacher, Birmingham)

"Could there be a two year rolling programme of materials used so that teachers don't feel they are becoming stale / less than enthusiastic with regards to the resources?"(Year I teacher, Somerset)

"If there could be a special needs resource made available to complement that made for main stream pupils, I'm sure more special needs schools would benefit."(Literacy Co-ordinator, Doncaster)

"The resources are much appreciated. I always get an 'oooooh' when I give them to class teachers, they really do like them and I see resources being used as part of effective display. It's a great resource and they are well used by staff and children."(Literacy Co-ordinator, Cheshire)

"As teachers we have to make the curriculum work for the children in that particular year and so we adapt our planning accordingly. It would be useful to have ALL the resources at the beginning of the year and so they can be used most effectively at the right time of the year for the school."(Reception teacher, Leeds)

"I would like the rhymes and activities to change more often as I have a mixed year 1 and 2 class."(Year I teacher, Derbyshire)

"We really rate the resources - it is always great to receive resources that will deepen children's learning and understanding." (Reception teacher, Bristol)



6. School case studies – key themes

A number of schools indicated during the survey that they would be happy to take part in further case study research. These schools were re-contacted and invited to take part in either an in-depth telephone interview or face to face visit. Seven schools chose to be interviewed by telephone and three chose a visit; schools were asked if they were happy to be named in their case study. Five case studies have been included in full within this report and there were a number of key themes common to all the case studies – these are summarised below.

Overall, from the case studies, it was evident that **children had found The Ant Club resources engaging**, particularly those with stickers/posters and colourful formats. Schools gave several examples of children who have struggled to engage in the past who have clearly enjoyed using The Ant Club resources. Schools noted **improvements in confidence and speaking skills**, particularly through the use of The Rhyme Challenge.

The schools in receipt of The Ant Club resources are often situated within deprived neighbourhoods and developing home/school links can be challenging. However, there are several examples of schools that have **used the resources effectively to engage with parents** either through assemblies or as homework tasks. Again, The Rhyme Challenge and Stories for Drama resources have played a key role in this. Schools commented that parents seem to find the rhymes familiar and accessible and therefore feel confident to work with their child on homework tasks. The sticker and poster formats also appear to be less likely to get lost amongst the other homework sheets/resources sent home from school because of their 'bright and cheerful' appearance.

Generally, The Ant Club appears to be **well supported by all staff within the schools** with resources and best practice being shared within the school. However, there were a couple of examples of resources going unused or becoming 'lost' within the school; e.g. when a teacher leaves.

Schools also appeared to be using The Ant Club resources very **flexibly and creatively**. There are examples of the resources being used across a variety of subjects, e.g. PE, and Maths as well as outside of lesson time in after school clubs and during lunch times with the support of lunch time/playground assistants.

Suggestions for development made by schools tended to relate to a preference for more variation of the resources year on year and for changes to when the resources are received. However, it was evident that schools **value the resources highly** in terms of overall quality and content.

6.1 Beechwood Primary School, Plymouth

About the school

Beechwood Primary is in Plymouth; there are 359 children who attend the school. There are an average number of children with special needs/disabilities in attendance and there are two reception classes. Ofsted gave them a grade of 'satisfactory', with a note that the teaching staff are dedicated and form good relationships with children and parents.

How The Ant Club resources are used

The Ant Club appears to be well supported within the school with good engagement from senior management. The children are engaged with the materials and look forward to receiving the new ones, particularly The Rhyme Challenge from Reception to Year One which the school has incorporated into an event;

"Well I love The Rhyme Challenge, because we realised that was our weakness, so when children come in they don't know rhymes. So we send the rhyme poster home in the first three weeks; then we invite all the parents in and we connect it with the Macmillan coffee morning. So we had about 60 parents and grandparents turn up, then we did The Rhyme Challenge. So the parents knew what rhymes we were going to do cos we sent it home and then they all joined in and we used rhythm sticks as well. Then we did a couple of dances and a time to talk Rhyme Challenge."

Views on The Ant Club

The school values the quality of the resources provided and feedback from parents has also been positive, as this comment about Booktime demonstrates:

"Absolutely fantastic! And good quality, and I couldn't believe it was free. And when I gave them out to the parents...the parents thought they belonged to the school and I said no it's yours! We have a story telling session...We promote reading with children as being very, very important, and then we give out the book bag and it has such an impact!"

The school has seen some **improvements in reading and writing** skills and the Booktime resources have played a key role in this. This comment about Booktime demonstrates this;

"60% of our children were doing really well up to Christmas reading, and from December when the books came until now, 30% have gone up again. So now we have 90% of the children who can read, so that's had a real big impact."

The main attraction and value comes through from the resources being provided for the children for free, that they are flexible, and the children really enjoy being given them.

Parental engagement

The school have also found that using the resources has helped to develop the home/school relationship. The teacher guidance is printed off from the website and given out to parents for them to use. The parents come to workshops and assemblies and can see their children reading

independently. The Rhyme Challenge has been particularly successful in engaging parents and children alike.

“The children were going home and saying ‘I need to do The Rhyme Challenge’ so they were doing it while they were cooking and things like that...It really does have a big impact, especially with our parents, you know, we are in quite a deprived area and to get two brand new books is absolutely fantastic.”

Suggestions for the future

The school have had a very positive experience using The Ant Club and would strongly recommend other schools to commit to it and promote it to staff.

“To other schools, I would say...‘just do it’, I know it comes in a pack, but just sit there for half an hour and go through the stuff, because it is worthwhile. And its good quality stuff. Look through all the stuff and then promote it.”

6.2 Valley Road School, Sunderland

About the school

Valley Road Community Primary School is a 415 place school plus a 60 place Nursery in Hendon, Sunderland. This school is larger than the average-sized primary school and is classified 'good' by Ofsted. The proportion of pupils supported at school action, at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well above the national average. The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is high – 57%.

The school has a literature rich curriculum, choosing a focus book every week in addition to the core curriculum books. They also run a 'Red Ted' initiative, which focuses on reading for pleasure. Foundation stage also uses The Bug Club (www.bugclub.co.uk) to enhance the curriculum. The percentage of pupils making expected progress in reading at Key Stage 2 is 83%.

How The Ant Club resources are used

The school has placed a strong emphasis on developing home school links and parental engagement through the use of The Ant Club resources.

"We used Rhyme Challenge in reception and we sent the resources home for the children to learn the poems and followed this up with an assembly for parents to watch. If the children learnt the rhymes and did the assembly then they got a certificate at the end...and it was lovely."

The school also used **Stories for Drama 'Chicken Licken'** in class as a drama activity whereby the classroom was emptied and the children spent a full week on this. In Year One, parents were invited into school for 45 minutes once a week to learn **The Rhyme Challenge** rhymes with the children. Year One also spent time using **Stories for Drama 'Stone Soup'** with the help of a specialist drama teacher that the school had brought in for this activity.

The school has found The Ant Club resources easy to fit in with their curriculum which already has a strong emphasis on drama as oracy is one of the school's targets. The school finds the resources very useful and the children find them engaging.

"Very useful – the stickers for the drama ones particularly...flash a sticker at anyone and you are on to a winner!"

Valley Road also seems to have had particular success in using The Ant Club resources to aid parental engagement.

*"We are in an area where it is difficult to engage with parents but they do seem to have engaged and the idea of having an assembly at the end...they tend to come to things that are non-threatening."
"Create your own book went home as homework, we adapted it and asked the children to write about their Christmas... we got quite a big response probably over 50% returned them - which is good for us."*

In terms of the impact of The Ant Club resources on children's development, the school have seen noticeable improvements in speaking skills and confidence.

“The biggest impact is in speaking skills and confidence. We had a poetry competition before Christmas where the children stood up and recited poetry [using Rhyme Challenge] some of the children you wouldn’t have thought would have had a go.”

The school appreciate the variety of resources provided along with the teacher guidance.

“We liked the range of different ones, as teachers we get fed up of seeing the same things. The guidance is very useful...if a worn out teacher can get a pack that they can just follow it is really really helpful!”

Suggestions for the future

The school are happy with the resources as they are and would just like more of the same, particularly eye-catching resources that include stickers and posters.

“The least popular is My Book, but the stickers and the posters are good... anything that we can send home that is bright and cheerful that will get stuck on the fridge instead of going on the pile.”

6.3 Browney Primary School, Durham.

About the school

This is a community school with 82 pupils. At Key Stage 2, 82% of the children are achieving level 4 or above in reading, writing and maths. Ofsted gave the school an overall rating of 'good' and 'outstanding' in relation to pupils' behaviour.

How The Ant Club resources are used

The school has been using an active learning approach to work with **Stories for Drama 'Chicken Licken'**. The children go to the gym where they do a warm-up session, and go round the group using ordinal numbers (first, second, third, etc). The children and teachers then do a song and dance and then sit in a circle to be read the Chicken Licken tale. To go with the story, puppets, masks and name tags (chicken, rabbit, fox, cat, and snake) are placed in the middle of the circle for the children to see and to help prompt them remembering the characters. As the story is read, the teacher asks the pupils to fill in blanks, or ask what happens next.

Once the story had been read, the children play a Chicken Licken version of the 'Duck, Duck Goose' game, which is very popular with the children.

"We like to recap the story, listening to the rhyming in the words, also I've been doing ordinal numbers with them at the moment. Trying to push first, second, third throughout that. I think you can get a lot from numbers in books which people don't always realise."

The school likes to use methods such as active learning with The Ant Club resources as they find this helps to improve the children's concentration;

"Oh they need that, that class are very lively, but I don't suppose that will differ from any other school, we do sit and read a lot of stories, but being involved and having the puppets, its just such a better way of doing it."

There is a lot of enthusiasm for The Ant Club within the school and commitment from the senior management team;

"Oh yes, our head, she's very keen for me to do it and the first year I did it, she kept asking 'have you done it, I'm really keen to see what you've done!' so I did it and I really enjoy it! So she does push me to do it!"

The school has found **The Rhyme Challenge** to be a particularly important and useful resource as some children come into reception not knowing any nursery rhymes. The children enjoy using the stickers and receiving certificates makes the children really happy. The electronic resources are not used by the teachers as they feel they get what they need in the packs. Also, they have their own school website, which is where they would put their resources.

The school puts displays on the walls about the Chicken Licken story so that children and their parents are able to view what work the pupils have been doing.

Views on The Ant Club

The resources always arrive promptly, along with guidance on how and when to implement the resources. In general the school tends to stick to the suggested timing but would probably have done things a little earlier than suggested but they ended up having quite a lot on so it was left until later to use the Spring term resources.

The school feels that the Booktime resources that the children get first are really important;

“That comes out quite early on when they start in September, which is nice anyway for them to take a book home. Because sadly there are still some families who won’t have books at home...And they often bring them back in, we have show and tell on a Friday and you’ll often find them coming back into school to show everyone, so they’re obviously a big hit!”

The teacher interviewed for this case study personally found **The Rhyme Challenge** and **Stories for Drama ‘Chicken Licken’** resources the most useful. The resources are seen as a starting point, for teachers to adapt and build upon depending on their curriculum. Having different resources year on year was noted as being important, as it was explained that some lessons include mixed year groups. The teacher guidance was referred to as being really good, noting that you could pick it up in a classroom and teach a class from it.

Key skills and confidence was seen to have improved through using the resources as the children understand rhymes now, and at the start this was an area where there were problems. Confidence in children is also improving through the creative use of the resources and active learning;

“One little boy in particular in there, when he is recalling the story like that, he can’t do that in class in a normal situation. Yet when we do that, it’s different and it’s coming through.”

Parental engagement

The school has sent Ant Club resources home but has had minimal feedback from parents. The resources haven’t been used as a specific tool to aid parental engagement.

“I always send the letter out that comes for the parents, but I never get any feedback from them about it. But I haven’t actually gone actively looking for the feedback either...If there isn’t a problem then they [parents] don’t need to...but now that I’ve said it I think it would be quite interesting to get their view!”

Suggestions for the future

The school is planning to focus more on improving the home school relationship and would like some resources for **the older children**, rather than just stopping in Year 1. More stories involving **numbers** would also be appreciated.

6.4 Anonymous School, Case Study 8

About the school

This school, in the West Midlands, has c.370 pupils and admits up to 60 children per year in September. They teach a broad and balanced curriculum; Ofsted gave a statement that it “is a good school, with some outstanding elements.” The percentage of pupils with English not as first language is 12.8% and 33% are eligible for free school meals.

How The Ant Club resources are used

The school has been receiving The Ant Club resources for the past few years. In reception, the teachers use them when they are appropriate to their projects; they usually do an activity based on the books. Other times they are used as a whole class. In both Reception and Year 1, **they use the resources at lunchtimes to help with the transition;**

“The Rhyme Challenge we have used with the dinner ladies to encourage the children to start rhyming at lunch time, they’ve had those laminated...that’s carried on into year one, so it’s been quite useful.”

The school also reuses the resources such as **Stone Soup**. In Reception, **The Rhyme Challenge** is used to encourage the children to join in, look at rhythm and rhyme. The approach is generally whole class based and used with a focus on **encouraging good listening and communication**. Listening is a skill which the school have noticed that is specifically improved through The Rhyme Challenge as the children have to listen out when they come across a rhyme they aren’t familiar with.

Stories for Drama ‘Chicken Licken’ is saved until the summer term, when the children are becoming writers.

Views on The Ant Club

In general, the school has found that the way the resources are presented makes them really useful in terms of supporting their reading programme and reaching parents. The resources always arrive promptly and are passed between staff straight away to decide on how they will be used. The children love the resources. With The Rhyme Challenge, as most of the children know some sort of rhyme, the familiar ones are used first when the children start out at school in reception.

“We pick something which is familiar to them, and it helps to unify them and help them feel comfortable and confident...we’ve always done that, but it’s rather nice because we have the posters to share with them and we do have displays around the class...gives them something colourful and visual to look at.”

The **teachers are really enthusiastic** about The Rhyme Challenge as it fits well with their overall approach. They appreciate that all the resources have different purposes and don’t feel that one is better than the other. Along with The Rhyme Challenge, Chicken Licken is popular and the children love the stickers.

For children who have English as an Additional Language (EAL), the resources are particularly useful and that is where the **improvements are clear**. Using actions with the rhymes helps the

children to join in. Parents of children who have EAL have also found the rhyming resources useful and have been able to sing them with their children.

The school finds the resources **flexible** and the teacher guidance is used to some degree and can be adapted;

“You need the teaching material because you need to know what the outcomes and purposes are, will we fit it, and then ultimately, I think any good teacher will just alter it to fit their own needs.”

As a school, they believe in ‘real materials’, so they do use the online resources but they aren’t their main focus and they prefer the actual books. The school are very **positive and appreciative** about the free hard copies;

“I don’t want a resource like that to die, it doesn’t happen often, I know its charity run, its things like that we need to have in school, especially as budgets get tighter, having that means a lot to me, so I want to make sure we support them back!”

Parental engagement

Parents have been really involved, they love the resources and are happy to have the ‘real materials’ given to them so they can make use of them. Teachers make use of The Ant Club resources in order to encourage parents to be more involved, this includes sending home activities but also having **parent workshops**;

“We do a parent ‘stay and read’ on a Friday morning, so we actually use that in the session and get the parents involved in doing that activity.”

The Rhyme Challenge is also sent home with the parents so that they can work with the children on rhymes. Stories for Drama ‘Chicken Licken’ has been useful as parents came in and read the story as it was not familiar to them;

“And also the parents, it wasn’t a familiar story to them, so they were able to come in and actually read the story and fill in the stickers, it was really getting parents involved in how its important to talk and read things, and the impact that has on writing.”

Suggestions for the future

It is noted that the resources are most useful in reception. Getting the children involved in this in reception is really important as they need to get the parents involved – the resources are very helpful in this respect.

Finally, the school is aware that there are some children who come into reception not knowing any nursery rhymes, therefore one suggestion would be **to implement The Rhyme Challenge during nursery**;

“The Rhyme Challenge would be lovely in nursery classes...you can’t go wrong with rhymes, they are inclusive to everybody and children love to be involved...they can be used inside or outside.”

6.5 Francis Askew Primary School, Hull

About the school

The school has around 300 pupils in attendance of which a high proportion (62%) are eligible for free school meals. Francis Askew is rated as 'good' by Ofsted. In 2013, the percentage achieving Level 4 or above in reading, writing and maths was 70%.

How The Ant Club resources are used

The school started using the resources for the first time this academic year. The resources had been going to another teacher in the school for two years and not being used. However now, the teacher interviewed for this case study ensures all resources go directly to her.

The school are keen to ensure they can engage all children in reading and are involved in various charity projects with Oxfam and Literacy Trust. The school go "above and beyond" just reading, by trying to link books with the interests of individual children and organising activities to appeal to them. The Reception children are given the opportunity to stay behind for an afterschool club, which they call "The Ant Club" – which is an hour's extra learning using The Ant Club resources.

The school also runs a four week teaching programme using the Stories for Drama 'Chicken Licken' resources within an after school club. There are currently around 15 pupils who attend, a letter was written to the parents to ask for permission to keep them behind;

"The children love it...I've said how the children have enjoyed it, the resources are lovely, and they love getting the stickers and the poster they take home!"

The lesson plans are used, starting with warm up activities to music and the four week programme is followed. Two teachers work on rotation between two classes of Reception and Year 1 children. The school encourages teaching students to be involved in the afterschool club and use The Ant Club lesson plans; this is helpful for the students as it helps them become involved in the wider curriculum as part of their training.

The online resources are checked to view any new books and the school use the audio recordings of Stories for Drama at the after school club.

Views on The Ant Club

The Stories for Drama 'Chicken Licken' resource has proved to be popular with both teachers and children. Teachers have noticed that the children have developed their **speaking skills** to talk about a story;

"I have noticed that they are able to talk about a story now...talking speaking and listening does come into the reading."

The resources are regarded highly and the teachers involved are looking forward to what they receive next term. The teacher guidance has not been used to any great extent because the rest of the resource is felt to be substantial enough and no gaps in the resources were identified.

“It does take time to get through [the teacher guidance]; I think the lessons are actually quite thorough and quite well planned.”

Parental engagement

The school describes home/school relationships as ‘generally okay’ but they are always looking to improve it and involve parents as much as they can. The school hosts meetings and workshops where there are talks, activities, food and drinks.

The school sent letters out to all the parents explaining that the books are free for each child and theirs to use and keep. In addition, they held a Booktime Meeting and asked parents to attend and there is one coming up next week;

“I’m using some of the resources to show parents how to engage with books.”

The meeting was used to give extra guidance to parents about how to read with their child, explaining phonics but also explaining meanings of images and words; and talking about the book before reading it.

Suggestions for the future

The school feels it would be useful if Booktrust put links on the website to some instrumental music for use during the warm up exercises.

7. Conclusions and recommendations

In this section we provide our conclusions and recommendations based on the key findings of this research. Please note we have only provided a recommendation where we feel we are able to do so, and some of these recommendations relate to an ideal scenario which would be dependent on the financial limitations of the programme.

Conclusion 1: It is clear from the survey and case studies that levels of satisfaction with The Ant Club are high and that it is a valued resource. The survey indicates that teachers have seen specific improvements in children's confidence and speaking skills – this has complemented the focus on oracy mentioned by several case study schools and has also been helpful for children with English as an additional language. The Rhyme Challenge has played a key role in this.

Recommendation 1: Continue to provide resources along the lines of The Rhyme Challenge, and/or stories with a repetitive format.

Conclusion 2: There is evidence to suggest that despite the difficulties faced in engaging parents in some of the more deprived communities, schools have effectively used The Ant Club resources to engage with parents in a range of ways. Schools mentioned that the familiarity of The Rhyme Challenge material was very accessible to parents and this enabled them to feel confident to help their child with homework. The sticker format of the Stories for Drama resources was felt to work well in that it was distinctive and less likely to become 'lost' amongst other homework sheets/resources brought home.

Recommendation 2: Continue to provide resources that are familiar to parents, particularly in a sticker or poster format that can be displayed within the home as a reminder/prompt for parent/child discussion.

Conclusion 3: The findings from the survey and case studies suggest that the online resources are not used as much as they could be due mainly to a lack of awareness and some teachers commenting that they did not know their log-in details.

Recommendation 3: A 're-launch' of the website would be useful in raising awareness alongside a reminder of log-in details.

Conclusion 4: Comments made in the survey and case studies suggest that some schools may have missed certain resources or have received them later than expected. As highlighted in the case studies there is a danger that resources can become 'lost' and consequently not used within the school if the key contact moves on.

Recommendation 4: Ensure schools have regular opportunities to update their contact details and consider issuing a follow up email to check that schools have received their resources by the specified date.

Conclusion 5: The majority of schools are not using the resources in the intended order and structure suggested by Booktrust, and several suggested that they would like to receive the resources earlier.

Recommendation 5: Consider if there is any way in which schools can select a different time to receive their resources.

Conclusion 6: The findings from the survey and case studies show that some teachers would appreciate a more diverse range of resources in terms of format (e.g. short animations/films)

Recommendation 6: Consider developing additional resources in other formats, e.g. short films/animations.

8. Appendices

8.1 Description of The Ant Club resources

Age Group	Autumn	Spring	Summer
Reception	Booktime	Stories for Drama: Chicken Licken	The Rhyme Challenge
Year 1	The Rhyme Challenge	Stories for Drama: Stone Soup	Create Your Own Book

Booktime (reception)

Booktime is a national free books programme for all reception-aged children. Every child receives a free book pack for children to share and enjoy with their family and friends, with supporting resources available online.

Stories for Drama (reception and year 1)

Each resource helps teachers explore an engaging story using drama with their class.

Teachers receive:

- A retelling of a story (Chicken Licken or Stone Soup)
- Ready-to-use session plans for using drama in class related to the story
- A colourful poster and four stickers linked to the story for each child to take home to stimulate discussion with parents.

The resource aims to support:

- Confidence in speaking
- Listening skills
- Increased parental involvement in their child's learning

The Rhyme Challenge (reception and year 1)

Each Rhyme Challenge consists of ten nursery rhymes and early years poems for children to learn in school and at home. Teachers can choose how many rhymes to learn and are encouraged to hold a celebration event involving parents and children at the end of The Rhyme Challenge.

Teachers receive:

- Rhyme sheets and posters of classic rhymes to learn as a class
- High quality reward certificates for every child
- Resources and guidance on how to involve parents

The resource aims to support:

- Familiarity with rhythm and rhyme
- Confidence with words that rhyme, increasing phonological awareness
- Repetition and recollection skills
- Increased home-school links and parental engagement
- Transition into Year 1 through having a similar resource in reception and Year 1

Create Your Own Book (Year 1)

Each child receives a high quality book to populate with their own content, designed to promote child-led content and creativity.

Teachers receive:

- A book for each child
- Resources and guidance on how to help children make use of the book.

The resource aims to support:

- Creativity
- Positive attitudes towards books
- Familiarity with different genres
- Parental involvement in their child's own learning

8.2 Table of case study schools

Name of school	No. of pupils	% eligible for free school meals	% English not as first language	Ofsted rating	% with SEN statement or School Action Plus	Key Stage 2 performance (% level 4 or above in reading writing maths)	Interview method
Beechwood Primary School, Plymouth	443	37%	not available	Good	12%	86%	Phone
Cross Gates Primary School, Leeds	213	39%	4%	Good	10%	82%	Phone
Maryland Primary School, London	459	24%	74%	Good	4%	67%	Phone
Watercliffe Meadow Community Primary School, Sheffield	541	35%	12%	Good	18%	50%	Phone
Valley Road Community Primary School, Sunderland	415	57%	16%	Good	14%	59%	Phone
School six (North East)	104	51%	0%	Good	27%	65%	Visit
Browney Primary School, Durham	82	20%	0%	Good	16%	82%	Visit
School eight (West Midlands)	372	33%	13%	Good	7%	75%	Phone
Galliard Primary School, London	715	34%	52%	Good	10%	69%	Phone
Francis Askew Primary School, Hull	271	63%	15%	Good	9%	70%	Visit

Source: Department for Education, Performance Tables

8.3 School survey

The Ant Club - School Survey

Ant Club and Booktrust logos to show on front page

We are conducting an evaluation of The Ant Club programme which provides free resources for use with Reception and Year 1 pupils to help develop children's confidence with speaking, listening, reading and writing.

It is key that Booktrust evaluates The Ant Club so that it can be continually improved. We would greatly appreciate it if you could complete this short online survey, which will take no longer than ten minutes. Even if you haven't used the resources we would still welcome your feedback.

All data provided to Booktrust will be anonymised in the report so you will not be identified.

Everyone that participates in the survey will be entered into a prize draw to win a £125 high street gift voucher for their school. This survey will close on 8th February 2014.

Should you have any queries or concerns regarding the research please email Kay Silversides at Qa Research kay.silversides@qaresearch.co.uk.

Q1 Please can you provide your:

School name:

Local authority:

School Postcode:

Q2 What is your role at the school?

Multiple choice

Reception class teacher

Year 1 teacher

Literacy Co-ordinator

Teaching Assistant

Deputy headteacher

Headteacher

Other

Please state

Q3 How long have you been in this role at your current school?

Ask in relation to every response at q2

Less than a year

1-2 years

3-5 years

Over 5 years

Q4 For how long have you been a qualified teacher?

Less than a year

1-2 years

3-5 years

Over 5 years
Not applicable – not a qualified teacher

Q5 Your school should have been sent Ant Club resources from Booktrust over the past year. Which of the following resources have you used?

All to show on the same page – images to be shown alongside each option

Reception class materials:

Booktime

Stories for Drama 1 (using 'Chicken Licken' resources)

The Rhyme Challenge for reception

Year 1 materials:

The Rhyme Challenge for Year 1

Stories for Drama 2 (using 'Stone Soup' resources)

Create Your Own Book (using 'My Book' resources)

Booklist (issued each term)

None of these

Q5b What are your reasons for not using any of the resources to date?

Multiple choice

I have not had time to integrate into the curriculum

I have other resources that I prefer to use

The pupils prefer other resources

Other reason

Please state

Q7a Would you say you have used the resources in the order and structure intended by Booktrust, using each resource for the year group it is intended, and during the term it was intended for?

Largely as intended

Adapted to fit in with planning

Used ad hoc, without specific planning

I wasn't sure how they were intended to be used

Q7b Can you give your reasons for this?

Only ask if select option 3 at Q7a

Q7c Did your school use the Rhyme Challenge resources as transition resources to aid transition from Reception to Year 1?

Yes

No

Unsure

Q7d Can you give your reasons for this?

Only ask if select 'no' at Q7c

Q8a Have you made use of any of the take-home aspects of The Ant Club resources to engage parents in their child's learning and build home/school relationships? (for example, sending out the

provided posters and stickers, sending letters to parents about resources, or running events based on the resources)

Yes
No

Q8b Can you say why not?
Only ask of those answering no at Q8a

Those answering Q8b route to Q9

Q8c What kinds of things have you done to engage parents by using the Ant Club resources?

Q9a On a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is not at all useful and 5 is very useful, how useful do you consider The Ant Club resources to be, in terms of the following aspects...

Scale of 1 to 5, also add a not applicable

Improving listening skills
Improving speaking skills
Improving reading skills
Improving writing skills

Q10 Are other members of staff aware of The Ant Club, and the resources being used?

Yes
No
Unsure

Q11 On a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is strongly disagree and 5 is strongly agree, to what extent do you agree with the following statements?

Scale of 1 to 5 plus a 'Not applicable' and 'don't know'

- a. The Ant Club resources are of a high quality
- b. I know more about new books and authors as a result of The Ant Club
- c. The Rhyme Challenge resources help ease the transition from reception to Year 1
- d. I feel more confident about using drama with pupils as a result of The Ant Club
- e. The Ant Club resources help to engage parents/carers with their child's learning
- f. The Ant Club resources complement the curriculum
- g. The Ant Club programme is a good service for schools

For any of the above questions where they've given a 1 or 2 ask: (ensure they are shown the statement again)

Please could you provide a few more details about why you disagreed with this statement?

Q12a Have you ever visited The Ant Club section of the Booktrust website?
Screenshot to show of: <http://www.booktrust.org.uk/ant-club/login/> If yes go to Q13, if no go to

Q12b
Yes
No

Q12b Is there a reason/s why you haven't used The Ant Club website?

Multiple choice

I haven't had time

I wasn't aware of the site

Other reasons

Please state

Q13 How useful have you found the additional resources and information featured on the Ant Club website?

Show image of homepage

Very useful

Quite useful

Okay

Not very useful

Not at all useful

I have not used the Ant Club website

Q14a How would you rate the success of The Ant Club in your school?

Highly successful

Successful

Partially successful

Unsuccessful

Q14b Is there anything that would help you to make more of the potential of the Ant Club programme?

I don't know

Q14c Finally, do you have any other comments you would like to make about the Ant Club programme or suggested improvements?

As a thank you for completing the survey we are offering you the chance to be entered into a prize draw. Would you like to be entered into this draw?

Yes

No

Prize draw details: There is one prize of a £125 high street gift voucher. Cash alternatives are not available. The survey closes on February 8th 2014. Qa Research will administer the prize draw; winners will be selected at random on the 17th February 2014 and be notified by the 21st February 2014. Winners will be contacted by email or telephone. A list of winners can be obtained by contacting Kay Silversides on kay.silversides@Qaresearch.co.uk.

As part of the evaluation of The Ant Club, Qa Research will be undertaking some case study interviews with schools in the next few weeks, these will either be telephone or face to face interviews to discuss the Ant Club in a bit more detail. Interviews would be arranged at a time to suit you.

Q15a Might you be able to help us with these case studies? If so one of Qa's researchers may call you in the next few weeks to discuss this further. You are not committing to anything by saying yes at this time. Schools selected for case studies will be given a £50 high street gift voucher for their participation.*(all need to be asked Q15b for prize draw element too)*

Yes

Maybe with more details

No

Q15b Please could you provide the following details? This information will only be used by the evaluation team and Booktrust in relation to the evaluation and prize draw. Your details will not be shared with any other parties.

Contact name

Work telephone number

Email address

Q16 Finally, do you have any other comments you would like to make about the Ant Club programme or suggested improvements?

Thank you very much for completing this survey! If you know any other teachers or staff that could be using the Ant Club resources we'd be grateful if you can let them know about this survey!

8.4 Case study interview guide

Please note; this a guide for the interviewer and will not necessarily be followed in the order presented or use the same words. The guide will need to be adapted slightly dependent on which interview method is used; certain activities will not apply to the telephone depth interviews.

Moderator:

Date:

Time:

Location:

My name is XXXX and I work for Qa Research an independent research company. Thank you for agreeing to take part in a case study interview. As you already know, we are completing this evaluation of the Ant Club on behalf of Booktrust. Booktrust are particularly interested to know more about how teachers and schools make use of the Ant Club resources.

As you know, I will be recording the interview today – this is just to help me write up the findings, the recording will not be passed on to anyone else, and your name will not be used in any reports that are written.

START RECORDING.

The interview will last around 30 minutes.

Do you have any questions before we begin?

Section I: Introductions

1.1 To get us started and to ensure I am asking questions relevant to you, could you explain to me a little about yourself and your role at the school?

- Name
- Position
- How long have held that position/been at the school

1.2 Were you aware of the Ant Club prior to being involved in the programme?
(Probe on their knowledge of the Ant Club resources and website, first use, first impressions.)

1.3 Were you aware of Booktrust prior to being involved in the programme?

Section 2: Use of Ant Club resources

Visits: Take out copies of the resources to use as memory aids, this may include any photos of examples given to us ahead of the meeting.

Telephone: If required, email images of resources to those taking part in the interview.

OK to begin with I'd like us to talk a bit about the way in which teachers use the Ant Club resources and integrate them with other work.

2.1 How often do you make use of the Ant Club resources in your school?

(Probe as to why resources are used or not used frequently/regularly)

2.2 Could you explain to me the methods you use to incorporate the resources into everyday learning?

(Probe as to why they are used in that way; ease of incorporating into existing learning)

Activity

[Telephone depths] We would like you to talk us through how you would typically use the Ant Club resources in the classroom/ [face to face] observe how you use the resources in the classroom. (Ask to take photographs if appropriate and have consent.)

(What adaptations have been made, how easily the resources fit in with the current curriculum, what do the resources add to lesson time? Do resources support learning goals? Are they used in groups or as whole class resource? Are they used with intended age groups at intended times? If not, why not?)

- 2.3 Additional resources, and electronic versions of resource guidance are also available online. In what way have used these? Do you prefer one format over the other?
(Probe for issues including – do they have they used they website? Ease of navigating the website, why is one preferred over the other, which is most practical for the classes, is a mixture of both used?)

Section 3: Reflections on the programme

The next questions look to explore your reflections on the Ant Club resources.

- 3.1 As a whole, how useful have you found the Ant Club resources to be?

Thinking about:

- Accessibility (online)
- Practicality/flexibility
- Interest from the pupils
- Interest from teachers
- Interest from parents

(Probe throughout for reasons, explanations and suggestions for improvements.)

- 3.2 Thinking about the specific resources, I would now like to speak about each one you have used in turn. Can you tell us which ones you have used and your opinions/reflections on them?

Reception class resources

- Booktime
- Stories for Drama 1 (using 'Chicken Licken' resources)
- The Rhyme Challenge for reception

Year One resources

- The Rhyme Challenge for Year 1
- Stories for Drama 2 (using 'Stone Soup' resources)
- Create Your Own Book (using 'My Book' resources)
- Booklist (issued each term)
- None of these

(Probe on where improvements could be made, have the resources had an impact on own teaching?)

- 3.3 Would you find it beneficial to receive similar resources each year to build on knowledge, or would you prefer different resources?

- 3.4 The Ant Club resources include teacher guidance, could you explain to me how useful you found this to be?

(Probe on how often they refer to the guidance)

Section 4: Perceived impact of the programme

The next couple of questions are about the impact of the programme on parents and children at your school, what improvements there have been and how these have been measured.

- 4.1 What do you perceive to be the impact of the Ant Club resources on the improvement of children's' key skills?

(e.g. reading, writing, speaking and listening, confidence, enjoyment, etc)

- 4.2 Have any of the resources been particularly effective/popular/successful?

(Ask to give examples...Probe on if there are some resources that children seem to have a strong preference for e.g. Chicken Licken, Stone Soup, The Rhyme Challenge etc. Why do they think this is?)

4.3 Can you talk me through an example where you have noticed a clear improvement in a child's ability?

(Probe on what the improvement was, how the improvement was measured, how much the improvement can be attributed to the Ant Club resources.)

4.4 Have you used the resources to engage parents in their child's learning? Have the resources helped to build/improve home-school relationships?

(Probe on how homework relationship has been facilitated, homework tasks, sending resources home, and invitations to events/school drama performances)

4.5 Following on from the previous question, how successful has this been? What works well?

(Probe on which resources have helped the development, what about them has influenced parents and children to read them.)

Section5: Communication of improvements

The next questions look at how the use of the Ant Club resources has been communicated throughout your school, and how improvements in the classroom have been communicated amongst teachers.

5.1 Can you think back to the start of the term and explain what methods were used by you and your fellow teachers to share information about the Ant Club resources?

Prompts:

- What happens when the resources arrive?
- Who decides how to use them, is it just reception/Y1 teachers or a whole school approach?
- If a two-form entry, do both classes use the resources at the same time or separately?
- Are there any best practice techniques shared amongst the team?

(Probe on availability of resources, enthusiasm towards the programme, time taken to communicate between teachers, organisation of delivering programme to children.)

5.2 Do you feel there is much senior management involvement or interest in the Ant Club?

(If not – would this be beneficial?)

5.3 With regards to your communication with Booktrust, what is this like?

(Probe on whether they know when resources are going to arrive, what the resources will be, how clear it is how to use them and who to use them with)

Section 6: Suggestions

- 6.1 If you had one message or suggestion to give to Booktrust regarding the Ant Club resources, what would it be?
- 6.2 Are there any gaps in the resources available to you that Booktrust could help with in the future?
E.g. resources for special needs children, children in nursery classes?
- 6.3 Do you have any tips for other schools about how to make the most of the resources?

Section 7: Close

- 7.1 Is there anything you would like to mention today that we haven't already covered?
- 7.2 Would you be happy for your school to be named in the final report?

Thank you