



Evaluation of BookTrust's additional needs support and resources

Final Report, July 2016



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Relevant publications

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Executive Summary

Introduction

BookTrust is the largest reading charity in the UK and it gifts over five million carefully selected books to schools and families each year. It recognises the dramatic impact that reading for pleasure has on well-being and social mobility but also celebrates reading as a pleasure in and of itself. BookTrust offers a universal programme of provision but combines this with targeted approaches to ensure that a full range of groups and individuals are served. For example, the *Letterbox Club* provides additional resources for children in foster care and *Bookstart Corner*, which is delivered through children's centres, for families who need additional support. The resources are also delivered through schools.

BookTrust provides **support for children with additional needs** through resources aimed at children of different ages from birth through to 16 years. Book Trust's additional needs resources support children with a variety of needs:

- The early years resources (Bookshine, Booktouch and Bookstart Star) are delivered through early years settings, libraries, SEN services and health professionals, and aim to support children aged 0-5 who are deaf, blind or visually impaired, or have disabilities affecting the development of fine motor skills.
- The resources for older children, aged 5-16, (Special School Library Pack and SEN resources for special schools) are delivered through special schools and aim to support children with a wide range of additional needs.

All of the additional needs resources aim to help children to develop a love of reading through accessible books, carefully selected by a panel of independent external reviewers, engaging resources, and guidance for parents, carers and practitioners. The books for special schools also contain positive images of disability. These resources are closely connected to BookTrust's larger scale mainstream programmes, and are delivered through partners in schools, libraries, early years settings and local authorities.

Please see the Appendix 6 for a full summary of the support Book Trust provides for children with additional needs.

Research questions

BookTrust commissioned researchers from the Institute of Education at the University of Derby to investigate the following questions:

1. How do children with additional needs experience books and reading for pleasure and what is the impact?

- What are the benefits of reading for pleasure (including reading with others) for children with additional needs?
 - What impacts do BookTrust's resources have with children with additional needs?
2. Is reading for pleasure experienced, supported and encouraged differently for children with additional needs?
- How can children with additional needs be supported to engage with reading for pleasure
 - What are the barriers to reading for pleasure?
3. How are BookTrust's additional needs resources used in a range of settings?
- How are BookTrust resources used by schools and families?
 - How are BookTrust resources integrated into different settings?
 - What reading for pleasure needs are not met by BookTrust's and others' resources?

Context

In England, 1.3 million (15.4%) children and young people are identified as having special educational needs (DfE, 2015). This represents a complex and heterogeneous cohort of individuals. Those who have more exceptional and complex needs will have a Statement or an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan¹. Those whose level of need does not warrant an EHC plan will receive special educational needs (SEN) support. More generally, SEN is conceptualised along a continuum predicated on levels of exceptionality, complexity and severity. Relatedly, there will be much developmental variance in literacy skill across all age groups. Individuals signified by the term special educational needs will occupy the cohort who are served by BookTrust's additional needs programmes

It is of great importance to note that each individual signified by their special educational needs is a unique, contributing human being with potential for growth and development. The sample for this project did capture a range of 'types' of need (such as visual impairment, profound and multiple difficulties, physical impairment and so on) but each participant was a complex individual whose impairment(s) combined with their personalities, propensities, stages of development, preferences and life situations in ways that made them unique. With that in mind, this research project has been *conducted* and is *reported* in ways that honour that fact.

Methodology

The research was carried out across four Local Authorities (LAs) in England, namely, Cornwall, Nottingham, Bradford and Ealing. These were selected to enable coverage of a

¹ An EHC plan replaces a statement of SEN. It is a legally binding summary of the provision that is to be made for an individual in response to their needs and aspirations. It focusses on positive outcomes in the areas of health, education, education and independent living.

broad range of contexts covering coastal, rural, city and metropolitan contexts. Within each LA, organisations who had participated in BookTrust’s additional needs programmes were recruited with the support of Bookstart co-ordinators in the regions. A summary of the sample is presented in Table (1) below:

Table (1) The sample for the project (pseudonyms used for schools and organisations)²

	Bradford	Cornwall	Ealing	Nottingham
Early Years	SEN Support Services (Visual Impairment, SEN early intervention)	Pinewood Special School (ages 2-19, severe and profound learning difficulties) Cornwall portage services.	Cloverfields Children’s Centre	Sherwood Nursery and Primary Mainstream School
Schools	Northwood Grange Special School (ages 11-19, generic and behavioural needs)	Pinewood Special School (Severe and Profound Learning Difficulties)	Summerglade Special School (ages 4-19, specialist school for autism)	Sherwood Mainstream School

Across the four LAs, researchers worked with the following participants

- 13 families and young children aged 3-6 years and 3 families of children and young people aged 11+
- 13 children and young people between the ages of 11 and 15 years in special and mainstream schools.
- 7 groups of young people in special and mainstream schools between the ages of 11 and 15 years
- 27 practitioners inclusive of portage practitioners, teachers, teaching assistants, special needs coordinators and SEN support services.

Though this sample was drawn from opportunity sampling, great care was taken to ensure that a diverse range of schools, families, children and young people were included.

The study adopted a qualitative approach to investigating the research questions to enable rich descriptions of the manner in which BookTrust’s additional needs resources were used and experienced. This also allowed investigation of important questions about how children with special educational needs experience *reading for pleasure* and can be supported in it.

Methods

Given that the study’s participants included very young children and children with special educational needs it was important to design tools that enabled them to voice their feelings and thoughts as freely as possible. The research tools ensured that children and young

² In the case of schools, pseudonyms are used.

people took part willingly. Their participation was maximised through use of flexible methods such as conversations, semi-structured interviews with scope for detailed personal accounts, exploring topics through focus groups, drama, use of puppets, diaries, photos, videos, painting, and map-making (Alderson, 2005).

The research team recognised that it is important not to assume that children with special educational needs must be singled out for protections that go beyond those deemed suitable for *all* children for this has commonly been a reason for disenfranchising them from opportunities to be heard. Rather, their engagement was underpinned by four key ethical principles: beneficence; non-maleficence; justice and autonomy. For these reasons, careful consideration was given to:

1. the processes for gathering the consent of the child/young person
2. building in opportunities for choice and ownership; and
3. data collection processes that are flexible and responsive to the propensities, abilities and interests of the child/young person.

The research was approved by the College of Education Research Ethics Committee at the University of Derby

The following, qualitative methods were used:

The research team conducted deep level interviews with families which comprised three elements: Firstly, an observation of parents and children reading the resources together using a structured observation schedule (Appendix 1a) combined with a video recording so that a narrative account could be structured. The research tools also included an observation schedule that was designed for children at the earliest stages of communication (Appendix 1b). Secondly, with parents present, researchers conversed or played with children (Appendix 2) to elicit their views and feelings about books and reading. A range of elicitation tools were used including puppets, drawing, objects of recognition, augmented and alternative communication³ and so on. Finally, parents were interviewed using a semi-structured approach (Appendix 4). Though most of the data collected through this approach was drawn from a range of Early Years settings, it was also used in KS3 when the opportunity arose.

The research included observations of individual children in their school settings. During this time children and young people would be engaged with an activity, discussion about or sharing of books and resources from the School Library Pack. Following this, the researcher would converse or play with the child/young person using age appropriate elicitation tools and conversation schedules (where it was more comfortable for the young person, the

³ Augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) includes all forms of communication (other than oral speech) that can be used to support expression. For example, use of eyegaze, signs and symbols. Some AAC uses technology such as overlay voice output communication aids.

practitioner would lead this process). The research questions were also investigated using a focus group schedule or when more appropriate, an observation of a group activity led by a practitioner who also elicited views and feelings about the resources. Semi-structured interviews were carried out with a wide range of practitioners using face to face and telephone modes (Appendix 3).

Data was analysed using a range of qualitative techniques including coding and enumeration. This process involves the coding of raw data in order to identify themes and categories of evidence that relate to the research questions. Enumeration involves counting the number of times a theme, phrase or word arises. This process harvested answers to the research questions.

The research also included a systematic review of the literature.

Findings

How do children with additional needs experience books and reading for pleasure and what is the impact?

Appreciation for the resources provided by the BookTrust

The parents and practitioners participating in this project were full of praise for the quality and appropriateness of BookTrust's additional needs resources. They appreciated the care and investment that had been made in their selection and presentation. Families welcomed these gifts and felt that their children were being valued through them. Schools welcomed the arrival of the School Library Packs and adapted the ideas provided in the *Supporting guide for the Special School Pack*. Everyone was very positive about BookTrust and affirmed its impact.

The benefits of reading for pleasure

The benefits of reading for pleasure among children with additional needs in this study were significant and often profound. Books were important in their lives. Among the benefits were opportunities for comfort, closeness and well-being. Books were also important scaffolds for development and were being used to provide a highly personalised route to learning. For example, books were a stimulus for movement, communication, language development, learning about the world and learning to be independent. BookTrust resources were clearly seen to contribute to delivering these positive outcomes and there were countless examples of this in the data. For reasons that are unclear, the literature provides very little account of the impact of reading for pleasure among children and young people with special educational needs and the findings of this project make a useful contribution. More research and development around this important issue needs to be undertaken.

Access to reading for pleasure

Emphatically evidenced across the data was the belief that children with additional needs did experience the benefits of reading for pleasure as much as children without additional needs.

The general consensus was that differences in the extent to which children were able to gain pleasure from books were to do with access. Some access issues were impairment specific (such as visual and hearing difficulties). For example, where children had visual impairments, lighting and seating position were important. Some access issues were highly individual, for example where an individual preferred some forms of sensory stimulation through their feet rather than hands. For older children and young people with Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties, there was a dearth of appropriate sensory books that were age appropriate and this was recognised as a substantial shortcoming in current provision within and beyond BookTrust.

Is reading for pleasure experienced and encouraged differently for children with additional needs and what are the barriers?

Personalisation and barriers to reading for pleasure

The issue of personalisation was central in understanding how enjoyment of reading might be encouraged and supported. Here, personalisation refers to the way that communication, support and interaction was matched to the unique capabilities and preferences of individual children and young people. Encouraging and supporting reading for pleasure among children and young people with additional needs was a matter of combining the right resource with a responsive adult who could mediate the connection between child and book in ways that were highly individualised.

The data and the literature led to the proposal that barriers to reading for pleasure arose from a complex set of factors inclusive of children's impairment(s), sensory preferences, stages of development, personalities, life-situations, capabilities and ages. It would not be wise to dismiss the significance of impairment. However, the data suggests that it is unwise to both overgeneralise and under-generalise in this respect. For the former, it should not be assumed that children who have the same impairment will need the same types of support. For the latter, it should not be assumed that children and young people with impairments may not share experiences and needs that are common to all children.

Born out by the literature (Han *et al.*, 2015; Le Fanu, 2015; Lewis and Norwich, 2006 Lacey *et al.*, 2008) is an argument for fluid models of provision that combine what is known for all children with what is known about specific types of impairment combined with what is known about the unique individual. How these three elements are patterned is likely to be dependent on the individual and is best conceived fluidly. To a large extent, the findings demonstrate that BookTrust's approach is fitting for such fluidity since they combine universal gifting programmes for all children (such as Bookstart and the School Library Packs) with programmes tailored to the needs of specific sub-groups (such as the additional needs packs which complement the Bookstart programme). However, in the case of the additional needs packs there is some space to intensify *personalise-ability* even further (see recommendations).

Strategies for pleasurable reading with children with special educational needs

Crossing the boundaries of impairment were a wide range of strategies that were potentially relevant to the inclusion of children with special educational needs in pleasurable reading. The data and the literature correlate to propose that *inclusive literacy* (Lacey *et al.*, 2008) and *emergent literacy* (Rohde, 2015) can be adopted as promising philosophies and practices for the full range of children with special educational needs. Practices most likely to have a positive impact on engagement with reading were:

- The use of multi-modalities: Tactility, songs, rhymes, auditory, visual, kinesthetic, sensory, digital literacies, props, concrete resources, real-world artefacts.
- The integration of playful activity: puppets, role play
- Intensive use of sensory stimuli
- Adoption of intense dialogic, dyadic interaction
- Enabling independence, responsibility and taking a lead
- Making connections with everyday life and experience through for example, extratextual talk (Zucker *et al.*, 2012)⁴
- Providing resources for older children that are accessible and age-appropriate.
- Recognising the central role of parents, carers and significant others
- Highly responsive practice

It is important to note that such practices are already embedded in the resources, guidance and approach adopted by BookTrust. However, the relevance of such approaches to older children and young people who may have severe and profound learning difficulties and disabilities must not be overlooked.

What reading for pleasure needs are not met by BookTrust's and others resources?

The need for accessible and multi-sensory books for older children

In the context of very positive evaluations about BookTrust's resources, there were widespread concerns of the dearth of appropriate books for older children with additional needs. Parents, practitioners and young people themselves identified the need for accessible, sensory picture books that were relevant to teenagers' lives. This was signaled as an urgent need and one that may form a priority for BookTrust's programme development. Interview and observation data demonstrated that though the Special School Library pack did contain carefully chosen books that were age-appropriate whilst being easy to read (such as *Respect*, *Contact* and *Laika the Astronaut*), the pack does not contain the kind of accessible, robust, sensory books that are required by teenagers with severe and/or profound and multiple learning difficulties.

Special School Resources

⁴ 'Extratextual talk' describes interection surrounding the story or text such as labelling, making inferences, relating what is being read to children's own lives, explaining and/or analysing 'before, during, and after the reading of a text.

Practitioners in special schools were positive about the value of the special school resources and would adapt the activities around the specific needs of their students. A sensory approach to story-telling was commonly used in special schools and practitioners were confident about their ability to design such activities. Hence, the *SEN resources for Special Schools* were supplementary to their established practice and were useful in this respect. Practitioners in schools noted that if the SEN resources for Special Schools were also accompanied by the books they referred to, they would be more widely used. It was more likely for practitioners to use the ideas in the *Supporting guide for the Special School Pack* since these were accompanied by the actual book.

Online resources

More generally, the resources available on the BookTrust website were underused by schools (such as activity sheets) and practitioners were not aware of the scope and potential value of these resources. For example, in the early years, there was frequent mention of the need for parent guidance materials in multiple languages when these are already provided by BookTrust on their website.

Intensifying personalise-ability

Parents and practitioners suggested some ways forward for BookTrust. These suggestions were about intensifying the personalise-ability of the resources. Among some families, children had been gifted a pack designed for a particular type of need (e.g. physical impairment) which omitted auditory resources and signing materials that would have been appropriate in the case of, for example, children whose physical impairment meant that they needed to use signing to communicate.

The need for big books and multiple copies

Participants also asked whether multiple copies of books within packs could be provided to resource activities in school using the same books as were being used at home. Providing big book formats would support this further as would acknowledgement of Makaton⁵ signing. Dual language books and guidance for parents would also be welcomed as an additional route towards personalisation. Some practitioners had accessed the website but asked that parents be better signposted to it as an additional resource.

How are BookTrust's additional needs resources used in a range of settings?

The important role of the Bookstart Co-ordinator

Bookstart Co-ordinators were very active in accessing a range of settings including portage services, early years settings (schools and children's centres) SEN support services and Sensory support services. It was clear that these settings had an established and long lasting relationship with BookTrust as a consequence of being in close contact with the Bookstart Co-ordinator. Such services were an important route to reaching the children and families who

⁵ Makaton is a language programme that utilises symbols and signs to support communication. The signs and symbols are used with speech and in spoken word order.

would benefit from the additional needs resources.

Integration into settings

In the organisations visited (schools, children's centres, health services, SEN support services), the additional needs resources were well-integrated into the every day work of the setting. For example, in Bradford the Visual Impairment specialist teacher had used the Booktouch resources with parents at the local library. Other practitioners working in this service also used these resources to support parents in meeting their children's needs. In Cornwall, the Bookstart Co-ordinator was a special visitor to the playgroup at the Child Development Centre providing sensory stories and rhyming sessions for parents and families and using this forum as a route to gifting resource packs. The Bookstart co-ordinator had also made resources that were on constant display in this setting. In Ealing, the children's centre valued the BookTrust resources very highly and having requested additional copies of the Booktouch, Bookshine and Bookstart Star materials for their classrooms, used these in the curriculum, finding them useful for all children. In cases where the Bookstart co-ordinator had gained lesser access to the setting or where the relationship was new, the resources did not hold such a high profile.

In schools, books from the Library Packs were used to support the curriculum and to resource day to day reading activities. For example, in Bradford, *Laika the Astronaut* was used to support the English, art and food technology curriculum.

Recommendations

The resounding message from this study is that BookTrust should continue with its good work. Further steps in supporting reading for pleasure among children with additional needs are possible in the spirit of intensifying the degree to which programmes can be personalised around the unique needs of individual children and young people. The following recommendations are made with this mind.

1. BookTrust should revisit how it conceptualises and gifts to the full spectrum of children and young people with special educational needs. Currently in the early years programmes, the division of resources into the three categories of hearing impairment, visual impairment and physical impairment does not reflect the complex continuum of individuals who do benefit (and could benefit) from BookTrust programmes. BookTrust are encouraged to consider whether, in the early years, a universal pack could be established and supplemented thereafter by resources that are selected by parents, practitioners and children on the basis of their knowledge of individual needs. This may require some additional training for staff about how to gift packs that are appropriate to the child rather than their impairment. It may also require some changes
2. For similar reasons, BookTrust should revisit the division of its School Library Pack into Special and Mainstream versions since both types of schools are populated by very varied

cohorts where individuals may benefit more from one pack than the other. This is particularly important since schools are restricted to ordering one type of pack and where children with additional needs in mainstream schools may not be gaining access to the kinds of books that might be most suitable for them.

3. In relation to greater personalisation, BookTrust should consider how its books and resources could be developed to increase the presence of the individual child or young person in books. For example, the inclusion of Velcro squares onto which photographs of children and the things that matter to them could be attached. No doubt, there are other imaginative ways to support parents and practitioners in achieving this level of personal inclusion. Such developments could include the wider use of digital options.
4. Similarly, the advice provided for parents assumes singular impairment when in reality, many children and young people in this cohort have more complex profiles. BookTrust is advised to revisit the presentation of its guidance for parents. This may be imagined in the form of universal guidance which is supplemented by suggestions about sensory impairments, autism, profound learning difficulties and speech difficulties for example. BookTrust could also consider the construction of guidance templates that practitioners in schools and support services could edit in ways that meet local and individual need.
5. Parental guidance could make more explicit reference to the importance of 'Extratextual talk' (Zucker et al., 2012) so as to enable deeper engagement in stories and books. Such talk is about making inferences, relating the material to children's own lives and talking about the events, people, things and places in the book. More emphasis might also be placed on giving children opportunities to take the lead in conversation, page turning and choosing points of focus so that independence is enabled over passive engagement.
6. For the Special School Library Pack, BookTrust should revisit its programme, giving attention to how the range of books could be developed to better meet the needs of children and young people with severe and profound learning difficulties. This is important given that this group may include individuals for whom conventional literacy will not be acquired and for whom emergent literacy is likely to be protracted, even to the entire life-course. This could be the basis for a research and development project that could attract funding from a range of organisations and would involve the creation of robust, multi-sensory books (typically produced for very young readers) which are relevant to teenagers' lives. This project could include investigation of how parental involvement in reading might be shaped around the needs of older children.
7. The Special School Library Pack does include some fiction and non-fiction books that are easy to read but age appropriate but schools and young people continue to claim shortage of such texts. BookTrust should consider how it can expand the range of books of this type through its gifting programme or through the titles it recommends on its website.

8. Generally, the website resources are underused by schools and families. This is because they simply do not know they are there. Though the website is very boldly presented on the packaging of the early years resources, this does not seem as noticeable or encouraging of access as is desirable. One suggestion made by practitioners is to insert a QR code or web address into the books and resources.
9. BookTrust should consider how it could supplement its current resources to include multiple copies of texts for use in classrooms, settings or centers. Where practitioners can use the same books being read at home in the classroom, the books can be more fully used and promoted among children and families. For many children and young people with special educational needs the experience of repetition and anticipation is important in the enjoyment of books and reading.
10. The Bookstart co-ordinator has a central role to play in intensifying the use and impact of current resources. Where the Bookstart co-ordinator has well developed relationships with a setting, the resources tend to be more integrated and better promoted among families. It will be important for BookTrust to consider how it could increase the promotion of existing resources (such as dual language books and online resources) and how the Bookstart co-ordinator might be part of this. It is also important to consider how a similar co-ordination role might be extended to the School Library Packs and SEN Resources for Special Schools so that their impact can be intensified.
11. Finally, BookTrust should continue to operate around its core principles and philosophy. In foregrounding the enjoyment of books and reading, it presents an important message and one that is overlooked in the literature. Enjoyment of books and reading has profound importance in the lives of children with special educational needs and is something that deserves more attention in the wider field of academic theory and research.

BookTrust is leading the way with its gifting programmes for SEN and should continue to lead the way through propagating further research and development that can contribute to theory and practice in this important area.

The best way to end this executive summary is with the words of Sandra, mother to John who is now 13, has a wide vocabulary and a particular liking for Dr Who. Her comment represents the way in which parents and practitioners saw enjoyment of reading as essential. About John (who loves books and also has Down Syndrome), Sandra said:

'I think that books are very powerful and reading with him helped him to learn and recognise speech. He learned to say his name with books. Books are very powerful.'

1. Context

1.1: About BookTrust

'It is not true we have only one life to live, if we can read, we can live as many lives and as many kinds of lives as we wish.'

Haywaka, 1964

Being able to read with enjoyment opens doors. It enables access to different worlds and identities, promotes social mobility and personal wellbeing. Hence the value and importance of reading for pleasure must not be underestimated and children with additional needs should not be excluded from opportunities to develop a love of books.

Evidence of the central importance of *reading for pleasure* to positive and equitable educational outcomes is substantial. Clark and Rumbold (2006) Twist *et al.* (2007) and the OECD (citing PISA, 2009) report on the positive relationship between how *often* children read, how much they *enjoy* reading and their educational attainment. The OECD (2000) found that enjoyment of reading is more prevalent among socio-advantaged students. More recently, the OECD (2010) report increasing evidence of the link between reading daily for enjoyment and scores on the PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) reading assessment. Clark and Rumbold (2006) also outline the positive social and emotional consequences of finding pleasure in books. Further, reading at home (independently and with parents/carers) is associated with higher attainment (PIRLS, 2006; OECD, 2009) and increased general knowledge (Clark and Rumbold, 2006). More recently, research on reading attitudes has continued to illustrate that motivation to read is correlated with overall reading performance among learners with additional needs (Cassidy and Ortlieb, 2013; Ortlieb, 2014; Ortlieb, 2015).

However, the Department for Education report a general decline in the number of children reading for pleasure over the past decade (DfE, 2012 citing OECD, 2009) while Twist *et al.* (2007) found evidence that in the UK, the decline was more marked than in many other OECD countries. There are also differences among socioeconomic groups with children and young people from low income families reading less than those from higher income groups; boys reading less than girls and secondary aged children identifying reading and 'readers' as having lower status than primary aged children (DfE, 2012). Additionally, there is evidence that what children are *reading for pleasure* is also changing with increasing use of social media (and other online sources), graphic novels and comic books (Clark and Douglas, 2011).

With this complex context in mind BookTrust is committed to the promotion of reading for pleasure among *all* children and young people including those from disadvantaged groups and those with additional needs (such as sensory and physical impairment). It has designed and implemented a wide ranging programme of book-gifting and projects for children and young people from birth to secondary school with some of these, such as the *Letterbox Club* and *Bookstart Corner* targeted at children in foster care and families using children's centres

respectively, designed to ensure equity across the school and pre-school population. BookTrust has also commissioned and published research reports seeking to examine the impact of their work on practitioners, children, parents and young people in order to ensure that, in the changing context noted above, their approaches were having the desired impact.

In support of BookTrust's concern for equitable outcomes, this project has cast valuable light on the application and impact of the *Bookshine*, *Booktouch* and *Bookstart Star* programmes as well as its gifting of School Library Packs and SEN Resources to special schools. Studies that analyse the impact of reading for pleasure on children with additional needs are very small in number. With this in mind, this project offers BookTrust a useful account of impact, whilst making an important contribution to knowledge in this field.

BookTrust provides **support for children with additional needs** through resources aimed at children of different ages from birth through to 16 years. Book Trust's additional needs resources support children with a variety of needs:

- The early years resources (Bookshine, Booktouch and Bookstart Star) are delivered through early years settings, libraries, SEN services and health professionals, and aim to support children aged 0-5 who are deaf, blind or visually impaired, or have disabilities affecting the development of fine motor skills.
- The resources for older children, aged 5-16, (Special School Library Pack and SEN resources for special schools) are delivered through special schools and aim to support children with a wide range of additional needs.

All of the additional needs resources aim to help children to develop a love of reading through accessible books, carefully selected by a panel of independent external reviewers, engaging resources, and guidance for parents, carers and practitioners. The books for special schools also contain positive images of disability. These resources are closely connected to BookTrust's larger scale mainstream programmes, and are delivered through partners in schools, libraries, early years settings and local authorities.

Please see the Appendix 6 for a full summary of the support Book Trust provides for children with additional needs.

1.2: About Special Educational Needs in England

Where this report uses the term *additional needs*, it is synonymous with the definition of *special educational needs (SEN) and disability* that occupies current policy and legislation. In the 2014 Children and Families Act 2014, the term SEN identifies children and young people who have significantly greater difficulty learning than their peers and/or who have a disability which makes access to mainstream education of the type generally available more challenging (DfE and DoH, 2015, p15). Previously the term SEN was applied to children between ages 2 and 16 (SENDA, 2001) but this has been extended to include children and young people aged 0-

25 to enable more continuity of provision over the life-course of individuals. Children with special educational needs receive special provision that is additional to or different from that which is usually provided.

Many children and young people who have SEN may have a disability under the law that is ‘...a physical or mental impairment which has a long-term and substantial adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities’ (Equality Act, 2010, Section 6, 1). The SEN Code of Practice (DfE and DoH, 2015) notes that this definition includes sensory impairments such as those affecting sight or hearing, and long-term health conditions including asthma and epilepsy. Children and young people with such conditions do not necessarily have special educational needs though there is a very large amount of overlap between disability and SEN. Where a disabled child or young person requires special educational provision they will also be covered by the SEN definition. As noted previously, BookTrust operates a system of carefully designed universal provision (such as Bookstart) combined with more targeted programmes (such as Letterbox Club and the additional needs resources) to ensure that the wide diversity of children and young people are appropriately supported by its work. With this in mind it is useful to position BookTrust’s provision for SEN within the national context.

In England, 1.3 million (15.4%) children and young people are identified as having special educational needs. Just over 235,000 (2.8%) have more exceptional and complex needs and will have a Statement or an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan⁶ along with a more significant level of different or additional provision (such as a place in a special school, transport costs, social care). This cohort is signified by the term *SEN with an EHCP*. Children and young people whose level of disability or learning difficulty do not warrant an EHCP are supported through funds that are delegated to schools and/or available from Local Authorities through an application process. This cohort is signified by the term *SEN Support*. More generally, SEN is conceptualised along a continuum predicated on levels of exceptionality, complexity and severity. Relatedly, there will be much developmental variance in literacy skill across all age groups. The most recent and reliable data (DfE, 2015) offers the following accounts of the cohort of learners identified by the term SEN. This is of interest to BookTrust since it reports on the population that it is striving to serve:

- 57% of children with EHCPs (or statements) were in mainstream schools and 43% in special schools (a 1% increase since 2014).
- Across all age groups and levels of support, boys are about twice as likely to be identified as having SENs than girls.
- Across all age groups and levels of support, children who are eligible for free school meals are twice as likely to be identified as having SENs than those who are not eligible.
- Children whose first language is known to be English are more likely to be identified

⁶ An EHC plan replaces a statement of SEN. It is a legally binding summary of the provision that is to be made for an individual in response to their needs and aspirations. It focusses on positive outcomes in the areas of health, education, employment and independent living.

as having SENs than children whose first language is not English.

- The number of children and young people with an EHC plan increases steadily with age and those aged 14 and 15 are the most likely to have an EHC Plan.
- The likelihood of having SEN support peaks at around age 9 or 10, declining thereafter.

The proportions of children who have an EHC Plan (or statement) have primary types of needs (approximations) as follows (DfE, 2015):

Autistic Spectrum Disorder 24%
Moderate Learning Difficulties 18%
Severe Learning Difficulties 14%
Speech, Language and Communication Needs 13%
Social, Emotional and Mental Health Needs 13%
Physical Disability 5%
Specific learning difficulties 4%
Profound and multiple learning difficulty 4%
Hearing impairment 3%
Visual Impairment 1.5%
Multisensory Impairment 0.2%
Other 0.3%

The proportion of children who have SEN support have primary types of need (approximations) as follows (DfE, 2015):

Moderate Learning Difficulties 26%
Speech, Language and Communication Needs 20%
Social, Emotional and Mental Health Needs 17%
Specific learning difficulties 16%
Other 9.5%
Autistic Spectrum Disorder 5%
Physical Disability 3%
Hearing impairment 2%
Visual Impairment 1%
Severe Learning Difficulties 0.5%
Multisensory Impairment 0.1%
Profound and multiple learning difficulty 0.1%

Though these figures describe the *primary* type of need it is common for learners to have a more complex profile where, for example, a multisensory impairment is experienced along with profound and multiple learning difficulties or ASD is experienced alongside communication needs.

Having presented an account of this national picture, it is of great importance to note that each

individual signified by the terms SEN or disability is a unique, contributing human being with potential for growth and development. With that in mind, this research project has been conducted and is reported with core principles of respect for this fact. The sample for this project did capture a wide range of types of needs but each participant was a complex individual whose impairment(s) combined with their personalities, propensities, stages of development, preferences and life situations in ways that made any generalisation difficult. However, the rich accounts and stories that are to be told can inform BookTrust's theory of change for universal and targeted provision in important ways.

1.3: About this evaluation and its core questions

The core purpose of this research was to evaluate the use and impact of BookTrust's additional needs resources and programmes - in particular, the Early Years programmes, *Bookshine*, *Booktouch* and *Bookstart Star* and the *Special School Library Pack* and *SEN Resources for Special Schools* (see Appendix 6). The research questions were drawn from two distinct but interrelated dimensions. The first was to investigate how children with additional needs experience reading for pleasure; the second was to explore how BookTrust resources were used in different settings. These dimensions combine to inform BookTrust's theory of change. Central to this theory is a mission to intensify the extent to which all children are included in the world of books and can gain from the delights they have to offer. With this in mind, the following questions were investigated by this project:

1. How do children with additional needs experience books and reading for pleasure, and what is the impact?
 - What are the benefits of reading for pleasure (including reading with others) for children with additional needs?
 - What impacts do BookTrust's resources have with children with additional needs?
2. Is reading for pleasure experienced, supported and encouraged differently for children with additional needs?
 - How can children with additional needs be supported to engage with reading for pleasure?
 - What are the barriers to reading for pleasure?
3. How are BookTrust's additional needs resources used in a range of settings?
 - By schools
 - By parents
 - How are BookTrust resources integrated into different organisations?
 - What reading for pleasure needs are not met by BookTrust's and others resources?

The literature review that follows explores the current treatment of questions 1 and 2.

2. Supporting children with additional needs to read for pleasure

This section explores what is known, hypothesised and discussed in the literature about the benefits of reading for pleasure and how this might be best supported for children with additional needs.

2.1 The evidence for the benefits of reading for pleasure for all children and children with additional needs

Clark and Rumbold (2006, pp.5-6) argue that 'reading for pleasure' is difficult to define. Nonetheless they observe that it is 'reading that we do of our own free will anticipating the satisfaction that we will get from the act of reading'. Although this definition of reading for pleasure appears to indicate that the activity is about pleasing oneself, the authors argue for the central importance of reading for pleasure to positive and equitable educational outcomes, going so far as to observe that because reading enjoyment appears to be a significant precursor of educational success, 'Reading for pleasure could therefore be one important way to help combat social exclusion and raise educational standards' (Clark and Rumbold 2006. P.6. See also Morrisoe 2014; Read On, Get On 2014). Hartas (2011) however, found that although all socioeconomic groups participated in home learning activities equally, this does not apply to reading since mothers living below the poverty line and those who do not have educational qualifications read to their children less frequently. Clark and Rumbold (2006) also outline the positive social and emotional consequences of finding pleasure in books. Further, reading at home (independently and with parents/carers) is associated with higher attainment (Mullis *et al.*, 2006; OECD, 2009) and increased general knowledge (Clark and Rumbold, 2006). Twist *et al.* (2007) and the OECD (2009), citing the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), report on the positive relationship between how often children read, how much they enjoy reading and their educational attainment. Some of these topics are explored further in later sections.

This view that reading is a basic skill and one that forms a base for further attainment in other fields is widespread in the literature. Typical of the view is Stutz *et al.*'s (2016) observation that: 'The ability to read constitutes an important prerequisite for learning, and deficits in that ability have considerable consequences for the acquisition of other necessary skills' (p.101). Reading is therefore both intrinsically and extrinsically motivated (Wigfield and Guthrie 1997; Stutz *et al.* 2016): 'Intrinsically motivated readers read for enjoyment and because they find the process of reading rewarding in itself. In contrast, extrinsically motivated readers read in order to attain some goal that lies beyond the process of reading (e.g., receiving good grades in school)' (Stutz *et al.* 2016. P.102). The benefits of reading for pleasure are therefore twofold: gaining personal satisfaction and meeting the requirements of others, leading to for example better examination grades and enhanced prospects for successful economic performance. Clark and Rumbold (2016) note that intrinsic motivation is a predictor of reading for pleasure while extrinsic motivation is not. Likewise, the authors observe that intrinsic motivation is

positively associated with comprehension while extrinsic motivation is negatively associated. However, while some studies have shown that both types of motivation can lead to increased amounts of reading, and more reading can increase reading competence (Stutz *et al.* 2016), it is argued that the evidence to support a positive relationship between extrinsic motivation and reading amount is more mixed with at least one study indicating a negative association (ibid). Stutz *et al.*'s own (2016) study showed a positive association between intrinsic motivation and comprehension but a negative association between 'competition-oriented', extrinsic motivation.

The discussion above has identified two main areas of benefit of reading for pleasure: *internal benefits* relating to personal satisfaction and *external benefits* relating to pleasing others. However, there is not necessarily such a distinction between the two as pleasing others can lead to 'internal' pleasure as well as to better grades, potentially higher wages, and potentially a more comfortable and pleasant lifestyle. The corollary of the benefits of reading for pleasure is that there are disadvantages to poor literacy.

Gross (2009) has identified the long term costs of literacy difficulties. They include costs related to the provision of support, exclusion from school, risks to employment, and engagement in crime. The author argues that these costs 'operate over and above those associated with social disadvantage in general, and those associated with lack of qualifications' Gross 2009 p.5) It is therefore of concern to note that the Department for Education report on a general decline in the number of children reading for pleasure over the past decade (DfE, 2012 citing OECD, 2009) while Twist *et al.* (2007) found evidence that in the UK, the decline was more marked than in many other OECD countries. It is important to acknowledge that this picture may change when the results of the next PISA with a specific focus on reading is published in 2019. There are also differences among socioeconomic groups with children and young people from low income families reading less than those from higher income groups (see the following section); boys reading less than girls and secondary aged children identifying reading and 'readers' as having lower status than primary aged children (DfE, 2012).

Across the literature the *vital importance* and the *universally positive* impact of reading for pleasure is emphatically evidenced. Research reports this to be the case across ages, genders and socioeconomic groups. However, the question 'what are the benefits of reading for pleasure for children with additional needs?' is not addressed with most studies focusing on 'top down' functional skills and how programmes of reading instruction can best be designed for children with learning disabilities. This project has the potential to make an important contribution in this respect.

2.2 Barriers and gateways to enjoying reading among children and young people with additional needs.

In the introduction to this review and elsewhere in the report, it is noted that there has been little evidence of the benefits of reading for pleasure for children with additional needs identified in the literature. It follows that there is also little evidence of how this is different from those experienced by children without additional needs. However, some relevant overarching issues have been identified in the literature and are discussed in this section, often with reference to specific additional needs.

Firstly, it is important to note that there is widespread discussion of what is 'different' about pedagogy for children with special educational needs. Lewis and Norwich (2005) present a useful way of thinking about this - they argue that in the majority of cases (though not all) approaches to engaging children with special needs are not necessarily 'distinctive' from ordinary pedagogies in their essential nature. Rather they are different in their level of intensity. This concept is explored further with reference to children and young people who may have profound and multiple learning difficulties.

Profound and multiple learning difficulties

The idea proposed by Lewis and Norwich (2005) about the quantitative rather than qualitative nature of different approaches for SEN may apply to the enjoyment of books and reading in the following way. When sharing a book with a child with *profound and multiple difficulties*, the markers of good practice would be the same as for all children. The adult would be following the child's lead; providing a range of sensory inputs (sight, sound, smell, touch); using modalities of voice to engage the child; making sure the child was comfortable, making sure the child was in the mood for the activity; choosing an engaging story; choosing something that was relatable to the child's experiences and preferences; using repetition as a route to anticipation, making books part of the natural routine of life and so on (Lacey, 2007). All of these practices are as relevant to a child with a profound and multiple difficulties although there would have to be more highly personalised sensory inputs, more care given to their physical comfort, more exaggerated modulation of voice, more scaffolds for engaging the child such as using 'hand over hand' to help them find the texture on pages, more repetition and a focus on the earliest processes of communication.

Inclusive literacy uses 'symbols, pictures, videos and 'new literacies' associated with ICT' (Lacey *et al.* 2007 p.153) and is different to 'conventional literacy': 'traditional text-based reading and writing' (*ibid*). The authors argue that the promotion of inclusive literacy strategies in teaching literacy skills with students with learning difficulties is 'not about learning to read and write text' and argue that 'many of these [inclusive literacy] activities fit into the new literacies associated with technology and media related to the digital age'. Extrapolating from Lacey *et al.* (2007), it can be argued that there is potential for both internal (pleasurable) and

external benefits (pleasing a teacher for example) for people with profound or severe learning difficulties. For this reason, it is enjoyment and cultural engagement with literature that is important rather than literacy development as it may be conventionally understood. This could be different from 'conventional literacy' in that it requires engagement with symbols, pictures and videos but might also be similar to the benefits of engagement with 'new literacies' for a wider group, particularly when engaging with image-based apps such as Snapchat and Instagram.

By the same token, simply enjoying a book as a sensory, social and linguistic experience, is relevant and continues to be relevant for children and young people who may not become independent readers in a conventional sense. However, in adopting a philosophy of respect and recognition, there is a need to consider them as emergent readers, whose period of emergence may be longer than others and who may need reading materials that are accessible whilst being age appropriate.

Emergent literacy

The theory of *emergent literacy* becomes relevant here, and Han *et al.* (2015) define the basic components of this in terms of:

- Print motivation – being interested in and enjoying books
- Vocabulary – knowing the names of things
- Print awareness – noticing print and how to handle books
- Narrative skills – being able to describe things and events and tell stories
- Letter knowledge – recognising names and sounds of letters in books and in the real world
- Phonological awareness – being able to hear and play with the smaller sounds in words and with rhymes and rhythms
- Understanding – comprehending the meaning of printed text, stories and messages.

Clay (1967) was one of the earliest proposers of *emergent literacy*, noting that children began to engage with literacy long before formal instruction. Since then, evidence from the literature has supported the premise that emergent literacy is an essential step towards becoming fully literate (Rohde, 2015). For children with severe and profound learning difficulties, this emergent stage may be protracted, meaning that the practices known to be effective in supporting emergent literacy remain relevant into much later stages of life. Though not writing specifically about SEN, Rohde (2015) presents a complex model of emergent literacy where the importance of concrete, language embedded experiences, communication-rich environments and meaningful activities in the child's natural context are emphasised. Hence, for children who may be operating at very early stages in later stages of life, it is important to engage with books through:

- Play
- Building books and reading into the routine of daily life
- Using routine in daily life as a way of reinforcing language and teaching sequencing
- Shared storybook reading
- Sensory storytelling, using all of the senses.
- Dialogic exchanges where a responsive adult follows a child's lead.

Notably, the BookTrust *Special School Library Pack* promotes these very approaches in the accompanying *Supporting Guide for The Special Schools Pack* and parents are also encouraged to apply them in the case of the parents guidance for the Bookstart *additional needs* resources for the Early Years. For that reason, there is a close association between markers of good practice in emergent literacy and BookTrust's approach.

Engagement with literacy at the earliest stages of development

The *P Scale Assessment Tool* (DfE, 2014) offers an account of early literacy. It also illustrates what the earliest literacy behaviours might look like and, concomitantly, how they might be supported:

P1 (i) Pupils encounter activities and experiences and may; be passive or resistant, show simple reflex response, participate when fully prompted

P1(ii) Pupils show emerging awareness of activities and experiences and may; focus their attention on certain people, events, objects or stimuli

P2(i) Pupils begin to respond consistently to familiar people, events and objects and may; accept and engage in coactive exploration (such as the sensory aspects of stories and rhymes).

Lacey *et al.* (2007) identified that for children with profound and *severe learning difficulties*, the following practices (common in special schools) would represent inclusive literacy. It is notable that these too focus on communication but with added emphasis on a *multi-modal approach* to engaging learners with symbolic representations of the world. Central to this model of effective practice is a concern to place the child and their every-day life at the heart of a personalised programme through use of:

- Objects of reference
- Picture books and stories
- Sensory and multi-media stories
- Book making
- Talking books
- Photo albums

- Still photography to make books
- Film making
- Life boxes or quilts

Across the literature, there is support for a holistic approach to engaging children with books and reading that recognises the manner in which such processes must connect with the people, places and events of children's daily lives (Rohde, 2015). For children with *severe and profound learning difficulties*, this demands a wider view of what is meant by 'reading' and a multi-modal and personalised approach to engaging them with books. It also demands the provision of age appropriate material for older children and young people who may remain at an emergent stage for longer, if not for their entire life course.

Hearing impairment

The literature emphasises recognition of the group signified as hearing impaired as highly heterogeneous (Gregory, 2005). Characteristic of this heterogeneity are levels and types of impairment and the extent to which hearing loss can be augmented successfully. This is further complicated by the fact that hearing impaired children may use British Sign Language (BSL), sign supported English (SSE), Makaton, oral modes, picture exchange communication systems, augmentation aids or all of these, depending on their context. Children with hearing impairments may have other impairments in unique combinations (Farrell, 2012) and children using signing may not be using it because of hearing difficulties but because of a physical impairment that means they cannot speak clearly or easily. The case of hearing impairment is a good example of an issue prevalent across the literature; when it comes to using 'types of difficulty' as a way of understanding barriers and gateways to enjoying books and reading, there are complications that make the relationship between these things more complex than might be assumed.

However, Do and Chung (2015) observed that hearing impaired and profoundly hearing impaired young people did not understand figurative language as well as their hearing peers. In addition, hearing impaired young people in the study had comprehension levels for figurative language, e.g. similes, metaphors and idioms that were at earlier stages of development. The study was undertaken in Vietnam with specific contextual factors. For example, hearing impaired young people in Vietnam go to school at a relatively late age and therefore miss key learning opportunities, and the relative high cost of hearing aids in that country (Do and Chung 2015, p.510). Nonetheless, the study confirmed the findings of earlier studies carried out in a range of countries and at different times. Although Do and Chung do not directly address the benefits of reading for pleasure, it appears likely that the young people in the study would experience reading for pleasure differently as a consequence of developmental differences in their language and vocabulary (Do and Chung 2015). However, as is the case with studies of other types of needs, we might also surmise that once this barrier has been overcome with the right material and the right support, enjoying books and reading

for pleasure is experienced as it is with hearing children. This tends to support the argument that the differences are to do with how children's engagement with books is mediated. However, Do and Chung (2015, p.511) call for more account of 'effective intervention to help to improve the figurative language knowledge as well as the overall reading ability of hearing impaired children.' One essential route to this has already been noted in this review – notably to foreground enjoyment of books and reading, a solution commonly overlooked in the literature. However, much of the evidence (Gregory, 2005) does tend to suggest that for some children who have hearing impairments, it is important to provide books that are less demanding in terms of vocabulary, more straightforward in terms of forms of expression but age appropriate. This is more likely to make reading a pleasurable and meaningful experience, and relatedly to experience all of the benefits that this promises.

Echoing Do and Chung (2015), Gregory (2005) reports that much published research confirms that children with more profound hearing impairments are at earlier stages of development in literacy than their hearing peers for two main reasons. Firstly, their language and vocabulary is underdeveloped because they have not been able to 'absorb' it due to a lack of every day, natural encounters with speech. Secondly for those using British Sign Language (BSL), there are significant syntactical differences between this language and written English. Gregory (ibid.) would argue that sharing books with children who are more profoundly hearing impaired demands more support with language and vocabulary. Adults working with children should note the importance of the following:

- In essence, where children use BSL as their primary mode of communication, written English is a second language and plenty of exposure to books and stories is an important way to develop understanding of this second language.
- A total communication approach can support access to books and reading through using a combination of signing, Makaton (signs and symbols) and multisensory methods. Sounds are not irrelevant to the engagement of children with hearing difficulties given variation in the extent of impairment.

However, Gregory also notes that the population of children with hearing impairments are hugely varied. Those with lesser degrees of impairment may be able to access books in a similar way to those without and benefit from general good practice. Those with more significant losses (who are being educated through a sign bilingual approach) may need to enjoy books through the medium of a visual spatial language (meaning one involving signing and symbols) rather than a linear one (involving speech and text). Notably, a number of books and resources gifted by BookTrust to families and schools do integrate traditional books and BSL in the spirit of combining these languages.

This highlights an important point that recurs across the literature; adults play an important role in being a bridge between children and their books – they must know the child well enough to scaffold their enjoyment in ways that match their mode of communication, hearing level,

interest level and developmental stage. Providing books that support this kind of personalisation and offer a range of ways in (multisensory, multimodal) seem most likely to enable enjoyment. It also follows that parents, who often have the deepest and most expert knowledge of their child, are significant agents in this process. This has always been reflected in the design of BookTrust's gifting programmes and their emphasis on parental involvement. As a universal measure, this is highly relevant (if not more relevant) to children with additional needs.

Adding further complexity are reports of the importance of balancing *supportiveness* with *independence* (Blatchford *et al.*, 2015). Uzener's (2008) small study of three young learners with hearing loss suggested that 'regardless of their hearing status, students must be provided with explicit instruction of not only cognitive but also metacognitive skills and strategies' (Uzener, 2008 p.52).

Thus, learners should have knowledge and control 'over their own learning and thinking' (ibid. p.47) in a metacognitive sense and 'Teachers should always emphasise and demonstrate through their actions that students have the responsibility for and control of their own strategies and outcomes in their education and daily lives' (ibid. p.52). In its materials for parents and special schools, BookTrust does encourage intensive interaction that follows the child's lead.

Visual Impairment

The cohort of learners typed with the signifier 'Visual Impairment' is heterogeneous and ranges from those who are blind to those who have impairments in colour recognition, night vision, distance vision, tunnel vision and so on (Farrell, 2012). Like hearing impairment, visual impairment is known to have effects on wider development such as movement, social interaction and literacy development. For example, in the case of movement, visual impairment may cause more timidity in exploration of physical space. It may also affect balance, co-ordination and fine-motor skills since children do not always have sight to provide feedback on where their body is in the space around them. Farrell (2012) notes that in a general sense, children with visual impairments can be supported by concrete experiences, real world artefacts, tactile experiences, emboldened print, enlarged print, Braille or Moon.⁷ In particular relation to books and other artefacts, Davis (2012) reports on the challenges of orientation, noting that children may need additional processing time and guidance in mapping the structure of the page and in having their attention drawn to key features. Though many children with visual impairments have other impairments, the auditory senses are likely to be strongest (Davis, 2012).

Douglas *et al.* (2011a and 2011b) observe that two teaching strategies have been used in order for children with visual impairments to access print media: the provision of accessible

⁷ Moon is a system of raised shapes which allows people who are blind or partially sighted to read through touch.

materials (such as large print, braille, magnification devices or auditory texts) and the teaching of 'access skills' which the authors argue 'can be thought of as taking a 'longer-term' developmental view of visually impaired children's education by teaching skills which will enable them to gain access to information and curriculum materials for themselves' (Douglas, *et al.* 2011a p.35). The authors argue that good practice includes both the provision of accessible materials *and* the learning of access skills but they observe that in many schools there is a focus on the former and not so much the latter, arguing further that, in order to promote the learning of access skills, policy and professional development opportunities might need to be addressed so that teachers and teaching assistants have the necessary knowledge, skills and understanding to enable visually impaired learners to become more independent (Douglas, *et al.* 2011b).

Again, though the group signified by the term 'visual impairment' may share common barriers and benefit from specialist approaches to enabling their access to books and reading (such as large print and high levels of spoken interaction), there are individual differences that must be accommodated by highly personalised and flexible responses. Thus far, the review is also revealing specific practices that are relevant across a range of types of needs. For example, the connection between books and children's real lives; the importance of multi-sensory access routes and the need to promote independence. This is returned to in the summary section of this review.

Physical impairment

Farrell (2012) and Larsson *et al.* (2009) report that children who have physical impairments may have some associated delay in non-motor areas. For example, when engaging with books and other text-based artefacts, there may be visuospatial deficits that affect fixing on and tracking text and pictures. For this reason, physical support in the form of *Hand over hand* guidance has been found to intensify children's engagement with learning tasks (Larsson, 2009). There may also be speech impairments which affect phoneme awareness⁸. More generally, across a range of impairments, this review finds that delays in language and literacy are likely but the extent of this delay relies on a range of complex factors and for some individuals may not occur at all. This suggests that a range of levels of challenge within age appropriate literature is important across the range of needs and age groups. Extrapolating from Farrell (2012) and Larsson *et al.* (2009) it can be argued that this is just as important for children with physical impairments.

Of course, the range and severity of physical impairment is broad but there is strong evidence to support a holistic approach that favours social interaction, sensory stimulation, repetition, activities to raise self-esteem, songs and rhyme, music, play and encouragement (Larsson *et al.*, 2009). For example, the Conductive Education Movement asserts that the capacity for

⁸ Phonemic awareness is a subset of phonological awareness in which learners are able to identify and separate phonemes, the smallest units of sound that can represent meaning.

motor control is impacted by motivation and self-esteem and so development of the whole child is important and regard has to be given to general wellbeing (Blank *et al.*, 2016). Books that relate to the child's real life and preferences are more likely to motivate physical engagement and interaction. Rhythmic songs, rhymes and poems also have an association with motivation for motor control. Larsson *et al.* (2009) found evidence that children with severe speech and physical impairments benefited from rhyme and rhythm more than children without these needs. All of this tends to support Lewis and Norwich's (2005) argument that many of the differences in approaches to support are matters of intensity.

It is interesting to note that many of the strategies recommended for physical impairment are also recommended by Lacey *et al.* (2007, p.23) when considering profound and severe learning difficulties though expectations and outcomes for 'conventional literacy are different.' These strategies also arise in the evidence base for *sensory impairments*. It is notable that Bookstart additional needs resources and some books in the Special School Library Pack (and SEN resources for special schools) adopt and promote such practices along with a strong interest in supporting home reading.

The relevance of home reading to children and young people with special educational needs

As noted earlier, it is important for reading to begin in preschool settings, including in the home. Train (2007) provides a model of effective family reading. Nonetheless, the model indicates that: parents and caregivers should find time to read regularly with their children; reading for pleasure should be recognised as an important part of the process of learning to read; young people should feel comfortable about being seen to enjoy reading; and reading in the home should be encouraged and supported by schools, the library service and the local community.

However, studies suggest that it is not only involvement in reading that is important for children in preschool, but the 'extratextual' context surrounding the reading interaction (Zucker *et al.*, 2012). 'Extratextual talk', e.g. labelling, making inferences, relating what is being read to children's own lives, explaining and/or analysing 'before, during, and after the reading of a text is important for fostering skills in the short term but also that these qualities play a role in children's long-term language and literacy development' (ibid. p.1435). Parents and teachers then, should not only focus on the text, but encourage greater understanding and contextualisation of reading materials. Hindman, *et al.* (2014 p.309) also found that 'when parents highlighted connections between books and children's own lives, children had stronger vocabulary skills regardless of their earlier cognitive competence' and it can therefore be proposed that it is this wider engagement with reading materials that is a marker of good practice. 'Extratextual' talk is an important means of engaging all children in reading and reading for pleasure. However, it is particularly important for young people who cannot pick up on, for example, visual clues that accompany the text

2.3: Summary

This review, though thorough, has harvested very little information on the benefits of reading for pleasure among children and young people with additional needs. Most research has focused on instructional methods. A focus on enjoyment may be absent because the benefits of reading for pleasure among all children are already well reported which means that a focus on children with additional needs has been assumed as unimportant. Alternatively, perhaps the question of enjoyment is seen as subordinate to the question of instruction for epistemological reasons. Whatever the case, this project has the potential to offer new accounts and insights that are of wider value.

In relation to the question of barriers to reading for pleasure, a range are reported. Generally, these are reported as challenges to access that can be overcome by group specific strategies (such as enlarged print for visual impairment; integrating signing with text for hearing impairment; communication with children with severe and profound learning difficulties). It would not be sensible to suggest that children with impairments do not experience specific barriers related to their impairment. However, some barriers (such as having a more limited vocabulary, difficulties with tracking text and pictures, being slower to acquire literacy) cross boundaries and are more common.

When considering the final question, whether reading for pleasure is experienced, encouraged and supported differently for children with additional needs, boundary crossing is also evident. As noted above, supports offered for accessing books may be highly specific to particular types of need but the following strategies are reported as important modes of support and encouragement across a range of profiles

- Integrating music, songs and rhymes
- Intense interaction
- Sharing books
- Using play and playful activities
- Connecting books with children's real lives (e.g. through extratextual talk and 'new literacies')
- Using multi-modal and multi-sensory approaches
- Adopting an emergent literacy approach
- Encouraging independence
- Scaffolding interaction (e.g. through hand over hand support)
- Matching resources to children's interests
- Providing books that are age appropriate but accessible
- Inclusive literacies.

It can also be noted that though children and young people who have certain 'types' of difficulty may share some common barriers and gateways to reading, the picture is more complex and fluid than may be assumed. In the end signifiers as 'types' of need can only ever be orienting principles (Lewis and Norwich, 2005) in need of individuation. Parents and teachers have an important role to play as mediators who can make the process of reading accessible and enjoyable through responsive, individualised practice.

Finally, evidence and debate in the literature implies that an appropriate model for providing for the full range of individuals on the SEN continuum would involve a flexible approach that takes practical note of the following principles. Children with additional needs can be supported by a whole range of strategies just as relevant to those without additional needs. For example, as noted in the list above, matching resources to the child's interest and providing books that are age appropriate. In some cases, children and young people with particular types of needs will benefit from access strategies common across that group and specific to types of impairment. However, in all cases, children will experience barriers and gateways to reading that are unique to them as individuals. A gifting approach that allows for the flexible and fluid combination of all three principles is likely to address the needs of the full spectrum of children and young people signified by the marker special educational needs. The questions posed by this review can be further tested by the research findings for this project.

3. Methodology

3.1 Sampling strategy

The project adopted a qualitative approach to gathering data in four Local Authorities (LAs) in England. Selection of the LAs was made using data about the number and range of organisations registered for additional needs resources. High participation areas were identified and from those, four LAs were selected to enable coverage of a range of contexts as shown in Table (2) below.

Table (2) Sampling frame

Indicator	Target authority	Number of children/schools registered per area for additional needs resources
Metropolitan South East	Ealing	Early Years= 30 children Special schools= 5 schools Mainstream ⁹ = 0 schools
Large Urban conurbation Midlands	Nottingham City	Early Years= 117 children Special schools= 6 schools Mainstream =0 schools
Large urban conurbation North	Bradford	Early Years = 114 children Special schools = 3 schools Mainstream = 3 schools
Coastal, rural, South West	Cornwall	Early Years= 91 children Special schools = 4 schools Mainstream= 2 schools

Context and Scope

Mixed methods were used (including observations, semi-structured interviews, conversations, and focus groups – see Methods, section 3.2) which could combine to form a rich account of BookTrust provision and impact within these LAs. The focus was on BookTrust's core additional needs resources for the Early Years and KS3. The study drew on an opportunity sample but great care was taken to ensure that it included a broad range of organisations, children, young people, families and practitioners. In each LA, an Early Years setting was recruited. Settings included children's centres, nursery schools, special schools, NHS child development centres and portage services. KS3 settings were also recruited to include mainstream schools and special schools. Appendix 7 provides a summary of participating

⁹ Schools are able to choose whether they receive either the Special School Library Pack or the Mainstream School Library Pack. A minority of special schools choose to receive the mainstream packs. A minority of mainstream schools choose the Special School Pack.

organisations and individuals. Pseudonyms are used as a consequence of conditions of consent. The sample for this project did capture the full range of types of needs (listed in Section 1) but it is important to reiterate that each participant was a complex individual whose impairment(s) combined with their personalities, propensities, stages of development, preferences and life situations in ways that made them unique.

3.2: Methods

This section describes the qualitative methods adopted to explore the research questions across four Local Authorities.

Ethical issues and principles

Given that the study's participants included very young children and children with special educational needs it was important to design tools that enabled them to voice their feelings and thoughts as freely as possible. The research tools ensured that children and young people took part willingly. Their participation was maximised through use of flexible methods such as conversations, semi-structured interviews with scope for detailed personal accounts, exploring topics through focus groups, drama, use of puppets, diaries, photos, videos, painting, and map-making (Alderson, 2005). The research team also performed the role of scribe for children and involved parents and practitioners in supporting the children's communication. The project was given careful ethical consideration and its research tools and processes for informed consent were robustly evaluated by the College of Education Research Ethics Committee at the University of Derby. The research team recognised that it was not to assume that children with special educational needs must be singled out for protections that go beyond those deemed suitable for all children. Rather, their engagement was underpinned by four key ethical principles: beneficence; non-maleficence; justice; autonomy. For these reasons, careful consideration has been given to:

1. the processes for gathering their consent;
2. building in opportunities for choice and ownership; and
3. data collection processes that are flexible and responsive to the propensities, abilities and interests of the child/young person.

The range of research tools are summarised in Table (3) and presented in full in the appendices.

Table (3) Summary of research tools and related appendices

Research Methods	Research Tool	Appendix
Observation of children Reading with parents/carers Reading with practitioners Engaged in independent reading activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observation Schedule • Engagement Scale 	Appendix 1a (i) Appendix 1b (i) and (iii)
Conversations with individual children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conversation and Elicitation Schedule for young children and children at an earlier stage of development in communication • Conversation Schedule for children and young people at a more advanced stage of development in communication. 	Appendix 2 (i) Appendix 2 (ii)
Semi-structured interview with parents and carers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interview Schedule 	Appendix 3
Semi-structured interview with practitioners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interview Schedule 	Appendix 4
Focus group interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus Group Schedules 	Appendix 5 (i and ii)

Data collection in Early Years settings

The research team conducted **13 deep level interactions with families** which comprised three elements: Firstly, an observation of parents and children reading the resources together. Observers used an observation schedule (Appendix 1a) to collect data combined with a video recording (when participants consented). The research tools included an observation schedule that was designed for children at the earliest stages of communication (Appendix 1b). Secondly, with parents present, researchers conversed or played with children (Appendix 2) to elicit their views and feelings about books and reading. A range of elicitation tools were used including puppets, drawing, objects of recognition, augmented technology and so on. Where it was more comfortable for the child, parents would lead this process. Thirdly, researchers carried out a semi-structured interview with parents (Appendix 3)

Data collection in KS3 settings

The research team conducted **13 observations of individual children in their school settings**. During this time children and young people would be engaged with an activity, discussion about or sharing of books and resources from the School Library Pack and the

SEN Resources for schools (if these were used). Following this, the researcher would converse or play with the young person using age appropriate elicitation tools and conversation schedules (Appendix 2). Where it was more comfortable for the young person, the practitioner would lead this process. It was also possible to carry out one observation of a young person sharing a book with a parent. The research questions were also investigated using a **focus group schedule** (Appendix 5) or when more appropriate, an observation of a group activity led by a practitioner who also elicited views and feelings about the resources. In total, there were **seven research events involving groups**.

Practitioner interviews

A total of **27 practitioner interviews** were carried out with a range of professionals across Early Years and KS3 provision using a semi-structured interview schedule using face to face or telephone modes (Appendix 4).

Methods of data analysis

Data was analysed using a range of qualitative methods including coding and enumeration. This process involves the coding of raw data in order to identify themes and categories of evidence that relate to the research questions. Enumeration involves counting the number of times a theme, phrase or word arises. This process harvested answers to the research questions.

4: What are the benefits of reading for pleasure for children with additional needs?

Across the data, there were rich accounts of the benefits of reading for pleasure. These are explored in relation to the following themes

- The importance of high quality resources and book ownership
- Comfort, closeness and routine
- Books as scaffolds for development
- Parents' views on the benefits of reading for pleasure
- Practitioners views on the benefits of reading for pleasure

The importance of high quality resources and book ownership

Emphatic across the data is an endorsement of BookTrust and its high quality programmes. Christine, (not her real name, pseudonyms are used throughout this report) a qualified teacher working with the visual impairment team in Bradford, made very warm comments about the additional needs materials for the Early Years:

'The packs are very smart so I feel quite proud arriving with this lovely bag and I know that the children, well, they can't wait to see what's inside. I think the way they are packed is really good and they are high quality resources'

Christine reported seeing children walking around very proudly with their book bags and believed that the pleasure children gained from this was an important *feel-good* benefit. Positive evaluations of the quality of the additional needs resources were very prevalent across the data for both of the programmes investigated. Often noted was the importance of providing high quality resources to disadvantaged families. Amalia, an Early Years teacher at a Children's Centre, gave an example of a family who received the resources:

'This is a family who live in one room, they have very little and the thought of the family having this high quality resource feels good to me. The child who received the book took some convincing that she could keep the books. Children owning books is very important and something I think they should have a right to. It also encourages borrowing from the school library.'

The family mentioned by Amalia had participated in the research and Samira, mother to Mila (aged 4, visual impairment, Booktouch) commented that she was grateful to receive the books since books were so expensive to buy and the robustness of BookTrust ones meant that they lasted a long time. Fazina, mother to Arif (aged 3, Down Syndrome, Bookstart Star), made similar comments and noted that it had encouraged her to go to the library and borrow from there. She was a single parent with six children and it was hard to prioritise spending on books which could feel like luxuries when money was tight.

Jackie, an inclusion leader at a primary school in Nottingham, reported on families' responses

to receiving the resources but did note that the setting needed to be sensitive about any stigma that went with being given a 'special' pack, noting that they selected:

'parents who wouldn't feel that it was labelling their child and families [for whom] it wouldn't be an issue being a 'special pack.' [Families thought] it was nice to get something and it was nice to get something that was particularly for their child.'

The issues raised by Jackie about stigmatisation do not arise elsewhere in the data but do signal an issue that it is worth considering in the context of universal provision.

Comfort, closeness and routine

Many parents reported the pleasure arising from sharing books as part of their daily routine. For example, Aneesa talked about how her daughter, Salima (aged 4, autism, Bookstart Star), liked to have stories at bedtimes when, talking about two of the books in BookTrust pack, she 'loved to read the books and read again and again and again.' Lottie's mum, Laura, reported that books were a big part of her bedtime routine and something they enjoyed together and Kara and Paul, mum and dad to Joel, said 'at night time we always have hot chocolate, a book and a cuddle on the couch because it has got to be part of a routine.' In many cases, the fact that children had special educational needs meant that routines were more intensely important. For example, children with profound and multiple learning difficulties could also come to understand the passage of time and learn to anticipate events – all valuable for their development. It also helped them cope with any stress and anxiety they might experience.

There was evidence that the books have emotional benefits, bringing families close together. Observations of families reading provided substantial evidence of the way in which the presence of books triggered shared focus, physical closeness and intense interaction. This was universally observed and is represented well by the case study below:

Case Study: Physical closeness and interaction [Observation, March, 2016]

At their local library, four-year-old, Joel, his three-year-old sister, Millie and his adoptive mum and dad, Kara and Paul are reading *Off to the Park* from the Bookshine pack. Joel is five years old and has a visual impairment called Nystagmus which causes his eyes to move from side to side in a rapid, swinging motion. Paul explained that this made it a bit difficult for Joel to map out his surroundings and so needed some help with focusing.



They were teaching him to do this more independently. The family sit close together on some

soft low chairs at the corner of the room. Kara pulls her chair closer and Millie cuddles up to her mum. Everyone's focus is on the book.

Paul says 'Are we all ready? Ready? Joel, are you all ready? 3 – 2 – 1.... off to the park...' (Paul bounces his fingers along the words on the front cover). Millie and Joel are very focused on the book. He encourages the children to feel the gritty path on the front cover. 'It goes all the way to the..?' 'Millie says, 'the swing'. Paul gives Joel time to feel his whole way around the page.

When Paul opens the next page both children play with the laces that are threaded through the shoes on the page. Then they talk about the picture of the pedestrian crossing and both children discuss what happens when you press the button. Kara says 'yes and sometimes it flashes!' They talk about the colours of the lights. While Paul is reading about the pedestrian crossing, Joel talks about all the sounds he hears when he is on the street. The beeps and the engines. The children talk about the gate on the next page. It is a moving picture of a gate into the park. They talk about their own park. Paul continues to read the text on the page....'squeak, squeak, squeak' and moving the gate, Joel says 'They will close this at night!' The family cuddle up closer and Millie sits on her mum's lap. Joel leans into his dad and looks up at him to repeat a phrase in the story about a path that 'never ends' and Paul repeats 'never ends' at which point, Joel looks up at his dad and they both whisper 'never ends' together after which Joel claps.

The children get very excited when the page with the squashy red ball is opened and listen intently as their dad reads and he says 'What is it?' both children say 'It's a ball!' The family are totally engaged with the book, laughing together about a picture that looks like a wriggly worm. The children go very quiet when their dad is reading about the swing and then both go 'wheeeee.' They talk about the way the tyre swing in the book feels and decide to go to the park later to find one because Joel says he has never swung in one. Paul gets them both talking about the things in the book and where they have seen them in the real world. On the last two pages, the children lean in to smell the ice cream and in a conversation afterwards, the children draw pictures of the swing and the ice-cream because they were their favourite parts of the story.

The case study is a good example of the close interaction that arose when the books were present and the way this invited intense, shared focus. In almost all observed sessions with younger and older children, the books triggered a settled, calm and focused demeanour. Also observable was the way in which the books could be used as ways to support developmental priorities particular to individual children and the way that the parents are using extratextual talk to support learning.

Books as scaffolds for development

The term 'scaffold' is an educational term used to describe the way children are supported by

people or resources in their journey towards independence (Pritchard, 2014). Paul and Kara explained that they used books as a way of teaching Joel about the physical spaces in the outside world. They needed to help him with this because his visual impairment made incidental learning about this difficult and they wanted him to be as independent as possible. They said that the *Off to the Park* book was a particularly good resource for this because they could connect it with real life. Paul and Kara also encouraged him to scan the page fully:

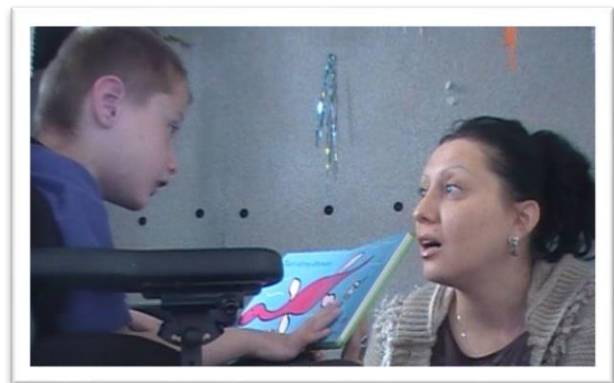
‘When you are reading with Joel, you have to get the timing right before you move on because you don’t want to turn the page until he has seen everything. He also likes to go back to the pictures he was really interested in.’

Paul and Kara deliberately used the books to support Joel’s spatial learning using the kind of *extratextual* talk described by Zucker *et al.* (2012)(See 2.2 above). They were also helping him to develop proximal mapping of text and images. They did not consider themselves experts in this and appreciated the way that the visual support teacher and BookTrust could help them to find the best resources.

The observational evidence also provided many other examples of the way in which books supported development. The two case studies below are very strong illustrations of this.

Case Study: Books as scaffolds for development [Observation, May, 2016].

Rudi is six years old. He has profound and multiple learning difficulties and his mum, Branca, explained that he had some sight problems too but nobody was quite sure how much he could see. Branca describes Rudi as an ‘Angel, because he has a good soul and a kind spirit, I can feel that about him. He is not just his disability.’



When they were reading together, Branca started with the Playtime book from the Booktouch pack. With hand over hand support, Rudi interacted with the various textures of the book, particularly enjoying the elephant’s silky ear. When Branca came to the page with the sticky paints, Rudi lifted his own hands to touch and feel them and after giving him some time to explore them, Branca said ‘Good boy, well done.’

Then she read *That’s Not My Dinosaur* and held each textured page up to Rudi to touch. He engaged with this more than the previous book and when Branca read the page ‘That’s not my dinosaur, his teeth are too bumpy,’ and held it up to Rudi, he ran his fingers over the dinosaur’s teeth (which were raised on the page) for a long while. While he was engaged with this, Branca waited and used verbal encouragers such as ‘Aaaah, what’s there, dinosaur’s

teeth' and 'Rudi, it is so interesting.'

After a while, Branca turned the page and read 'That's not my dinosaur, its flippers are too slippery', holding the page up for Rudi to feel. Rudi became very quiet and focused on the page, spending a long time looking and feeling the velvet scales. At one point, he looked up at his mum and it was clear that he was trying to communicate. His head and body went very still and he made 'ka, ka' noises and a round shape with his mouth. Branca mirrored these movements and whispered 'Are you trying to talk to me Rudi?' Rudi continued to make clicking noises while Branca waited and said 'Tell me something.' Branca looked at the researcher, smiled and raised her eyebrows, noting later that this was an important moment.

Branca and Rudi finished sharing the book and Rudi was engaged throughout.

Case Study: Books triggering shared focus [Observation, 2015]

George is 12 years old. He likes food, routines and talking about his pets and family. He is a friendly and sociable boy. He has an epileptic condition and has seizures often. He also has severe learning difficulties. His teacher Abbie explained that one of the consequences of this is that he gets stuck in loops of thinking and will repeat the same phrases over and over.



During an observation of George, he was seen to be in one of these loops, talking about his cat and his family. One of the teaching assistants in his class, Dawn, sat with George and invited him to share *The Really Gross Body Book* from the school library pack which George became immediately engrossed with. He turned the pages and lifted the flaps. He was particularly taken with the pages about flatulence. He spoke with the researcher about these with delight. Dawn followed his lead and talked with him about the pictures he liked. He took photographs of his favourite parts, particularly liking the ones about vomit and poo!

Each of these case studies demonstrate the way in which a book was a scaffold for development. For Rudi, it motivated him to engage, focus, move his hands and communicate. For George, it brought him out of a loop he was stuck in and engaged him in another experience. **Both children were supported in this by highly responsive adults who knew about each child's needs and targets for development and this was typical across the data.** Across all age groups and types of need, the *combination of the book and responsive adults* brought benefits of **direct, individual, developmental relevance**. This was the case in almost all observations and was supported by the interview data with parents and

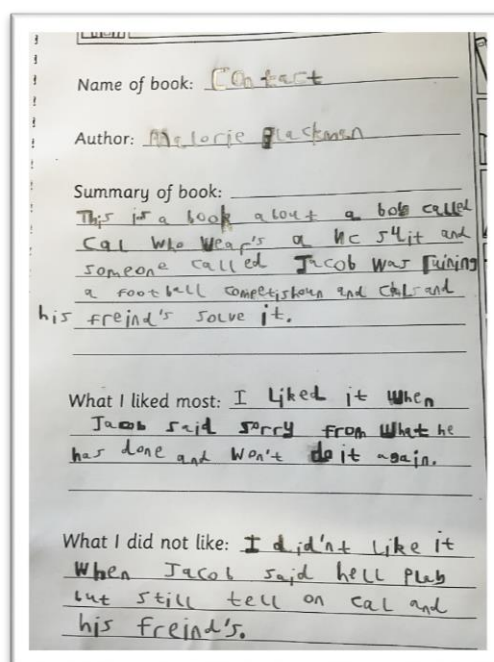
practitioners. It was clear that the carefully chosen, high quality nature of the books provided by BookTrust led to parents and children using them quickly and keenly. For some, the book was used as an opportunity for BSL practice. Two books supported this particularly well, *Shark in the Park* (Bookshine) and *What the Jackdaw Saw* (School Library Pack). For others, the books enabled the development of tactile tolerance. Books were also used to develop spoken vocabulary through pointing and naming. In Ealing, Aneesa said that 'books are our friends' and that for her daughter, Salima (aged 4, autism, Bookstart Star), they were a chance to learn about people's feelings and how people might react to things:

'The colours of these books attract her and because she has autism, I use them like social stories. When I am reading a story like *Mouse is small* I talk about the mouse and the elephant playing together and I show her the relationship. And when I am reading *Off to the Park*, I talk about how you must take turns on the slide. I also teach her about how to read - the direction of the words and I point to them as I go along.'

Enjoyment of books in KS3 among children who had severe learning difficulties but had more advanced reading skills tended to be part of a wider literacy curriculum. They also provided a stimulus for the wider curriculum. The case studies below provide evidence of the way in which books in the Special School Library Packs were used and enjoyed by practitioners and children.

Case study: The Special School Library Pack [Observations and interviews, Ealing, 2016]

The pupils of Summerglade Special School have autistic spectrum disorders and a range of learning abilities. One KS3 class in the school were reading the books from the *Special School Library Pack* during their literacy lesson. George was reading *Respect* with his teacher, Mark. They were talking about the picture of children swinging over a lamppost and about the clues in the story that this was in the past. George said 'Like the good old days' and they talked about the things that had changed since then. Mark said 'Well, some things are the same, like boys being all about football.' George spent the rest of the session reading the book independently in readiness for writing a Book Report. He was observed to be very engrossed in the story and when an adult sat with him to read the last few pages he was shocked at the part where Tully (the hero) was reported to have died in the war. When asked about what he liked in the book, he said he liked the fact that it really happened. It was true.



Lewis was reading *Contact* and he had nearly finished it. He was able to talk about the story so far. He said that he enjoyed the fact that it was a good story but that there were not too many words. His favourite types of books were graphic novels and comics since these had plenty of pictures and few words. During the session he finished the book and wrote a book report about his view of it.

Alan chose to read *The Really Gross Body Book* and his teacher, Mark said that it had been one of his favourites. Alex was sharing the book with a teaching assistant, Finlay. Finlay showed his disgust at some of the content of the book and Alan seemed delighted by this. As they were reading about the fact that 'sweating is the body's natural cooling system' Alex was very focused. He laughed about smelly socks (the book informed him that there were 35,000 sweat glands in feet) but when it was finished he didn't want to talk about it. He wanted to read another book from his favourite series *Fanimals*.

Zaphir was reading *Respect* which he finished during the session. He said he enjoyed reading and that the most recent book he had read was *Mice and Men*. He was reading this in his English Literature lessons. During the session he had also read *Laika the Astronaut* but he had not liked it since it was not true. If it was non-fiction it should have been true and it should not have had a lie in it. He wrote about this in his book report.

Adam was reading with Jennifer, a teaching assistant in the class. Adam had chosen to read *This is not my hat* but he was finding it difficult to work out what the fish was thinking and what each character knew and did not know. Later, in an interview, Jennifer said that they had had to give up on this book in the end because it was very abstract and complex, despite being a picture book. However, she had used the book to encourage some intense interaction, the following being a typical exchange:

Jennifer: The fish has a hat there. Did he buy it or did he steal it? Did he pay for it?

Adam: No. He stole it from a big fish.

Jennifer: Who did he steal it from? A big fish or a little fish?

Adam: A big fish

Jennifer: Was it sleeping or awake?

Adam. Awake

Jennifer: Let us read again – was he sleeping. What about his eyes?

Jennifer explained that this was how she was helping him to engage in conversations in a more active way so that he was looking and listening, then processing this in his exchanges. Practitioners in the school were not using the *SEN Resources for Special Schools* because the ideas for sensory stories were not quite right for their students who tended to be more able readers.

Case Study: Use of the books from the Special School Library Pack

[Observations, focus group and interviews, Bradford, June 2016]

Northwood Grange is a generic special school attached to a mainstream school in Bradford. Enjoyment of reading is very high on the school's list of priorities and books are an important part of the day to day curriculum.



In a KS3 class (ages 11-12), children were working on a range of activities based on *Laika the Astronaut*. Around the class were examples of writing and art work based on the book. The children had made rocket sandwiches in their Food Technology classes and photographs of these were displayed. After the class teacher, Sally, had read the story, the children were engaged in making junk models of Laika's rocket and using the sand pit to build a model

of the space stations where the aliens who were featured in the story lived. Sally explained that the children had loved the story and that it was a rare example of accessible non-fiction for this age group. She had really valued it and used it fully for that reason. The class had been making a den, which comprised a panel covered in a sheet on which was painted pictures of characters in the book. This was going to be part of an outdoor barbecue event that the whole school were doing.



In another class, a group of children were reading *What the Jackdaw Saw* with their teacher. They were making the signs and one pupil who had not wanted to join the activity originally, became increasingly engaged and seemed to be enjoying making the signs shown in the book. The class teacher explained that the class were working on a display about the book. The children had made different scenes and these were being assembled on a story board. The class teacher said that it was rare to find books with signing integrated into the story and this was useful as a way of developing children's communication.

Later, in a focus group interview, two young people (Callum and Tom) from KS4 were discussing a book they had read and enjoyed called *Respect*. The teacher

leading the group discussion encouraged them to reflect on how their visit to the Somme (as part of a school trip) connected to the story. They talked at length about the battlefield and memorials they had seen and how affected they were by their experiences and Callum (aged 15, a young person with Prader-Willi Syndrome) said 'That book does upset you but it gives you a feeling for what it was really like to leave your family.' Cameron and Tom talked about how the story made you wonder about why countries go to war because 'We are all humans and we should just get on with one another.'

Callum said he really enjoyed reading romantic books 'I loved Jane Eyre and that lovey dovey stuff and *White Fang*'. Mark said that he had really enjoyed *The Silver Sword* and the books his class had been reading.

The case studies above are evidence of the way in which the School Library Packs (in this case for Special Schools) were being used to enrich the curriculum. For example in Bradford, Respect was linked into a field visit to France and to an ongoing project about World War I. Among younger children the books *Laika the Astronaut* and *What the Jackdaw Saw* were linked to the wider curriculum and there was clear evidence that children were enjoying these books and gaining much from them. Teachers saw them as a valuable resource for stimulating wider learning as part of a more general curriculum in which literacy and the enjoyment of books was important. They also noted that accessibility of both of these books made them particularly useful in their settings.

The data provides clear evidence of the benefits of reading for pleasure among children with special educational needs. Interestingly, parents and practitioners saw books as a route to enjoyment but also to development. They were unlikely to separate the two outcomes. The case studies in this section have also illustrated the wide diversity of the children and young people served by the BookTrust resources. In all cases, this diverse group were experiencing enjoyment and engagement as a consequence of interacting with the gifted materials. The varied range of books in the School Library Pack seemed to have supported this but among older readers with profound learning difficulties, practitioners were drawing on the sensory books provided in the *Early Years Additional Needs packs*. This is further evidenced in the interview data for parents and practitioners.

Parents views on the benefits of reading for pleasure for children with additional needs

In face to face interviews, parents reported a range of benefits for their children. In most cases they did not speak of the grand or long term benefits reported in the literature (such as social mobility reported by Morrisoe, 2014) but nonetheless they saw books as an essential part of their children's lives. As an emphatic example, it is important to refer to Sandra who said that her son John, aged 14 with Down Syndrome, 'had learned to say his name from the books she had made when he was younger.' More generally, parents focused more on *here and now* benefits and how sharing books might support current developmental priorities.

Summarily in order of relative importance and frequency in the data, the benefits revealed in the data were:

- Closeness: reading the books provided opportunities for closeness, cuddling and shared time together. Books could also help children to recognise, anticipate and engage with routines such as bed time.
- Shared focus: reading the books helps parents and children share time together and it leads children to engage in a task with more sustained focus.
- Support with current developmental targets: books were a scaffold for supporting language development. Movement, colour recognition, social skills, learning to sign, vocabulary and so on.
- High quality resources make the children feel special and encourage them to use and enjoy the books
- Books and reading were useful for learning about the real world and talking about every day experiences. The book *Off To The Park* was often a good example of this.
- An incentive for communication
- Learning to sign
- A step towards learning to read (though this was rarely mentioned).

It is important to end this section with a comment made by Laura, mother to Lottie:

‘Because Lottie has a heart condition, she can’t move around in the world as freely as other children. Also, her tracheostomy means she cannot talk about it as freely as other children either. Books are important because they bring the wider world to life. For her in particular, because she can’t talk about it, books provide common ground for us to share and understand together.’

Practitioners views on the benefits of reading for pleasure to children with additional needs

Practitioners reported on a range of benefits. Among these were the opportunities books provided for closeness, warmth and fun. They could also have more profound purposes. Abbie, class teacher at Pinewood special school, said:

‘It is all about the enjoyment of the book. Our children with profound needs can show their likes and dislikes through a book. We were all watching Simon [a 12-year-old boy in the class] using the book *Playtime*, the one with the sticky paints in. He loved that. He was so surprised by the stickiness, he put his nose to the picture and then tried to taste it. He was trying to work it out. The book motivated him to make some effortful movement. Our children need these kinds of sensory inputs.

Books are also important for other things. As part of our sex education programme we use a book called *Where Willy Went* and we remember Cal, one of our children, looking

at Dawn's [our TAs] baby bump and you could see that he was thinking 'I know where that came from' To me, this is a prime example of the importance of a book'

Jackie, the Early Years leader at Pinewood Special School, explained that books were important for creating that special time. For children with profound and multiple difficulties, a book was a good place for learning early communication, such as turn taking. It was also a good focus for the intensive interaction that children need with significant others. Jackie's view was that this was particularly important for children who had complex medical needs during their babyhood since they may have missed out on the dyadic interactions that were important for development and important for feelings of well-being. Practitioners from the Visual Impairment Team in Bradford and the Portage Team in Cornwall also commented on how important BookTrust resources were in encouraging parents to see reading as relevant to their children no matter what their impairment. An important message to get through was that reading was for everyone. They also used the books as a way of showing parents how to engage children's senses and relate the stories to their real life experiences. Christine, a visual Impairment teacher in Bradford, made the following points:

'There's [a book] called *Off to the Park* and the textures in that are very realistic and the language, it's to do with real experiences that the children will have. Even if the story hasn't got any textures, as long as you can use a real object as a prop or you are able to reference it to the child's everyday experience, that's good. That is a good teaching point I can use with the parents.'

Universally, practitioners agreed that BookTrust programmes provided the kind of sensory, colourful and multimodal resources that were needed to maximise the benefits of reading for pleasure. This was more profoundly stated for the Early Years resources. They could use them as an additional tool in their work since such high quality resources were often hard to fund and find. The guidance booklets were also useful in helping parents to understand how to maximise those benefits. Interestingly, none of the parents said that they had read the guidance, mainly because they had already received advice and support from teachers at school or from the support services. In most cases this was prior to or during the gifting of the packs. Parents also said that the guidance was easy to miss and sometimes a bit off putting because it seemed very wordy. Where advice was on laminated cards (as in the Bookstart Star pack) it was more likely to have gained parents' attention. It is also likely that if parental guidance had been signposted by practitioners, parents would have seen the relevance of these materials more fully.

In summary, there is substantial evidence across the data that reading for pleasure brings significant benefits to children with additional needs. These benefits are experienced by children, young people and their families and BookTrust resources make an important contribution to securing these positive outcomes. It is important to note that it is **the combination of the book with a responsive adult** that seems to be of particular importance

to readers whose communication and literacy is still emergent or who may have sensory impairments. Currently, guidance for parents does not gain much attention and is absent from the resources in KS3. This is worthy of the BookTrust's consideration.

5: Is reading for pleasure experienced, supported and encouraged differently for children with additional needs?

Practitioners views on how reading for pleasure is experienced differently for children with additional needs and how it can be supported

There was some consensus among practitioners on this issue. It was noted that there are individual differences in the way all children experienced reading for pleasure and this included those children with additional needs. This was understood to arise from a complicated set of factors inclusive of children's impairment(s), sensory preferences, stages of development, personalities and ages. Jackie, inclusion leader in a Nottingham primary school commented that:

'Reading for pleasure is such an *individual* thing. Everyone likes different sorts of books, different sorts of text, different sorts of layouts. Some people like reading on a screen, some people don't. Some people like reading non-fiction, some only like stories, some people like to read reports about things, some people would just want magazine articles. I think it's that. It's what you're interested in rather than what special need you do or do not have. I think that if children or adults with special needs don't experience reading for pleasure, it is because of poor resources.'

Jackie noted that the Early Years Additional Needs packs did provide good resources to incentivise reading for pleasure but that these could be even more personalised. All practitioners agreed that the differences in reading for pleasure for children with additional needs related to how books were accessed. The following extracts from telephone and face to face interviews represent the nature of this consensus:

'Reading for pleasure is reading for pleasure. SEN or whatever you want to call it is largely irrelevant. You just have to make it accessible. You need to provide the right material.'

'I think [children with special needs] can experience reading for pleasure just as much but I do think that the adaptations have to be made such as to the colours or textures in the books'

'the person sharing the book with the child needs to think about how they are holding it, where they are placing it, the specifics are to do with access to reading such as Braille.'

'We have two children with the same 'condition', Rett syndrome but the way they access books is totally different. The way I would share a book with each is different because they have different sensory likes and dislikes. In the end, the end result is, all children can get the same amount of pleasure from a book, it is just how you get them there.'

Practitioners believed that all children could enjoy books and reading and benefit from these experiences. It was the route to the enjoyment that was different. They made a range of suggestions about how best to encourage and support children's engagement and the range of suggestions ties in closely with the literature related to emergent literacy (Han, 2015; Rohde, 2015) and inclusive literacy (Lacey *et al.*, 2008). Namely that such approaches included

- Using books that provided rich sensory experiences and stimuli
- Supplementing stories with sensory experiences, songs, play and puppets.
- Relating the books to children's experiences.
- Using sensory preferences as a way to connect children with books.
- Adapting books and texts so they are visually accessible to readers with visual impairments (such as drawing thick black lines around pictures, enlarging texts or using Braille).
- Using rhymes, songs, DVDs, clapping, musical instruments and other auditory stimuli.
- Using props and real world artefacts to bring books to life.
- Giving children the time they needed to process their experiences
- Integrating discussion of the book with signs and symbols.
- Interacting intensively
- Repetitive stories and repeating use of the same books.
- Involving parents and encouraging them to use these strategies at home.

As has been demonstrated in Section Four, the issue of personalisation is central and the right book combined with a responsive adult are the most significant encouragers and supporters of reading for pleasure.

Parents views on how reading for pleasure is experienced and supported differently for children with additional needs

The data arising from interviews with parents offered a very useful account of how reading for pleasure is experienced, encouraged and supported. Parents focused on the question of how children experienced reading for pleasure rather than if they did. They also tended to focus on how they support their child in securing enjoyment of books. Rudi's mum, Branca said that it was a matter of tuning into what he liked and responded to. Rudi had favourite books (like *That's Not My Dinosaur* and some *Thomas the Tank Engine* books) and he also liked books that made noises and had music with them. Eva, whose daughter Lizzie has very limited vision, said that she read with Lizzie in the same way she read with all of her children, she just had to make sure that Lizzie was always sitting on her left since Lizzie could only see through her right eye. She also had to make sure the lighting was right and that Lizzie was in the mood

to focus. Similar points were made by other parents whose children had visual impairments. Jonah's mum, Tina said:

'I like to help Jonah to connect the book to his own experience. Because Jonah doesn't talk he is learning to sign so we use the books to practice this – as a way of getting communication going. Being able to communicate is going to be very important for his development. The school also make books that use symbols to help him connect the words with signs.'

Many parents talked about the importance of choosing the moment carefully. Faye and Andrew explained that with Isabella (age 6, Rett Syndrome, Bookstart Star pack), there 'was no middle ground' and they needed to be responsive to her mood because 'If Isabella does not want to engage, there is no point trying'. They also knew that Isabella was much more interested in the text on pages than the pictures. In fact, she was very drawn to print in the wider world and loved signs like 'Fire Exit' and 'Push' and so on. This is why Faye and Andrew were very careful not to obscure the text when they were reading to her. They also looked for books that had large text in different fonts since they knew that Isabella would find that very engaging. This is a good example of how, among such a diverse population, content that might be assumed as being universally attractive to children (like pictures) is not always so. Responsive adults will use books in ways that meet the individual needs of their child.

Fazina talked about her son, Arif, (an energetic, lively, sociable three-year-old with Down Syndrome) and how he experienced reading for pleasure. Fazina provided a useful account of how Arif interacted with books and this was all echoed in the observation data of these two:

'He likes to feel the book, and see in the books things he likes doing in his life like playing and painting. With this book *Playtime*, he likes to touch the doll's hair and he likes the pictures of the children playing. He picks the book up and he puts it down and turns the pages over and over again. I can see when he is thinking – he will go very quiet and focused - and I will listen very well because it looks like there is something he wants to say. He also likes to put the book to his mouth and if he sees something he likes he will look at me and go 'Mama' or 'Ga-ga-ga.' He is trying to speak. He goes forwards through the pages and back again and he will spend a long time with books.'

The data from parental interviews suggests that children are engaging with books on their own terms and that the manner of that engagement is sometimes influenced by the child's impairment. However, in the end, parents give more weight to the individual personalities and preferences of their children when thinking about how they experience reading and are supported in it. As noted in Section 4, parents mediate this engagement to support developmental priorities such as learning to communicate or learning about the bigger wider world. For them, reading for pleasure brings other developmental benefits. They also see engagement with books a useful resource for developing independence at the level that is

right for their child. For example, Branca said that books were a way for Rudi to learn to communicate 'No' in his own way by showing which books he liked and which he disliked.

Returning to the literature, Uzener (2008) argues that learners should have control 'over their own learning and thinking' (ibid. p.47) and 'Teachers should always emphasise and demonstrate through their actions that students have the responsibility for and control of their own strategies and outcomes in their education and daily lives' (ibid. p.52). The data arising from this project suggests that for parents, the promotion of independence is a priority for as Fazina emphasised 'it is my job to teach [Arif] to be independent.'

The emphasis that parents place on individuation is widely evidenced in the data. The following case studies offer further illustration of how this operates. They also represent the subjective nature of the experience of pleasurable reading.

Case Study: Sandra and John's books
[Interview, May 2016]

John is now 13 and he has a wide vocabulary and a particular liking for Dr Who. He loves books. He also has Down Syndrome. Sandra said 'I think that books are very powerful and reading with him helped him to learn and recognise speech. He learned to say his name with books. Books are very powerful. Because books are so important to me and because I used them so much when he was young, John likes and engages with them. When he was younger people were stunned and amazed by that.'



Sandra brought some of John's books to the interview to share with the researcher and she had travelled a long way to attend it. This was because there were some important things she wanted to share about how to engage children with additional needs with reading. The books Sandra brought included the Signalong range because those were very important in learning to use BSL. She remembered spending a lot of time in the library joining in the Signalong events. She also remembered receiving some of these books from BookTrust. John does not have hearing loss but his difficulties with articulating speech mean that signing is an important support for Total Communication. Sandra also shared some of the books she had made for John. She continues to make them as a way of helping him to learn about his own life.

When asked whether she thought that children with additional needs experienced reading differently, she said that it was hard to say. 'Experience is subjective so it is hard to say what someone may be seeing, hearing or feeling, but I can say that John has his favourite books that he revisits again and again and again, but then who doesn't? However, John does have a degree of autism so the need for repetition seems to be part of that too.'

When talking about the benefits of enjoying books, Sandra said that there were significant benefits that included gains in communication skills and concentration. Books also provided opportunities for quiet time, shared focussing and togetherness. They also stimulated imagination and even books without words have stories that can engage children.

For children with additional needs, Sandra's experience was that reading material needed to be meaningful and relatable to real life. At the same time, books needed to be age appropriate because 'it is very important that children see themselves in a book – they need to be able to say 'I can see myself in that book' and unfortunately, as children get older, there are less and less books that are accessible enough for children with special needs.'

**Case Study: Highly personalised routes to books
[Observation and Interview]**

Brigit, mum to Owen, explained that for Owen, it was the sounds of people's voices that he connected with. Owen is a happy and responsive child who is 6 years old and he also has profound and multiple learning difficulties. He loved rhymes, songs, repetitive stories, lively intonation and so on. When Brigit was reading she always exaggerated the expression and made sure that her intonation was very lively and engaging because that was what Owen loved and responded to. It wasn't so much about pictures or textures in books. This is why she found that BookTrust books were not quite as useful to her. Owen needed books with more words, rhymes and sounds and because she had received the Bookstart Star pack (which is a pack for children with conditions affecting their fine motor skills), she didn't have the rhyming book. She also needed longer stories with plenty of lively text.



Brigit read Mouse is Small (from the Bookstart Star pack) to Owen. Owen laughed and smiled and became more animated as Brigit's intonation did. For example, one part of the story reads 'Waaaah, a spider!' and Brigit read this in a high pitched, terrified voice and Owen squealed with delight. Both smiled and were joyous in their sharing. Later Brigit talked about the benefits of reading for pleasure and said that for her, it was just about doing things that made Owen happy. That was the most important thing, seeing him happy.

In summary and with reference to the case studies presented above, the story emerging from the data is that children with additional needs experience reading for pleasure as fully as children who do not have special needs but what is different is the need to make highly personalised adaptations around the preferences, personalities, moods, impairment(s) and interests of individual children. Adults have an important role to play in mediating the connection between books and children and young people with special educational needs.

6: What are the barriers and where are there gaps in provision?

The literature reviewed in Section Two does give some account of barriers to reading but with most of the focus being on instructional techniques rather than enjoyment. The data already reviewed does provide further account of barriers to enjoyment. Though it is recognised, and appropriately so, that there are specific barriers arising from impairment(s), such as visual, auditory, attentional, sensory, cognitive and emotional ones, none of the participants in this study saw these as insurmountable. It is hard to say whether the parents in this study were typical of all parents but it is notable that this view was prevalent across the data in all settings for all families. They could be bridged by the right books combined with responsive practice. Hence, barriers were not to be conceptualised as being *within* the individual but a consequence of not having the right approaches or resources.

The evidence in the data makes for the confident claim that BookTrust additional needs resources are well chosen, effective and right for children with additional needs. These have already been described in detail in previous sections but include tactility, colour, real-world connection, integration with signing, promotion of intensive interaction and play and rhyme. However, there were some important examples of where BookTrust could go further in getting the right books to the right children.

In relation to the additional needs packs, there were six cases (out of 13) in which children had received packs aligned to their impairment that may have been better replaced by others or supplemented by resources in other packs. For example, Lottie had a heart condition and a tracheostomy that affected her movement and she received Bookstart Star. However, because she could not speak very easily, she was learning to sign. For her, the contents of Bookshine would have been more appropriate even though she did not have a hearing impairment. Another example was Owen, who had also received Bookstart Star but would have responded better to books like *Shark in the Park* (from Bookshine) and *Bookstart Rhymetime* (from Booktouch) because of his particular preference for the sound of voices. Further, most of the children and young people included in the project had multiple rather than singular impairments. The guidance books for parents place some emphasis on the latter.

During the project, researchers also met Cathal and his mum. Cathal was 14 years old, full of life, into everything and very curious about the world and all of the things in it. One consequence of this was that he deconstructed things, often breaking them. Cathal's mum could not leave him alone with books because he would rip them up. Even cardboard books were not robust enough. What he needed were cloth books and these were impossible to find for his age group.

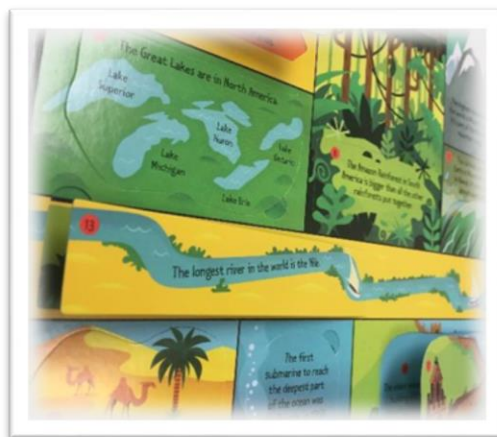
More generally, among older children using the School Library Pack, the most accessible books were the picture books such as *What the Jackdaw saw* and *The really gross body book*. Most of the other books were beyond the reach of children with additional needs but when asked to choose which they would prefer to use, children and young people with severe and

moderate learning difficulties tended to choose those that *looked* older. The case study from an observation of older children is an example of how this plays out when young people are interacting with the books.

Case Study: Choosing from the School Library Pack

[Observation, 2016]

Ben, Tom, Chantelle and Taylor were choosing, sharing and talking about books with a teaching assistant, Duncan. At first, Chantelle chose *Cowgirl*. (A book the researcher had with them). Chantelle chose it because she liked the picture and she thought it would be about cows. She began reading the book aloud to Duncan 'I was screaming for my little....' Duncan said 'Try reading that again' and Chantelle



said 'I was screaming for my life' and Duncan said 'Screaming for my life! I wonder why that would be?' The reading continued but was quite laboured and effortful. Duncan suggested that they change the book and Chantelle chose a book called *General Knowledge*. Here engagement with the book seemed more relaxed and Chantelle and Duncan read the parts about the South Pole together. She was also interested in the parts about rivers and seas and she took a photograph of this to show the parts she had enjoyed. In a conversation with a researcher Chantelle said that she really liked reading magazines and stories that had been on TV or had been films because she could follow these better. She also said that sometimes, she really couldn't be bothered to read. She didn't like to be seen reading books that were too babyish.

Ben chose a book from the School Library Pack called *Survival* and Duncan asked him what he thought it would be about. Duncan said he thought it would be about a boy that got stuck in a hole. Ben read the section in the book about being in a vehicle under water. Duncan and Ben were very engrossed in this. Ben said that he had chosen the book because it reminded him of a film he watched. He liked reading books that were from films and programmes and his favourites were Horrid Henry and Minecraft. He said he would also like to read Bubble Wrap Boy from the School Library Pack because he was interested in why a boy would be covered in bubble wrap. Ben then picked up *You Tell Me*, a poetry book but he struggled a bit with reading it.

Tom chose to read *You Tell Me* because he liked the picture on the front of the dog. He thought it might be about a dog that was kept inside. He read the poem called A Good Poem and Duncan praised him for his self-correction. He said the next book he would choose would be *Survival* because it looked like it was about a brave boy that liked to have adventures.

Taylor said he liked reading a lot, adventure and horror and stuff. He particularly liked Percy

Jackson. He chose to read *Survival* from the School Library Pack and said 'I already like the look of this because it looks like Everest. He looked through some of the pictures and said 'Yeah, basically this is about Everest. Duncan said, 'but is it a story' and after looking more closely, he said, 'No, it's telling you about what to do, to survive.'

Of this group of learners, Chantelle faced the most challenge in reading. She wanted to choose books that were appropriate for her age but needed high levels of support. This represents an issue that was commonly represented in the data; widespread concern about the lack of appropriate books for older children and young people with additional needs. This was in four main areas:

1. For young people with severe and profound and multiple learning difficulties there was a dearth of age appropriate, multisensory, robust books for teenagers.
2. For children and young people with severe learning difficulties there were insufficient non-fiction books that were accessible enough.
3. For children and young people with severe learning difficulties, there were insufficient fiction books that were age-appropriate yet accessible.
4. Books which are appropriate for the reading age of older children who are not yet reading fluently look childish. There is a need for more books that are easy to read but look like books for older readers, i.e. are age-appropriate.

The BookTrust resources were effective in filling some of the gaps in the Special School Library Pack, notably (2), (3) and (4) but (1) was largely unserved. In relation to BookTrust resources, parents and practitioners were full of praise for their quality and appropriateness. However, the following comments represent the full range of views on how they might be improved further:

'For older children with severe learning difficulties, you need picture books that reflect a teenager's life. This *Off to the Park* book could be used with older children quite well, it just needs to reflect their lives to work for them.'

'Books made for older children have too many words. Books without words would be good for Cathal because we could make up our own stories. They need to be short and sweet and easy to access but about older children's lives.'

'[It would be good to have more books that] can be used at bath time...obviously the parents are always there.'

'The packs have BSL signs but why not Makaton? We use Makaton in our setting so for consistency it would be really good to have that. Guides for parents also need to be in different languages, mainly Arabic, Polish, Punjabi and Urdu. I think that the information books for parents would be more attractive on cards. The website is fantastic but we need something that signals it even more clearly. Could there be

stickers inside the books with QR codes?’

‘What we really need is a big book version of books like *Off to the Park* so we can make that home school link more effectively. This would make it more possible to integrate the resources into our curriculum.’

‘It’s quite hard to find non-fiction textbooks that’s suitable for some of our readers, that aren’t too highbrow’

‘It’s very hard to find age appropriate texts for students with special needs. I’ve got 12, 13, 14 year-olds [in KS3] who are academically impaired but cognitively they are quite switched on. Quite street-wise. They look like young adults. It’s very hard when they’re still needing to decode and that sort of level one area but they’re not interested in reading about little bugs that can talk, cartoon character-type illustrations. They know about the world so they want books that tell a story that’s true or they can relate to.” Either fiction or non-fiction books but books that relate to a world that they know.

‘The special needs library pack comes with just one of each book. It would be really nice to have sets of the lower ability books ... When it’s just one the chances are you’ll either use that as a classroom reader, so you’d be reading it to the children, or they’ll be reading it independently in the book corner and they’ll just flick through it looking at the pictures, or in that rare moment, you’ll have a member of staff to sit one-to-one with that student and share that book with them. But that’s a rarity. To be able to use those books as the focus of a lesson but that everyone would have a copy would be a massive boost.’

‘The sensory story pack [SEN resources]. It’s not really what I would call a ‘sensory story pack’ it’s a guide to how to present a sensory story but it doesn’t come with the stuff you need. That would be a brilliant thing to work on - an actual sort of story bag. A sensory story bag that comes with, not everything because that’s part of the teacher’s responsibility to develop their own resources and see what works with their kids but just to have a few starting points with age appropriate books.’

Returning to the issue of barriers to enjoyment, it is interesting to note that issues raised in the literature were absent from the data (see 2.3). The idea that children with impairments are more likely to be delayed in their language development than those without impairments is widely discussed and evidenced in the literature, further supporting the importance of intensive interaction around books. However, participants did not tend to make reference to this or to the idea of norms. They were more focused on children and young people’s individual development and progress, rather than how they compared to a normative measure of progress. This is significant because it is echoed in the mission and philosophy of BookTrust where the focus is on enjoyment and engagement rather than literacy instruction.

7. How BookTrust resources are used in schools and organisations

BookTrust resources are integrated into settings in a range of ways. Bradford SEN support services use them as an additional way to inform parents about how to help their children to access books. They made warm comments about the value of the resources in this respect. In special schools, the resources are often used in sensory storytelling and group activities. In Early Years settings, treasured copies of the books are used to resource literacy activities and as part of parents' evenings, as ways to advise families on matters of reading with children. One of the schools that had participated in the research wished that they had made more use of the resources for that reason since:

'Once they had gone home, we didn't have much access to them. We didn't know we could request some class copies or about the parent guidance resources but now we do, that will make us deal differently with them next time.'

The data did suggest that practitioners were not aware of the full extent of the resources available such as dual language books, large text or braille resources. They also seemed unaware of the supplementary resources available on the BookTrust website. Practitioners in Bradford and Cornwall explained that BookTrust resources did help services to work together, for example librarians, health visitors and portage practitioners. In Cornwall too, the Bookstart co-ordinator had a big role in making connections across a range of settings as is demonstrated by the case study below.

Case Study: BookTrust and the Child Development Centre.

[Observation, April, 2016]

The Child Development Centre hosts playgroups for parents and children with complex needs and disabilities. Janet (a portage practitioner) explained that books were very important and that during home visits, practitioners would model how to use books to aid enjoyment and development. For young children, the attractive, visual and high quality of the resources was so important.

Five families attended the playgroup and whilst children were playing, the Bookstart Co-ordinator (Debbie) chatted with parents and shared books with the children. She talked to one of the Dads attending and discussed with him which pack would be best, showing him the books. His son immediately took to one of the books, *Off to the Park* and dad talked with him about the bouncy red ball in it.

Debbie sat with another family and showed them the book *Playtime* which was an immediate hit! The child turned the pages and engaged with the book for some time. The books are spread around the room at this point and gaining attention from families. Debbie visits each family in turn, talking to them about their needs. Debbie is the 'special guest' at the playgroup

and the portage team explain that they invite guests to each meeting. This was an important forum for connecting families with other services and for giving them a chance to meet each other. During the session, Debbie shares a sensory story with the children. Everyone is attentive and engaged and the children react very positively to the sensory experiences that go with this. Debbie also plays the Rhymetime CD and the parents and children join in with the songs and movements.

The portage team explain that their relationship with BookTrust goes back a long way and that they value the relationship very much. There are some BookTrust information sheets and pamphlets in the room. They look like they are there permanently among other information resources for children and Debbie explains that she has had some made especially for the Centre.

The case study demonstrates the way that BookTrust resources are held in high regard by organisations. Much of this is a consequence of the Bookstart Co-ordinator's role in networking with settings. Data arising from the project to date suggests that such networking is more likely in the Early Years. The relative looseness in the extent to which the School Library Pack is integrated may be a consequence of the absence of a LA based co-ordinator undertaking this role.

Most practitioners in schools and other organisations did not identify other providers that they used, mainly because they had not found one quite like BookTrust. It was the quality and the 'free' status of BookTrust programmes that were difficult to replicate. Portage practitioners in Cornwall noted use of StorySack for sensory resources. For older children, the dearth of age appropriate reading material for young people with special needs meant that practitioners made personalised materials themselves.

In some ways, this was a substitution that was not always without problems. Sarah, a teaching assistant from Pinewood School in Cornwall, made an important point about this which provides an emphatic ending for this section of the analysis:

'For children with special educational needs, who are often surrounded by 'special' resources and equipment and stuff, a book is a bit unique because it is, how can I put it, its 'normal' and what I mean is it is something 'ordinary' that people use in the wider world and that carries no 'special' stigma. It is really nice for children and families to enjoy that ordinariness. This is why books are so important.'

8. Key findings and Recommendations

Findings

How do children with additional needs experience books and reading for pleasure and what is the impact?

Appreciation for the resources provided by the BookTrust

The parents and practitioners participating in this project were full of praise for the quality and appropriateness of BookTrust's additional needs resources. They appreciated the care and investment that had been made in their selection and presentation. Families welcomed these gifts and felt that their children were being valued through them. Schools welcomed the arrival of the School Library Packs and adapted the ideas provided in the *Supporting guide for the Special School Pack*. Everyone was very positive about BookTrust and affirmed its impact.

The benefits of reading for pleasure

The benefits of reading for pleasure among children with additional needs in this study were significant and often profound. Books were important in their lives. Among the benefits were opportunities for comfort, closeness and well-being. Books were also important scaffolds for development and were being used to provide a highly personalised route to learning. For example, books were a stimulus for movement, communication, language development, learning about the world and learning to be independent. BookTrust resources were clearly seen to contribute to delivering these positive outcomes and there were countless examples of this in the data. For reasons that are unclear, the literature provides very little account of the impact of reading for pleasure among children and young people with special educational needs and the findings of this project make a useful contribution. More research and development around this important issue needs to be undertaken.

Access to reading for pleasure

Emphatically evidenced across the data was the belief that children with additional needs did experience the benefits of reading for pleasure as much as children without additional needs. The general consensus was that differences in the extent to which children were able to gain pleasure from books were to do with access. Some access issues were impairment specific (such as visual and hearing difficulties). For example, where children had visual impairments, lighting and seating position were important. Some access issues were highly individual, for example where an individual preferred some forms of sensory stimulation through their feet rather than hands. For older children and young people with Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties, there was a dearth of appropriate sensory books that were age appropriate and this was recognised as a substantial shortcoming in current provision within and beyond BookTrust.

Is reading for pleasure experienced and encouraged differently for children with additional needs and what are the barriers?

Personalisation and barriers to reading for pleasure

The issue of personalisation was central in understanding how enjoyment of reading might be encouraged and supported. Here, personalisation refers to the way that communication, support and interaction was matched to the unique capabilities and preferences of individual children and young people. Encouraging and supporting reading for pleasure among children and young people with additional needs was a matter of combining the right resource with a responsive adult who could mediate the connection between child and book in ways that were highly individualised.

The data and the literature led to the proposal that barriers to reading for pleasure arose from a complex set of factors inclusive of children's impairment(s), sensory preferences, stages of development, personalities, life-situations, capabilities and ages. It would not be wise to dismiss the significance of impairment. However, the data suggests that it is unwise to both overgeneralise and under-generalise in this respect. For the former, it should not be assumed that children who have the same impairment will need the same types of support. For the latter, it should not be assumed that children and young people with impairments may not share experiences and needs that are common to all children.

Born out by the literature (Han *et al.*, 2015; Le Fanu, 2015; Lewis and Norwich, 2006 Lacey *et al.*, 2008) is an argument for fluid models of provision that combine what is known for all children with what is known about specific types of impairment combined with what is known about the unique individual. How these three elements are patterned is likely to be dependent on the individual and is best conceived fluidly. To a large extent, the findings demonstrate that BookTrust's approach is fitting for such fluidity since they combine universal gifting programmes for all children (such as Bookstart and the School Library Packs) with programmes tailored to the needs of specific sub-groups (such as the additional needs packs which complement the Bookstart programme). However, in the case of the additional needs packs there is some space to intensify *personalise-ability* even further (see recommendations).

Strategies for pleasurable reading with children with special educational needs

Crossing the boundaries of impairment were a wide range of strategies that were potentially relevant to the inclusion of children with special educational needs in pleasurable reading. The data and the literature correlate to propose that inclusive literacy (Lacey *et al.* 2008) and emergent literacy (Rohde, 2015) can be adopted as promising philosophies and practices for the full range of children with special educational needs. Practices most likely to have a positive impact on engagement with reading were:

- The use of multi-modalities: Tactility, songs, rhymes, auditory, visual, kinesthetic, sensory, digital literacies, props, concrete resources, real-world artefacts.
- The integration of playful activity: puppets, role play

- Intensive use of sensory stimuli
- Adoption of intense dialogic, dyadic interaction
- Enabling independence, responsibility and taking a lead
- Making connections with everyday life and experience through for example, extratextual talk (Zucker *et al.*, 2012)
- Providing resources for older children that are accessible and age-appropriate.
- Recognising the central role of parents, carers and significant others
- Highly responsive practice

It is important to note that such practices are already embedded in the resources, guidance and approach adopted by BookTrust. However, the relevance of such approaches to older children and young people who may have severe and profound learning difficulties and disabilities must not be overlooked.

What reading for pleasure needs are not met by BookTrust's and others resources?

The need for accessible and multi-sensory books for older children

In the context of very positive evaluations about BookTrust's resources, there were widespread concerns of the dearth of appropriate books for older children with additional needs. Parents, practitioners and young people themselves identified the need for accessible, sensory picture books that were relevant to teenagers' lives. This was signaled as an urgent need and one that may form a priority for BookTrust's programme development. Interview and observation data demonstrated that though the Special School Library pack did contain carefully chosen books that were age-appropriate whilst being easy to read (such as *Respect*, *Contact* and *Laika the Astronaut*), the pack does not contain the kind of accessible, robust, sensory books that are required by teenagers with severe and/or profound and multiple learning difficulties.

Special School Resources

Practitioners in special schools were positive about the value of the special school resources and would adapt the activities around the specific needs of their students. A sensory approach to story-telling was commonly used in special schools and practitioners were confident about their ability to design such activities. Hence, the *SEN resources for Special Schools* were supplementary to their established practice and were useful in this respect. Practitioners in schools noted that if the SEN resources for Special Schools were also accompanied by the books they referred to, they would be more widely used. It was more likely for practitioners to use the ideas in the *Supporting guide for the Special School Pack* since these were accompanied by the actual book.

Online resources

More generally, the resources available on the BookTrust website were underused by schools (such as activity sheets) and practitioners were not aware of the scope and potential value of these resources. For example, in the early years, there was frequent mention of the need for

parent guidance materials in multiple languages when these are already provided by BookTrust on their website.

Intensifying personalise-ability

Parents and practitioners suggested some ways forward for BookTrust. These suggestions were about intensifying the personalise-ability of the resources. Among some families, children had been gifted a pack designed for a particular type of need (e.g. physical impairment) which omitted auditory resources and signing materials that would have been appropriate in the case of, for example, children whose physical impairment meant that they needed to use signing to communicate.

The need for big books and multiple copies

Participants also asked whether multiple copies of books within packs could be provided to resource activities in school using the same books as were being used at home. Providing big book formats would support this further as would acknowledgement of Makaton¹⁰ signing. Dual language books and guidance for parents would also be welcomed as an additional route towards personalisation. Some practitioners had accessed the website but asked that parents be better signposted to it as an additional resource.

How are BookTrust's additional needs resources used in a range of settings?

The important role of the Bookstart Co-ordinator

Bookstart Co-ordinators were very active in accessing a range of settings including portage services, early years settings (schools and children's centres) SEN support services and Sensory support services. It was clear that these settings had an established and long lasting relationship with BookTrust as a consequence of being in close contact with the Bookstart Co-ordinator. Such services were an important route to reaching the children and families who would benefit from the additional needs resources.

Integration into settings

In the organisations visited (schools, children's centres, health services, SEN support services), the additional needs resources were well-integrated into the every day work of the setting. For example, in Bradford the Visual Impairment specialist teacher had used the Booktouch resources with parents at the local library. Other practitioners working in this service also used these resources to support parents in meeting their children's needs. In Cornwall, the Bookstart Co-ordinator was a special visitor to the playgroup at the Child Development Centre providing sensory stories and rhyming sessions for parents and families and using this forum as a route to gifting resource packs. The Bookstart co-ordinator had also made resources that were on constant display in this setting. In Ealing, the children's centre valued the BookTrust resources very highly and having requested additional copies of the Booktouch, Bookshine and Bookstart Star materials for their classrooms, used these in the

¹⁰ Makaton is a language programme that utilises symbols and signs to support communication. The signs and symbols are used with speech and in spoken word order.

curriculum, finding them useful for all children. In cases where the Bookstart co-ordinator had gained lesser access to the setting or where the relationship was new, the resources did not hold such a high profile.

In schools, books from the Library Packs were used to support the curriculum and to resource day to day reading activities. For example, in Bradford, Laika the Astronaut was used to support the English, art and food technology curriculum.

Recommendations

The resounding message from this study is that BookTrust should continue with its good work. Further steps in supporting reading for pleasure among children with additional needs are possible in the spirit of intensifying the degree to which programmes can be personalised around the unique needs of individual children and young people. The following recommendations are made with this mind.

1. BookTrust should revisit how it conceptualises and gifts to the full spectrum of children and young people with special educational needs. Currently in the early years programmes, the division of resources into the three categories of hearing impairment, visual impairment and physical impairment does not reflect the complex continuum of individuals who do benefit (and could benefit) from BookTrust programmes. BookTrust are encouraged to consider whether, in the early years, a universal pack could be established and supplemented thereafter by resources that are selected by parents, practitioners and children on the basis of their knowledge of individual needs. This may require some additional training for staff about how to gift packs that are appropriate to the child rather than their impairment. It may also require some changes
2. For similar reasons, BookTrust should revisit the division of its School Library Pack into Special and Mainstream versions since both types of schools are populated by very varied cohorts where individuals may benefit more from one pack than the other. This is particularly important since schools are restricted to ordering one type of pack and where children with additional needs in mainstream schools may not be gaining access to the kinds of books that might be most suitable for them.
3. In relation to greater personalisation, BookTrust should consider how its books and resources could be developed to increase the presence of the individual child or young person in books. For example, the inclusion of Velcro squares onto which photographs of children and the things that matter to them could be attached. No doubt, there are other imaginative ways to support parents and practitioners in achieving this level of personal inclusion. Such developments could include the wider use of digital options.
4. Similarly, the advice provided for parents assumes singular impairment when in reality, many children and young people in this cohort have more complex profiles. BookTrust is

advised to revisit the presentation of its guidance for parents. This may be imagined in the form of universal guidance which is supplemented by suggestions about sensory impairments, autism, profound learning difficulties and speech difficulties for example. BookTrust could also consider the construction of guidance templates that practitioners in schools and support services could edit in ways that meet local and individual need.

5. Parental guidance could make more explicit reference to the importance of 'Extratextual talk' (Zucker et al., 2012) so as to enable deeper engagement in stories and books. Such talk is about making inferences, relating the material to children's own lives and talking about the events, people, things and places in the book. More emphasis might also be placed on giving children opportunities to take the lead in conversation, page turning and choosing points of focus so that independence is enabled over passive engagement.
6. For the Special School Library Pack, BookTrust should revisit its programme, giving attention to how the range of books could be developed to better meet the needs of children and young people with severe and profound learning difficulties. This is important given that this group may include individuals for whom conventional literacy will not be acquired and for whom emergent literacy is likely to be protracted, even to the entire life-course. This could be the basis for a research and development project that could attract funding from a range of organisations and would involve the creation of robust, multi-sensory books (typically produced for very young readers) which are relevant to teenagers' lives. This project could include investigation of how parental involvement in reading might be shaped around the needs of older children.
7. The Special School Library Pack does include some fiction and non-fiction books that are easy to read but age appropriate but schools and young people continue to claim shortage of such texts. BookTrust should consider how it can expand the range of books of this type through its gifting programme or through the titles it recommends on its website.
8. Generally, the website resources are underused by schools and families. This is because they simply do not know they are there. Though the website is very boldly presented on the packaging of the early years resources, this does not seem as noticeable or encouraging of access as is desirable. One suggestion made by practitioners is to insert a QR code or web address into the books and resources.
9. BookTrust should consider how it could supplement its current resources to include multiple copies of texts for use in classrooms, settings or centers. Where practitioners can use the same books being read at home in the classroom, the books can be more fully used and promoted among children and families. For many children and young people with special educational needs the experience of repetition and anticipation is important in the enjoyment of books and reading.
10. The Bookstart co-ordinator has a central role to play in intensifying the use and impact of current resources. Where the Bookstart co-ordinator has well developed relationships with

a setting, the resources tend to be more integrated and better promoted among families. It will be important for BookTrust to consider how it could increase the promotion of existing resources (such as dual language books and online resources) and how the Bookstart co-ordinator might be part of this. It is also important to consider how a similar co-ordination role might be extended to the School Library Packs and SEN Resources for Special Schools so that their impact can be intensified.

11. Finally, BookTrust should continue to operate around its core principles and philosophy. In foregrounding the enjoyment of books and reading, it presents an important message and one that is overlooked in the literature. Enjoyment of books and reading has profound importance in the lives of children with special educational needs and is something that deserves more attention in the wider field of academic theory and research.

BookTrust is leading the way with its gifting programmes for SEN and should continue to lead the way through propagating further research and development that can contribute to theory and practice in this important area.

The best way to end this report is with the words of Sandra, mother to John who is now 13, has a wide vocabulary and a particular liking for Dr Who. Her comment represents the way in which parents and practitioners saw enjoyment of reading as essential. About John (who loves books and also has Down Syndrome), Sandra said:

'I think that books are very powerful and reading with him helped him to learn and recognise speech. He learned to say his name with books. Books are very powerful.'

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Appendices

Research Tools

Appendix 1a (i): Observation Schedule

Researcher to add notes about the way in which the parent engages the child and enables an active role.

Researcher to add notes about the extra-textual features of the conversation (e.g. whether the parent helps the child to see the links between the book/resources and their own lives).

Observable behaviour		Frequency (tick when occurrence is observed)
Gazing at.... the book (and other resources, e.t. rhyme mat and puppets)	
Pointing to....		
Touching....		
Turning....		
Mouthing....		
Smelling....		
Holding....		
Listening to....		
Talking about....		
Vocalising about....		
Communicating about....		
Asking questions about....		
Choosing		
Reading from....		
Reciting parts of....		
Turning the pages of....		
Tracking the words of....		
Gestures showing engagement with....		
Facial expressions showing engagement with....		
OTHERS (Researcher to note)		

Observation Schedule: Focus on the parent or practitioner (to accompany audio/video recording)

Observable behaviour		Frequency Count (tick when occurrence is observed)
Talking about the pictures in the the book (and other resources, e.t. rhyme mat and puppets)	
Pointing to things in the		
Asking questions about		
Answering questions about		
Listening to the child talking about		
Letting the child make choices about		
Helping the child to read		
Repeating parts of		
Supporting key skills (e.g. laterality, phonics, comprehension) whilst reading		
Supporting Joint attention		
Supporting turn taking		
Closeness		
OTHERS (Researcher to note)		

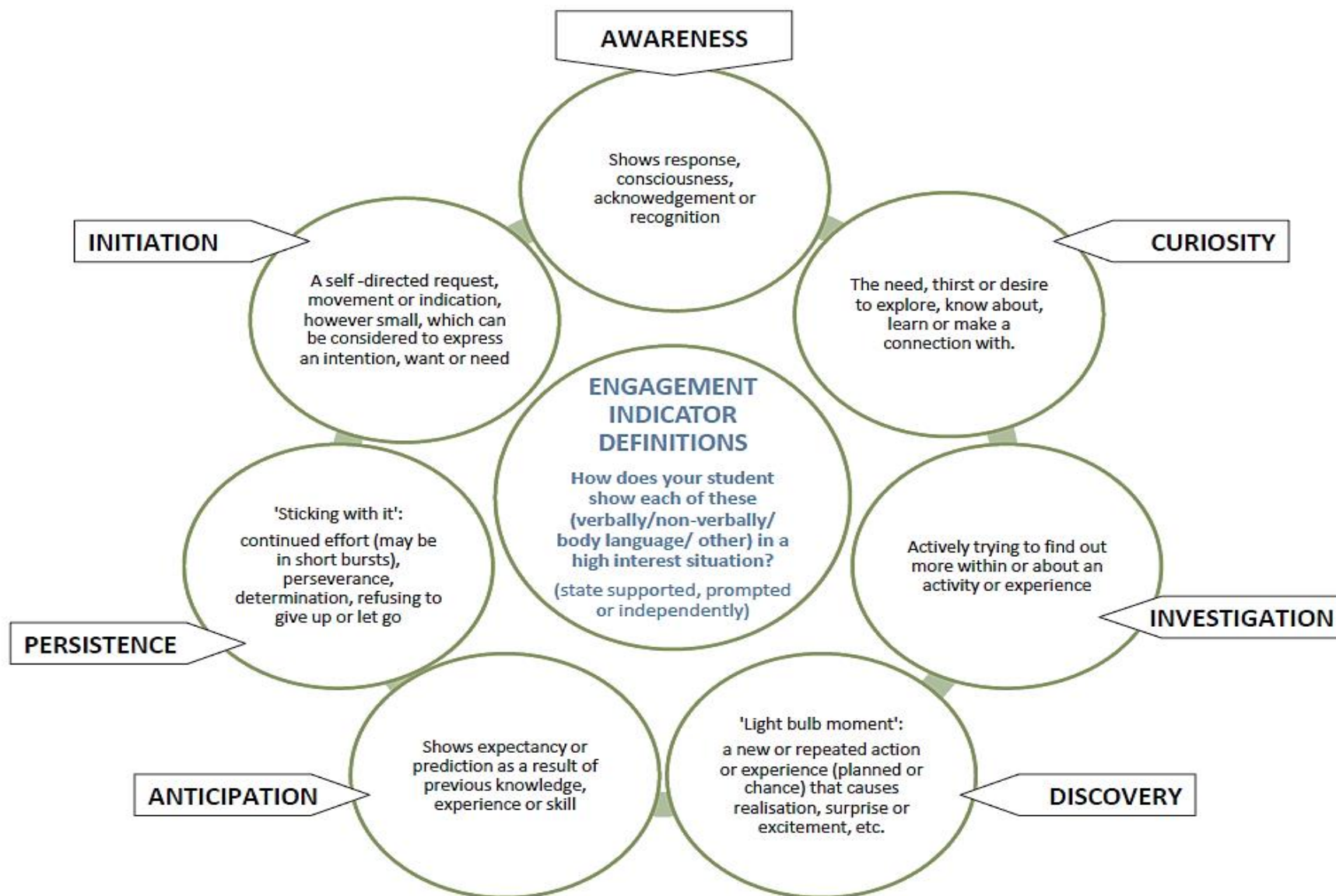
Appendix 1b (ii): Observation Schedule: Engagement Scale (for children with profound and multiple learning difficulties or severe learning difficulties)

Engagement Indicators	Score (0–4)	Observational notes
Awareness		
Curiosity		
Investigation		
Discovery		
Anticipation		
Initiation		
Persistence		
Total score		

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----

Key for scoring	0	1	2	3	4
	No focus	Low and minimal levels – emerging/ fleeting	Partly sustained	Mostly sustained	Fully sustained

**Appendix 1b (iii): Observation Schedule: Engagement Scale (for children with profound and multiple learning difficulties or severe learning difficulties)
Descriptors**



Appendix 2 (i): Conversations with individual children (following observations)

Support for elicitation

Researcher to discuss most appropriate form of elicitation with parent/carer or practitioner (e.g. modes, aids etcetera)

If carer/parent or practitioner is needed to support communication, researcher to brief them.

Initiation:

I would like to talk with you about the book(s) you have been reading/you have just been reading with X (name of parent/carer or practitioner).¹¹

We would like to talk with you about the book(s) you have been reading/you have just been reading with X.

Consent:

Is it okay with you if we talk about this together? (Symbol cards YES/NO/I HAVE HAD ENOUGH NOW/MORE PLEASE).

Choice for child:

When we are talking would you like to: (materials laid out with symbols)

Draw pictures showing what you are thinking and feeling about the book(s)

Paint pictures showing what you are thinking and feeling about the book(s)

Use the puppet.....

Take some photographs.....

Write something down.....

Get me to write something down....

Talk about.....

Prompts that the interviewer can use during the activity to support the conversation

What did you feel when you were reading the book(s)?

What do you feel when X says it is time to read?

Do you ever ask X to read with you?

Do you sometimes ask X if you can read with him/her?

What did you enjoy about the book(s)?

What didn't you enjoy about the book(s)?

What is your favourite thing about the book(s)?

Tell me about your favourite book(s)

What do you like about reading book(s)?

What don't you like about reading book(s)?

What makes it easier/more difficult for you to read books?

Examples of symbols that will be available during the elicitation



¹¹ Also refer to other resources such as puppets and rhyme mats throughout

Appendix 2 (ii): Conversations with individual children (following observations) who may be at a more advanced stage of communication,

Support for elicitation

If carer/parent or practitioner is needed to support communication, researcher to brief them.

Initiation:

I would like to talk with you about the book(s) you have been reading/you have just been reading with X (name of parent/carer or practitioner).¹²

We would like to talk with you about the book(s) you have been reading/you have just been reading with X.

Consent:

Is it okay with you if we talk about this together?

Choice for child:

When we are talking would you like to: (materials laid out)

Draw pictures showing what you are thinking and feeling about the book(s)

Paint pictures showing what you are thinking and feeling about the book(s)

Use the puppet.....

Take some photographs.....

Write something down.....

Get me to write something down...

Talk about.....

Prompts that the interviewer can use during the activity to support the conversation

1. Tell me about you
2. Tell me about what you are good at
3. Tell me about what you find difficult
4. Tell me about the books you have read (from this range)
5. What do you like about the books?
6. How much did you enjoy the books?
7. What makes reading books easier for you?
8. What makes it more difficult for you to read books?
9. How do you know when you are enjoying the books?
10. What books didn't you enjoy?
11. What kinds of books do you usually read?
12. Tell me about.....Do you read other stuff that is not printed in a book?
13. Are these the kind of books you like and enjoy?
14. Have these books helped you enjoy reading more?
15. Have these books helped you to become better at reading?
16. What other kinds of books would help you enjoy reading? /What would make the books better?

¹² Also refer to other resources such as puppets and rhyme mats throughout)

Appendix 3: Semi-Structured Interview with parents/carers

Instructions to researcher

Layout examples of the Bookstart Resources to contextualise the interview.

Participants may want to talk about specific resources or parts of them by showing them to you.

Questions

What BookTrust Pack (s) have you received and shared with your child?

How and when do you use the books and resources?

What do you and your child get out of reading the books?

To what extent is it an enjoyable experience, for your child? For you?

To what extent are they learning that we can read for pleasure?

What does your child learn from it?

How does it help your child to develop?

What do you want your child to get out of reading the books?

What other things do you think your child gains from reading the books? (e.g. enjoyment, relaxation).

To what extent do the books chosen for the packs, engage your child?

What impact do you think that reading for pleasure has on your child now? What about in the longer term future?

When you are reading with your child, are there particular ways that you engage them?

Can you tell me about whether these approaches are a response to the type of disability or special educational need that they have,

or

Are they a response to other individual qualities?

or

Both?

Follow up: Do you think that children with special educational needs experience enjoyment of reading differently? Do you think they need to be encouraged to enjoy reading differently?

How well do the contents of the Book Trust packs you have received and used, help your child to read for pleasure/enjoy reading?

Are there ways that the Book Trust could develop its resources to help your child enjoy books more? Is there anything they could do to meet child's needs when it comes to helping them enjoy books?

Appendix 4: Semi-Structured Interview with practitioners

Instructions to researcher: Interviewer will need the BookTrust summary of programmes.

Questions

1. Can you tell me about your current role and workplace?
What is your role in relation to the BookTrust?
What BookTrust resources have you worked with?¹³
2. Can you tell me about how the Book Trust resources are used in your setting?
 - i. Do the BookTrust programmes lead you to do things that you would not otherwise do?
3. What impact do you think the Book Trust gifts have:
On parents and children?
On children with special educational needs?

What kind of impact do the Book Trust gifts have on confidence/enjoyment/frequency of reading?

Can you give me an example of something you have seen that illustrates that impact?
In your view, what is the impact of reading for pleasure? Now? In the longer term? For children with additional needs in particular?

4. Book Trust really wants to promote reading for pleasure for all children and young people. To what extent do you think that the packs (books and resources) achieve that?
Follow ups to probe (choosing those most appropriate to the setting)
Bookshine
Booktouch
Bookstart star
Bookshine
BookTime
School Library Pack for mainstream schools
School library pack for special schools
SEN resources for schools
Parents' guide to enjoying reading
Toys
Pack design features
Laminate inserts
Puppets
Rhyme mats

Note for interviewer: Ask about these within each pack rather than separately, e.g. for Bookstart Star – touch and feel book, board book, finger puppets, parent guidance).

5. Are there some BookTrust packs that particularly suit children with different types of needs such as hearing impairments, cognitive impairments, and dyslexia?

¹³ What BookTrust resources have you worked with? (information for interviewers – respondents might mention Bookstart – universal packs (Baby and Treasure), BookTime, Bookshine – for hearing impaired children, Booktouch – for blind or partially sighted children, Bookstart star – for children with conditions affecting fine motor skills, School Library Pack for mainstream schools, School Library Pack for special schools, SEN resources for schools).

6. Are there some types of reading for pleasure needs that are not well met by current BookTrust packs?
 What should the BookTrust continue to do?
 What could the BookTrust do to improve its provision for children with additional needs?
7. Do you use other providers of reading resources in addition to the Book Trust resources? (in general and for children with additional needs)
8. Thinking beyond the BookTrust packs and more widely, when it comes to books and resources to promote reading for pleasure among children with special educational needs, what gaps are there?

I will read out some statements for you and then I will ask you to reflect on how true each one is in your view using a scale 1-5, 1 being 'largely untrue' and 5 being 'largely true' You can also opt for 'not sure.'

	1	2	3	4	5	Not sure
Children with special educational needs experience reading for pleasure in much the same way as children without special educational needs.						
Children with special educational needs experience reading for pleasure somewhat differently to children without special educational needs.						
Children with different types of special educational needs experience reading for pleasure in specific ways.						
There are individual differences in the ways that children with special educational needs experience reading for pleasure.						
There are individual differences in the ways that children without special educational needs						

experience reading for pleasure.						
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Once complete, Follow up:

Can you talk about your responses?

In your view (and experience) to what extent do children with special educational needs require different kinds of support and encouragement in reading for pleasure than children without special educational needs?

Do you think that there are any specific barriers to reading for pleasure that are specific to children with additional needs?

Appendix 5 (i): Focus group interview for younger children or children at an early stage of development in their communication.

Support for elicitation

The focus group event should follow some time spent by children and young people with the BookTrust books and resources.

Researcher to discuss most appropriate form of elicitation with practitioners (e.g. modes, aids etcetera)

If practitioner is needed to support communication in the focus group, researcher to brief them.

Initiation:

I would like to talk with you all about the book(s) you have been reading/you have been reading with X (name of parent/carer or practitioner).

We would like to talk with you about the book(s) you have been reading/you have been reading with X.

Consent:

Is it okay with you if we talk about this together? Symbol cards YES/NO/I HAVE HAD ENOUGH NOW/MORE PLEASE)

Activity time (15 minutes)

We would you like to: (materials laid out)

Draw pictures showing what you are thinking and feeling about the book(s)

Paint pictures showing what you are thinking and feeling about the book(s)

Use the puppet.....

Take some photographs.....

Write something down.....

Talk about.....

Group may choose to use the same elicitation method

Individuals may choose a specific approach.

Give the group time to work alone or in pairs to make something or talk about the books they have been reading.

Sharing time (20 minutes). This is the section that is audio recorded

We would like you to share what you have made with the whole group and tell us about it.

Discussion to be recorded.

Researcher to scribe responses, regularly checking accuracy with the group.

Prompt questions for the facilitator (During activity and sharing time)

1. Tell us about the books you have read (from this range)
2. What do you like about the book(s)? What does everyone like about the book(s)?
3. How much did you enjoy the book(s)? What did everyone enjoy about the book(s)?
4. How do you know when you are enjoying the books?
5. What books didn't you enjoy? What would everyone say about that?
6. What kinds of books do you usually read?
7. Tell me about.....Do you read other stuff that is not printed in a book?
8. Are these the kind of books you like or want?
9. What other kinds of books (or reading materials) would help you enjoy reading? /What would make the books better?

Appendix 5 (ii): Focus group interview for children at a more advanced stage of development in communication

Support for elicitation

The focus group event should follow some time spent by children and young people with the BookTrust books and resources.

Researcher to discuss most appropriate form of elicitation with practitioners (e.g. modes, aids etcetera)

If practitioner is needed to support communication in the focus group, researcher to brief them.

Initiation:

I would like to talk with you all about the book(s) you have been reading/you have been reading with X (name of parent/carer or practitioner).

We would like to talk with you about the book(s) you have been reading/you have been reading with X.

Consent:

Is it okay with you if we talk about this together? (Symbol cards YES/NO/I HAVE HAD ENOUGH NOW/MORE PLEASE)

Focus group questions

1. Tell us about you
2. Tell us about what you are good at
3. Tell us about what you find difficult (what everyone finds difficult)
4. Tell me about the books you have read (from this range). What has everyone been reading?
5. What do you like about the books? What does everyone like about the books?
6. How much did you enjoy the books? What does everyone enjoy about the books?
7. What makes reading books easier for you? (For everyone?)
8. What makes it more difficult for you to read books? (For everyone?)
9. How do you know when you are enjoying the books? (How does everyone know when they are enjoying the books?)
10. What books didn't you enjoy?
11. What kinds of books do you usually read? (What about everyone?)
12. Tell me about....Do you read other stuff that is not printed in a book? (What does everyone do?)
13. Are these the kind of books you like or want? (Everyone likes or wants?)
14. What other kinds of books would help you enjoy reading? /What would make the books better?

Researcher to scribe key points during the discussion, ensuring these are what the group wanted to say/have written down.

Appendix 6

BookTrust additional needs resources

Bookstart

Bookstart offers the gift of books to all children at two key ages before they start school to inspire a love of reading that will give children a flying start in life and to help families enjoy reading together every day. Children receive the Bookstart Baby pack in their first year, and the Bookstart Treasure pack aged 3-4 years.

Children who are deaf, blind or visually impaired, or have disabilities affecting the development of fine motor skills are also entitled to extra packs to support their additional needs, in addition to the universal Bookstart packs:

Bookshine

Bookshine packs are available for children who are deaf. Two Bookshine packs are available: Bookshine Baby (0-2 years old) and Bookshine Toddler (3-5 years old). In 2014-15, 2,586 Bookshine packs were delivered to families.

Contents of the packs:

- Two books (a bookmark showing British sign language is also included in the toddler pack)
- Booklet of advice about sharing books with deaf children
- Book guide listing lots more great books as well as useful organisations and resources
- Nursery rhyme placemat featuring two rhymes and photographs of babies signing.

Booktouch

Booktouch packs are available for children who are blind or partially sighted. Two Booktouch packs are available: Booktouch Baby (0-2 years old) and Booktouch Toddler (3-5 years old). In 2014-15, 2,704 Booktouch packs were delivered to families.

Contents of the packs:

- Two touch-and-feel books
- Booklet of advice about sharing books with blind and partially sighted children
- Book guide listing lots more great books
- Leaflet listing useful services related to reading
- Bookstart Rhymetimes CD and booklet

Bookstart Star

Bookstart Star packs are available for children with disabilities that impact on, or delay the development of, fine motor skills. Bookstart Star is aimed at children aged 3-5 years old. In 2014-15, 4,748 packs were delivered to families.

Contents of the pack:

- *Off to the Park!* – an exclusive book from Child's Play publishers, which includes an array of tactile features such as a big red squashy ball, a glittering path and even an ice cream scented page.
- *Mouse Is Small* – a board book from Mary Murphy and children's publisher Walker.
- Animal finger puppets for playing along with the story.
- Resources to help parents and carers enjoy reading with their children.

Special School Library Pack

The School Library Pack is available to any secondary school or education provider in England with Year 7 students. The pack aims to help staff to create a reading culture that reaches all students, encouraging them to talk about reading and join in activities such as reading groups. In 2014-15, around 4,000 mainstream schools and 700 special schools received the School Library Pack. Schools are able to choose whether they receive the Mainstream School Library Pack or the Special School Library Pack.

The mainstream pack includes:

- Over 40 books from a range of genres: 6 copies each of 5 future classics, 5 reluctant reader titles, and 5 short story collections.
- Reading group guides for each of the future classics
- A poster to promote the books and the school library.
- A guide including information about each of the books in the pack, along with activity ideas linked to the books.

The special school pack includes:

- 10 carefully selected books, including a wide range of styles, themes, sizes and formats, e.g. high interest-low reading age books, non-fiction, poetry and audio CDs.
- A poster to promote the books and the school library.
- A guide including information about each of the books in the pack, along with activity ideas linked to the books. .

SEN resources for special schools

Book Trust also provides resources for special schools linked to the mainstream programmes, Ant Club (for reception and Year 1) and Beyond Booked Up (for Year 7 and Year 8). The resources are designed to inspire, boost skills and build confidence and help with the development of speaking, listening, reading and writing. They include sensory stories, rhymes, writing activities and lesson ideas for teachers. In 2014-15, the special schools resources were delivered to 162 schools.

Booktime

Booktime provides a book pack for all Reception-aged children in England. The pack includes a book for the child along with guidance for parents and carers to help them to support their child's confidence and engagement with reading. Alternative format titles are available for children with additional needs including large print and braille books, touch-and-feel books, and simple interactive books. In 2014-15, 100 Booktime additional needs books were delivered to schools.

Bookbuzz

Bookbuzz supports schools to encourage reading for pleasure, independent choice and develop a whole school reading culture. Participating schools give their students the opportunity to choose their own book to keep from a list of 17 titles suitable for 11 - 13-year-olds and selected by a panel of experts. The programme is aimed primarily at Year 7 and Year 8 students but can be extended to children of other ages. Large print and braille versions of 5 accessible titles in the selection are available for children with additional needs.

Appendix 7

Summary of settings, participants and contexts with pseudonyms

Cornwall (coastal, rural, small urban)		
Early Years Booktouch, Bookshine and Bookstart Star	KS3 School Library packs and resources	In Cornwall, the research team spent three and a half days at Pinewood Special School. Pupils at the school have additional needs including complex medical needs, autistic spectrum conditions, profound learning difficulties and severe learning difficulties. There is a residential hostel on the site. Ofsted had praised the school for their effective teaching of early reading and there are 95 pupils on roll. The school had established a strong relationship with the local Bookstart co-ordinator.
Pinewood Special School and Trivista Child Development Centre Severe learning difficulties(SLD) and profound and multiple learning (PMLD) difficulties, ages 2-19		
Early Years (ages 3-6)	KS3 (ages 12-14)	While at the school researchers observed individual children and young people sharing books with their parents and teachers. They also carried out two group observations in which practitioners facilitated responses to the books to explore the children's feelings and opinions about them. Interviews were done with 7 parents and 9 practitioners. The key contact at the school was the Early Years leader. Researchers also spent one half day observing a playgroup at the Child Development Centre at a large hospital. This research event involved informal discussions with parents. It also involved an observation of the Bookstart Co-ordinator sharing a sensory story and the rhyme pack. The Bookstart Co-ordinator was also observed as she interacted with parents and organised gifting around the children's needs. Interactions between the co-ordinator and the portage team were also observed. All of these contacts were found through BookTrust co-ordinator who had strong links with local settings.
Rudi and his mum, Branca <i>Profound and multiple difficulties</i>	Cathal and his mum Sally <i>Global developmental delay</i>	
Josh and his mum Janet <i>Profound and multiple learning difficulties</i>	John and his mum Sandra <i>Downs syndrome</i>	
Owen and his mum Bridget <i>Profound and multiple difficulties</i>	Phoebe and her mum, Dawn <i>Rett Syndrome</i>	
Isabella and her mum Faye and her dad, Andrew <i>Rett syndrome, severe learning difficulties</i>	Lewis and his teacher Colin <i>Autistic spectrum disorder</i>	
Children and parents attending the Child Development Centre (CDC) playgroup	George and his teaching assistant, Dawn <i>Severe learning difficulties and epilepsy.</i> 2 Group observation of Jess A, Dawn and Jess B working with children with <i>severe and profound learning difficulties.</i>	
Practitioners	Practitioners	
Jackie <i>Early years leader at Pinewood</i>	Abbie KS3 class teacher	
Sarah <i>Teaching assistant at Pinewood</i>	Colin KS3 class teacher	
Amrina <i>Portage Manager (Severe and complex needs) NHS Trust</i>	Jess A KS3 teaching assistant Jess B KS3 teaching assistant	

Janet <i>Portage practitioner (Severe and complex needs) NHS Trust</i>		
Kirstin, Head of CDC.		

Ealing		
Early Years Booktouch, Bookshine and Bookstart Star	KS3 School Library packs and resources	Researchers spent one full day at Cloverfields Children's centre in Ealing located in an area of significant deprivation. Most of the families in the area speak English as another language. Ofsted had praised the setting for having an important positive impact on the most vulnerable groups in its catchment area. It offers outstanding provision and has an excellent reputation for improving boys' literacy skills. The centre has a specialist class and teacher for SEN and has had a long relationship with BookTrust and the local co-ordinator.
Cloverfields Children's Centre Mainstream provision with specialist class and class teacher for SEN.	Summerglade Special School Autism and communication, Age 11-19	
Children and families	Young people (11-14)	
Mila and her mum Samira <i>Visual impairment and global developmental delay</i>	Observation of class engaged in reading activities (independent and shared with adults).	The key contact for the centre was the Deputy Head. Whilst at the centre, the research team interviewed three practitioners and carried out deep level interviews/observations with parents and their children.
Arif and his mum Fazina <i>Down syndrome and severe learning difficulties</i>	5 children (autism, ages 13-14).	
Salima and her mum Aneesa. <i>Autistic Spectrum Disorder</i>	Conversations with individual children about the books and reading, led by teaching staff.	
Practitioners	Practitioners	Summerglade Special School is for pupils aged 4-16 who have Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD) and a range of learning abilities. The school is recognised as a centre of expertise in the field of ASD
Jackie <i>Early years teacher for SEN group</i>	Mark <i>Class teacher</i>	
Amala <i>Early years teacher</i>	Finlay <i>KS3 teaching assistant</i>	
Grace <i>Centre manager</i>	Jennifer <i>KS3 teaching assistant</i>	The researchers spent 1 and a half days at the school and carried out 3 observations/conversations with individual learners and a focus group interview. Three semi-structured interviews were also held with different members of staff within the setting.

Nottingham		
Early Years Booktouch, Bookshine and Bookstart Star	KS3 School Library packs and resources	Researchers spent two days in schools within the same catchment area, covering ages 4-12.
Sherwood School Mainstream School	Sherwood (KS3) Mainstream School	
Children and families	Young people (11 years)	The schools were set in an urban area where there was significant deprivation. As a consequence of LA policy there are a higher number of children with special educational needs in mainstream schools and both settings included children with serious health conditions and moderate learning difficulties. Observations of three children from the EYFS took place along with interviews of parents. Within the primary school, 4 practitioners were also interviewed.
Lottie and her mum, Laura <i>Chronic heart condition</i>	Ben <i>Autistic Spectrum Disorder</i>	
Jonah and his mum, Tina <i>Cerebral palsy and global developmental delay</i>	Tom <i>Dyspraxia</i> Chantelle <i>Global developmental delay</i>	
Tamara and her mum, Michelle <i>Multisensory impairment</i>		Three older children were observed reading and sharing the books and the researcher spent time talking with them as individually and in a group about reading and the books in the school library pack. The teaching assistant working with them was also interviewed.
Practitioners	Practitioners	
Jackie <i>Special needs co-ordinator</i>	Duncan <i>Teaching Assistant</i>	
Jane <i>EYFS class teacher</i>		
Karen <i>HLTA in the EYFS</i>		

Bradford		
Early Years Booktouch, Bookshine and Bookstart Star	KS3 School Library packs and resources	The SEN Support Team included the <i>SEN Early Intervention Team</i> and the <i>Service for Children and Young people with Visual Impairments</i> who have a long relationship with BookTrust. Practitioners recruited families for the research team to work with at local libraries. Researchers carried out three deep level observations/interviews with families and telephone interviews with three practitioners.
SEN Support Team City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council	Northwood Grange <i>Generic special school with provision for Social and emotional difficulties</i>	
Children and families	Young people (12-14)	The key contact at Northwood Grange was the Deputy Head of the school who was also lead teacher for literacy - part of her role was to provide learners with a literacy rich environment and she had a long association with BookTrust.
Lizzie and her mum Eva <i>Visual impairment</i>	3 observations of group and individual activities around the books in the School Library Packs	
Joel and his mum Kara and dad, Paul <i>Visual impairment</i>	1 focus group (2 young people aged 15)	
Karina and her mum Salima <i>Multisensory</i>		

<i>impairment</i>		<p>The school is a generic special school supporting children with a wide range of complex and individual needs.</p> <p>The research team spent one and a half days in the school interviewing 3 practitioners and working with individual children and groups using observations, interviews and focus group schedules.</p>
Practitioners	Practitioners	
<p>Sehrish <i>Visual Impairment Support Team</i></p> <p>Christine <i>Visual Impairment Support Team</i></p> <p>Erisha <i>SEN Early Intervention Team</i></p>	<p>Jackie <i>Senior Teacher</i></p> <p>Michelle <i>Teaching assistant</i></p> <p>Sally <i>Class teacher</i></p>	