

FATHERS READING EVERY DAY



Fathers Reading Every Day at Goldthorn Park Primary School: An Evaluation





Early Years Foundation Stage Launch Party May 2018



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EVERY DAY



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THANK YOU!

The Fatherhood Institute would like to thank the children, fathers, brothers, grandfathers and other male carers of Goldthorn Park Primary School for their hard work and commitment throughout the FRED programme, and for sharing their views and experiences through the evaluation process. We would also like to thank the mothers and female carers who support them and have helped to spread the message of FRED.

The staff in Nursery and Reception have shown enormous commitment and creative expertise throughout the implementation of FRED 2018, resulting in a successful, child-centered programme. Special recognition and gratitude to Mrs. Sahni and Mr. Sandi, who attended the original FRED training in 2015, and have continued to spread the word with professionalism, dedication and infectious enthusiasm. Thank you to the Head Teacher, Mrs. Harrison, and the leaders within the school for supporting the programme and for sharing the experience with the Fatherhood Institute.

Thank you to the funders, The Funding Network, who supported the Fatherhood Institute to deliver the EAL version of FRED.

Jeszemma Garratt
Head of Training
www.fatherhoodinstitute.org

INTRODUCTION

“I feel this programme FRED is very good, it helps build the relationship between father and son better and helps them bond more”

Quote from father

FRED works by encouraging men to read to their child and/or engage in literacy-benefiting activities for a fixed number of minutes per day, for two weeks – and then double the amount in weeks 3 and 4. They record their progress in a logbook (provided, along with activity ideas and dialogic reading tips, at the programme launch event) and receive brief support sessions (face-to-face or via phone, text or email) from staff during the month of the programme.

FRED can be transformative for parents, and parent-school relationships. Mothers often ‘take the lead’ on supporting children’s education, and this is likely to be the first time either parent has heard a clear message that fathers’ involvement matters. Many fathers say FRED has enhanced their relationship with their child (and any siblings), and brought them closer to settings (suggesting longer-term impact on child outcomes). Mothers say that FRED prompts dads to contribute more substantively to the home learning environment, and that this leads to more effective co-parenting.

Children benefit from their fathers’ focused attention on their reading and language development, and a month’s worth of warm interaction, which may lead to a lifetime of improved relationship. The programme impacts positively on measures of reading, writing, numeracy and ‘school readiness’. Previous FRED programmes at Goldthorn Park Primary School have identified that children who took part are almost a term ahead of those that don’t.

Two staff members from Goldthorn Park Primary school were trained to deliver FRED in 2015, as part of a funded programme of training from the Fatherhood Institute and have continued to successfully deliver the programme for three consecutive years to children in Nursery and Reception year groups. The focus of this evaluation is a revised version of FRED, designed to focus on and support EAL fathers and their children. Fatherhood Institute time and resources were funded by the Trust for London as part of a larger trial.

This evaluation is compiled by Jeszemma Garratt, head of training at the Fatherhood Institute. For clarity, Jeszemma has a child in reception class at the school and so cannot claim complete impartiality. The FI have reviewed this report and judged it to be an accurate reflection of the evaluation evidence.

IMPACT SUMMARY

FRED 2018 was delivered in Nursery and Reception classes (children aged 3, 4 and 5 years), to a total of 84 children. Here are some key facts and figures about the impact of the programme:

- Fathers and children read for around 20 minutes a day (average), with 98% fathers reading every day. More than two-fifths (42%) of the children exceeded the target number of minutes, with most children reaching the target
- Just under 90% of the FRED children have English as an Additional Language, the whole school average is 80%. Pupils whose first language is known or believed to be other than English is 28% in Wolverhampton and the national average (2018) is 21.2%
- 97% of fathers say taking part in FRED has helped them read to their child every day
- 96% say their child is choosing a book or something to look at or read more often
- 96% say they have noticed their child having longer conversations with them and others and 95% say they have noticed their child using new words or phrases
- 91% say they feel more 'connected' (knowing when they need quiet time, a cuddle, eye contact, understanding their 'mood' etc) with their child, and 87% speak to, sing and/or laugh more with their child.
- 87% say they enjoy/ feel more confident in reading books or telling stories with their child
- 76% say they feel more comfortable talking to staff at the school
- Books were the top choice of reading material, being read 2486 times throughout FRED 2018, with many books being read repeatedly throughout the four weeks. Apps and the internet were used 79 times.

READING BEHAVIOUR

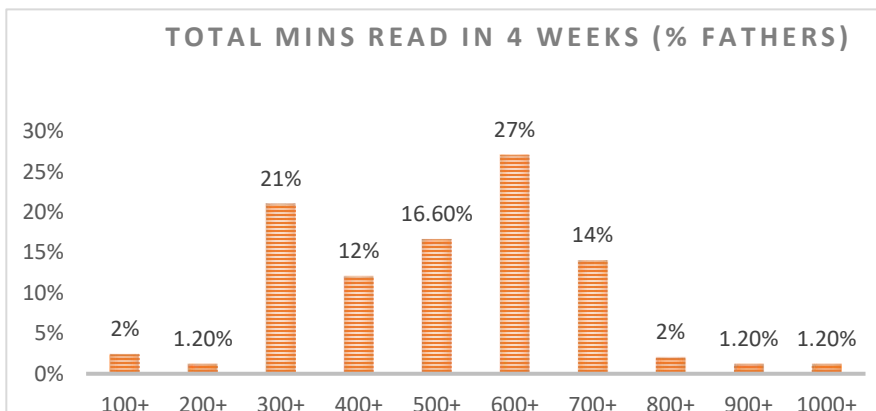
“I think that FRED has helped quite a bit as (child) reads more confident with me and has progressed really quick with his reading and also have more bonding time when reading” – quote from EAL father

FRED is a ‘read anything, anywhere’ programme, and that message was clearly given during the launch, with fathers reading books, newspapers, magazines, leaflets, menus, religious literature, road signs and cereal boxes.

Unsurprisingly, fathers reached for the bookshelf during the FRED programme, with books being read repeatedly and with some titles being highly popular in all classes (*The Very Hungry Caterpillar* was read over 200 times). There were very few differences between fathers’ reading habits with their male/female children in regard to time spent reading, repetition of stories or frequency. Fathers were more likely to read magazines and newspapers with boys, which follows a *belief* that boys prefer fact-based reading (and girls prefer stories), but may also be due to messages given at the launch around ‘read anything’ and to follow the child interests, such as cars or dinosaurs.

Apps and the internet were used only 79 times. Most frequently used was the Reading Eggs app, which the school uses and promotes. The CBeebies story time app was rarely used, but some fathers looked up things factual items on the internet.

We gave dads a target of 630 minutes over the four weeks (15 minutes a day for the first two weeks and 30 minutes a day for the final two weeks). Most families managed between 300 – 700 minutes, with an average reading time of 561 minutes. A couple of families really went beyond expectations; one father and child managed 1,650 minutes and reported high satisfaction with the programme; *“Yes, I’m really happy to meet the lady. My son learning very well day by day. I’m very happy to see my son...he is always taking own school and teaches. He says my teachers and friends very nice. He says my teachers look after me and other children. I’m very happy listen to him. Thanks very much.”*



Children at Goldthorn Park exceeded the FRED average of reading for five days a week, with almost all (98%) reading every single day.

Only a few fathers showed some reticence during the launch event – one father said he had already done FRED with his child the previous year, one said he did not like reading and one reported that he is only comfortable reading in his own language. Time was taken with these fathers and the key messages were explained – ‘**read anything, anywhere, in any language**’. When the father heard he could read in his own language, he spoke emotionally of his own favourite childhood books that he had brought with him to the UK. One father read via Skype from Africa, supported by his children’s mother: *“FRED is an amazing programme, it has help a lot with communications between me and my child, even with her brother and sister. She finds reading fun and exciting. Most of the time she reminds me that I have to read to her, she enjoyed every session I had with her and also with the dad through video calls (he travelled out of the country) and now she loves reading thanks a lot to the FRED team.”*

Nearly all (97%) of respondents report that FRED has helped them to read to their child every day, with 87% saying that since starting FRED they feel more confident in reading books or telling stories. Fathers are also reporting – in high numbers - that their child is using new words or phrases (95%), choosing a book or something to look at or read (96.3%) and having longer conversations (96%) since starting FRED.

Alongside the reading behaviours, many fathers are reporting changes in their relationship with their child, with many talking about improved closeness and bonding – in fact many mothers are also commenting on this. 91% of fathers feel more ‘connected’ (knowing when they need quiet time, a cuddle, eye contact, understanding their ‘mood’ etc) with their child, which would suggest an increase in reciprocity and understanding – all important for long term outcomes for children. A very high percentage (87%) of fathers say they are speaking, singing or laughing with their child more since FRED, and this is worth noting because these playful interactions can signify an increase in parental satisfaction and reflects more frequent verbal interactions with the child.



EVALUATION

FRED 2018 at Goldthorn Park Primary School has been extremely successful, due to the ongoing commitment to parental engagement by the staff and the fathers themselves being eager to support their children. FRED has many 'educational' outcomes, which can be measured within existing school processes, but it also has additional outcomes, which are often unmeasured:

- It can 'kick start' a new relationship between the father and the school:

76% of respondents say they feel more comfortable talking to staff the school.

"I am happy with my son and their teacher" – quote from father

- It can raise awareness of the role of the father, for staff, mothers and fathers themselves:

"(childs name) feeling very happy when she was reading with her dad because its different experience for her. She more attached with her dad, more confident and comfortable. Thanks FRED" – quote from mother

- Fathers feel more 'connected' with their child, which leads to longer term reciprocity and understanding:

88% of fathers report an increase in 'connecting' behaviours

"I feel this programme FRED is very good, it helps build the relationship between father and son better and helps them bond more"

"I think that FRED has helped quite a bit as (child's name) reads more confident with me and has progressed really quick with his reading and also have more bonding time when reading" – quotes from fathers

Mothers can often be hugely powerful forces in the success of FRED, with some passing on the information to fathers unable to attend the school. Nearly all mothers spoke highly of FRED 2018 at Goldthorn Park, and of getting the fathers involved. It is possible (and expected) that a few mothers will have completed or contributed towards the reading recorded by this FRED programme; this was not measured so we cannot rule it out. One mother reported:

“Fathers do not consistently read so mothers end up with the responsibility, it should be called ‘parents reading every day’”

FRED emphasizes the need for communications that explain (1) a father’s role in his child’s education and (2) the impact of FRED (and reading), and that address themselves directly to fathers. If mothers are the conduit of information there is the possibility that the message is not clear or that non-conducive familial relationships will hinder the involvement of dad in the programme. Direct engagement, meaning direct conversations, letters, emails and text messages to fathers also helps to let them know you are treating them as equals, alongside the mothers.

NEXT STEPS:

Goldthorn Park Primary School have good, and often, great relationships with the fathers that they see, with all staff calling dads in at the end of the day or week to speak about FRED and other issues directly, but work can be done on less direct methods too. For example, the school’s very useful text messaging service tends to go only to one member of the household, which is often the mother. The FRED registration and reading diaries request contact information, and fathers willingly give it; it is important that this information be utilized.

Fathers at Goldthorn Park Primary School have shown commitment and dedication, and their involvement in the FRED programme may be transformative – not just for them and their children but also for their relationship with the school. Parental engagement tends to ebb away as the children get older, but our implementation of FRED in early years settings and the first few years of primary school shows that higher levels of engagement are achievable.

The school focuses FRED in the nursery and reception years, and this helps to embed good parental engagement from the start. FRED could also be used in the older year groups, as children’s reading habits change and we see a larger reading gap between boys and girls.

DISSEMINATION

The work the Fatherhood Institute undertook during this round of FRED 2018 has been funded by The Funding Network, as part of a larger trial of resources for a FRED programme that is accessible to families who have English as an additional language. This report will be shared with the funders as part of the complete project report and will be available on the website www.fatherhoodinstitute.org

This report was written with the fathers, mothers and children in mind, and will be made accessible to them, the staff, FRED leads, governors and other stakeholders at Goldthorn Park Primary School.

This report will be shared as part of the package of case studies and evidence base for new FRED settings to share the good practice and findings.

FRED Goldthorn Park Primary School, Wolverhampton

Exit Forms Evaluation July 2018

Total evaluation forms: 79 (Reception 22, RS 22, Nursery 35)

Has taking part in FRED helped you read to your child more?

| Yes, a lot more | | Yes, a bit more | | About the same as before | |
|-----------------|------------|-----------------|------------|--------------------------|-----------|
| RBW | 19 | RWB | 3 | RWB | 0 |
| RS | 13 | RS | 8 | RS | 1 |
| NURSERY | 21 | NURSERY | 13 | NURSERY | 1 |
| TOTAL | 53 | | 24 | | 2 |
| % | 67% | | 30% | | 3% |

Since starting FRED, do you enjoy/ feel more confident in reading books or telling stories with your child?

| Yes, a lot | | Yes, a little | | Same as before | | I don't know | |
|--------------|------------|---------------|------------|----------------|------------|--------------|-----------|
| RBW | 17 | RBW | 3 | RBW | 2 | RBW | 0 |
| RS | 15 | RS | 3 | RS | 3 | RS | 1 |
| NURSERY | 24 | NURSERY | 6 | NURSERY | 4 | NURSERY | 1 |
| TOTAL | 56 | | 12 | | 9 | | 2 |
| % | 71% | | 15% | | 11% | | 2% |

Do you feel more 'connected' with your child? (knowing when they need quiet time, a cuddle, eye contact, understanding their 'mood' etc)

| Yes, much more connected | | Yes, a bit more connected | | The same as before | |
|--------------------------|------------|---------------------------|------------|--------------------|-----------|
| RBW | 14 | RBW | 6 | RBW | 2 |
| RS | 15 | RS | 7 | RS | 0 |
| NURSERY | 18 | NURSERY | 12 | NURSERY | 5 |
| TOTAL | 47 | | 25 | | 7 |
| % | 59% | | 32% | | 9% |

Do you feel that you speak to /sing/laugh with your child more? (at bedtime, meal times, drop off/pick up from school, when out and about together)

| Yes, I do that a lot more | | Yes, a little more | | It's about the same as before | |
|---------------------------|-----------|--------------------|-----------|-------------------------------|-----------|
| RBW | 18 | RBW | 3 | RBW | 1 |
| RS | 12 | RS | 8 | RS | 2 |
| NURSERY | 16 | NURSERY | 11 | NURSERY | 8 |
| TOTAL % | 46 59% | | 22 28% | | 11 13% |

Do you feel more comfortable talking to staff at the school?

| Yes, much more comfortable | | Yes, a bit more comfortable | | About the same as before | |
|----------------------------|-----------|-----------------------------|-----------|--------------------------|-----------|
| RBW | 14 | RBW | 5 | RBW | 3 |
| RS | 14 | RS | 3 | RS | 5 |
| NURSERY | 13 | NURSERY | 11 | NURSERY | 11 |
| TOTAL % | 41 52% | | 19 24% | | 19 24% |

Have you noticed your child doing the following things more often?

| | | Yes, a lot more often | Yes, a bit more often | About the same as before |
|--|---------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| Using new words or phrases | RBW | 20 | 2 | 0 |
| | RS | 18 | 2 | 2 |
| | Nurs | 20 | 13 | 2 |
| | Total % | 58 73% | 17 22% | 4 5% |
| Choosing a book or something to look at or read | RBW | 18 | 4 | 0 |
| | RS | 17 | 5 | 0 |
| | Nurs | 24 | 8 | 3 |

| | | | | |
|--|---------|------------------|------------------|----------------|
| | Total % | 59 75% | 17 22% | 3 4% |
| Having longer conversations with you and others | RBW | 19 | 3 | 0 |
| | RS | 17 | 5 | 0 |
| | Nurs | 18 | 14 | 3 |
| | Total % | 54 68% | 22 28% | 3 4% |

NB: Figures may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

| Results from reading diaries | | | | |
|---|-----------------|------------|-------------|--------|
| | NURSERY (40) | RS (19) | RBW (25) | TOTAL |
| Number of times read: BOOKS | 1246 | 535 | 705 | 2486 |
| Number of times read: MAGAZINES/NEWSPAPERS | 50 | 31 | 82 | 163 |
| Number of times read: LEAFLETS/SIGNS/LETTERS/OTHER | 62 | 47 | 39 | 148 |
| Number of times read: WEBSITES/APPS/ONLINE | 48 | 23 | 8 | 79 |
| Number of minutes read in total | 21,265 | 10,870 | 15,047 | 47,182 |
| Average minutes read per child over four weeks (target 630) | 531 | 572 | 601 | 561 |

Quotes from FRED fathers

“I feel this programme FRED is very good, it helps build the relationship between father and son better and helps them bond more.”

“I feel FRED has benefitted me with my confidence reading to my children more often. Thank you, FRED.”

“I think that FRED has helped quite a bit as (*child's name*) reads more confident with me and has progressed really quick with his reading and also have more bonding time when reading.”

“I am happy with my son and their teacher.”

“I think the FRED makes me happy to see (*child's name*) read.”

“I think the FRED programme is useful however ‘fathers’ do not consistently read so mothers end up with the responsibility, it should be called ‘parents reading every day’. This would help children to be reassured who are not from ‘cereal packet norm’ family. Otherwise, the programme is a good idea.”

“I did teach my child and I did feel that I did spend more time with him and my relationship with my child has been more close. I feel happy that my child try to learn also from me..”

“Yes, I’m really happy to meet the lady. My son learning very well day by day. I’m very happy to see my son (*child's name*). he is always taking own school and teaches. He says my teachers and friends very nice. He says my teachers look after me and other children. I’m very happy listen to him. Thanks very much.”

“(child’s name) is a bit more connected with books. Hes learning some more words now. He can recognise those words like the, a, all etc. some time he try to join the words or blend the words. Thanks.”

“Father reading programme is really good. I can spend more time with my child. She feel more comfortable when she read with me.”

More quotes from FRED fathers

“(child’s name) feeling very happy when she was reading with her dad because its different experience for her. She more attached with her dad, more confident and comfortable. Thanks FRED.”

“Fathers Reading Every Day – enjoy it, do it with (child’s name). she asked me a lot about the stories I read. Laughing! And also good for the fathers, gives you confidence to play a roll character of the story with (child’s name). I try to read every day since FRED!”

“The Fathers Reading Every Day (FRED) is an amazing programme, its has help a lot with communications between me and my child, even with her brother and sister. She finds reading fun and exciting. Most of the time she reminds me that I have to read to her, she enjoyed every session I had with her and also with the dad through video calls (he travelled out of the country) and now she loves reading thanks a lot to the FRED team.”

“I feel that the FRED project has benefitted me into reading a lot more to my child and helped with my confidence in reading more.”

“I feel that the FRED project has helped my child using more of a range in words. Also helped me read more often and boost my confidence.”

“I think FRED was a good idea but since (child’s name) was little I always every day read to him without fail even at functions I read something to him.”

NB Quotes are unedited.

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