



Case Study 1

Corsehill Nursery

“You can wonder ‘am I doing a good enough job?’- then you come to Bookbug and you see how happy your child is and then you bring that into the home.”

Background Information

The Senior Early Years Practitioner came into post in 2014, bringing experience of Bookbug Sessions from a previous role in another establishment. Having seen the value of it and finding a supportive environment to roll it out further she sought to expand the use and role of Bookbug at Corsehill Nursery. Around the same time one of the Early Years Practitioners had attended Bookbug for the Home training and there was, therefore, an increased resource of trained staff and a willingness to incorporate Bookbug across the nursery’s involvement with children and parents. This case study involved interviews with the two staff referred to above and a discussion with seven parents.

The place of Bookbug at Corsehill Nursery

Staff described a desire to fit Bookbug activities into the working practice at Corsehill so that *“it becomes the norm”* and is not restricted, for example, to an eight week block; *“It wouldn’t have the same impact if we did it in blocks.”* The aim is that it *“ties into everything else which we were doing in nursery. It’s there all the time. We are promoting interaction with the children, improving their communication and language.”*

Establishing a parent group has been a key element as this group is regularly involved in Bookbug activities and the parents have become strong advocates of the approach.

The nursery had also introduced pre-admission home visits where a key worker meets with parent and child before they begin nursery. This has been a new way of working as staff had not previously gone out to visit families at home. Having experienced Bookbug for the Home training (described as *“fabulous”*) the Early Years Practitioner had brought Bookbug activities into these visits. Initially there was a thought that after home visiting they would be able to encourage parents to come to a nursery-based Bookbug Session,



but there is recognition that this “*doesn’t have to happen*”. From the nursery’s point of view these visits are now seen as important ways to learn about families – “*we find out a lot more*”.

The nursery had also made some physical changes, setting up a Bookbug zone in the cloakroom. This provided a way to show parents what was happening and also tied in with providing a lending library. Parents talked of the value of the user-friendly nature of this facility; “*it’s there when you want - it’s open and flexible.*” This has proved important in enabling siblings of pupils at the nursery to also take part in Bookbug activities, which both parents and practitioners encourage.

Parents’ previous experience of Bookbug

The parents’ perception of Bookbug Sessions, from what they understood of those held at the local library, was that children needed to sit quietly. Through Bookbug interactions at nursery, they have realised that the aim is to have a more creative and interactive environment.

Parents described the difficulties they had experienced with library-based Bookbug Sessions:

“I used to take the kids down [to the library] – I didn’t like it – people were studying and getting distracted.”

“It can be a bit overwhelming having to keep quiet.”

“No mum, dad or parent wants to take a child to a place where they [the parent] get stressed. My kids would be screaming or ripping books – it was too stressful.”

In contrast to this, the parents described activities within the nursery environment very differently.

“You open up.”

“Everything is calm. We can relax.”



Bookbug Sessions

Staff described a flexible approach to planning and running Bookbug Sessions without following a fixed format; *"We do each bit for as long as we need to. If the interest in it stops – we stop"*. Whilst remaining flexible, staff noted that some children like the structure every week - *"some things you need to keep the same"*, and certain elements were seen as essential – *"Wheels on the Bus is crucial!"*

The parents also commented on the format of Bookbug Sessions describing them as *"structured but unstructured"*. They also noted the importance of *"movement rather than sitting reading"*, as well as commenting that the children enjoy it as *"they can take control"*.

Staff commented that people can be quite traditional, resulting in the fact that *"new songs can be harder to introduce"* but that there was also freedom to try things out - *"it's all trial and error – that's what's good about it"*, and that there is acceptance of the leaders and the content they introduce - *"you can't do anything wrong."*

Overall impact on practice

Staff commented on the impact of Bookbug across much of their work. *"It has really changed our practice. It's made us look at things in a totally different way."*

As well as incorporating Bookbug principles and activities into the day to day life of the nursery, there was also an impact on one-off events. They described an activity in the local park (a Gruffalo hunt) which they had organised for families - *"We wouldn't have done an event like that before."*

They also identified that having a stronger profile for Bookbug had also changed the way in which Bookbug Bags were gifted, with the nursery now gifting the Pirate Pack at 'graduation' as the children move from nursery to Primary School.

"It means more to them now."

"I remember them [Bookbug Bags] coming but we didn't do anything with them. It's different now – there's a purpose to the bags".

Parents described a new understanding of what they could do with their child's Pirate Pack. *"We didn't know how to use them. Bookbug made us more aware of it."*



Looking to the future

Staff described a level of confidence they had that Bookbug had a strong role to play in the work of the nursery in the future.

"I know how this is going to pan out – it's a natural fit."

"It won't stop here. We have gone Bookbug crazy this year."

More specifically the nursery's plans included running a big Bookbug Session early on in the new term, to raise its profile and gain more interest from parents with a message that "Bookbug is easy to do and fun", to run Bookbug related events around transition, and to explore how Bookbug could be used in relation to FAST (Families and Schools Together – programme supporting learning at home).

The Senior Early Years Practitioner said that she *"would like every member of staff trained, that we would be doing 'stay and play' sessions with parents, and that Bookbug becomes part of our day and a big way of breaking down barriers."*

Parents also recognised future possibilities which they could be involved in which would promote Bookbug and its benefits to other parents; *"We could go to Mother and Toddler groups – it would be good transition."*

Behaviour change

Parents

Staff commented on the ways in which parents had changed as they got involved in Bookbug Sessions over a period of weeks.

"Parents started off sitting on chairs – then they got on the floor and were singing as much as the kids were singing."

"I saw a mum starting to do 'what's in the bag today?' all by herself. She took control of a Bookbug Session."

On a practical level staff noted that some parents thought that they "would have to buy books" but have learned about the Bookbug resources that are available (gifting bags) as well as making use of the nursery's lending library.



Parents described the way they had previously engaged with books and reading and how Bookbug activities had made a difference to how they presented or interpreted a book for their child.

"I was never one for reading books – it was boredom – I didn't know how to read it. Now I get it. Putting enthusiasm into it."

"I wouldn't have known how to make it visual. [Using a Bookbug approach] It's more creative. You might be reading about rolling a stone and you could use playdough."

"Before I wouldn't have involved the child in telling the story."

Parents also noted how they used songs learned through Bookbug activities in everyday situations. Their Bookbug experience helps these songs be closer to the surface and give parents and children a strong way of connecting outside a formal Bookbug Session but using the same content.

"We are out shopping and they see a star-shape and sing 'Twinkle Twinkle'."

"They are in the bath and sing 'I'm a little turtle.'"

Parents also talked about the way in which some routines with their children had changed for the better, with reading being introduced at bedtime. Another referred to the encouragement gained from Bookbug activities and the impact on their personal confidence as a parent resulting from this.

"It's definitely changed the way I do bedtime routines. Before they would have watched a DVD. Now they read books."

"It's nice to have something like reading at night – it's precious."

"It gave me confidence – I thought "This is what I can do" – you can feel proud of yourself. You can wonder "am I doing a good enough job?" – then you come to Bookbug and you see how happy your child is and then you bring that into the home. You're not just bringing them to a club, you're bringing it home with you."

Children

Parents also described how they believed Bookbug activities made a connection and had an important role to play for their children.



“When you get this teddy [Bookbug doll], it’s opening up their imagination. As soon as they see that teddy, it’s a visual thing.”

“It’s language, speech and imagination.”

“It gets them used to that group of children.”

Some described specific behavioural changes resulting from Bookbug.

“The kids are learning a lot. It takes time but they are learning patience and turn taking.”

“My kids would rip books up. His development skills are up.”

Some parents also spoke about the impact Bookbug has had on the speech and language development of their child, who had been struggling with this prior to their involvement in Bookbug Sessions.

Summary

This case study shows how Bookbug affects both organisations and individuals. In this case the nursery has found an ethos combined with a set of activities and resources which fits in with their efforts to provide a positive play and educational experience for young children. However it has also provided them with a way to positively engage with parents, offering opportunities for parents to engage with their children in ways which can be sustained at home.

The parents confirm that there is a positive impact for them with changed attitudes to reading books with children and to other ways of engaging with them, and new confidence in their role as parents.