

## Book Talk

### What is it?

'Book-talk' is the ability to talk about books, developing the confidence to offer ideas as well as listen to and react to other contributions. Children can and should expect to change their minds in the light of what others say. Children are encouraged to raise questions as well as make points and suggestions.

'Book-talk' only works if the books being discussed have enough content that is worthy of discussion. The quality of the book determines the depth of discussion available. It is important to accept answers from as many children as possible and even more importantly, make sure that all comments are accepted. Book talk helps children to trust their own ideas and interpretations; therefore, all contributions should be listened to and appreciated.

As the leader of the 'book-talk', the adult must act as an interested listener. Below are a number of ideas and questions that can be used by this leader to encourage good quality 'book talk'.

### Ideas of how to use it:

There are several levels that book talk can provide. This can be dependent on confidence, ability or how conversation flows.

**Basic questioning** can be used to get interpretation started and ease children into conversation:

- *What did you like or dislike?*
- *Was there anything that confused you?*

**General questions** can bring conversations a long and can make children begin to compare ideas with others:

- *Have you read any other books like this? How did they compare?*
- *Which parts of the book stay in your mind most vividly?*
- *How did the main character change?*
- *What surprises are there in the book?*

**Special questions** that are specific to the book being discussed can help to deepen understanding:

- *How long did it take the story to happen?*
- *Where did the story happen?*
- *Which character interested you most?*
- *Who was telling the story?*
- *Talk about the links between the story and the illustrations.*