

Brit primary Schools read to dogs to improve Literacy

LONDON - Kids at a primary school in England are being egged on to read to dogs in the classroom to make better their skills - because the pooches do not laugh or get impatient when they stammer.

St. Michael's Primary School in Bournemouth, Dorset, launched the pioneering scheme in April to help the seven- and eight-year-olds to improve their literacy by reading out to dogs like Yorkshire Terriers, Labradors, and Shetland sheepdogs.

And, according to Martin Ford, the teacher who helped introduce the scheme organised by the Caring Canines charity, the dogs had helped make a "significant impact."

"The children always looked forward to their sessions and it certainly helped with motivating them to read both at school and at home. There was also a real sense of ownership and pride from the children towards their dogs. Any way to get the children to read is a positive way," the Telegraph quoted Ford as saying.

Julie Lankshear, from the charity, said: "Ours are special dogs that are good with children. The scheme works because the dogs are non-judgmental; they won't laugh at stammers or get impatient.

Lankshear added: "They will sit with the child enjoying their time and their reward is to be stroked and played with afterwards. The children who benefit most are those with low self-esteem and often it is not their reading skills that are poor, but their confidence. Reading to the dogs gives them confidence and enables them to communicate."

But Nick Seaton, the chairman of the Campaign for Real Education, appeared less convinced with the tactic.

He said: "It's an amusing idea, but if the child makes a mistake the dog can't correct it. It is simply a distraction from effective teaching. I think that while gimmicks like this maybe enjoyable they are unlikely to raise standards effectively."