

**BUSINESS
IN THE
COMMUNITY
IRELAND**



Business Action on Education

Time to Read Evaluation Report 2018

Time to Read is funded by all participating businesses and an anonymous donor at The Community Foundation for Ireland



Table of Contents

1. Executive Summary	1
1.1. The Time to Read Year, Fania Ellison, BITCI	1
1.2. Introduction	2
1.3. Main Findings	5
2. School Coordinator Evaluation	6
2.1. Programme Benefits & Impacts	6
2.2. Programme Operation	11
2.3. Service and Support	14
2.4. Recommendations	15
3. Principal Evaluation	17
3.1. Programme Impacts & Benefits	17
3.2. Programme Operation	22
3.3. Service and Support	22
3.4. Recommendations	23
4. Home School Community Liaison Evaluation	26
4.1. Programme Benefits & Impacts	26
4.2. Programme Operation & Service	29
4.3. Recommendations	31
5. Volunteer Evaluation	33
5.1. Programme Benefits & Impacts	33
5.2. Programme Operation	36
5.3. Service and Support	39
5.4. Recommendations	39
6. Company Coordinator Evaluation	42
6.1. Programme Benefits & Impacts	42
6.2. Programme Operation	44
6.3. Service and Support	45
6.4. Recommendations	47
7. Informal Feedback	49
7.1. Child's Informal Feedback	49
7.2. Parent's Informal Feedback	51

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Section 1

Executive Summary

1.1 Review of the year

Time to Read continues to grow and develop – inspiring 530 young readers from second classes in national schools around the country, and providing a meaningful volunteering experience to 550 volunteers this year. We had 47 partnerships around the country and four of these were additional sites of participating companies which is great to see.



The ongoing development, growth and deeper impact is a direct result of the funding we received from the anonymous donor at the Community Foundation for Ireland which we are most grateful for.

Although our objectives are to increase children's confidence and enjoyment of reading, this year 3 schools did some standardised testing of the children's reading ability before and after the programme. The school coordinators were amazed to discover that the children in Time to Read had improved their reading ability by almost three times as much as other children in the class.

The additional social and emotional impacts on the children cannot be underestimated. Not only are they much more happy and confident readers, they are learning how to have conversations and opinions. They are finding out about the world of work and what happens in a workplace. There is also an impact on schools as a whole. Teachers describe the "buzz" they feel when Time to Read is on, the additional books being enjoyed by the children, the enjoyment of having the volunteers in the school. They also notice impacts on families who might not be keen readers, starting to read with their children and use the local library.

Volunteers tell us how much it means to them to take part in the programme. The programme gives them the chance in work time to put something directly back into their community. They talk about what fun it is and how they feel it impacts their life too.

Fania Ellison, Time to Read Programme Coordinator

1.2 Introduction

Time to Read is a reading enhancement initiative managed by Business in the Community Ireland (BITCI), the network for responsible business, which supports the Government's Literacy & Numeracy Strategy. It provides an employee engagement opportunity for companies to engage in one to one reading sessions with local primary school children.

The programme's desired outcomes are:

1. To increase the enjoyment of reading
2. To increase confidence in reading
3. To improve and encourage self-discovery
4. To improve fluency and comprehension when reading

Businesses partner a local primary school and weekly reading sessions take place at the school, with each volunteer spending an hour reading with two second class children for a half hour each. The children do shared reading with their volunteers from a selection of specially chosen books and the volunteers use a variety of reading strategies to help the child develop their fluency and comprehension and therefore their confidence, in reading. The children's parents are invited to be involved at key stages of the programme. Library visits are an important programme element and there is also a workplace visit to the company where the children see the work area of their volunteer reader and get a tour of the workplace.

The continuing development and operation of Time to Read is overseen by a **Steering Group of experts**

Dr. Eithne Kennedy	Head of School, Language, Literacy & Early Childhood Education DCU St Patricks Campus
Diane Fannin	Group People and Sustainability Executive, ESB
Anne-Marie McGovern	Integrated Services Manager, Educational Welfare Services, Tusla
Maria Carroll	EU Portfolio Planner, Enterprise Project Management Office, EPMO, Elavon
Laura Joyce	Senior Librarian at South Dublin County Council
Rita Kinsella	Retired Primary School Principal and Funder Representative
Fania Ellison	Time to Read Programme Coordinator, BITC
Germaine Noonan	SBP Programme Manager, BITC

Their terms of reference are:

- i. To contribute expertise to ensure Time to Read is a programme of continuous evolution
- ii. To have a strong advocacy role
- iii. To provide input and recommendations on the evaluation
- iv. To advise on the expansion and development of the programme

The Steering Group met in January and July, 2018.

47 schools completed the Time to Read Programme in 2017-2018:

- Abbott Ireland Diagnostic Division & St. Edward's NS, Co. Sligo
- ABP & Scoil Phádraig Naofa Boys School, Co. Cork
- ABP & Tiarnach's Primary School, Co. Monaghan
- AIB & St. Maries of the Isle, Co. Cork
- Arup & St Patrick's B.N.S., Ringsend, Dublin 4
- Arup & Sunday's Well B.N.S., Co. Cork
- Bank of Ireland & Harold's Cross NS, Dublin 6
- Bank of Ireland & Scoil Mhuire, Rathallagh, Co. Dublin
- Bank of Ireland & Holy Family Primary School, Dún Laoghaire, Co. Dublin
- Bank of Ireland & St. Joseph's Primary School, Dún Laoghaire, Co. Dublin
- Bank of Ireland & St Patrick's De La Salle, Co. Kilkenny
- Blizzard Entertainment & Scoil Mhuire Fatima, Co. Cork
- Business in the Community Ireland & St Mary's Primary, Dorset Street, Dublin 1
- Citi & St. Laurence O'Toole's C.B.S., Dublin 1
- CNP Santander & St. Paul's Primary, Dublin 7
- Core & St. James' Primary, Dublin 8
- Cornmarket & St. Brigid's Primary School, Dublin 8
- Davy & O'Connell C.B.S., Dublin 1
- Elavon Financial Services & St. Columbanus N.S., Glenageary, Co. Dublin
- Elavon Financial Services & St. Patrick's N.S., Arklow, Co. Wicklow
- Electric Ireland & St. Kevin's BNS, Dublin 11
- ESB & Holy Family N.S., Co. Wexford
- ESB Group & St. Patrick's G.N.S., Dublin 4
- ESB Group & St. Laurence O'Tooles G.N.S., Dublin 1
- ESB Group & St. Mary's NS, Dublin 3
- ESB Networks & Queen of Angels Primary School, Dublin 16
- ESB (Wilton) & Glasheen G.N.S., Co. Cork
- Fáilte Ireland & St. Joseph's CBS, Dublin 3
- Fexco & Glounaguillagh N.S., Co. Kerry
- Friends First & Scoil Cholmcille J.N.S., Dublin 18
- Gas Networks Ireland & Scoil Aiséirí Chríost, Co. Cork
- Gas Networks Ireland & Mother of Divine Grace, Dublin 11
- Generali Link & St Joseph's Mercy Primary, Navan, Co. Meath
- Horse Racing Ireland & Scoil Mhuire J.N.S., Newbridge, Co. Kildare
- Irish Life & Scoil Chaoimhín, Dublin 1
- Irish National Stud & Kildare Town Educate Together, Co. Kildare
- Kildare Village & St. Brigid's Primary School, Co. Kildare
- KPMG & City Quay N.S., Dublin 2
- Lionbridge & Scoil Íosa, Ballina, Co. Mayo
- Pramerica & Letterkenny Educate Together, Co. Donegal
- Procter & Gamble & Scoil na Naomh Uilig, Co. Kildare
- Teneo PSG & Good Shepherd NS, Dublin 14
- Mayo County Council & Breaffy N.S., Castlebar
- Workday & Francis St. C.B.S., Dublin 8
- Zurich & St Brigid's Primary School, Dublin 4
- Zurich & St. John of God Primary School, Co. Wexford
- Zurich Life & St Kevin's N.S., Sallynoggin, Co. Dublin

1.3 Main Findings

The Time to Read programme has four stated aims. School Coordinators, Home School Community Liaison Coordinators (HSCL) and Company Volunteers were asked to evaluate how the programme performed with regard to each aim. The results provide strong evidence that each aim was achieved:

Table 1: Overview of the programme's stated aims.

Answer Options	School Coordinators: Exceeded/Met objective		HSCL: Exceeded/Met objective		Company Volunteers: Exceeded/Met objective	
	2018	2017	2018	2017	2018	2017
Increased the enjoyment of reading	100%	100%	100%	96%	95%	94%
Increased confidence in reading	100%	100%	100%	91%	97%	97%
Improved fluency and comprehension when reading	100%	100%	88%	86%	92%	92%
Improved and encouraged self-discovery	98%	91%	92%	91%	88%	87%

The impact of Time to Read on the role of HSCL was very positive this year. Many highlighted how it increased communication between themselves and the children's families and this was very beneficial to their work. This will be outlined further in section 4 of the report.



Section 2

School Coordinator Evaluation

Of the 47 Time to Read Programmes this year, 44 school coordinators were involved. **40** school coordinators (**91%**) (80% in 2017) completed the evaluation. The evaluation form was divided into four key sections:

2.1 Programme Benefits & Impacts

2.2 Programme Operation

2.3 Service & Support

2.4 Recommendations

2.1 Programme Benefits & Impacts

In this section we asked the school coordinators to consider and evaluate whether the programme met its aims and objectives. The programme's stated aims are:

- To increase the enjoyment of reading
- To increase confidence in reading
- To improve and encourage self-discovery
- To improve fluency and comprehension when reading

2.1.1. Objective One: To Increase the Enjoyment of Reading

The school coordinators indicated that the participating children's enjoyment of reading:

- Increased a lot: **88%** (91% in 2017)
- Increased somewhat: **12%** (9% in 2017)
- Remained the same: **0%** (0% in 2017)
- Decreased: **0%** (0% in 2017)

The children's level of enthusiasm towards reading has increased so much. They had such a positive experience with the Time to Read programme and were always so excited about the reading sessions.

The boys eagerly awaited their Time to Read sessions each week. They were reluctant for their sessions to end and returned to the classroom with smiles and often with books in their hands to continue to read at home.

The children were very excited to go out to read with the volunteers, and were talking about the books they read with great enthusiasm. Children who did not read a lot before the programme have now developed their own preferences in literature and have favourite books!

2.1.2. Objective Two: To Increase Confidence in Reading

In considering the Programme's second objective the school coordinators indicated that the children's confidence in reading:

- Increased a lot: **63%** (78% in 2017)
- Increased somewhat: **37%** (22% in 2017)
- Remained the same: **0%** (0% in 2017)
- Decreased: **0%** (0% in 2017)

The children selected for the programme would not have regular opportunities to be listened to. This programme gave them the golden opportunity to read in a relaxed, informal environment...this can only boost their confidence.

I found the children to be more confident reading in front of their groups in class.

For the majority of the children who participated, I have noticed a huge change in the way they approach text, and in the way they problem-solve when they encounter tricky words. This is particularly true for the children who were reluctant or weak readers at the start. They are not afraid to make mistakes anymore, and if they do, they are more likely to discover the mistake, and try again, without getting frustrated or embarrassed.

2.1.3. Objective Three: To Improve and Encourage Self-Discovery

Self-discovery means the child becomes aware of different genres and the types of books they like to read. It also means knowing which authors they like to read. When considering the programme's third objective school coordinators indicated that the children's self-discovery:

- Increased a lot: **43%** (38% in 2017)
- Increased somewhat: **55%** (53% in 2017)
- Remained the same: **2%** (9% in 2017)
- Decreased: **0%** (0% in 2017)

The programme afforded the boys an opportunity to engage with a huge variety of genres, it enabled the boys to follow their own preferences and opened them up to a wider spectrum of fiction and non-fiction. The programme encouraged the boys to be inquisitive and to wonder. They often returned to the class and shared with their peers a new and interesting fact or story they encountered during their session.

Children are now able to connect to their own experiences in relation to their reading.

The children gained a lot in terms of personal development and self-discovery. We purposely put forward a few children who were shy, lacking confidence and experience social difficulties. These children were helped enormously by the experience of engaging in conversation and getting attention one to one with the volunteers. They came out of their shells as the weeks went on and enjoyed chatting to the volunteers.

2.1.4. Objective Four: To Improve Fluency and Comprehension when Reading

In relation to the programme's fourth objective, the participating school coordinators were asked to consider the children's fluency and comprehension when reading. The school coordinators indicated that the children's fluency and comprehension when reading:

- Increased a lot: **45%** (56% in 2017)
- Increased somewhat: **55%** (44% in 2017)
- Remained the same: **0%** (0% in 2017)
- Decreased: **0%** (0% in 2017)

The children demonstrate an improved ability to decode words independently and are reading more fluently. The discussion and questioning between the children and the volunteers during reading has been fantastic and has had a great impact on the children's comprehension skills. This is the area where most improvement was seen in the test scores for children. This is due to book talk and questioning by volunteers in sessions.

2.1.5. Qualitative Impacts of the Time to Read Programme

School coordinators were asked to identify and comment on any individual child (without naming them) where the impact of the programme has been particularly evident. Feedback from the school coordinators included:

One particular child who would find reading difficult and would shy away from it at any opportunity wanted to read an excerpt from a book at the closing ceremony, which would not have happened in September.

One child who was originally picked as being quite shy around adults had bereavement during the programme and the extra adult attention was appreciated. A certain number of children were EAL and having extra time reading in English was invaluable.

2.1.6. Additional Impacts of the Time to Read Programme

School coordinators indicated that the programme had a number of other impacts on the participating children.

Further impacts included:

- Social engagement: **95%** (97% in 2017)
- Reading development: **80%** (88% in 2017)
- Emotional engagement: **80%** (75% in 2017)
- Cognitive development: **60%** (56% in 2017)

School coordinators commented:

Socially children became more confident and engaged well with the volunteers. Self-efficacy also improved during Time to Read sessions when they had to move from classroom to classroom independently and organise their partners and times to go to the Time to Read sessions.

Being able to hold a conversation and be socially involved in a positive reading environment.

All of the above apply. It is impossible to quantify the benefits of the Time to Read programme. Some of the children come from large families, where one-to-one time is scarce, so to get half an hour once a week is like gold dust. Some of the children improved their general knowledge and loved talking about what they had read. To have someone listen to them and talk to them and help them has done wonders for their self-esteem. They felt very special.

Building positive relationships, communicating, reading fluency, improved focus and concentration etc.

The programme increased the children's motivation for learning and forged a strong link between school and the workplace. The children paid a visit to the volunteers' workplace. This was a fantastic experience for the children and they absolutely loved it. They were fascinated with the beautiful building and by all the people working there. The strong link created between reading and schoolwork to the job and workplace of their volunteers was invaluable.

I think it was very important for the children to meet excellent male and female role models and they particularly enjoyed the work place visit. It is so worthwhile for them to have something to aspire to.

A future - something to aspire to. One child told me that he would read to his children when he is a father.



2.1.7. Further Impacts on the Children Attributed to Time to Read

School coordinators were asked to detail any impacts on the children not directly involved in the programme that they noticed and which they attributed to Time to Read.

The boys who were not directly engaged with the Time to Read sessions have greatly benefited from the new books in our class library. They love to read them and have looked forward to our classroom story time. They were also invited on an absolutely wonderful workplace tour and showered with very generous gifts.

Much more interest in reading and in books in all the children in the class.

Some of the girls who did not participate are starting to keep a book on their desk to read when they have their work done. They compared books and shared sometimes.

2.2 Programme Operation

In this section we asked school coordinators to rate and comment on different aspects of the programme's operation – from the venue of the reading sessions, to the volunteer logs and the books provided. The venue is where the reading sessions took place and these varied from school libraries to parents' rooms. We encourage schools to choose a quiet and comfortable space to enhance the experience.

2.2.1. Operational Aspects of Programme

The majority of respondents rated the **venue for the reading sessions**, the **volunteer logs** and the **ease of the changeover of the volunteers** as **excellent** or **very good**.

Table 2: School Coordinator Satisfaction with Aspects of Programme

Answer Options	Excellent		Very Good		Fair		Poor	
	2018	2017	2018	2017	2018	2017	2018	2017
The ease of changeover of volunteers	73%	75%	27%	19%	0%	6%	0%	0%
The venue for the reading sessions	65%	66%	28%	31%	7%	3%	0%	0%
The volunteer logs	65%	66%	35%	31%	0%	3%	0%	0%

We had a spare prefab which was ideal. The volunteers were very punctual and made the whole process seamless. The volunteer log was good but perhaps a little detailed.

As a classroom teacher I felt that the volunteer changeovers were very efficient and worked seamlessly both from the classroom point of view and for the children. The venue was a large room away from the classroom so worked well in terms of minimizing interruptions to lessons taking place simultaneously in the classroom.

Lots of changes of volunteers throughout the year due to illness and other reasons but was handled very well by the volunteers and there was always someone there to read with the children every week which was most important.

2.2.2. Programme Books

Considerable research with experts has been undertaken to ensure that the Time to Read books are as suitable as possible. Books have been chosen to ensure that there is a wide range of reading levels and interests covered in fiction and non-fiction books. Initially about 60% of the books were provided and about 6 or 7 weeks later further books were chosen by each school to compliment that selection, based on the children's interests and the books already in the school. Understandably, the book selection process can be quite challenging as year on year interests and abilities change with each new group of children; but we strive to address this each year.

The school coordinators were asked to rate the appropriateness and the variety of the books. **88%** of school coordinators indicated that the Time to Read books provided were **very appropriate and a good variety**, this is the same result as last year (88% in 2017).

There was a good range of books and our coordinator arranged for additional books to be ordered half way through the programme.

A wonderful addition to our library, a wide variety of genres, books in all shapes and sizes and very engaging for the children.

It was difficult to please every child. Perhaps if the books were sourced locally it would be easier to target the children's needs and there was too long a time lag between requests and books arriving.

There were lots of books available for the children to read and they were eager to tell me about what they had read. The books were all new releases and classics. The children were very excited about the book choice and there as a lot of choice for them.

2.2.3. Usefulness of Volunteer Logs in Monitoring Child's Progress

98% of school coordinators found the volunteer logs **very helpful or helpful** in monitoring each child's progress.

Very thorough and insightful feedback that was relevant and appropriate.

Helpful for the monitoring of children's progress or if there were any issues during the sessions.

I probably need to look at it more frequently

2.2.4. Overall Satisfaction with Children Leaving Class

School coordinators were asked to rate their overall satisfaction with the children leaving class for their one to one reading sessions:

- **80%** (81% in 2017) found it **worked very well**
- **20%** (19% in 2017) found it **worked well**
- **0%** (0% in 2017) found it **did not work well**
- **0%** (0% in 2017) found it **very disruptive**

Excellent seamless routine. The children quickly got used to what was expected, and left and returned quietly (although excitedly). They were able to join in their lessons when returning with little disruption.

As it happened at the same time each week it was easy for the class teachers to work around it.

There was no difficulty with the children themselves leaving, but from a classroom management point of view due to it always being the same children you don't want the remaining children to feel they are completely missing out and it is a full hour when you can't do any work that may cause the children involved with the program to miss out.

2.3 Service and Support

Each school coordinator was asked to rate and comment on the service received from the BITCI coordinator, as well as the communication with the volunteers and to describe the partnership between the school and the company. The level to choose from was: excellent, very good, fair or poor.

2.3.1. Service provided by BITCI

The service provided by the BITCI coordinator was evaluated **excellent** by **83%** and **very good** by **17%** of school coordinators. School coordinators commented:

Very supportive of the programme and encouraging towards the volunteers.

An excellent communicator, enthusiastic and supportive. Couldn't have asked for more.

Very professional and very well organised.

2.3.2. Communication & Information Sharing with Company Volunteers

90% of respondents indicated that there was **sufficient communication and sharing of information** with the volunteers during the programme.

There was constant communication between all parties, mainly via email.

Our BITC coordinator kept everybody very well informed of anything that arose. The mid way session with volunteers was a great way to keep them up to speed with the kids and for them to share any concerns with me.

Volunteers spoke to me regularly after the reading sessions about the children's progress.

2.3.3. Partnership between the School and Company

The **partnership** with the link company was evaluated as **excellent** by **95%** and **very good** by **5%** of school coordinators.

We were incredibly impressed by the commitment of our volunteers towards the programme. We feel that a fantastic partnership has been formed.

We have been involved in the Time to Read initiative with our company for three years now and I feel we have created a great link between the school and the business. When we have volunteers who were out sick, people who had volunteered in previous years helped out and it was lovely to see them back in the school again.

We are so delighted with the partnership and friendship that has developed with our company. We are really excited to work with them for many years to come.

This partnership has been hugely beneficial to us and we hope it continues into the future.

2.4. Recommendations

In this section we asked school coordinators if they had any recommendations to make about the programme.

2.4.1. Programme Changes and Improvements

85% of school coordinators would make **no change** to the Time to Read Programme. Of the remaining **15%**, suggestions and improvements related to:

- The volunteer log
- The books
- Time of day
- The workplace visit
- The library visit
- The wrap up event
- Including all of the class
- Other

Of those who ticked 'Other', recommendations related to increasing the number of students included in the programme.

Comments and feedback from school coordinators included:

I think for classroom morale and the sense of importance placed on each individual child in our care that it would be most beneficial that all children in the class could be engaged in the program somewhat. Whether the children rotate every 8-10 weeks or there is a buddy reader system set up I think it should be encouraged. I also think that all children in the class would benefit from the library trip.

The volunteer log template could be modified to add a section asking if the volunteer coordinator should update the selection of books, e.g. "Would you like the volunteer coordinator to add more books to the box?"

2.4.2. Recommending the Time to Read Programme

A remarkable **100%** of school coordinators **would recommend** the programme to a colleague (100% in 2017 and 2016 also).

This programme is an amazing boost for all pupils who participate, and also allows the class teacher to give more time to the children who remain in the classroom while the participants are out reading with the volunteers. It is a win-win situation for all and impacts so positively on the children's reading development, enjoyment, self-esteem and attitude to school and learning in general. It has been such a fantastic, positive experience for the boys.

Time is such a valuable resource to a school and to have 6 adults giving an hour a week is just so valuable to the school. The area is quite volatile at the moment and some of the children live quite chaotic lives and can be quite anxious and I just found it so wonderful that the children were getting 30 minutes of uninterrupted one on one time each week. Something a class teacher just can't do with the demands of the class.

The programme isn't just a reading programme. It brings such a wide range of benefits to the participants and their school. Many of the benefits cannot be measured on a graph or in a test, but the experience and the opportunities it offers has far reaching positive results.

Excellent programme to support positive links within the community.

It really benefited the children, improved their reading and oral language skills and gave them a love of reading.

Section 3

Principal Evaluation

Of the **47** Time to Read Programmes completed this year, **39** principals completed the evaluation report – an **83%** response rate (90% in 2017). The evaluation was divided into four sections:

3.1 Programme Impacts & Benefits

3.2 Programme Operation

3.3 Support and Service

3.4 Recommendations

3.1 Programme Benefits & Impacts

In this section we examined what principals thought were the main benefits to their school and to the children from taking part in the programme. We also asked the principals to consider what they felt the impacts of the programme were.

3.1.1. Overall Impact of the Programme on Children

Principals were asked to rate the overall impact on the children and the options given were: very positive, positive, no impact or negative impact. The principals indicated that the overall impact of the Time to Read Programme on the children who took part was extremely valuable. **100%** of principals rated the overall impact to students as either **very positive or positive**.

Principals commented:

The children benefited from reading one to one with an adult working in their locality. Many of our children are from other countries or disadvantaged backgrounds and would not have such a role model in their lives. Their reading ability improved as recorded in the end of year standardised test results.

We tested the children beforehand and on completion. Most pupils had improved scores of up between 2 and four years.

The children improved their fluency and comprehension of reading and gained confidence and enjoyment from it. Furthermore they thoroughly enjoyed meeting their volunteers and chatting to them each week. This helped to develop oral language.

As a DEIS school having positive adult role models in and around books and reading and the enjoyment of all things literary is priceless.

3.1.2. Overall Impact of the Programme on the School

95% of principals felt that there was a **very positive** impact overall on the school, **5%** felt it was **positive**, with comments such as:

Time to Read has been great for our school. We love the interaction with our link company whose friendly staff have built special relationships with both the children and the school staff. The facilities for reading have been enhanced through the support of the company and the volunteers have shown a heartfelt interest in each individual child who took part in the programme.

The links between the school and our company go beyond the scope of the Time to Read programme. The company have most generously supported other projects in the school. We really appreciate the time and effort that the company has given us.

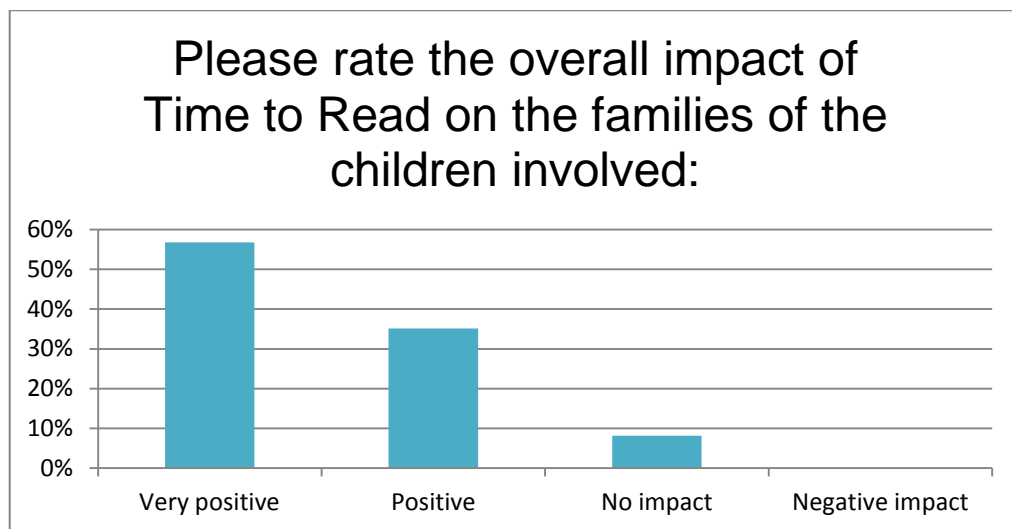
The staff, parents and children love the programme. It is so well organised and fits in so easily with our regular programmes. I love how the programme helps to maintain positive links with parents of children in our school.

The volunteers were excellent and were extremely pleasant and positive when in the school. They added a lovely atmosphere each Wednesday morning. People were delighted to see them!

It was a very positive experience for all involved. We have a brand new library and had a big focus on literacy this year so it tied in nicely with our approach. Any exposure children get to literacy is positive. The fact that they can read a book of their choice and have one on one attention is really positive.

3.1.3. Overall Impact of the Programme on the Families

Chart 3: Overall Impact of Programme on Families involved



The families are delighted with the program. At our end of year ceremony one of the volunteers won our School Hero award for his commitment to our school. He received a standing ovation from the families and boys.

Many families who had been struggling to get their children to read at home commented on how much this had changed by the end of the programme. They were delighted that their children were asking to read with them.

The programme encourages parents to engage with their children about reading. It gives them support, with volunteers doing some of the 1:1 reading that they are not confident enough to do themselves. But when the children come home excited about the book and ready to read, it makes it easier for them to help.

3.1.4. Impact of the Library Visits

An important aspect of the programme is the opportunity for children to visit their local public library. The purpose of the library visit is to introduce the children and their family members to their local library. The idea is for them all to have fun in a library and to know that it is somewhere for them to come and enjoy themselves and take out some books. The majority of school principals believed that the impact of the library visits on the children involved was **very positive** (72%) or **positive** (20%). The remaining **8%** felt that the visit had **no impact** on the children.

The general library promotion target is one that is constantly referenced in all our literacy endeavours. The library visit with the reading buddies is very much a highlight of the Time to Read programme. The role model

impact is very influential in encouraging the pupils to join the local library and make weekly visits to source their reading material.

This was a thoroughly enjoyable day where the class learned a lot. They really enjoyed having the volunteers and their parents there at the same time.

The children really enjoyed the experience and some of them have become regular visitors of the library since the visit.

3.1.5. Impact of the Workplace Visits

Each school group was brought on a workplace visit also. This involved being taken on a full tour of the business and engaging in some activities such as visiting warehouses, seeing their volunteer's desk, making a conference call abroad and answering quizzes. The children saw the actual workplace of their readers and then had refreshments in the boardrooms or canteens. The principals were asked to rate the impact on the same scale as the overall impact question. The impact of the workplace visits on the children involved was rated as **very positive** by **85%** and **positive** by **13%** of principals. The remaining principals rated that it had **no impact** and this was due to the **workplace visit not taking place**.

The visit is such a great way to introduce our children to the world of work - they see it as a very fun place! It broadens their horizons and expands their vision for their future.

The workplace visit gave a new perspective to the pupils on how a workplace operates. It creates a further link with the volunteer. It also gives the pupils an understanding as to why they should learn to read.

The pupils and the teachers really look forward to this planned trip. The pupils readily show their active engagement with this site visit through the sheer volume of oral questions they ask on the day. The visit sparks their curiosity and promotes greater understanding of the term "workplace". This trip promotes the use of oral language, both expressive & receptive for the children involved.

3.1.6. Impact of Programme on School Literacy Plan

95% of respondents indicated that the Time to Read Programme contributed to the literacy plan for their school.

The programme is listed as one of the initiatives in our DEIS action plan. We are constantly trying to improve the learner experience at school and the programme has very significantly helped us to achieve this aim.

A huge part of literacy is simply the enjoyment of reading and children wanting to read separate to formal teaching of literacy. This programme is perfect for achieving those goals.

It contributed to our literacy plan because it was an extra support for pupils in a middle bracket who might not have received help otherwise.

3.1.7. Main Advantage of Time to Read in School

In an open ended question principals were asked to discuss the main advantages of having Time to Read in their school. Below are some of the comments:

The positive attitude and approach towards the children was hugely beneficial. Having other people sit down and read with the boys made them realise that it's not just for school with your teacher and that it can be fun to do together with others! I couldn't recommend this initiative highly enough!

Time to Read helped the school open up to the wider community and link in with the surrounding business world, a world which may otherwise have appeared quite alien to the children in the school. I think this was the biggest advantage - the interconnection between the two worlds and the chance for the children to gain an understanding of how literacy is a shared value of both schools and the workplace.

It is good for the children to hear other voices/accents other than their parents and teachers. The children got to read on topics they loved and also found new topics to love.

The entire school community benefits from viewing the collaboration between the school and a high profile business organisation. This initiative brings the world of work into the school domain which in turn encourages our pupils to have high expectations for their own career ambitions later on in life.

3.2 Programme Operation

Principals were asked to rate and comment on their satisfaction with the operational aspects of the programme.

3.2.1. Weekly Visits of Volunteers to the School

The response from principals to this question was overwhelmingly positive. **79%** of principals indicated that the weekly visit of the Time to Read volunteers to their school worked **very well** and **21%** indicated that it worked **well**. No principal indicated that it did not work well.

Principals commented:

The weekly visits adhered to the structured timetable which was put in place long before the programme started.

Everyone arrived on time, knew what to do, got stuck in immediately, No time wasted. Arrived and left subtly.

It was a pleasure to have the volunteers in our school. All I saw was smiling faces on both adults and kids when they were in our school.

3.3 Service and Support

Each principal was asked to rate and comment on the service provided by BITCI, as well as the partnership between the company and the school. The range of levels from which to choose were: excellent, very good, fair or poor.

3.3.1. Service Provided by BITCI

This year, **82%** of respondents evaluated the service provided by the BITCI Coordinator as **excellent** **18%** rated it **very good**. Comments included:

The coordinator was always on hand to keep everything running smoothly and it was very useful to have someone sending emails back and forth with reminders etc. It was a great support to have her only ever at the end of the phone.

Our coordinator set up the whole process so well from start to finish. Everyone knew exactly when and where they had to be and everything went according to plan.

The BITC coordinator made everything run smoothly and communication was excellent. Feedback sessions were informative and productive. Work and library visits were great to raise expectations for our boys. Thank you.

3.3.2. Partnership between the School and Company

85% of respondents rated the partnership between the school and company as **excellent**, **13%** rated it as **very good** and **2%** as **fair**. Some of the principal's comments are outlined below:

Our company were so enthusiastic about the initiative and were great to work with. The care and dedication shown by the volunteers was amazing and the atmosphere during the work place visit was amazing. They invited children from the class who were not part of the programme along so they wouldn't feel left out. Very welcoming and inclusive which mirrors the school ethos perfectly!

Corporate Social Responsibility philosophy emanates from the volunteers. Yet again the company has gone beyond the Time to Read programme to generously finance projects and outings to support the children in the school. At discussion meetings, the volunteers express a sincere enjoyment and satisfaction about reading with the children. I am in constant admiration of the company, the CEO and the volunteers for how they support the children.

As in the previous year, our company were a pleasure to work with. The team were always professional in their approach to the programme and they were all extremely kind to the children.

3.4 Recommendations

In this section of the evaluation principals were asked for any recommendations or changes they would make to the programme along with improvements in feedback and support.

3.4.1. Recommendations and Changes

79% of principals would make **no changes** to the Time to Read Programme. Of the remaining 21%, the recommendations related to:

- The one to one reading sessions
- The books
- Other

Of those who ticked 'Other', recommendations related to increasing the number of students included in the programme and the possibility of including all the children in the class, or extending the length of the programme. Comments and feedback included:

The only disadvantage we have encountered is the remaining children in the class who are not included. Perhaps a class item once during the year might make the others feel in some way included in the programme.

Please expand it! We would love if all the children in 2nd class were included.

It is hard from year to year to judge the interest level of the pupils. The extra Christmas Readers were a great addition this year, maybe some more on seasonal topics.

3.4.2. Expectations of the Programme

Principals were asked if the programme lived up to their expectations. **95%** of principals indicated that Time to Read **was what they expected**. **5%** felt it was not, however this was mostly because it was better than they expected, as seen in their comments.

We had a very positive experience the year before and this year was no different

It exceeded my expectation as the training undertaken by the volunteers was obviously tailored perfectly.

It exceeded our expectations.

3.4.3. Recommending the Time To Read Programme

100% of principals **would recommend** the Time to Read Programme to another principal.

It was organised so well and had such a positive impact on the children involved and the school in general. There was no real extra workload for principal or teachers.

This is a well-run programme. It provides valuable support for pupils without excessive paperwork for principals.

The benefits to the children and their families are huge and once the school is organized in their approach the weekly sessions run extremely smoothly.

The company has become embedded in the school life by supporting the children improve in their reading over the past two years. The children love to see their volunteers come in each week and this has provided motivation to them to read more on their own. Reading fluency has improved significantly among the children who took part in the programme.



Section 4

Home School Community Liaison Evaluation

In 2017-2018 there were 33 Home School Community Liaison Coordinators (HSCL) involved in the Time to Read Programme. Some schools do not have a dedicated HSCL Coordinator. Over the course of the Time to Read Programme they discussed the programme with the children and their families, and in some cases they attended the library and workplace visits. **25 (76%)** HSCL Coordinators completed the 2017 Time to Read Programme Evaluation (69% in 2017).

The evaluation was divided into 3 sections:

- 4.1** Programme Benefits & Impacts
- 4.2** Programme Operation & Service
- 4.3** Recommendations

4.1 Programme Benefits & Impacts

4.1.1. Meeting the Programme's Aims and Objectives

The HSCL Coordinators indicated that the programme met, if not exceeded, its stated objectives.

Table 3: Achieving Programme Aims and Objectives

Answer Options	Exceeded its objective		Met its objective		Partially met objective		Did not meet its objective		Cannot comment	
	2018	2017	2018	2017	2018	2017	2018	2017	2018	2017
Increased the enjoyment of reading	64%	55%	36%	41%	0%	5%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Increased confidence in reading	64%	36%	36%	55%	0%	9%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Improved & encouraged self-discovery	48%	32%	44%	59%	4%	9%	0%	0%	4%	0%
Improved fluency & comprehension when reading	40%	18%	48%	68%	12%	14%	0%	0%	0%	0%

The feedback from the class teacher and support teacher outlined a huge improvement in children's fluency and confidence in reading.

The children were offered the opportunity to read with an attentive adult weekly which was very beneficial.

Overall, the greatest achievement was that children of a naturally shy disposition "came out" of themselves a bit more. That for me was an element of the Programme nearly greater than the reading outcomes. Parents were very enthused about it as an initiative too.

4.1.2. Additional Impacts of Programme

The HSCL Coordinators indicated that Time to Read had a number of other impacts on the participating children.

- Improved **social engagement**: 96%
- Improved **oral communication**: 84%
- Improved **emotional engagement**: 80%
- Improved **motivation**: 64%
- Improved **self-efficacy**: 28%

Three of our children were from homes where English is a second language. They really enjoyed talking to another adult in English.

The children could engage emotionally and socially by selecting books and discussing books that they might relate to. Oral language was improved through discussions of the books read.

The boys definitely became more confident in their own abilities. They developed good bonds with the volunteers.

4.1.3. Synergy with Home School Liaison objectives

Respondents were asked to indicate whether Time to Read had assisted them in their roles as HSCL Coordinators with families and guardians. **88%** indicated the programme **greatly enhanced** or **somewhat enhanced** their role. The remaining respondents stated that the programme did not enhance their role.

It helped the parents who are new to the school get to know the school a bit better. It was a great success.

It is great to be in contact with outside agencies who are willing to help out in the school. Also, it gets the parents involved in their children's education at a practical level. It creates a positive atmosphere around reading in the school. It ticks a lot of my boxes at work.

Provided an opportunity to invite parents to attend events and to highlight the importance of literacy.

Parents engaged more positively with the school when seeing that their children were benefiting from the programme.

4.1.4. Impacts Noticed on Individual Children

Respondents were asked to comment on any individual child (without naming) where the impact of the programme has been particularly evident. Comments included:

In one instance, a child who comes from a large disadvantaged family was offered the opportunity to engage in one on one attention, support and encouragement. The child looked forward to the session each week.

One particular child really benefited from the time out of class spent with another adult who was willing to listen to him and chat. This child often has difficulty speaking in a bigger group so the individual attention has really increased his self-esteem and confidence.

There are at least three of the group who would not have books at home or be read to. A parent of one child in particular is illiterate so he has really felt the benefit of enjoying reading books with an adult.

4.1.5. Programme Impacts on Parents and Families

Home School Community Liaison Coordinators indicated that Time to Read had a number of positive impacts on the families involved in the programme.

- Increased **awareness of the importance of reading**: 84%
- Increased **reading in the home**: 68%
- Increased **contact with school**: 52%
- More **supportive of child**: 48%
- Enhanced the **school's dialogue with families**: 44%

We have some illiterate families who really engaged with this program as they understand the importance of being able to read.

The parents seem more engaged overall.

There are definitely more families going to the library and more books are being bought and read at home.

4.1.6 Overall Impacts on Children as a result of Time to Read

Following on from the previous questions HSCL Coordinators were asked to consider the overall impacts of the programme on participating children.

Further benefits included:

- Improved **self-confidence**: 92%
- Improved **interpersonal skills**: 72%
- Improved **engagement in school**: 44%
- Improved **attendance**: 32%
- Improved **punctuality**: 24%

The children loved interacting with the volunteers and the attention and support they got from them had impact on them.

The boys love going out of class to meet with the volunteers. They love to see, at the end, their log and how much reading they have achieved. They loved the site visit and the trip to the local library too.

Children make an effort to be in on Wednesday mornings as they do not wish to miss their reading session.

4.2 Programme Operation & Service

In this section of the evaluation Home School Community Liaison Coordinators were asked for their thoughts on the programme operation and service.

4.2.1. Library Visits

92% of HSCL Coordinators found the library visit a **worthwhile element** of the programme. The other **8%** did not have a library visit. The HSCL Coordinators were then asked to comment on the effect of the library visit on the children. Below is some of their feedback:

Many children are not afforded the opportunity to be brought to the library. This was a unique experience for some children. The activities organised by the library were very child friendly, engaging and enjoyable. Parents were invited also and quite a number of parents supported the event.

There was a great turnout from the parents and children got library cards.

We have a great library in our school but about half of the children continued to visit the town library after the visit.

4.2.2. Workplace Visits

100% of HSCL Coordinators found the workplace visit a **worthwhile element** of the programme; this was the same figure in 2017. The HSCL were asked to comment on the effect of the workplace visit on the children.

It allows the children to see where the buddies work and get an insight into the daily workings of an office environment which the children may not be familiar with.

It's brilliant for the children to see where the volunteer comes from. It shows them that they have a real job and are taking time out for them.

Their teacher reported back that the visit to the workplace was the highlight of the programme this year. We try to visit as many places as we can every year with the children and any workplace is a beneficial trip. The trip was so enjoyable for all the children and the volunteers made it educational also.

4.2.3. Feedback sessions

Respondents were asked if they found the feedback sessions beneficial or not. **64%** found the two feedback sessions **beneficial**. **4%** indicated that they did not find the feedback sessions to be beneficial. The remaining **32%** did not attend the feedback sessions, and so therefore could not comment.

It provided a forum for the volunteers to ask for advice in supporting the child and for the class teacher to gain an insight into how the child was progressing on an individual level.

The volunteers interacted well with the school staff and made some good suggestions. They also looked for support and advice when necessary.

4.3 Recommendations

In this section of the evaluation Home School Community Liaison Coordinators were asked for any recommendations or changes they would make to the programme.

4.3.1. Recommendations, Changes or Additions

72% of respondents would make **no changes** to the programme for the next academic year.

The remaining **28%** identified the following aspects of the programme for recommendations:

- The one to one reading sessions
- The books
- The library visit
- Other

It would be more beneficial if every child in the class group could engage with the program

The books received from Time to Read were limited and would not have sustained the programme without being supplemented by the library and the school.

It would be great to get Garda vetting done earlier and be ready to start the programme in early to mid September.

4.3.2. Recommending the Time to Read Programme

100% of Home School Community Liaison Coordinators **would recommend** the Time to Read Programme **to a friend or colleague**.

It is an extremely worthwhile experience for the children in terms of reading, confidence and commitment. I would highly recommend the programme and the benefits are long lasting to all involved.

It is only fantastic. Parents are involved, people from the community are involved, learning is going on, library visit is involved.

It is exactly the stage when children need support to become independent readers and one teacher cannot do it. Once it is well set up it is very easy to run. Everyone wins!

Brilliant chance for kids to interact with adults other than teachers around literacy. It shows them that not only teachers like to read. Some of them don't have adults in their lives who would value reading books.



Section 5

Volunteers Evaluation

450 company volunteers were involved with Time to Read programme this year. **85%** of volunteers completed the Time to Read Evaluation (74% in 2017). The evaluation was divided into 4 sections:

5.1 Programme Benefits & Impacts

5.2 Programme Operation

5.3 Support & Service

5.4 Recommendations

5.1 Programme Benefits & Impacts

5.1.1. Overall Programme Enjoyment

Company volunteers' experience of the programme was overwhelmingly positive. The volunteers were asked to rate their overall enjoyment level from a choice of very enjoyable, enjoyable or not enjoyable. **84%** (85% in 2017) of volunteers found the programme **very enjoyable**, **16%** (15% in 2017) found it **enjoyable**.

Volunteers commented:

Time to read was one of the highlights of my year, I loved getting to know the children and seeing them every Tuesday brightened my day!

It gave me the opportunity to go back to the school where I was educated and give some of the boys the benefit of my experience. I would have loved to have participated in a program like this when I was their age as I believe it encourages children to aim high in life and reinforces that education and hard work is the best way to get there. On a personal level, it was great to see the old school, the teachers and the principal again.

I absolutely loved the programme. From the very start it was so clear to see how much the boys valued our time. The training we received in the beginning was very beneficial to understand how to approach different scenarios. To go back each week and see the boys get excited to see me and tell me how many pages they

read or new words they learned each week was so uplifting. The highlight of the programme for me was finishing a book with one of the kids (His first ever book to finish).

It was great to be part of the project on behalf of a larger organisation and feel we are making a contribution locally. I really enjoyed my time in the school and seeing how much enjoyment the children were getting out of the sessions.

It was just an amazing experience. As I don't currently have kids I didn't realise that Kids don't get 1 on 1 assistance in regards to reading in schools and it shocked me. I loved getting the chance to read to the kids individually and I believe they learned a lot from it.

The kids were very engaged and eager to read. They felt proud of finishing a book and marking it down on their reading log. It was nice to see them read a longer book occasionally because it interested them, instead of focusing on the amount of books completed. I was happy to see them frequently pick up science books. STEM subjects are as important to promote as reading itself, but it also gave them a chance to ask questions which were fun to answer [...] One of the kids came in one day and said "I know what I want to be when I grow up", expecting him to answer Fireman or something similar I was surprised and delighted when he said "What you do!".

5.1.2. Impact of the Programme on Volunteers

Volunteers indicated that the Time to Read Programme had a number of positive impacts.

- Improved **self-awareness: 55%** (50% in 2017)
- Improved **communication skills: 52%** (51% in 2017)
- Improved **interpersonal skills: 49%** (46% in 2017)
- Improved **self-confidence: 28%** (25% in 2017)

I'm at a stage now where I really want to help others and to make a positive impact and difference in the world. I want to positively affect the lives of others. This has been a great experience and has enabled me to start on this journey. I've enjoyed meeting the girls and working with them. Watching them improve in their reading bit by bit to become great readers was so rewarding. It would definitely make me devote more of my time to take part in this programme again and similar programmes.

The different needs of the two boys helped me to think outside the box in relation to encouraging them to keep reading. I think that my communication and interpersonal skills improved through thinking more about their needs.

Great to have the opportunity to support children in the love of reading and also to help build their confidence. I looked forward to visiting the school every week and giving back to the community was a privilege and a huge sense of satisfaction in helping the children to learn and grow.

It's easy to be stuck with a very middle class view of society. Kids are less fortunate through no fault of their own - it's great to be able to show them that through reading and learning they can get anything they want in life.

Working in financial services for many years, it's very rare that you come across anyone who grew up and was educated in the north inner city. It's not something that I ever really shouted from the roof tops as there is a fear that stereotyping could impact my career. This was the first time that I've had to talk about that part of my education in a work environment rather than my third level qualifications. I'm a lot more relaxed about it now, and I really hope to see boys from [the school] end up working for company x in the future.

5.1.3. Achieving Programme Objectives

Volunteers were asked to indicate whether they felt the programme met its aims and objectives: to increase enjoyment of reading, confidence in reading, fluency and self-discovery. The table below indicates those responses.

Table 4: Achieving Programme Objectives

Answer Options	Exceeded its objective		Met its objective		Partially met objective		Did not meet its objective		Cannot comment	
	2018	2017	2018	2017	2018	2017	2018	2017	2018	2017
Increased confidence in reading	48%	47%	49%	50%	3%	3%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Improved fluency and comprehension when reading	38%	49%	54%	53%	7%	7%	0%	0%	1%	0%
Increased the enjoyment of reading	37%	38%	57%	56%	5%	6%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Improved and encouraged self-discovery	34%	36%	54%	51%	10%	9%	0%	0%	2%	3%

One of the children I was reading with only came to Ireland 2 years ago and had never spoken English before that. In our initial reading sessions she was well able to pronounce the words but she raced over them and could see she was guessing what was coming next rather than reading what came next. Challenging her to slow down and forcing her to read the words she was skipping and also reflecting on the sentence to assess her level of understanding was really important and I feel this made a big difference to her reading and comprehension.

A large part of my reading sessions involved discussing what we were reading with the boys and getting their opinions on things that may have happened in the story. At the start, the boys were just reading words for the sake of it, but by the end, they were definitely taking in what they were reading and as a result they seemed to enjoy reading it a lot more. It was great to see them read something and then comment on it themselves without being prompted.

What I loved about Time to Read was that the aim was to first and foremost increase the child's enjoyment of the reading. One of my children loved books with a rhyme so he could "rap" them which meant he was reading a book but also enjoying it because he was doing it his way.

I am positive my boys love to read and will continue reading afterwards. We've discovered some new authors together.

In this section we asked the volunteers to rate their satisfaction with different elements of the Time to Read Programme.

5.2 Programme Operation

5.2.1. Aspects of Time to Read Programme

Volunteers were asked to rate various aspects of the Time to Read Programme, such as the venue for the reading sessions, the ease of the volunteer changeover, and the ease of usage of the weekly volunteer log (used to record elements such as the books read, a general overview of the session, whether the child was taking the book home that week, and other relevant information).

Answer Options	Excellent	Very Good	Fair	Poor
The workplace visit	73%	24%	1%	2%
The library visit	63%	29%	3%	5%
The one to one reading session	55%	43%	2%	0%
Ease of the changeover of volunteers	41%	51%	7%	1%
The venue of reading sessions	35%	45%	20%	0%
The volunteer log	30%	54%	16%	0%

The venue was good as the kids did not need to leave school which meant they were not distracted. The changeover of volunteers was simple and straight forward and actually provided a bit of excitement for the kids. I think the work place visit and the library visit were brilliant and you could see how much the kids enjoyed both.

Everything was great. The venue was big enough that we didn't feel like we were trapped in a tiny room. The volunteer log was easy to use. It could've probably done with a few extra pages. The workplace visit and library visits were definitely the highlights of the whole programme.

All the children rated the workplace and library visit very high. It was great to be able to organize library cards for all the children in the class regardless of whether they were in the Time to Read programme. some of them had never been in the library.

The library visit was great as it gave practical, 'hands-on' information to the children on using the library. The format of the visit was ideal and it was great to see the enthusiasm of the children. Likewise, the visit to the workplace was well organised. They had great fun doing 'work place' tasks! They learned about wind farms and were delighted with their goodie bags. It was great for them to see our 'world'. The volunteer log was good as it was a chance to see how the children were getting on. It was an opportunity to provide feedback. The reading venue was good....maybe could have benefited from more space but that's just a minor thing.

5.2.2. Programme Books

Volunteers were asked to rate the Time to Read books provided.

- **62%** found the books very appropriate and a good mix (59% in 2017)
- **28%** indicated the selection was the correct amount (32% in 2017)
- **10%** indicated the books were not suitable (9% in 2017)

Plenty of options for one of my children who had a lower level of reading and needed smaller books with more accessible words. For my other child there were a diverse range of interesting/funny and challenging books.

I would feedback that there should be a selection of books which are shorter- less pages - as some books provided were 100/120 pages or more and a child gets great satisfaction reading a book over one/ two sessions rather than the same book over 4/8 weeks as on the Reading log you would only see one book and this looks disheartening when other children have lots and still manage to read a lot over the sessions.

I think the mix was good but towards the end the kids had read most of the books they were interested in. I think more books would be required for the duration of Time to Read

There was a good range of books with a mix of fact, fiction and different genres. There was one book which was about a Polish child who had moved country. It would be good to have more of this type of book as both girls I was reading with were from Romania and they really related to it.

Only thing is we ran out of books fairly fast and I think there could be more books that are suitable for girls. There were not enough age appropriate books so a variety would be better. The boys loved the bugs/spider type books the gorier the better! The kids seem to be afraid of taking the books home so this might be something that could be encouraged more.

Volunteers were also asked to comment if the children they were reading with took books home with them. 24% (21% in 2017) of volunteers stated that the children took books home **most weeks**, 42% (46% in 2017) stated **sometimes** and 33% (33% in 2017) said that the children **never** took books home. We will continue to address this and ask the volunteers to encourage the children to bring their Time to Read books home with them.

5.2.3. Volunteer Time Commitment to Programme

The majority of respondents (**96%**) this year feel that the 10 week time commitment was **manageable**. The remaining **4%** of volunteers felt that the time commitment was not manageable.

The programme did not impact on my work commitments. If anything it reinvigorated me and made me more productive during work.

The 10 weeks actually flew by and it was just the right amount of time to get to really know the children and to work on improving their reading skills.

It was, but sometimes it was difficult to get out of the office but when we did it was all worthwhile.

5.3 Service & Support

Volunteers were asked to rate and comment on the service provided by the school.

5.3.1. Schools' Welcome & Support

98% of respondents indicated that the **school's welcome and support** throughout the programme was **excellent or very good**. This was a slight increase of 1% on last year's figure. **2%** rated it as **fair**.

We always receive a fantastic welcome to the school each week. The home school liaison officer, teachers and principal all show their support for the programme.

All in School X could not be more welcoming. They care deeply about the children who attend their school, are open to improving the programme all the time, provide great feedback, are so hospitable and show their appreciation of BITCI and their staff at every opportunity. It's a super school to be volunteering in.

The Teacher and Principal were such a pleasure to deal with, always so welcoming and friendly!! You can feel the love and dedication they have for the kids and their education.

Area for improvement could be timekeeping for the reading sessions. Couple of times the boys were late which ate into their reading time. Also, the changeover with the second set of boys was often late which meant their reading time was a lot shorter.

5.4 Recommendations

In this section of the evaluation volunteers were asked for any recommendations or changes they would make to the programme.

5.4.1. Volunteer's experience of the training and recommendations

99% of volunteer's felt that the training provided prepared them for the reading sessions, this was a slight increase of 2% on last year's figure.

Our coordinator did a great job on the training. The Principal also helped put the programme and school into a wider context. I felt prepared and excited for the programme.

I would include more ideas as to how engage with kids who don't want to read or those very good readers who might find reading only not challenging enough. It would be beneficial to have additional activities included in the pack.

Perhaps getting a back ground of the child's reading ability in advance would be great.

I think it might be beneficial to have a chat with the children's teachers before the first session to learn why they have recommended each child. It was only after the first feedback session with the teacher that I had more confidence with the way I was interacting with the child and our sessions were going ok.

5.4.2. Recommendations or Changes

84% of respondents would make **no changes** or additions to the programme. Of the remaining 16% most recommendations related to:

- The books: **42%**
- Time of reading session: **19%**
- The one to one reading: **12%**
- The volunteer log: **11%**
- The venue of the reading sessions: **11%**
- The changeover of volunteers: **10%**
- The library visit: **8%**
- Other: **19%**

I think it would be beneficial to have a larger pool of volunteers available to sub in when necessary to avoid students having to double up when reading.

Need to make sure that new books are available quickly, some of the books were short and the children could read 2 or 3 in one session so they had to reread some.

I think the library visit could be improved. The kids could be shown what's on offer in the library, and I think it would have been good if they were all given their own library card to increase their interest.

The library visit should involve the children and their families seeing the library's services, how the borrowing is done, the work of the librarians and strolling around the library or doing a treasure hunt. The 2nd recommendation is that all volunteers attend both feedback sessions as so much valuable information is exchanged that enhances one's enjoyment and increases the impact on everyone involved. It's vital to know what everyone thinks and suggests and to hear it first-hand. I suggest it takes place in the business to minimize their time and to facilitate attendance.

5.4.3. Volunteer Expectations of Programme

91% of respondents indicated that the Time to Read Programme was what they expected. 9% stated that it was not what they had expected, however, the majority of these volunteers commented that it was actually better than expected. **100%** of volunteers said that it was a meaningful experience.

To see the joy on the child's face when they saw you waiting to read to them is something I will not forget.

It is one of the more interesting things the bank has got involved in. It is so rewarding and completely opposite to what I do on a daily basis. There should definitely be more of this kind of cooperation within the community.

I have commuted to work in cork City for the past 40 years and this was the first time that I participated in any community project in the City. It was good to do this - as I have spent the best part of my adult working life in Cork City.

I have been in company X for 21 years and have probably volunteered for every kind of event from bake sales to fun runs to bucket collecting etc. I found this programme the most enjoyable because I had to put in more effort and commit to a 10 week programme so I felt I got more out of it in the end. It's very easy to give up an hour at a once off fund raiser etc. but because this was a longer time commitment I felt more connected to the programme.

5.4.4. Recommending the Time To Read Programme

The volunteers were asked how likely it is that they would recommend the Time to Read programme to a friend or colleague. On scale of 0 to 10 the **net promoters score** was **77.9**.

Section 6

Company Coordinator Evaluation

Each participating company had a designated individual coordinating the programme on behalf of the business. **45 out of 47 (96%)** company coordinators completed the evaluation this year (98% in 2017). The evaluation form was divided into four key sections:

6.1 Programme Benefits & Impacts

6.2 Programme Operation

6.3 Service & Support

6.4 Recommendations

6.1 Programme Benefits & Impacts

This section examined the benefits of participation in the programme, both to the employees and to the company.

6.1.1. Benefits of Participation to Employees

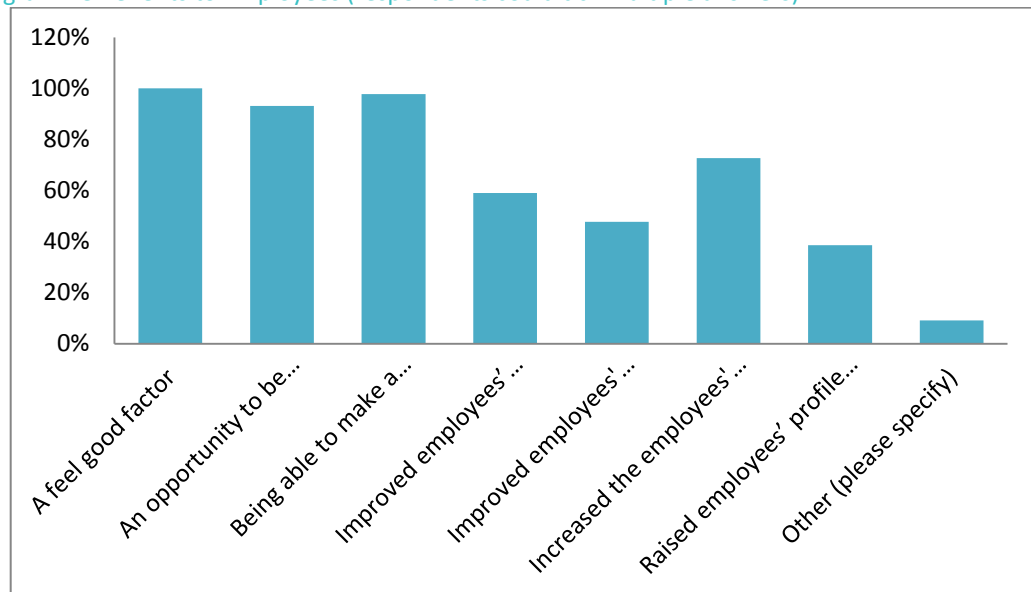
100% of company coordinators indicated that getting the **feel good factor** was a very beneficial aspect of the Time to Read Programme for company employees. **98%** of respondents felt that **being able to make a difference in a child's life** was a beneficial aspect of the programme **93%** felt that this **opportunity to be involved in a project outside normal work duties** was a benefit. **73%** agreed in increased employees' awareness of the outside community.

This type of program allows our staff to get to know staff in other functions, who they might not normally come into contact with, during their working day or as part of their role. It is also a good 'leveller' as all volunteers are simply volunteers, regardless of their position in the organisation.

Time to Read gave staff an opportunity to get involved in something very worthwhile. There was a big time commitment which staff readily signed up for. Some of the children's reading came along in leaps and bounds.

My colleagues thoroughly enjoyed themselves during the program. There would be a great buzz in the offices on our return from the reading session and a sense of "team spirit" between the reading buddies.

Chart 5: Programme Benefits to Employees (respondents could tick multiple answers)



6.1.2. Benefits of Participation to the Company

In this question we asked company coordinators to rate the different benefits to the company of participation in Time to Read. A remarkable **89%** of company coordinators **strongly agreed** or **agreed** that the main benefits to companies were: **providing an enjoyable and meaningful volunteer opportunity**, and **making a contribution to the local community**.



Table 5: Programme Benefits to the Company

Answer Options	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	2018	2017	2018	2017	2018	2017	2018	2017	2018	2017
Makes a contribution to the local community	89%	68%	11%	32%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Provides an enjoyable & meaningful volunteer opportunity	89%	76%	11%	24%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Contributes to our CSR strategy	84%	66%	16%	30%	0%	3%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Supports education locally	73%	63%	24%	35%	2%	3%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Helps raise the company profile locally	49%	39%	33%	38%	18%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Assists employee skills development	42%	32%	36%	41%	22%	29%	0%	0%	0%	0%

6.2 Programme Operation

In this section we asked the companies to rate their satisfaction with different elements of the Time to Read programme which included the reading sessions, library visit, workplace visit, feedback sessions and the wrap up event.

6.2.1. Company Satisfaction

Companies were asked to rate their overall satisfaction with the various parts of the programme such as the reading sessions, the feedback sessions and the work place visit. Below is a table outlining the respondents' thoughts about each of the elements.

Table 6: Company Satisfaction with Programme Features

Answer Options	Excellent		Very Good		Fair		Poor	
	2018	2017	2018	2017	2018	2017	2018	2017
The work place visit	89%	83%	9%	11%	0%	3%	1%	3%
The one to one reading sessions	84%	75%	16%	19%	0%	6%	0%	0%
The wrap up event	78%	69%	20%	25%	0%	6%	2%	0%
The library visit	76%	58%	16%	28%	2%	3%	7%	11%
The ease of changeover of volunteers	62%	39%	27%	45%	11%	8%	0%	8%
The feedback sessions	53%	44%	36%	44%	7%	6%	4%	6%

Excellent the whole way though. The assistance provided to us by our BITCI coordinator throughout the program was second to none. This made rallying my colleagues for visits or sessions effortless as we knew that whatever we were attending would run to plan and schedule which, from a company viewpoint, made Time to Read the ideal CSR program.

The program is well established and the format works well. As we have completed 3 years at this stage, it is relatively easy to co-ordinate and complete the elements of the programme, once the volunteers are in place.

Feedback sessions were great and the school teacher provided some great insight with each of the student's development and background difficulties. The ease of volunteer changeover could have been managed better by myself but this can be taken as learning into 2018/19 programme.

6.2.2. Company Time Commitment

We advise that company volunteers dedicate 10 weeks to the Time to Read Programme, ideally over 2 blocks of 5 weeks. With this in mind, when the company coordinators were asked to comment on the 10 week commitment, **98% felt it was manageable.**

The 10 weeks is spread over a number of months and in two reading blocks. This allows the volunteers to manage their time and to obtain reading cover from their 'buddy' should there be any key requirement to remain at work.

Apart from the snow, 10 weeks was fine...Communication is the key within T2R. WhatsApp group of volunteers is very beneficial.

Generally it is manageable, but last minute meetings / illness etc...can factor into volunteers not being available. Also we had to reschedule the library visit and having it at the end of the year is proving difficult to get many of the volunteers free, as we are starting into the holiday season.

6.3 Service & Support

Companies were asked to rate and comment on the service received from the BITCI coordinator, as well as the communication with the school coordinator and the partnership between the company and the school.

6.3.1. Service Provided by BITCI

The company coordinator was asked to rate the service level provided by BITCI. The range of levels from which to choose were: excellent, very good, fair or poor. **82%** of companies evaluated the service provided by the BITCI coordinator as **excellent**. The remaining **18%** rated the service as **very good**. Feedback and comments included:

Our coordinator provided great support - always available, always there with solutions (snow messed up some scheduled school sessions) and always working with us to find ways to make the programme even better and as beneficial as possible for both students and volunteers.

The coordinator was great at keeping in touch and planning/co-coordinating the program. This was critical to the success of Time to Read for us and meant that everything ran very smoothly.

6.3.2. Communication between the Company and the School Coordinator

The company coordinator was asked to rate the communication between themselves and the School Coordinator. The range of levels from which to choose were: excellent, very good, fair or poor. **69%** of company coordinators evaluated the communication as **excellent**. **20%** rated the communication as **very good** and **11%** rated it as **fair**. Feedback and comments included:

The school commitment was excellent. They really got involved in the programme and kept great records and were always organised every week we came to the school.

The teacher has been very helpful in all the years she has assisted in the programme. Nothing fazes her and she is very close to the children and shows great empathy. Her knowledge has been very useful to the volunteers and her support of the programme has been immense.

6.3.3. Partnership between the Company and the School

Similarly, the partnership between the company and their partnering school was evaluated as **excellent** by **78%** of the respondents, **20%** rated it as **very good** and **2%** as **fair**.

A very good relationship has been built up between both.

It is great to be able to provide this programme to a small, rural school that might not necessarily get this opportunity. A number of staff also have children there so it's a great connection to our local community.

Great communications between both and this helped with the smooth running of the programme, excellent feedback and amazing results were shown to keep the volunteers motivated and committed to the programme.

6.4 Recommendations

6.4.1. Recommendations, Changes or Additions

76% of respondents would make **no changes** to the programme; this is an increase of 19% on 2017 figures.

The remaining **24%** recommendations related to:

- The books: **40%**
- The volunteer log **20%**
- The Feedback and support sessions: **10%**
- The one to one reading sessions **10%**
- Other **40%**

More books, earlier and more often.

Ensure the school is directly involved in the support session as they will be the closest to the children and best understand their needs. I would like to see the programme further include the children in the class who are not directly involved in the 1:1 sessions of the Programme. Would it be possible to acknowledge the reading skills of the remaining pupils to some degree at the final wrap up session? These children often feel very left out as they know the volunteers and have been part of both the library and site visits. We have also found that the parents of these children are more supportive of the programme. I do believe it is worth exploring further.

I know that one question that gets asked a lot by schools is around wider inclusion of kids in the scheme. The intent of the programme, to assist those with mid-level reading ability is good, but results in kids feeling 'left out'. Perhaps it could be considered that one set of volunteers rotate reading with the wider class. This issue is positive really, as it shows the benefit of the programme when more want to be involved.

Company Expectations of Programme

Out of the 45 company coordinators who responded, **98%** indicated that the Time to Read Programme was **what they expected**. While respondents felt that the programme delivered in its expectations, these expectations were often exceeded in some cases, as the comments below suggest:

What I expected and more. I thoroughly loved it and am now going to miss going to read with the children each week as it really did have that feel good factor. I coordinated the program throughout and really enjoyed everything about it.

It was so much more. I can't describe the effect this project has had on our volunteers, it has been fantastic to watch the volunteers build up a relationship with the children. Each volunteer is overwhelmed by the reactions of the children to the attention given of just reading a story. It's amazing.

6.4.2. Recommending the Time to Read Programme

100% (100% in 2017) of respondents would **recommend** the Time to Read Programme to another company. These were some of the comments from the company coordinators reflecting this:

It's so worthwhile, a real feel good factor. The difference we made in a short time was just fantastic.

Most definitely as it is a very rewarding programme.

Great programme for the team - definitely brings a positive energy to the office.

This is a long term commitment to the local community. The schools and community need the support that a company can bring. Companies help with things outside of the programme that the school would be unable to do for itself.

It really was a meaningful experience - the one to one aspect really made it feel like we could make a difference with some of the children who perhaps didn't ever have a chance for something like this before.

Every session brought a smile to my face.

Absolutely! Learning to read and being confident in reading is the foundation for so many other skills.

Section 7

Informal Feedback

7.1. Child's Informal Feedback

In order to gather more feedback from the children, we distributed a child's survey to each of the participating schools. With assistance from their volunteers, the children were asked to complete a simple set of questions outlined in the survey. The children were asked about what they liked about Time to Read, and how often they were going to read after completing the programme. The following comments outline the children's thoughts on the Time to Read Programme:

When asked 'What do you think about Time to Read?' they responded:

I think it was great fun. The books were funny. It was very relaxing and good.

It's really good learning new words and looking at the pictures.

I love finding out more about things! And love meeting new people that work in the bank.

Brilliant. I want to do it again. I loved the reading.

Good, fun. Because we got to read, we got to talk to new people. Will read every day, every second of the day! Sometimes I take a break!

I enjoyed the books and learned how to slow down reading and split up the words.

Really good because we get to read and I get to read really good books.

Awesome. Time to Read was the most awesome thing I did in school.

It was amazing - you learn new words and ones that you got wrong, the volunteers help you learn what they are.

When asked ‘Now that you’re a great reader, when are you going to read?’ they responded:

Before I go to bed, in my attic I look out the window and can see everything while I read.

When I get older. When I am a "what do you call it? Father" I will read stories to my children.

I am going to read in bed. I've read all the books in the house. I'm now reading The Hobbit.

I'll read myself to sleep and I'll not skip the hard words and break them down.

Whenever I get a chance to in class and at home.

Yes will read all the time at home. Flat Stanley books are his favourite wants to go to the library to get some more.



7.2. Parent's Informal Feedback

Parents of Time to Read children are not formally surveyed for evaluation purposes. However, parents in a number of schools were asked how they felt their children were benefitting from Time to Read and their responses were as follows:

Child X often spoke about Time to Read to us. He was always so excited about it and was grateful for the opportunity. He thoroughly enjoyed it and I have noticed his interest in books increasing. He said the choice was great and that there were loads of books to choose from. His reading has definitely improved and I have noticed the use of bigger words he had not used before.

Child X likes the Time to Read programme a lot and he enjoys the time spent with the volunteers. He likes short stories and fact books, which he keeps reading at home. The thing that he enjoyed most was the trip to the company and he talked a lot about the things he saw there. This is a great programme to develop interest in reading and discovering different topics, facts, stories and through beautiful adventure books, finding out more about himself. I hope the programme will continue and give other kids a chance to be part of it. A big thanks to all the people taking part in the programme.

I feel that Child X has improved a lot in her reading skills and embraced the pleasure of reading. She enjoys Time to Read very much. At home I have fewer problems with her when I tell her that she has to read. I think it helps to develop her English vocabulary.


My child is truly enjoying the reading sessions. Her vocabulary has increased over the period of time. She illustrates the story at home, this confirms that she is interested in the choice of reading books. We are really happy that she has got the chance to take part. The tour of the company was an excellent arrangement and she treasures the gift of the book and the memories of the tour. I extend my thanks to all for arranging Time to Read.

First of all I would like to thank all the teachers and sponsors for having such a good reading programme. My son really enjoyed the programme. This programme helped him to improve his reading skills and learn so many new words.

Find out more

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