OÉ Gaillimh
NUI Galway

Barnardos
No child gets left behind

Wizards of Words
Process Study Evaluation

United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
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UNESCO Chair in
Children, Youth and Civic Engagement
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CHILD AND FAMILY RESEARCH CENTRE

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“My reading is getting better ever since the Wizards”

This report is dedicated to Nancy Denning
WoW volunteer
2007 -2009

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Executive Summary

Section One; Introduction

Barnardos, Ireland's largest independent children's charity, was established in 1962 and works with children whose well-being is under treat and who live in disadvantaged communities. Barnardos mission is: to support and challenge families, communities, society and government to make Ireland the best place in the world to be a child, focussing specifically on children whose well-being is under threat Barnardos seeks to achieve outcomes for children in two key domains:

- Increased capacity to learn and develop and
- Improved emotional well-being

In 2007, Barnardos developed a school-based reading programme, Wizards of Words (WoW), which aims to improve children's reading skills and help them become better and more confident readers. WoW is an intergenerational paired reading programme whose purpose is to improve children's overall reading achievement. The programme pair's first and second class students who are nominated by classroom Teachers for extra reading support with an appropriate older Volunteer. The trained Volunteers meet with their child two to three times weekly for 40 minute sessions during school hours to provide individualised reading instruction and support

1.1 Evaluation of WoW

The Child and Family Research Centre (CFRC) at NUI, Galway, were commissioned in August 2008 by Barnardos to undertake an evaluation of the Wizards of Words programme.

The evaluation of WoW consists of three strands. The first strand of the research is the process study which focuses on the implementation of the programme, both in the first year and throughout the study's timeframe. The second aspect of the study relates to the selection, testing and piloting of measures to be used as part of a randomised controlled trial. The third part of the study consists of a randomised controlled trial, to commence in September 2009.

The Process Study

The process study evaluation plan and methodology was designed and finalised in consultation with the members of the core WoW team in Barnardos. The overall aim of the process study is to explore the experience of introducing and implementing a literacy support programme in four primary school sites

The specific objectives of the evaluation are to:

1. To review the WoW service design process
2. To explore the implementation of the programme
3. To examine the key stakeholders perceptions of the programme
4. To ascertain the fidelity of the programme in line with the model as outlined

Key stakeholders involved in the research study include the WoW volunteers, children, parents, school staff, and the relevant members of the Barnardos team. The research methodologies were primarily qualitative in nature, comprised of both documentary analysis and in depth face-to-face interviews, focus groups, questionnaires, and observations. This is a summary report of the findings of this research.

Section Two; WoW Background

WoW was introduced to four schools in the Dublin area following a lengthy and detailed design process undertaken by a specific team within Barnardos. In 2005 and 2006 a number of site visits were undertaken to an educational support programme in the United States of America, Experience Corps. This is a school based mentoring programme where children who are having a difficulty reading are paired with an older adult who reads to and with them. This model which had been scientifically proved to be effective was adapted by Barnardos to fit with the Irish school context. A manual outlining the WoW programme in detail was subsequently designed and developed by Barnardos.

2.1 Programme Material

The programme content required specific attention to ensure suitability with the Irish curriculum. The design team researched and reviewed intergenerational educational programmes that focussed on reading (and also writing and maths) to understand how the design and effect of such programmes. The team, based on their research and expert advice decided to use a balanced approach to literacy development (this approach is a compromise between phonics approaches and whole language approaches). The design team felt this approach would best meet the aim of WoW; to improve children's reading skills and help them become better and more confident readers.

In selecting the programme material consideration was given to three factors;

- An evaluation and evidence base of the programme to demonstrate a positive impact
- The suitability of the material to the Irish context, including the Irish curriculum
- The suitability of the material for use with volunteers who may not necessarily have an educational background.

The design team subsequently selected The Oxford Reading Tree, a well established English reading programme based on the following reasons;

- The programme offered a balanced literacy approach
- The material was accessible for use by volunteers
- The material was compatible with the Irish curriculum
- The programme was already in use in some Irish school, including two that were being used as WoW pilot schools and
- The programme appeared to have a wide and varied selection of material to keep the child's interest

2.2 Recruiting Volunteers

The WoW design team decided to recruit volunteers for WoW who are aged over fifty five years who have an interest in both reading and in working with children.

2.3 Selecting Schools and Children

Potential school sites, clustered in two areas, were approached based on their ethos in terms of recognition of family and community as central in a child's life and an existing relationship or the potential to develop a relationship with Barnardos. Eligible children included in the WoW programme are in first and second class, approximately twelve months behind in their reading, regular school attendees, and fluent in English.

The WoW programme is managed by a Project Leader whose role is to train and support the volunteers and to monitor service implementation. The Project leader is the key liaison between, Barnardos the volunteers and the schools.

Section Three; Introduction and Implementation of WoW
This section describes the experience of WoW to the key parties involved and implementation of the programme in the school setting.

3.1 Selecting Volunteers
Volunteers are recruited through advertisements at social and religious outlets where older people network. The selection process (including the criteria noted above)is quite detailed involving an 'interview' and requiring Garda clearance. On successful completion of both the volunteers are then involved in an induction process to both Barnardos and the WoW programme.

3.2 Selecting Schools and Children
Suitable schools in Dublin based in areas of disadvantage and covered under the Department of Education and Science programme for Equality of Opportunity in Schools were approached by Barnardos and asked to apply to become a WoW school Four schools were selected in two areas and piloted WoW with either first or second class children.

Children who are eligible for WoW are nominated to attend by their class teacher with consent received from their parents. Children are then assessed by the WoW Project Leader using a standardised test the Weschler Individual Assessment Test II (WIAT-II). The test measures across four areas of reading including, phonemic awareness, vocabulary building, reading comprehension, and reading fluency. This test identifies the children suitable for WoW and allows appropriate assignment to the correct reading level in the ORT material.

3.4 The Unique selling points of WoW
There are a number of unique features of WoW that attracted both the school principals and the volunteers to the programme which are outlined briefly.

- The reputation of Barnardos and their overall mission of placing children needs as central
- The systematic nature of WoW; incorporating assessment, learning, review and evaluation
- A focus on literacy supports
- Targeting of Children aged approximately one year behind the desired reading level
- The intergenerational relationship between the volunteer and child
- A community based approach
- The time commitment required by the volunteers and
- The professional and skilled approach of the WoW Project Leader

3.5 Implementing WoW
Although a new experience for all involved in WoW the implementation overall has been quite successful. The WoW volunteers, although initially apprehensive are very pleased with their induction to the school environment and their role as part of the school team. The school principals and class teachers have embraced WoW as part of the programme on offer in their schools and are extremely satisfied with WoW.

3.6 The Experience of the WoW Reading Sessions

The findings in relation to the reading programme are based on the perspectives of the children, their parents, the volunteers and the school staff. The researcher also observed a number of sessions. The reading sessions are between thirty to forty minutes duration and based on the WoW manual and the material in the ORT programme. The structure and content of the sessions while based on the materials provided differ somewhat depending on an individual child's, ability, whether the material was new or revision and the demeanor on the day. Volunteers are creative and innovative in their efforts to engage the WoW children in the reading using individual experience and stories to maintain their interest and concentration

Section Four; The Effect of WoW

There was an overwhelmingly positive response to involvement in the WoW programme from all participants in the research study. Both the children attending the programme and the volunteers described a very positive and enjoyable experience.

4.1 The effect of WoW on Children

The children who participated in the research described their reading time very positively noting how they enjoyed both the reading and the relationship with their volunteers. The children interviewed offered accounts of how their reading has improved while attending WoW.

The volunteers noted a definite improvement with regard to both the WoW children's reading ability and their overall confidence. In analysing the responses in the questionnaires on specific questions for individual children, a strong improvement in their reading levels was outlined. The volunteers noted a positive change in the reading ability of 39 children (90.6%). A significant number of children (76.7%) were reported as having a positive change in their self-esteem, the rate of change noted as greatly improved (18%), improved (53%) or somewhat improved (6.9%). The majority of volunteers (83.7%) reported a positive relationship with their WoW child and almost all (93%) felt that their children enjoyed the sessions.

All parents interviewed described improvements in their children's reading; both in terms of actual interest in picking up a book and with their ability

The four class teachers who participated in the study described a positive impact on the children attending WoW. One class teacher who has six children attending noticed varying but specific improvements in each child. Children were reported as more willing to try reading, more confident in reading aloud in class, and their spellings had improved since attending WoW. School principals, while not having direct contact with the children had anecdotal stories from class teacher of the improvements in the children attending WoW. All school staff interviewed held strong views that targeting children who are approximately one year behind in their reading has potential to make a significant difference in both their reading levels and confidence to make an effort to read.

Relationship building was noted by the majority of those involved in the research as a significant component of the WoW programme. Both the teaching staff and volunteers noted specific and indeed quite subtle changes in the confidence of the children attending WoW. The relationship between the volunteers was described by

the school staff as quite unique and special. The intergenerational aspect of the relationship was noted as a positive effect of WoW and a new and welcome experience for the WoW children.

4. 2 The effect of WoW on Volunteers

The WoW volunteers highlighted their satisfaction with and enjoyment of their involvement with WoW. Volunteers were motivated by the opportunity to support children with their reading and instil a sense of confidence in their ability. A number of specific factors were noted by volunteers that supports their continued involvement with WoW. These factors include:

- The level of support and training provided by the WoW project leader in particular and Barnardos generally.
- The welcoming nature of the school staff team
- Participation in decision making and developing aspects of the WoW programme and
- The social support and friendship amongst the volunteers.

Section Five; The WoW Manual and Record Keeping

The WoW volunteers are provided with a programme manual developed by Barnardos which outlines the WoW programme and their role in detail. There is also an expectation that following each reading session a record is made of the material covered and the progress made by each child. The recording template, also developed by Barnardos covers areas such as attendance, comprehension, fluency, expression, phonics. This research study highlighted that the volunteers use the manual as a resource as necessary and adhere to the guidelines contained within thus maintaining fidelity to the WoW model. While at times frustrated with the record keeping process the volunteers record their sessions daily and appreciate the purpose and function of the records.

Section Six; Summary and Conclusion

The process study research has focussed on the design and development of WoW, its introduction and implementation in four schools in Dublin and the experience of those involved thus far. The research findings have been overwhelmingly positive. All stakeholders involved in WoW have highlighted and emphasised a high level of satisfaction with the programme. The children and their parents who were interviewed are delighted with their involvement in WoW and their improved reading. The schools are extremely accommodating of both the programme and the research team. All principals and the class teachers who participated have high praise for all aspects of the programme and are very keen for WoW to continue in their schools. The volunteers describe a very satisfying experience with an obvious commitment and enjoyment of their involvement in WoW.

A number of overarching key points and future considerations emerged during the process study evaluation in relation to WoW. The research team highlight key points and propose future considerations which are outlined below.

- The service design process embarked on by the service design team in Barnardos has resulted in a well researched, logical and systematic programme to support children's reading and emotional wellbeing
- The well respected reputation of Barnardos as a high quality service positively influenced the introduction and implementation of the WoW programme

- The professional approach, dedication and expert style of the WoW project leader has also positively impacted on the introduction and implementation of WoW. The ability to understand literacy development and educational support in children, to understand teacher training and the school setting and to impart this knowledge and skill to a volunteer population noted as crucial ingredients in the success of the programme.
- Implementing a support service in an external site is a new experience for the Barnardos team which has worked out well. The criteria determined by the service design process and used to select schools to pilot WoW and the subsequent professional relationships have resulted in a very successful model of interagency, inter discipline partnership and collaboration.
- The intergenerational relationship in the WoW programme and the focus on reading development were noted as a specific strengths and selling points of WoW. There is a special and unique relationship between the WoW children and their volunteers.
- The children, their parents, the volunteers and the class teachers offered a strong opinion that reading ability and confidence had improved. Clear examples of positive change in both aspects at home, in the class room and in the reading session were provided as appropriate.
- Correctly targeting children for the WoW programme is an essential component to ensure WoW realises its potential for children in need of this support. A clear and consistent upper and lower threshold is required which is communicated to all relevant school personnel.
- The emotional and behavioural wellbeing of children is also a necessary consideration in determining the suitability of individual children for WoW in order to ensure a positive experience which has potential to improve the children's reading.
- Expansion of the WoW programme would require a reorientation of the Project Leader role or additional personnel to support both the strategic vision and day to day operation of the programme.
- The involvement of parents in the WoW programme was highlighted as an area which may be developed in the future. Barnardos services typically involve parents and the team are aware of this current change in focus. This could be reviewed in future WoW service delivery where possible.
- The dedication and commitment of the volunteers to WoW is a highly significant factor in the success thus far of the programme. The research finds repeatedly highlighted the hard working friendly and supportive nature of the WoW volunteers. An increased use of community based volunteers is also a consideration for future service delivery, again where possible.

6.1 Conclusion

The overarching conclusion of this evaluation is that WoW is a very positive and productive experience, achieving all the intended aims of improving both reading support and emotional wellbeing for the children involved. Both the initial introduction and the implementation of WoW has been very well organised with strong collaborative systems underpinning the programme. All stakeholders are very keen that WoW continues with school staff advocating an expansion of the programme to other schools.

Section One; *Introduction*

1.1 Background

The Child and Family Research Centre (CFRC) at NUI, Galway, were commissioned in August 2008 by Barnardos to undertake an evaluation of the Wizards of Words programme.

Barnardos, Ireland's largest independent children's charity, was established in 1962 and works with children whose well-being is under treat and who live in disadvantaged communities. In 2005, Barnardos set out a strategy called Valuing Childhood: Cherishing Children 2005 - 2016 which outlines its vision of an Ireland by 2016 where childhood is valued and all children and young people are cherished equally. Barnardos mission is: to support and challenge families, communities, society and government to make Ireland the best place in the world to be a child, focussing specifically on children whose well-being is under threat. Barnardos Children's Services Family Support Strategy (2006) identifies two high level outcomes for children:

- Increased capacity to learn and develop and
- Improved emotional well-being

These two outcomes were chosen as: if a child's learning and development and his emotional wellbeing are successfully and measurably improved then the child's ability to benefit from life opportunities and manage life challenges will be improved

In 2007, Barnardos developed a school-based reading programme, Wizards of Words (WoW), which aims to improve children's reading skills and help them become better and more confident readers. According to the Barnardos programme manual, WoW is an intergenerational paired reading programme whose purpose is to improve children's overall reading achievement. The programme pairs first and second class students who are nominated by their classroom Teachers for extra reading support with an appropriate older volunteer. Children are then assessed by the WoW Project Leader using a standardised test the Weschler Individual Assessment Test II (WIAT-II). The test measures across four areas of reading including, phonemic awareness, vocabulary building, reading comprehension, and reading fluency. The trained volunteers meet with their child two to three times weekly for 30 - 40 minute sessions outside the classroom to provide individualised reading instruction and support. WoW is based on a balanced literacy approach[1] which supports current Department of Education and Science (DES) reading initiatives and English Curriculum expectations. WoW uses a guided reading[2] approach which focuses on four key areas of reading: phonics, vocabulary building, reading comprehension, and reading fluency. The volunteer engages the child in pre reading, reading and follow up activities. The child benefits from having individual attention that is focused on his/her reading and from the development of a positive relationship with an adult.

[1] An approach to reading instruction which strikes a compromise between phonics approaches and whole language approaches.

[2] Guided reading is a carefully structured session in which children are helped to apply their freshly learned skills in context. It is tailored to the specific needs and ability of the individual. The aim is to encourage and extend independent reading skills on new and increasingly challenging texts.

Schools delivering the WoW programme are clustered in groups of four in order that they can be managed efficiently and effectively by Barnardos. Each cluster is managed by a Barnardos Project Leader whose role is to train and support the volunteers delivering the service and monitor service implementation. The Project Leader is also the key liaison and communicator between Barnardos and the WoW programme and the school staff.

1.2 Evaluation, Aims and Objectives

The evaluation of WoW consists of three strands. The first strand of the research is the process study which focuses on the implementation of the programme, both in the first year and throughout the study's timeframe. The second aspect of the study relates to the selection, testing and piloting of measures to be used as part of a randomised controlled trial. The third part of the study, the randomised controlled trial will commence in September 2009.

This report is on the first phase of the research study; the Process Study. It is intended that the findings of the process study will be used to enhance the implementation of the programme and to identify specific issues that can be explored in the outcomes evaluation.

The process study evaluation plan and methodology was designed and finalised in consultation with the members of the core WoW team in Barnardos. The overall aim of the process study is to explore the experience of introducing and implementing a reading support programme in four primary school sites.

The specific objectives of the evaluation are:

5. To review the WoW service design process
6. To explore the introduction and implementation of the programme
7. To examine the key stakeholders perceptions of the programme
8. To ascertain the fidelity of the programme in line with the model as outlined.

1.3 Methodology

The process study evaluation included participation from all stakeholders in the WoW programme. WoW is currently in four schools in Dublin, which participated in the study, and a further four schools in Limerick. The WoW programme is based in schools which are included in the Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools Programme (DEIS) [3] under the Department of Education and Science

Key stakeholders involved in the research study include the WoW volunteers, children, parents, school staff, and the relevant members of the Barnardos team. An overview of the participants involved, the methods employed by the research team and the response rates are provided below in Table 1. The research methodologies were primarily qualitative in nature, comprised of both documentary analysis and in depth face-to-face interviews, focus groups, questionnaires, and observations (see Appendix A for interview schedules and the questionnaire).

[3] DEIS is an Action Plan for Education Inclusion which is designed to ensure that the most disadvantaged schools benefit from a comprehensive package of supports, while ensuring that others continue to get support in line with the level of disadvantage among their pupils.
http://jcsp.slss.ie/resources/DEIS_action_plan_on_educational_inclusion.pdf

Table 1; Sample population and research methods used in study.

WoW Personnel

Sample Population	Method of Contact	Number Invited	Number Consented	Number Participated	Response Rate %
Volunteers	Postal Questionnaire	23	23	21	91%
	Focus Group	23	19	12	82.6%
	Observation	23	20	5 selected	87%
Children	Face to face interview (Group and individual)	55	Parents consent x 14 Children consent x 13	13	25% (parents) 23.6% (children)
	Observation	55	Parents consent x 13 Children consent x 12	7 (randomly selected)	23.6% (parents) 21.8% (children)
Parents	Telephone Interview	55	12 consented	7 participated	21.8%

School Staff

Role / Job Title	Invited/ Participated	Method of Contact	RR %
School Principals	Invited x 4 Participated x 4	Face to Face Interview	100%
Class Teachers	Invited x 11 Participated x 4	Telephone Interview	36%

Barnardos Staff

Role / Title	Invited /Participated	Method of Contact	Response Rate
Director of Children Services	Participated	Face to Face Interview	100%
Assistant Director of Children Services	Participated	Telephone Interview	
Service Design Team x3	Participated	Telephone Interview	
Administrator Service Design Team	Participated	Face to Face Interview	
Senior Research Manager	Participated	Face to Face Interview	
WoW Project Leader (Dublin)	Participated	Face to Face Interview	
WoW Project Leader (Limerick)	Participated	Face to Face Interview	
Volunteer Development Manager	Participated	Face to Face Interview	

1.3.1 Response Rate

There was a varied response rate from the sample groups to the research requests. There was a very positive response from the WoW volunteers, the school principals and the Barnardos staff team. However, there was a somewhat low response rate from the remaining sample groups.

The most significant of these is the low representation of both the children involved in WoW and their parents. The response rate was approximately 25% for both groups across the methods. This low response is a concern for both the process study evaluation and also the next phase of the research project. Parents were initially provided with an information sheet on the evaluation and a consent form via their child's class teacher. Parents were asked to consent to participate in a telephone interview and to consent for their children to meet with the researcher, participate in an interview and /or agree to the researcher observing a reading session. As stated approximately 25% of parents responded giving permission for both themselves and their children. The researcher then met with this group of children to introduce and explain the research, all children agreed to participate in the interview with one child opting out of the observation.

A further limitation in this methodology is due to the fact that in one school consent was received from only one parent to meet with her child. Following two introductory sessions with participating children in other schools the researcher and WoW Project Leader agreed not to include this one child in the study as it would involve singling him out to withdraw from the class. This therefore resulted in the absence of the voice of children and their parents on WoW from one particular school.

There was also a relatively low response rate from the class teachers (36%). This low representation also requires consideration. An information sheet was hand delivered to the class teachers via the WoW Project Leader with a request to consent to an interview. In an effort to increase the response rate a subsequent offer of teaching cover, funded through the research budget was also verbally offered by the WoW Project Leader. This did not increase the numbers participating. This low response highlights one of the challenges in conducting research in a school setting where the staff members are timetabled to teach throughout the day.

1.3.2 Analysis

It was agreed with Barnardos that a documentary analysis would form a part of the overall evaluation of the WoW programme. The purpose of this analysis is to provide a historical journey of the service concerning the programme development, records and communication. Barnardos supplied copies of requested documentation, such as meeting minutes, progress reports and the volunteer training manual to the research team.

The findings from the research are presented in this report under thematic areas based on the interview schedules and key areas identified and highlighted by all participants. The core areas of the headings of utilisation, organisation, and fidelity (as identified in the initial research proposal) also provide a framework for the analysis and discussion. As identified in the initial research proposal; utilisation refers to the extent and nature of programme take-up, organisation refers to how well the programme is organised and run and fidelity refers to the extent to which the programme is implemented in line with the model as specified in the programme manual.

1.4 Ethical Issues

This process evaluation was guided by the key ethical requirements of firstly doing no harm, and secondly gaining informed, voluntary active consent of those participating in the research. The CFRC team were guided in their ethical requirements for this evaluation by the Research Ethics Committee (REC) in NUI, Galway. This committee established to guide all researchers, under the auspices of the university considers the ethical issues of each project submitted for approval. The application for the WoW process study was considered positively overall with some minor clarifications necessary.

1.5 Report Structure

Following this introductory section, section two provides the background and context to the WoW programme based on the findings of both the documentary analysis and primary research with the Barnardos staff.

The next three sections present the findings from the research study. Section three provides findings on the introduction and implementation of the WoW programme. This includes an overview of the reading sessions from both the participant's responses and the researcher's observations. This includes reference to fidelity to the WoW manual in programme delivery. In section four, the effect of WoW on the children is described in detail based on the data provided by children, parents, volunteers and the school personnel. The effect on the volunteers is presented in section five. This section also includes some additional effects of the programme as outlined by the participants. The use of the WoW manual (including fidelity) and record keeping is reviewed in section six.

Section seven discusses the findings overall. In drawing together and analysing all the data collected a number of key messages and future considerations have emerged which are presented in this concluding section of this report. This section is based on both the findings of the research process and the analysis carried out by the researcher.

Section Two; *WoW Background and Context*

2.1 Introduction

The decision by Barnardos to introduce a reading support programme developed primarily as an action arising from the agencies 'Children's Services Family Support Strategy, 2005'. The development of this strategy was one part of an overall review of service delivery in Barnardos and a simultaneous analysis of the needs of children attending Barnardos services. The Family Support Strategy highlights two outcomes; capacity for learning and development and increased emotional well-being It was further outlined by staff members that the *"review of services, the strategy and the needs analysis, which highlighted that a "significant proportion of children in Barnardos were struggling to learn to read"* prompted Barnardos to consider educational development in a more targeted way than heretofore in their service development. This process also, in part, resulted in a reorientation towards evidence-based practice in the Barnardos organisation generally.

"There was a whole sense of the importance of literacy and education more generally as a route out of poverty and disadvantage given that all of the communities we work in experience economic deprivation and educational disadvantage for the most part"

As educational support programmes were not part of service provision in Barnardos at this point, a core team in Barnardos embarked on a process to design a programme which aimed to achieve these specific outcomes of improved learning and emotional wellbeing. This core team of Barnardos staff are referred to as the Service Design team who have a specific role in researching and developing new initiatives such as the WoW programme.

2. 2 Programme Design; WoW

In 2005 and 2006, representatives from Barnardos and the Service Design team participated in a number of site visits to, (in the main) education support programmes which had a strong focus on children's emotional wellbeing in the United States of America (US). The site visits were arranged and funded through Atlantic Philanthropies. One such programme known as the Experience Corps[4] was identified as a potential model which would meet Barnardos dual objective of "improved learning and emotional wellbeing" The Experience Corps programme was initially visited in 2005 with a subsequent visit arranged in 2006. Furthermore, the Experience Corps programme had undergone a Randomised Control Trial which studied the impact of involvement in the programme on the health and wellbeing of the older volunteers. The Service Design team described how the study also, as an additional outcome, demonstrated the impact of the programme on participating children's reading levels.

"Experience Corps was a tried and tested model; it had undergone an RCT in relation to the outcomes and benefits of volunteering on the health and wellbeing of older volunteers and found also as a side result that the programme was also having an impact on children's reading"

[4] Experience Corps is a school-based mentoring programme for children struggling to read. The service pairs a child who is having difficulty acquiring reading skills with an older adult who reads to and with them three times per week over the course of a school year.

It was also noted by the Service Design team that the Experience Corps programme would "*translate into Irish context very easily and could more or less be taken off the peg, it looked like an attractive fit"*. The programme was thus selected and the process of adapting it to both the Irish school context, and to meet the Barnardos objective undertaken.

An unexpectedly lengthy and detailed process (November 2006 – September 2007) ensued to adapt and implement a programme based on the Experience Corps model in Ireland. Initially, the Service Design team understood the Experience Corps programme was developed and implemented consistently across all sites in the US, however with further research and exploration the team realised that there were a number of differences and discrepancies based on the precise need and systems in place in each individual site. Curricula differed across different sites and some programmes used an in-class model whereas others withdrew children for the reading session. This resulted in a longer and more detailed period of design and development for Barnardos than initially anticipated.

A number of specific areas were addressed by the Barnardos Service Design team to adapt the Experience Corps model for use in Ireland and are outlined below.

2. 2.1 Naming WoW

Naming this new programme involved an inclusive process with older people, young people and partner agencies. The Barnardos team had preliminary suggestions of a name that had a resonance for the Irish context however "*Harry Potter*[5] *was very popular at the time and both older and younger people were coming up with something about magic and wizardry and really liked this as an idea"*. Thus Wizards of Words (WoW) was chosen as the name for the programme.

2.2.2 Selection of Schools

Potential school sites were explored by the design team with specific criteria for selection outlined. The selection criteria included:

- An existing working relationship with a school or the potential to develop a working relationship.
- The ethos of the school; a recognition of the importance of children, family and community in the overall ethos of the school was essential.
- The potential to work in partnership with Barnardos in implementing this programme.

Based on these criteria four schools in the Dublin area were selected and agreed to pilot the WoW programme. Barnardos presented the WoW programme to the school principals and additional support staff. As the programme was to have one Project Co-ordinator, it was decided that all schools would be based in the Dublin area initially to allow adequate contact and support. A 'contract' or 'memorandum of understanding' between Barnardos and these schools was then drawn up and agreed.

[5] Harry Potter is a series of seven fantasy novels written by British author J. K. Rowling. The books chronicle the adventures of the adolescent wizard Harry Potter.

2.2.3 Recruitment of a Project Leader

In discussion with Barnardos one participating school principal offered to support the process of recruiting the WoW Project Leader. Given the nature of the WoW programme it was decided that the Project Leader required a background in education as opposed to social care which would be more usual in Barnardos services. As this school principal had training and experience in reading support it was felt that this expertise would enhance the recruitment and selection process.

"That was a real bonus…as Barnardos is a social care organisation … the education world is quite different so even trying to read qualifications can be difficult if it's not your field… so the school principal deciphered the qualifications and gave us guidance on that

The role of the Project Leader while primarily based on of the coordinator in the Experience Corps model required amending to ensure was the role and job description was relevant to both the Irish context and to Barnardos generally. The selection process was successful and a WoW Project Leader appointed.

2.2.4 Eligible Children

The Service Design team also considered a number of factors in relation to the eligibility of children who would attend WoW. The programme is aimed at targeting children who are approximately twelve months behind in their reading ability as compared to the average population. This decision as explained by a member of the Service Design team was based on *"the Best Practice Advisory Committee*[6] *but also from our own research on the area"*.

Additional factors in relation to eligibility of children decided by the Service Design team included:

- Children must attend school regularly
- Children who are not fluent in English and children who have a Learning Difficulty were specifically considered. The design team decided these children would not be considered eligible for the programme as it was felt that this would be "*outside the expertise of the programme*".
- The age of the children included was considered based on the Experience Corps model. The team decided to offer the programme to children aged between seven and nine as research showed reading support programmes have more impact at an earlier age and also that older children were more self conscious about leaving the classroom to attend a session with a volunteer.
- The number of reading sessions in a week was also considered with the relationship between the volunteer and the child an important factor in this decision. The programme aimed for three session's weekly if possible given the availability of the volunteers.

[6] The Best Practice Advisory Committee is a sub-committee of the Barnardos board and contributes to the strategic development of Barnardos services to children, young people and their families by providing advice, based on best international practice and research knowledge, on specific service designs and advising on evaluation strategies and methodologies to be used to demonstrate the impact of the new service designs.

- Consideration was also given as to the best time to withdraw a child from the classroom with the options including 'class reading time' or 'arts and crafts' time. This varies from school to school and is at the discretion of the school staff.

2.2.5 Parental involvement in WoW

Barnardos services typically have a strong emphasis on parental involvement and recognise family as the most central part of a child's life. This school based programme, however does not place a strong emphasis on parental involvement. Again, this mirrors the Experience Corps model.

"Parents don't have involvement in the WoW programme and this almost runs counter to the way Barnardos works". There was a lot of debate on this issue by the Service Design team.

The thorough service design process was noted by the Barnardos staff as instrumental in supporting an initial move away from the accepted traditional Barnardos approach of working in partnership with parents.

"We generally don't work with children in isolation, we'd always work with the parent when we're working with the child and our tendency would actually be to work with the parent first and the child as well…so this was a change for us and a shift for us into operating something differently but there is something in the rigor of the service design process that helped us to do that"

A decision "*to run with the original model and then to consider changing and involving parents in the programme more"* was made by the design team.

2.2.6 Additional Design Factors

A number of additional detailed issues were considered and addressed by the Service Design team to amend and develop the Experience Corps model, which are now discussed individually. This ensured that WoW could be accommodated and implemented within an Irish educational context. Additional issues included the age profile and criteria of potential volunteers, and the programme content.

2.2.6.1 The age profile of WoW volunteers

The Experience Corps programme uses volunteers who are aged over fifty five years. The Barnardos Service Design team considered the age of the volunteers for WoW in full. The team were fully aware of the Irish legislation, the Equal Status Act, 2000 and their obligations under this. In their research, the team reviewed material highlighting potentially positive impacts arising from relationships between older volunteers and younger children and debated this issue in depth.

"We were cognisant of not discriminating against the younger volunteer, but in researching and selecting the programme there seemed to be something in the relationship between the older volunteer and the younger child, something quite powerful that we didn't want to loose"

The dual focus of the Service Design team in terms of having a programme that impacted on both literacy development and emotional wellbeing was an important factor in considering the age of the volunteers.

"In designing the programme it was hoped to have an impact on how the child interacts in school, and also on the emotional relationship between the child and the older volunteer; this would have a positive impact on their emotional wellbeing as well as their education"

"I think there's something very attractive about that inter generational relationship that happens and I think that's what captured people's hearts when they went to America… they saw lots of volunteer-child interaction and reading sessions, there's something about, the power of that inter generational relationship"

Overall, the Barnardos team reflected that they were thus far happy with the decision to accept volunteers aged over fifty five into the WoW programme. The intergenerational relationship noted as being *"quite special"* and *"quite powerful"*.

"I think there's something special about the inter generational nature…I think there is something about that age gap that helps that kind of relationship and nurturing"

"I think there's something that captured our imagination about the transfer of knowledge from somebody who is older to somebody who is younger and also the wisdom"

2.2.6.2 Recruiting Volunteers

The Service Design team considered the characteristics of potential volunteers and felt that an interest in both reading and in working with children and availability of a certain amount of time (both in terms of hours and the academic year) were essential criteria in selecting volunteers.

"An interest and aptitude in the volunteers of direct work with children, someone who is fairly passionate about reading and available to commit to the organisation"

The advice from Experience Corps was that this level of time commitment (allowing for three sessions per week) was necessary to have impact. The programme in the US paid volunteers a stipend however the WoW team decided against this option as it is not standard practice in Barnardos to pay volunteers based in other programmes. The Service Design team also decided that they would seek fifteen hours commitment but would not rule out potential volunteers who could not offer that amount of time. A brief profile of the volunteers and an overview of their relevant experience are illustrated in Figures 1 and 2 in Appendix B. To date, volunteers with WoW have been able to commit to two reading sessions per week (ten hours approximately).

2.2.6.3 WoW Programme content

The design of the specific programme content also required more development and input than initially expected. The design team highlighted the experience and background of the WoW Project Leader in education being a significant resource at this stage

"By that stage [PL][7] had come on board and had huge experience so that was a real benefit to us in terms of being able to have a discussion with someone who was in the field… so we began to see that we were going to have to put the programme together ourselves and began to tease through what did we see as being the important elements of the programme"

The Service Design team researched and reviewed intergenerational educational programmes that focussed on reading (and also writing and maths) to understand both the design and effect of such programmes. The team researched and studied material on the "*pathway for normative language development, literature, and reading development in children"*. They also familiarised themselves with the curriculum for reading currently in use in the primary schools. The team considered in detail the literacy approach to adopt for WoW based on advice from the Experience Corps team, Barnardos own 'Best Practice Advisory Group' and the Service Design teams own in-depth research process. The options included using a "phonics[8] or a whole language approach[9]" to literacy development. The decision was to use a balanced literacy approach.

"The programme selected therefore included vocabulary building, phonemic awareness, comprehension and fluency and some phonics"

The best use of the volunteers skills were considered; the aim was to the harness the relationship between the volunteer and their WoW child while simultaneously ensuring fidelity to the programme as designed and consistency across the sessions.

"We tried to go for a more balanced approach so that there's a structure there, a programme that they follow, and there's room within that for them to make it more individual to the relationship with the child"

The potential of WoW to encourage and promote "*a liking and enjoyment for reading"* in the children as well as having the skills to read was discussed as, although this could be difficult to measure it was deemed an important aspect to promote in a reading improvement programme.

"I think that we hoped that the 'whole language' would help instill a love of reading rather than just a systematic understanding of what letter is where, we hoped that the relationship could encourage that, so through a positive kind of relationship you could nurture and stimulate a child"

[7] The name of WoW Project Leader was used in original quotes and is replaced in this report by the researcher and author.
[8] Phonics instruction is a way of teaching reading that stresses learning how letters correspond to sounds and how to use this knowledge in reading and spelling
[9] This is a system of teaching which involves acquiring words or phrases without attention to the characters or groups of characters that compose them.

Based on those factors and discussions a number of reading series were reviewed in selecting the material to use in the WoW programme. The team considered forty different reading series initially and then focused on nine in detail. Consideration was given to three factors;

- An evaluation and evidence base of the programme to demonstrate a positive impact
- The suitability of the material to the Irish context, including the Irish curriculum
- The suitability of the material for use with volunteers who may not necessarily have an educational background.

The design team subsequently selected The Oxford Reading Tree (ORT)[10] a well-established English reading programme based on the following reasons;

- The programme offered a balanced literacy approach (which would meet the aim of both instilling an enjoyment of reading while teaching the child how to read).
- The material was accessible for use by volunteers
- The material could be used and adapted in different ways by the volunteers
- The material was compatible with the Irish curriculum
- The programme was already in use in some Irish school, including two that were being used as WoW pilot schools and
- The programme appeared to have a wide and varied selection of material to keep the child's interest
- The ORT was included as a suggested programme in the UK standards in teaching early reading based on the recommendations of the Rose Report[11].

Following the selection of the ORT and in using the material with volunteers the team realised the phonics element in the material was not systematic enough. Their research had highlighted *children really did need to be taught phonics in a very systematic way" so* the WoW Project Leader and design team explored *"plug in material" for the phonic element"* and choose Read Write Inc[12] for this purpose. However, following initial period of using Read Write Inc, along with ORT, it was found unsuitable for use by volunteers and therefore a decision was made by the Service Design team and WoW personnel to discontinue with it.

[10] http://www.oup.com/oxed/primary/literacy/ort/

[11] The Rose Report is an independent review of the teaching of early reading in the UK published in 2006 (http://www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk./phonics/programmes)

[12] Read Write Inc. is a fully integrated reading and writing programme, the structure is firmly based in synthetic phonics. Synthetic phonics is the ability to convert a letter or letter group into sounds that are then blended together into a word. http://www.readwriteinc.com/

2.2.7 The WoW Manual

The Service Design team developed a detailed manual on the WoW programme which is provided to the volunteers on induction to WoW.This manual outlines in detail the WoW programme and the role of the volunteer. There is also an expectation that following each reading session a record is made of the material covered and the progress made by each child. The recording template also designed by Barnardos covers areas such as attendance, comprehension, fluency, expression, phonics.

The WoW service design was thus finalised with the next phase of the process to introduce the programme to schools and to recruit the WoW volunteers.

Section Three; *The Introduction and Implementation of WoW*

3. 1 Introduction

Following the completion of the design process outlined above Barnardos began the process of recruiting and selecting volunteers, introducing WoW to the key parties and implementing WoW in the four identified schools. This section outlines the introduction of WoW to the key parties and implementation in the school setting.

3.1.2 Selecting Volunteers

The recruitment and selection of WoW volunteers is facilitated through both the Human Resources Department and the Volunteer Manger in Barnardos. The Wow Project Leader is also involved in this process. This is an ongoing process with a number of volunteers for WoW selected in any one recruitment drive. Areas where older people network, such as Age Action, Active Retirement Groups, and Church Newsletters were used as a source to target over fifty five year old potential volunteers. While initially the notices to recruit WoW volunteers did not specify the upper age limit of over fifty five it was subsequently decided that it was necessary to include this on advertisements. This was to ensure clarity and avoid applicants being disappointed or having wasted their time in completing the initial registration form.

The first step in this process involves potential volunteers completing a registration form outlining their interest and reasons for applying to the programme. Once applicants fulfil the aforementioned criteria they are invited to an 'interview' to discuss their motivation and interest in both reading and working with children. This also affords potential volunteers an opportunity to discuss any concerns or make any necessary clarifications. Garda clearance[13] and references are checked for successful applicants and on receipt of same induction into the WoW programme commences. Volunteers may opt out of the recruitment or induction process at any point if they feel it is not suitable for them.

The majority of WoW volunteers who participated in the research study had initially heard about programme in their church parish newsletter or through their Active Retirement groups. A number of volunteers who are retired teachers had read a notice advertising WoW in their professional magazine. In the main, the volunteers are retired, have some spare time and are motivated to use it productively.

"My wife had died so I was looking for something to occupy my time"

"All my life I've been lucky, I've sort of got on so well and everything has worked out so well that I thought it was nice when you retire to be able to give something back"

3.1.3 Selecting Schools

WoW was introduced to the participating national schools in the first instance via the school principals. The four school principals where WoW is currently running had somewhat different experiences of their introduction to the WoW programme. One principal heard of WoW through a local Barnardos Family Support Service

[13] In Ireland anyone working with children must have clearance from An Garda Siochanna. This process can take some time due to the demand on the systems within An Garda Siochanna

(Springboard), another initially heard through a local interagency partnership and was subsequently approached directly by the WoW Project Leader, a third school initially heard through a neighbouring school but also had subsequent contact with the Project Leader and the final school was formally approached by Barnardos to ascertain if they would be interested in applying to become a WoW school. Once an agreement had been made between the principals and Barnardos to implement WoW, the programme was introduced to the wider school team. All four class teachers who participated in the research described how they immediately welcomed any programme that promotes reading, recognising the potential benefits of one to one reading support. The teachers were*"very impressed with WoW and delighted to have the programme in their class"*.

3.1.4 Selecting Children

The WoW children are nominated to attend the programme by their class teacher and consent received from their parents. The participating children, when asked by the researcher, recalled their introduction to WoW. All children were clear as to the reason they attend WoW and promptly responded they are there to *"get help with their reading"* and "*learn new things*". A number of children recalled getting a test with the WoW Project Leader to decide who attended the reading session and explained how when they are *"on their own and have a new word they can't get it but in Reading Club they have someone to help with the words"*. Playing word games (Bingo and Jigsaws), also featured strongly in the discussion as to why they attend reading club

3.2 The unique selling points of WoW

A number of specific characteristics of the WoW programme appealed to the school principals and the volunteers and were instrumental in attracting them to WoW. These factors, the majority of which are attributed to the school principals are outlined. From the principals perspective these contributing factors were at both an overall programmatic level and at a more localised school and community based level

3.2.1 Barnardos

On a general level, the reputation of Barnardos was a key factor in initially attracting the four school principals to the WoW programme. One principal mentioned how the overall mission and ethos of Barnardos *"that the child is centered within the family"* and their reputation of offering quality services which were "*well researched, well evaluated and well funded"* attracted her to apply for WoW.

"If Barnardos are offering us anything it won't be half baked, it will be fully baked and with expertise and a lot of thought and planning going into it.

All four principals emphasised the fact that the WoW programme is designed organised and coordinated by an external agency as particularly appealing. With their work load at full capacity the principals welcomed a new reading support programme with a relatively small additional workload.

3.2.2. The WoW Programme

The school principals were very impressed by the actual reading improvement programme. In particular, the organised and systematic nature of the WoW

programme appealed. The fact that WoW "*incorporated assessment, teaching, learning, review and evaluation*" was a positive selling point

"The programme seemed very organised with quite a systematic approach"

3.2.3 The WoW Project Leader

The approach of the Project Leader was also noted as a specific factor in accepting WoW in the school. The three principals who were introduced to the programme by the WoW Project Leader commented on the professional approach in their introductory meetings.

"[PL] is extremely professional and focused, very organised; she let me know exactly what was going to happen, when it was going to be

"That's what we need in a busy school. You need someone, like [PL] who is prepared to take on the task and do it do the nth degree".

3.2.4 Reading support

Additional reading support was noted by the principals as essential in the communities their schools are based. All four schools are based in areas with high levels of educational disadvantage and low levels of literacy compared to both a Dublin average and the National average. The opportunity therefore to have an additional reading support programme was a significant feature in attracting principals to WoW.

"I did it for the reading, I'm big into the reading, I feel in this area, if they leave illiterate well, we have failed".

"Anything to do with literacy… in one of the most disadvantaged parts of Dublin… any programme, any support that I felt could help us here I would like to be part of it"

3.2.4.1 Targeting of Children

A related strength of the programme emphasised was the targeting of the support offered by WoW towards children who are one year behind their expected reading level. The four principals noted how learning support and reading recovery support are targeted at children who have a high level of need (below the 10th percentile)[14] other children *"fly ahead and can manage in mainstream class"*, while the children with a moderate level can miss out as the supports are generally not available through the standard education system.

"The children that just haven't had enough practice in reading, or maybe they wouldn't have a home where reading is not encouraged. But they are perfectly intelligent to be able to read; they were slipping through the net"

"I always believed if you catch them in time, you can get a poor reader into the top ten"

[14] The recommended cut off point for learning support at primary level education is at or below the 10th percentile on standardised literacy tests (MicraT and Drumcondra). *Learning Support Guidelines, DES, 2000*

3.2.5 Intergenerational Relationships

The opportunity for children to build a positive relationship with an adult who was a positive role model was outlined as another positive factor and strength of WoW.

"I also feel that interaction with people of any age, once it's an adult. My children seemed to be starved of it; they seem to want to talk to me and every other adult they can, all of the time".

"The children here… seem to be obsessed with their grandparents, they are so mad about them"

One principal spoke of the fact that for children in the WoW age group their parents are in their twenties and their grandparents may be in their fifties. The population in the community generally is very young and the opportunity to have a positive relationship with an older "*grandmother or grandfather*" like figure would be a *"calming and nurturing influence"* on the children.

Principals also wanted children to experience primary school as a place which involved people of all ages. Introducing the concept of networking with both other agencies and local people in the community was an element of school life the principals wished to encourage and support in an effort to meet the children's needs in a comprehensive manner.

"The idea really would have been for the children and their parents to see that they are being supported by another agency as well; and for the teachers to see it's really good for the school to network and to work seamlessly with other organisations for the benefit of the children.

3.2.6 Community Based

The use of volunteers from local and neighbouring communities was also viewed as a strength of the WoW programme and identified as an area where WoW could expand as the programme became more established.

"I have very strong views that literacy is a community issue, it's not just a school issue. So, it kind of ticked all the boxes for us. We really were jumping up and down about it before we even got offered it"

"We try our very best to kind of keep the walls school as flat as possible so we can look out there and they can look in here. And even, occasionally step across the wall"

3.2.7 Time Commitment

Specific characteristics of WoW also attracted the volunteers to offer their time and commitment to *this* programme. The requirement in terms of time was noted by a number of volunteers as a positive factor in their decision. The general feeling being that the time commitment is very manageable. It was suggested that retired friends found committing to a more extensive programme of volunteering a difficulty. The fact that WoW is over two days and substitute cover can be arranged if necessary was strongly welcomed by the participants. The group of volunteers agreed that knowing the children would not miss a weeks reading if a particular volunteer could not attend

was reassuring. The relatively close proximity of many of the volunteers to the schools was also noted as a factor in encouraging involvement in the first instance.

3.3 Possible changes to WoW

School principals and the volunteers described a small number of limitations to the WoW programme and areas where minor changes could be introduced.

One principal was very keen to have the programme include parents more and felt that this was a limitation of the design of the current programme

"It doesn't really have inbuilt structures to help the parents get more engaged. So, its just to mobilise them a little bit more, with not, purely reading, but the whole school process and their kids education, and all it needs it's just a matter of a little nudge along the way.

The use of children's parents, extended family and locally based volunteers as a resource in supporting children literacy development highlighted as a potential for the schools generally and for the WoW programme.

"If we could bring in one of our indigenous nannies who has a connection with the children here and maybe bring them on board and build capacity with that population"

One principal explained how the school is moving away from a model of withdrawing children from the classroom for additional supports and that they will have to accommodate WoW within this new in-class approach. For the three other schools withdrawing children from class is a regular and normal practice within the school system and WoW fits in well within that.

"Children are withdrawn [from class] all the time. They are withdrawn for reading recovery, math's recovery, learning resource"

It was noted however that in identifying the children for WoW, consideration was given to the number of times individual children were being withdrawn in a given week to ensure they were not missing excessive class time or core subjects.

3.4 Implementation of WoW

The implementation of WoW was a new experience for the volunteers, the schools, and indeed the WoW Project Leader with a lot of learning and initial adjustments necessary for all parties. Overall, the process of implementing WoW however has thus far been relatively trouble free.

3.4.1 Volunteers

The volunteers recalled some initial apprehension on working in the school setting but described their introduction to the school environment as very positive with the welcoming nature of the school staff highlighted. All described how they felt part of the school team, and very much belonged in the school.

"When [PL] brought us in she introduced us to all the staff and even the caretaker so that he would know who you were passing in and out, we felt that we had a kind of a right to be there, we didn't shuffle in quietly so, that made it easy. They welcomed us and were very appreciative of the fact that we were coming along to help the children, so that was nice"

"We were made feel so welcome like from day one. You had really no inhibitions about going in and even now if you want to go down and make yourself a cup, they're so welcoming"

The background work and preparation completed by the WoW Project Leader in relation to both the schools and the selection of children eased the transition into the school environment for the volunteers.

"[PL] would have done a lot of the work beforehand. She would have tested and picked out the children so we got the child's profile, where the child was at"

"We are welcomed in schools. They make us feel important, whatever we're doing they make us feel we're great and instead of me being afraid that I'd be dumped with a child, it's absolutely nothing like that and the support for children is brilliant in it"

3.4.2 School Principals

From the school principals perspective the introduction of WoW required some minor adjustments, mainly to ensure adequate space and appropriate timetabling. The principals noted the flexibility of the volunteers and teachers and the solution focused approach of the Project Leader as instrumental in overcoming any such complications. Issues in accommodating the volunteers and the reading sessions varied from school to school with space initially being an issue in one school.

The principals also noted how they met no resistance or reluctance from the class teachers when introducing WoW. Generally, the principals explained, if the class teachers can see a benefit for the children they will embrace a programme.

"The teachers are very much on board, delighted that the children are getting the bit of extra help"

Again the role of the Project Leader and the support provided to the teachers was viewed as crucial in implementing the programme.

"It took a little bit of time for [the programme] to get refined and streamlined. But the key factor I think was that [PL] herself was rooted with the team here… so where a problem was arising [PL] could nearly see it happening or I could see it happening and we were there to intervene and maybe sort it out before it became an issue"

The professional and expert approach of the Project Leader at both an operational level and at a more strategic level was highlighted repeatedly by all four principals.

"The experience, the methodologies, the total organisation and how everything just blended into the school environment"

"I cannot underestimate what [PL] does. It's just, I'm in awe of her, you know. She is so efficient, so supportive of the volunteers and the teachers in the school and so skilful herself"

All school policies, procedures, and guidelines were imparted to the volunteers through the WoW Project Leader. Again, the principals noted how helpful this was in terms of the input necessary from them. The Project Leader inducted the volunteers to each school system ensuring they were familiar with all necessary information and the general day-to-day running of the school.

The school principals also highlighted the dedication, commitment, and their overall positive impression of the volunteers.

"The volunteers are super. I mean I can't speak for the volunteers in the other school. But I assume that they are of the same caliber and training"

They are extraordinarily friendly; they really look after the kids. And that's very important to me, very very important"

The principals were also extremely satisfied with their overall contact with Barnardos.

"This has been my first contact with Barnardos, it's wonderful, so positive and if this is what Barnardos does then I want more; it's organised, professional. And, it works. It's doing what it says on the tin. That is exactly what we want".

3.4.3 Class Teachers

The initial concerns of the class teachers, also described as "*minor"* centered on the organising WoW around the class timetable and the curriculum to ensure children would not miss essential class time or core subjects. One teacher described how (with the support of a colleague) she has group reading with the remaining children in the class while the WoW children attend their session. The teachers described the timetabling as *"their issue"* which they needed to work out to accommodate WoW. All four teachers commented that WoW *"did not disrupt the class whatsoever, children leaving and returning to the class is a regular part of the school day"* and "*each child knows where and when he or she is scheduled to go and with whom"*.

The class teachers also emphasised the all encompassing role played by the Wow Project Leader; assessing the children, discussing their individual needs, sharing information, explaining scheduling issues and supporting and training the volunteers. All noted the professional manner in her contact with them and in any contact they have with the WoW volunteers

"[PL] is extremely helpful, comprehensive, and professional, as are the volunteers; they are all very nice people"

3.5 WoW Reading

The experience of the WoW reading is presented from the perspective of the volunteers, children, school staff and the researcher's observations. Volunteers who read in the four schools and children from three schools participated in the research. The researcher observed reading sessions in two schools and was present during reading in a third school. Observations included sessions with seven children and five volunteers. Both the volunteers and the children observed were familiar with the researcher at this point in the fieldwork and appeared at ease in their reading session. The observation focused on two main areas; interaction and relationship building and fidelity to the WoW manual and took place in April 2009.

3.5.1 A typical reading session

Both the volunteers and the children who participated in the research described a typical reading session in some detail. The volunteers also discussed the WoW programme content. The volunteers outlined minor variations in the actual structure of the reading sessions and expressed a sense of knowing *"what worked"* with individual children and using different techniques to get the best out of the reading sessions.

3.5.1.2 Structure

Typical sessions described involved a conversation to ascertain how the children were and a brief settling in period (one to two minutes); moved on to reading, including expression (if appropriate), and then spending time on comprehension, new words and spellings. Some volunteers started a conversation about the weekend or previous evening and used the child's 'news' to start writing words and then constructing sentences. They felt that this technique harnessed existing interest in a topic or event and therefore helped the child to concentrate.

"This morning we were reading the New Baby and I know they have, not a new baby but a smaller child in the family and so asking her about it, they open up that way"

"It's great if something happens, maybe like pancake Tuesday was last week. I would get them to do one sentence or process writing out of that"

Others left reading to the last as their child expected the session to end following the reading section. Volunteers had learned through experience if the reading was introduced early in the session little else was accomplished in that reading time. The session starts therefore, with some revision, including phonics and finishes with reading.

The researcher observing the volunteers noted how all initiated the reading session with a brief conversation as to how the children were on that particular day. This generally related back to experiences individual to each child, family life, a recent school concert or pets. In the main the children observed, however presented as eager to start the reading

The children described a combination of reading, drawing and playing word games as a typical reading session. The children described how they sound out new words and then write the new words in their copy book.

"You get the first bit then the middle bit and put it together and then you have it all"

3.5.1.3 Style

Volunteers were creative and innovative in making the best use of their time with their children. Many described how they took turns in reading the pages, usually if a child found a particular book difficult or were tired or unwell on a given day. Others gave examples of using word games (word bingo or word snap) to keep their child interested and learning, again if having an "*off day*".

"…if that doesn't work you might pick words out of the book and play a little bingo game, he'd write the words, I'd write them, we turn them upside-down and find them"

All volunteers noted how they vary their technique and approach depending on which child they are reading with and whether the child has moved on to a new level in the reading material. Their child's demeanour and overall mood also influenced their approach to a reading session. A number of volunteers explained how children who have made progress on a particular reading level are happy to choose a story book and read for a large part of the session; sounding out and writing down any new words as they come across them. In this case they spend time a lot of time re-reading to introduce and then increase both expression and fluency.

All children explained how they liked spending time reading and working on words with almost all saying they liked the reading as much as the games. Three children described how they choose a book and read quickly to allow time to play or draw a picture of the story before club is over. The children also commented positively on the books available to read.

"The best bit is when the book is a fun book"

"My favourite bit is the reading"

One child also described how she had been given books to bring home at holiday time and *"really liked having a book to read at home"*. A number of children interviewed also noted *"having a chat"* as part of reading.

"I like the chatting"

The volunteers described how as they became more familiar and confident over time with both their role and the WoW reading material they felt better able to improvise and be creative in their techniques to encourage reading and their efforts to engage their children in the work at hand. Specifically, the participants mentioned increasing their use the word games and teaching techniques that had been provided by the Project Leader and others on their training days.

All seven sessions observed by the researcher were slightly different in style with choice given to each child to decide on which story book to read, to read alone or take turns, or to read first before word attack. Depending on their reading level and familiarity with the story some sessions spent longer on reading the story whereas others reviewed pictures, read a page each, or spent time on individual words. When

faced with a new word the children immediately sounded them out, tapping out the sounds on the table and picked up their accompanying dictionary if it was a word they did not understand. Volunteers asked questions to ascertain comprehension levels of particular sentences or words and moved on to rhyming and compound words where children were familiar with reading the words.

3.5.1.4 Content

There were differing expectations amongst the volunteers as to the amount of material covered in a session. More experienced volunteers described how in their first year they tried to "*fit in everything they had covered in training or with [PL]"* but with time they became less "*anxious and guilty"* about this in their second year and cover whatever they can. Discussion also ensued amongst the volunteers regarding phonemic awareness, with varying levels of concern expressed in relation to how successfully the volunteers felt they incorporated this into their sessions. A number of volunteers stated they did what they could to introduce it in the session but did not get overly anxious; others were more resistant to this and did not see it as part of their role in the reading club.

"All this phonological business, I said, my God there are a lot of ex-teachers but I'm just an ordinary Joe Soap"

"I also think that it can be a bit off-putting for the children if they come to a session with us and we're at the sounding and the blending a bit too much. Now a bit has to be done absolutely, I accept that but I really don't think it is an area that we should get too involved in"

"Where I come from is if we can get the children to enjoy a book, enjoy the story the chances are that they'll associate reading with enjoyment and when they go on in life that they enjoy reading. But the actual mechanics, I think belongs to the classroom more so"

The material used in the reading session was seen as a useful resource for both the volunteers and children with stories the children could engage with.

"I think we're lucky with the series we're working on this Oxford Reading Tree. There's great variety in the stories and I think it was a great choice for the kids with all these levels so you can very much tune into the level that the child is at

"The illustrations are fantastic and good old Gran is brilliant in them"

"What was very important was that we were told exactly the sort of level that the kids were a. I had thought you would have to initiate some of the stuff yourself but you don't. You work to a set curriculum, set series of books and you don't deviate from that"

In many instances, throughout the reading sessions the volunteers related the content of the story to life in the past. Activities such as picking berries, jam making, becoming a Monk, or the contents of a museum where all discussed and explained with reference to "long long ago…" or "when I was little…"

3.5.1.5 Duration

The duration of the reading session was highlighted with all volunteers expressing a wish for longer sessions The time taken to get from class, have introductory conversation, and general settling in it left a relatively short period for reading. The reading sessions observed by the researcher lasted approximately thirty minutes. However, all volunteers acknowledged the importance of not having children out of their regular class for too long and the implications for the class room teacher.

"Now to fit that into twenty, twenty five minutes, that frustrates me a bit. I'm inclined also to be going back on the words they don't know and I end up then not getting done what I want to do"

"We all feel the same about that. Not enough time"

Almost all of children also suggested that the reading session is over too quickly noting how they would prefer to spend more time in reading session and less time in their regular classroom.

All sessions observed by the researcher reflected the programme as described and outlined in the WoW manual with fidelity to the programme model upheld in practice

3.5.1.6 Relationship Building

The researcher observing the reading sessions paid particular attention to the relationship building process. Volunteers sat in close to their children, and focussed totally on the tasks in hand for the duration of the session. Their voice levels were low, tones positive and upbeat and there was a lot of smiling and nodding. All volunteers were very patient allowing time for the children to read as slow as necessary, take time over trying new words and generally allowing the child to set the pace of the session. Volunteers praised the children's progress constantly throughout; with every opportunity to relay a positive message to their WoW child availed of. An affirmative "*good, well done*" was regularly heard when a child completed a sentence. There were also many examples of specific feedback on the efforts of a child.

"It was the right sound but the wrong letter"

"You read very well when you take your time"

"That was a very hard word, well done"

"Excellent, you're a great girl

However, the volunteers appeared also to be conscious not to allow the children move on too quickly or waste any time. A firm yet gentle message was given in relation to the work load.

"We will play the jigsaw if we have time"

"No skipping words"

"We will get there in time, no rush"

There were many instances where the volunteers brought the story in the reading book back to the experience of each individual child. Trips in aeroplanes, outings to the woods, likes and dislikes and summer holidays were all discussed with reference to lived experiences of the child involved. The children took delight in and openly recounted a holiday or day trip they had been on. The story was then returned to and the child asked to read with expression.

Two children who have two volunteers outlined how they liked having both volunteer's as it was an "extra friend" whereas one child noted how he prefers to have just the one reading lady. The volunteers also highlighted the potential benefit of having a second person read with a particular child.

"It's good for them to sometimes have a break from you as well. You don't want them too dependent on you; it's actually nearly a good thing for [PL] to take them so that she can see where they're at. So it's two people looking at the child's reading as well"

When asked if there was anything they did not like about Reading session the majority of children replied that "*there is nothing that I don't like*" and "*it's perfect the way it is"*. Two children noted that they did not like re-reading books or answering questions about the story. One child noted how he attends another support class before attending WoW reading and is therefore very tired in this reading session.

3.6 Conclusion

Overall, WoW was seen as a very attractive strengths-based reading support programme introduced by a reputable family support organisation which complimented both the general approach and existing supports within the schools. The time commitment for the volunteers was viewed as manageable and an appealing aspect of the programme.

"If you had to tick a list of boxes about a potentially brilliant programme, WoW does it, and I'm not overstating that, it really is an exceptionally good programme"

The reading sessions work very well within the school setting with a very positive relationship evident between the WoW volunteers and the children attending reading. The reading session is based on the programme as designed, focused on the task of reading improvement with progress recorded by the volunteers using the template provided following each session.

Section Four; *The effect of WoW on Children*

4.1 Introduction

This section of the report describes and highlights the perceived effect of WoW on the children who attend reading. As the data sought and subsequently analysed in this phase of the WoW evaluation is predominately qualitative in nature the information presented is the subjective opinion of those involved in the research. With reference to the effect on the children, the views of the children themselves, their parents, the volunteers, and the school staff are outlined.

4.1.1 The Children's Perspective

"My reading is getting better ever since the Wizards"

All children interviewed were extremely positive about both their attendance at WoW and their volunteers and described an improvement in their reading and ability to learn new words.

"I love it, even when I'm in 6th I want to be in Reading Club"

"I like going to Reading Club 'cause you meet different people and have different books about adventures"

"I think it's fun and educational"

"There are loads of books and words, toys, stamps and puppets and different levels that you get through in the books"

"The people are very kind, and help me learn how to read"

4.1.2 The Parent's Perspective

All parents interviewed described improvements in their children's reading; both in terms of actual interest in picking up a book and with their ability. All parents felt that their children were more interested in reading, with four commenting that their child had been reading books over the Easter holidays. This interest was new for the children; parents felt they would not have been so keen to do this before their involvement in reading club. All noted specifically how they have noticed their children making an increased effort with words; "sounding out" new words, and reading advertisements on the bus or 'Luas', the newspaper headlines, and signposts. A number of parents also mentioned how their children had commented that they were "*the lucky ones*" as everyone in class did "*not get to go to Reading Club*".

4.1.3 The Class Teacher's Perspective

All four class teachers described a positive impact on the children attending WoW. One class teacher who has six children attending noticed varying but specific improvements in each child. Children were reported as more willing to try reading, more confident in reading aloud in class, and their spellings had improved since attending WoW. One teacher described how when "*working at the board on word families"*, she commented that the children "*were being a little bit too noisy*"; however the Special Needs Assistant (SNA), later explained to her that the WoW

children were sounding out their words and this was the 'noise' she had overheard. The class teacher reflected how this was obviously learning for her in terms of supporting their technique of sounding out new words. Another incident was described by the same teacher who noticed one of her boys knew a word they had not covered in class and when she asked him about this he *"proudly explained he had learned it with his reading lady"*. One teacher described how the children in her class will *"now pick up a book in the library and start reading it which they would not have done previously"*, how their reading *"has more fluency and more expression"* and how they *"generally are more confident in themselves"*.

"When bell goes for reading time they will pick a book and try to read by themselves… will now ask 'what's that word?', whereas before they would have closed the book and given up"

One teacher described how she explains to the Project Leader what words and sounds are being covered in class and the WoW volunteers will reflect this work in the reading session.

The teachers also highlighted that for children at this level of need the WoW programme can make a significant and long lasting difference to them. The educational disadvantage experienced in the specific communities where the WoW schools are based noted as an additional consideration for the children in their classes.

"A little bit extra support in the right direction will see them through for life. This is the right age also to help them before they have fallen too far behind and have an uphill struggle"

Attendance at WoW reading was highlighted by the teachers as impacting on the level of progress made by the children. Children who missed school on the days scheduled for WoW were noted by one particular teacher as not progressing in terms of reading and spelling as well as his class mates who attended WoW more regularly.

4.1.4 The Volunteer's Perspective

The volunteers noted a definite improvement with regard to both the WoW children's reading ability and their overall confidence. In analysing the responses in the questionnaires on specific questions for individual children, a strong improvement in their reading levels was outlined (see Figure 3 below). Both the qualitative and quantitative responses of the study however, placed a strong emphasis on the changes in the children's self esteem and confidence. All volunteers discussed the importance of building confidence in the children, both in relation to their reading levels and their overall effort to try new words. The volunteers offered concrete and specific examples of where they noticed positive changes over time in the confidence and self esteem of the children.

"You can actually see that happening; the way they want to read the book, they will choose the book. They even want to do the writing; they want to play the games. Before, they wouldn't want to do it at all because they are afraid of it"

"We get feedback from the teachers via [PL] to say that they're answering up in class which is one of the things that these children would never have done before because

they were always the slow children, always at the back of the class, always the problem children in some shape, form or description"

"You hear that back that he has forgotten that he's the slow one or whatever he is and he's actually putting his hand up and wanting to answer"

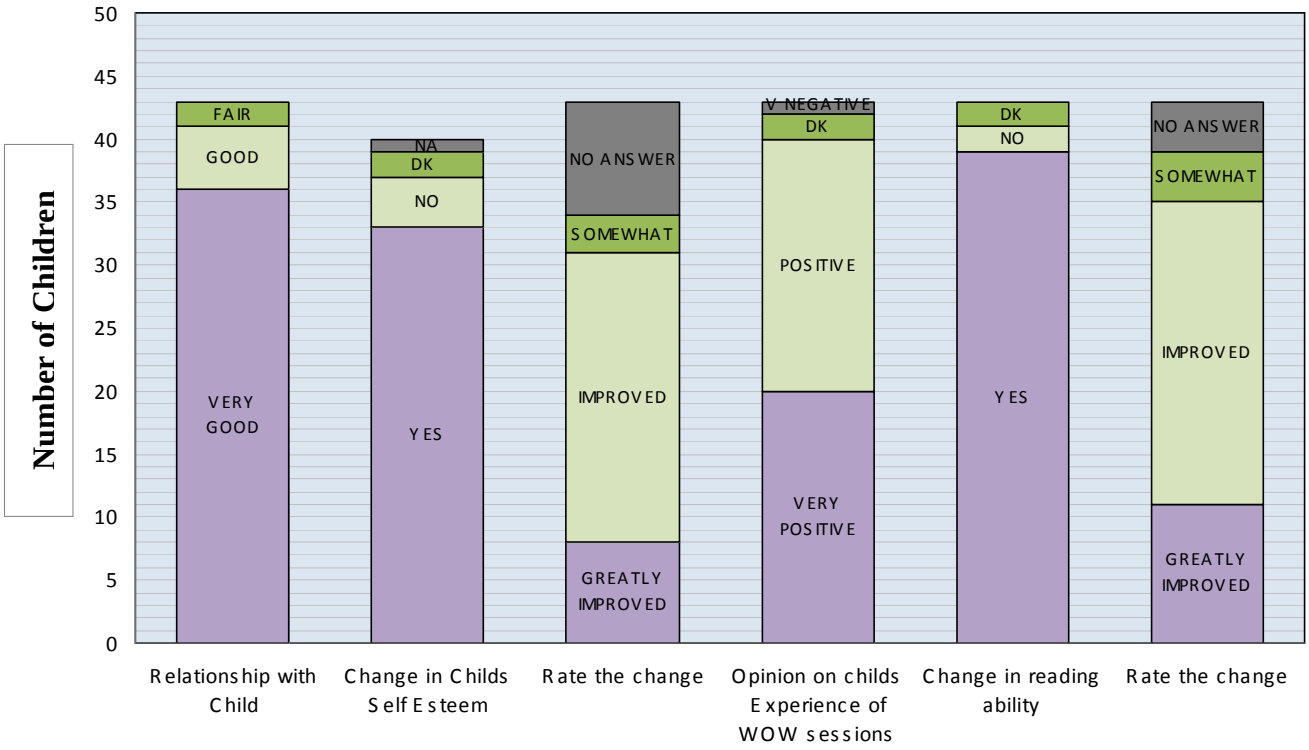

Figure 3; Volunteers opinion on Changes in children [15]

The volunteers noted a positive change in the reading ability of 39 children (90.6%). A significant number of children (76.7%) were reported as having a positive change in their self-esteem, the rate of change noted as greatly improved (18%), improved (53%) or somewhat improved (6.9%). The majority of volunteers (83.7%) reported a positive relationship with their WoW child and almost all (93%) felt that their children enjoyed the sessions.

[15]DK = Don't Know, NA = No Answer

4.1.4.1 Relationship Building

The volunteers suggested that building confidence was a significant component of the WoW programme.

"That is the biggest thing of all. That's what we find, you know, building up their self esteem is the huge thing, that they actually can do it and that's what everybody wants, that's what comes out of all of this"

Specific factors which supported a successful relationship with their children were outlined

"When you start doing the work at the right level with them it's quite easy to form a relationship with them. They're delighted to come to you because you're not putting that terrible pressure on them, they're succeeding. That's where their self esteem comes in you see, begins to build because you're actually working with them at the right level for them"

"We sit in a little chair with them so you're the same level you're talking to them rather than at them"

"You praise them every chance you get which is very important because they mightn't get that much praise. And if you're working at the proper level you see you have loads to praise them for and when you're correcting things for them they immediately, everyone wants ten out of ten for everything. So it's easy to give them full marks when they actually have it right and you're giving them the right thing to do"

The teachers described how the children also seem to enjoy the interaction and relationship with their volunteers. All eagerly made Christmas cards for them and appear to always return from the reading sessions in *"good form"*. One teacher noted how one of her boys comes from single parent family and has few adult male relationships and appears to really enjoy his time and interaction with his male volunteer. Another highlighted that she felt the relationship between the volunteers and the children was "*very special* and that there was a *"strong attachment there"*. Without being able to specifically name it, the teacher felt there was something *"unique and very special"* in the relationships between the WoW children and their volunteers.

"They look at volunteers as grannies and granddads and seem to have a special bond with them; it's so different to the teacher in the class room"

A combination of respect from the WoW children for an older age group, a lack of grandmother or grandfather relationships in their lives, and the patience and tolerance of the older volunteer were noted as possible reasons why the intergenerational relationship seems to work with the older volunteers and the children in WoW.

4.1.4.2 Subtle Changes

Volunteers also noted a number of less obvious indications of improvements in the children's confidence levels. One volunteer described how her child would previously guess words rather flippantly, making little effort to actually get the word right whereas over time he started to make a real effort to get the correct word unconcerned as to whether he is successful or not.

"Mid way through the story she said, I don't like this story; I don't want to read it. And I actually was delighted because it shows a bit of confidence"

"Now he's actually trying and to me that's, he has the confidence to try. I used to look at the other at the guessing thing as a failure. To me, he couldn't read in the class so therefore he was determined to be showing he could read; read anything rather than say they can't read it. But now he's actually trying to read it"

"You might notice even something simple like eye contact that you begin to notice after a while that they're able to look at you. They're able to respond and I think you know then that you're making progress"

"He smiles more and offers opinions"

The volunteers were also quite skilled at identifying where children were covering up their difficulties in reading. The volunteers were aware of times when their WoW children appeared confident, able to read and sound out their words but actually had little comprehension of the words or sentence.

"He seems to be brimming with confidence all the time but he was only sounding out words you know, he had no comprehension or that, you'd ask him when he was after reading and he wouldn't know"

"On the surface they can look as if they're fully confident and have everything, but there's something missing behind it. The older they get the better at glossing over it"

Volunteers described magical moments when all of a sudden they would see an improvement in a child's reading.

"With this chap it was really noticeable. It was a bit of magic really … it's hard to see that magic happening overnight but I think, to me it happened with him"

"It was almost instant you know, this change in him"

4.1.5 The Principal's Perspective

All principals outlined positive feedback from parents, teachers and children themselves in relation to the WoW programme. One principal commented how parents had described how they noticed their children looking forward to reading session on the scheduled days. Anecdotal feedback from class teachers received by the principals was very positive with improvements in both the children's confidence and reading ability (as outlined above from the class teacher's perspective). One principal described how a school evaluation had taken place earlier in the year with

the Divisional Inspector from the Department of Education who on hearing about WoW was very interested in programme and highly impressed with the work of the volunteers.

"Its [WoW] impact in the school impressed her and I think just working; school and community working together for the benefits of the children"

4.1.6 The Classmates

The volunteers and the class teachers also highlighted the influence of WoW on the children in the wider class

"They must bring it back to the classroom with them because one time they'd had several weeks of WoW and they had a new teacher. Their old teacher went off for maternity leave, the new teacher didn't know which boys were in WoW so she asked them; every hand in the class went up"

The volunteers noted (although they would like to) how important it was that they did not give their WoW children gifts or rewards due to the disruptive or negative impact this could have on their class mates. They all agreed this was the correct approach and that any reading materials or books should be given on a class wide basis. The volunteers also suggested that a useful addition to the WoW programme would be to provide reading books for all children to bring home.

"There's terrific sensitivity; anything that we're doing with our children the rest of children in the class are included so they don't have to feel they're left out. She is [PL] extremely sensitive about anything that happens, any benefit those kids might get the rest of the class would get as well which I think that's important as well"

Teachers also noted the fact that any books that are provided by WoW are made available for all children in the class ensuring no difference in what the WoW children receive.

Section Five; *The effect of WoW on Volunteers*

5.1 Introduction

The WoW volunteer experience is presented in this section based on their own responses to the research question, and on the responses of the both the school staff and Barnardos staff members. The commitment of the volunteers to the WoW programme is evident. All volunteers involved in WoW during the school year 2007/ 2008 returned to the programme for the school year 2008 /2009. While a number of volunteers had to subsequently leave the programme unexpectedly for personal reasons, the remainder were happy to continue volunteering for a second year.

5.2 The Volunteer Perspective

The views of the volunteers on their overall experience of WoW are illustrated in Figure 4 below.

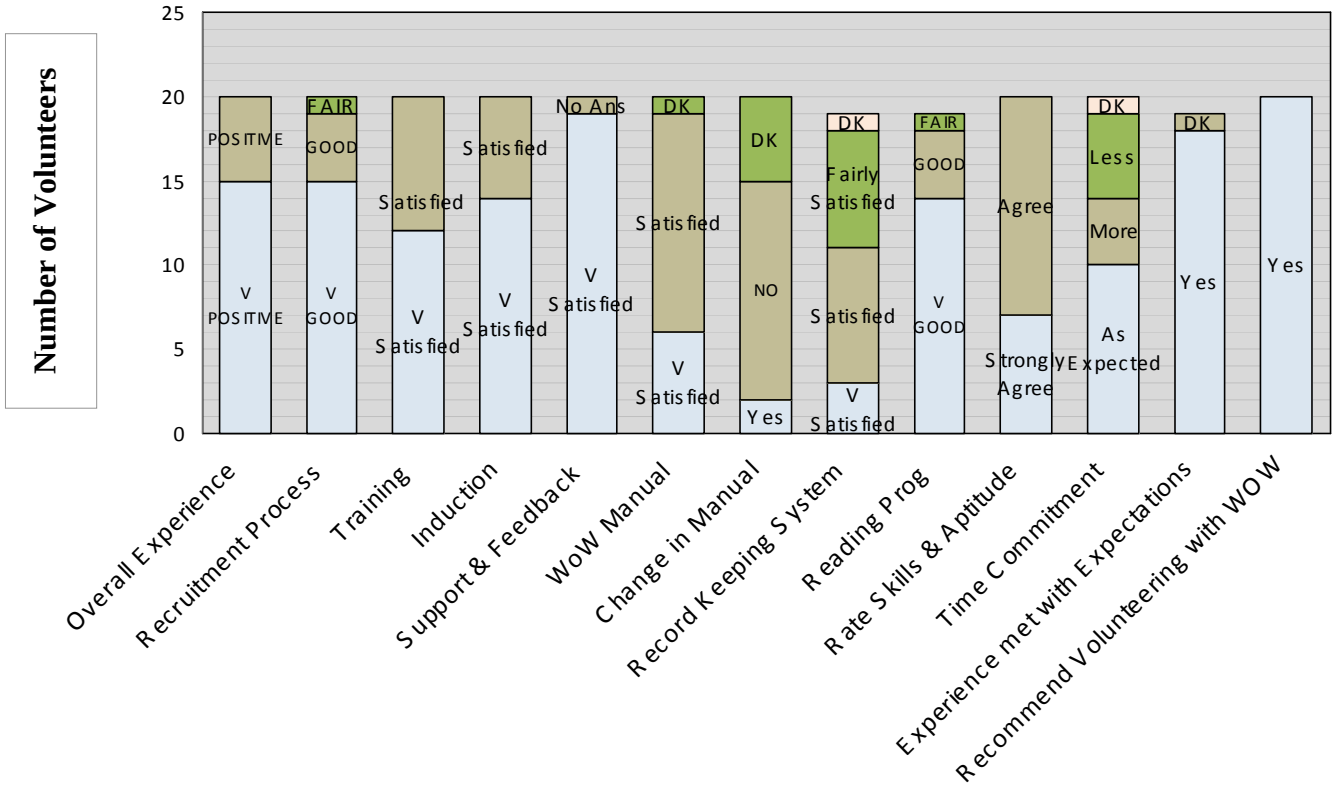

Figure 4; the WoW Volunteer Experience [16]

All volunteers reported a very positive response to their overall experience in WoW and the vast majority with the specific areas of recruitment training, induction, and support. All volunteers responded that they had the skills and aptitude necessary for the programme. In the main (63%) reported that the time commitment was as expected with a small number reporting that the time commitment was less than initially anticipated (23%). All volunteers would recommend WoW to a friend. The

[16] DK = Don't Know

volunteers have highlighted a number of specific factors which encourages their continued involvement with WoW; these are described in turn.

5.2.1 Support and Training

One area of note is the level and quality of both their initial induction to Barnardos and Wow and their ongoing support and training.

"The support from Barnardos has been excellent, it's very professionally done. Not surprising but very professionally done"

"They gave us good input on the whole Barnardos philosophy, the umbrella that we're only a small part of; but I think the actual training was extremely thorough, very complete"

However, a number of volunteers noted the amount of information as initially slightly overwhelming. This was particularly so for those who were not from a teaching background.

"At our induction training you came were given a bit about Barnardos itself and then about dealing with children, diversity, all that end of it. Then about the care of the children, the whole area covered and then some of the different techniques and the literacy programme as well. So it was the whole lot. I suppose they have to give it all at the start but it takes a while, you're only assimilating it over the following year"

"There was a lot of information given you know. At times it was a bit of an overload"

The ongoing support from the Project Leader and her role as a liaison with the schools was also emphasised repeatedly by the volunteers.

"Any problem we had, we'd come up against a problem you just had to refer it to [PL]. If I find anything I'll just go to [PL]. So that's how I got over all the lumps and bumps, let's put it that way"

"If you're not sure whether you're going too fast or too slow with a pupil [PL] will sit in or look on from behind you or whatever, she'll give you advice and that like"

"The support is phenomenonal. I did not expect the level of support that we're getting from [PL] and from Barnardos. It's fantastic. The detail is fantastic; she just thinks of absolutely everything and her support for the children is incredible. Her support for us volunteers is incredible and she works so well with the principal and the staff, they're all brought on board"

In the main the volunteers are supported by both the Volunteer Manager and the WoW Project Leader. They have also met a number of Barnardos staff members who are involved more indirectly with WoW. Informal, semi-formal, and formal mechanisms are in place for volunteers to feedback and express information or concerns to Barnardos staff. This includes regular contact with the WoW Project Leader, formal telephone check in, review days and exit interviews. The volunteers

also receive a monthly newsletter developed by the WoW Project Leader to share information and WoW news. The support offered to the volunteers by the WoW Project Leader highlighted as being very important to the WoW volunteers.

5.2.2 Participation

Participation in decision making and in developing aspects of the WoW programme is also noted as important in ensuring the voice of volunteers is heard and that the volunteers feel included in the overall organisation. Volunteers described feeling part of and involved in the WoW programme and described the process of making changes in the programme.

"Whenever there are changes to be made or they are updating something they always ask us what we think about it, we're always consulted about it, what do we think? That makes you actively part of the whole thing and what we say is always taken on board. Always, because we're the ones that are in the front line you know"

5.2.3 Social Support Networks

The level of support and friendship among the group of volunteers was highlighted as an additional and positive outcome of their involvement in WoW.

"There's great camaraderie amongst the people that are doing it, the other volunteers, I think there is an awful lot out of it for the volunteers themselves"

"*Before we start we'd go off down and get a cup of tea and then when we're finished go off down again, you'd be comparing notes with the others to see how they got on and how they found it"*

"Literacy in itself is a bit of a challenge because you've children that might be a bit hyperactive or whatever and you could be at your wits end at times in order to come to terms with them and you can talk all that out"

"You get great friendships and that out of the people that you're with, you get great value, you feel great after it, that you're, as if you are achieving something like that"

Having the reading sessions in the same room was also noted as a support by the volunteers they described how they felt there was always someone there if needed.

5.2.4 The School Environment

The welcoming nature of the schools and the school staff was also highlighted by the volunteers as ensuring their WoW experience is as positive one. The volunteers described how they feel part of the school team and very comfortable in the setting
Although a number of the volunteers described some contact with the class teachers it was suggested that a more formalised contact might also be useful. Volunteers expressed a wish to discuss the current class work (particularly phonics) and their WoW child's reading ability and progress made, if any with the class teacher.

5.2.5 The Bigger Picture

Volunteers did note their concern with the overall educational attainment of young children who are having difficulty with their reading and perhaps not getting the supports necessary or even the level they were providing to their WoW children.

"I just have to say that the overall picture I find daunting that so many children need help and are not getting it and, I have to actually block that out of my mind and go there and do it because I think it's horrendous that there are other children and if we're not there that those children won't get the help"

"The level of these children's reading and how it disables them in life I think is a big problem. So much hinges on it for them in life. It's just so disabling for people not to be able to read and write, just, it's a crime really"

5.3 The Barnardos Perspective

Based on their contact with the WoW volunteers through both their informal conversations and more formal review process Barnardos staff generally expressed a sense that the WoW volunteers seemed to enjoy their role and involvement with their children.

"I think from the volunteers' point of view just it seems to me they get a great enjoyment out of it. They seem to get a great sense of personal satisfaction of working with the children and seeing the children progress. And also a confidence in their own abilities because not many of them are teachers and so they're coming in and what they have is a love of reading and an enjoyment of working with children and they're able to see what their input has achieved"

"The volunteer's have reported a feeling of self worth that they are helping on a one to one, and that they enjoy and look forward to their time volunteering"

A number of the staff team (half of those interviewed) did however also express a number of concerns in relation to the welfare of the volunteers and the effect of certain aspects of the WoW experience on the volunteers which are outlined.

5.3.1 The impact of WoW

The general concern expressed is as to how long volunteers can maintain this level of commitment in terms of both time and also in terms of the impact of the actual work. Half of the staff team interviewed referred to the time commitment necessary and a concern that the volunteers would miss out on important personal events due to their commitment with WoW. Concern was expressed also, given the commitment of the volunteers that they could feel guilty if unable to commit to the necessary hours or had to miss a reading session. The amount of time volunteers are asked to commit to training was noted as a significant factor in the demand on the volunteer's time as part of WoW and a consideration in the continuation of the programme.

The emotional impact of the work was also highlighted by the majority interviewed and acknowledged as a area of concern for Barnardos**.**

"It's an emotionally draining programme as well because it's a one to one relationship, it's working with a child and getting to know them very well and that is emotionally draining"

"I think it needs to be formalised in terms of the training so that volunteers know how to de-brief, know how to manage a situation. We've obviously dealt with very particular issues like Child Protection but I think there's a lot around neglect and other areas that are maybe less dangerous contexts but nevertheless are emotionally draining for people and worrying, I know people go home and worry about something that's happened or they heard"

The importance of WoW being a task centered and highly focussed programme was emphasised stressing the importance of the specific role of the volunteers.

"One thing that is very important is boundaries around roles and I think we've managed to do that; it's [WoW] a really good part in the schools yet it's also recognised as Barnardos programme and that's really helpful because the volunteers have a specific task, they're not going to be asked to paint the school grounds or to hold tea mornings for parents"

Section Six; *The WoW Manual and Record Keeping*

6.1 Introduction

This section of the report outlines the findings from the research on the fidelity to the WoW manual and the use of the record keeping systems in place. The volunteers are provided with a WoW manual which is written by Barnardos and outlines the programme and their role in detail. There is also an expectation that following each reading session a record is made of the material covered and the progress made by each child. The recording template covers areas such as attendance, comprehension, fluency, expression, phonics

6.2 Fidelity to the WoW Manual

With reference to the WoW manual the volunteers described how although they did not refer to it every week it was a useful resource if they were looking for new ideas or needed some help with preparing a session. All use the manual as a guide and resource.

"At home sometimes when you're preparing, thinking about what you're going to be doing… It might be Monday evening or Sunday, you'd look it up to get an idea; on and off you'd look it up. You wouldn't be at it all the time"

"I was trying to do questions with my fella today, not just straight questions; you know you have the different kinds of higher order questions so I thought I must read up my WoW manual tonight"

A number of volunteers who had been with WoW for two years noted that the manual in use this year was much improved on the previous version.

"The manual now is a lot easier, last year they updated it and they brought us crowd in to ask us questions about it, what we would like changed and what we thought would be a better approach, easier you know"

The manual is used as the basis for all reading sessions and for guiding the volunteer in their work with WoW.

6.3 Record Keeping

The volunteers spoke of their frustration with the daily record keeping and described how they found it difficult to fill the specific sections required after each reading session. They described the time taken to figure out which areas they have covered specifically in the daily sessions.

"You look at phonological awareness and then you're looking at word building and you're wondering is it in this area or that area but it keeps people on their toes and it's good"

"I feel for one day, like you're thinking what'll I put in here, there and yonder you know"

I don't know who I'm supposed to be writing for. If I'm writing for myself described I think I'd get a lot more value out of it and I definitely would want to throw out that folder; it's a nuisance"

Both the size of the folders used and the storing of the folders were noted as specific issues that caused frustration for the volunteers

They did however also see their purpose and the impact they had particularly if a volunteer or the Project Leader had to substitute for another.

"The fact that we keep the records proves what we're doing, I hate records but they are very important and they do show us, and they do show anyone coming in that we have been reading the books"

"It's handy actually if you're taking over. I did one of children today so it's grand, it's lovely to see what she did the day before and it gives you an idea of what they have read as well"

The researcher in observing the reading sessions noted how when the children returned to class the volunteers immediately completed their written records, reviewing the progress made and work completed in the session.

A number of volunteers noted their dissatisfaction with the record keeping requirements of the programme with many describing this as the only negative aspect of WoW.

Section Seven; *Summary and Future Considerations*

7.1 Introduction

The CFRC were commissioned by Barnardos to conduct a process evaluation of the WoW programme in four primary schools in Dublin. This research has focussed on the design and development of the programme, its introduction and implementation and the overall experience of all involved thus far.

This report highlights the overwhelmingly positive findings of the process evaluation on the WoW reading programme. All stakeholders involved in WoW have outlined and emphasised a high level of satisfaction with the programme. Children and parents were delighted with their involvement in WoW and all commented on their improved reading. The four schools (both principals and class teachers) that facilitate WoW are extremely accommodating of the programme in their schools and also it must be noted the CFRC research team. The principals have high praise for all aspects of the programme and are very keen for it to continue in their schools. The volunteers describe a very positive experience with an obvious commitment to and enjoyment of their involvement in WoW.

The key points and main findings arising from the research are presented in this section of the report with reflections and considerations for the future of Wow, based on the evaluation and analysis carried out by the researcher, are presented. The programme overall is discussed first with specific aspects then considered. The issues of utilisation, organisation and fidelity are considered as part of the discussion on the key findings and reflections for the future.

7.2 The WoW programme

The WoW programme has been very well received by the children, their parents, the volunteers and the schools involved. The majority of the research findings were extremely positive with a small number of limitations or suggestions of change highlighted. Overall messages and common themes as to the success of the programme thus far emerged in collating and analysing the research findings which are outlined below in detail.

The service design process embarked on by the Service Design team in Barnardos has resulted in a well researched, logical and systematic programme to support children's reading and emotional wellbeing. The rigour of the service design process supported Barnardos' staff in an initiative that is quite different to their typical work programme. Aspects of the programme design and its overall focus are a significant departure for the staff involved and resulted in some apprehension and debate amongst colleagues. The detailed research and planning undertaken by the Service Design team supported staff in accepting this new approach.

The well respected reputation of Barnardos as a high quality service with the wellbeing of children and their families as their central focus positively influenced the introduction and implementation of the WoW programme. The school staff assumed a professional approach of a high standard from the Barnardos team and their expectations were realised. The formal nature of Barnardos and the WoW programme with detailed policies, structured guidelines and written records while somewhat

cumbersome was reassuring to all involved. School staff particularly felt that all areas of programme delivery with children were covered and this was welcomed.

The professional approach, dedication and expert style of the WoW Project Leader has significantly impacted on the successful introduction and implementation of WoW. The ability to understand literacy development and educational support in children, to understand teacher training and the school setting, and to impart this knowledge and skill to a volunteer population noted as crucial ingredients in the success of the programme.

Implementing a support service in an external site is a new experience for the Barnardos team, which has had a successful outcome. The criteria determined by the service design process and used to select schools to pilot WoW and the subsequent professional relationships have resulted in a very successful model of interagency, inter discipline partnership and collaboration.

The intergenerational relationship in the WoW programme and the focus on reading support were noted as specific strengths and selling points of WoW

7.2.1 Future Considerations

Both the continuation and expansion of WoW is a decision for the WoW team and wider Barnardos agency. A number of reflections on the overall programme which have emerged in the process study evaluation require consideration as part of this decision making process.

WoW Project Leader

Given the current arrangement of a cluster of four schools piloting the WoW programme being overseen by one Project Leader within a wider Barnardos team future expansion would require increased resources.

The role of the WoW Project Leader has been highlighted consistently as a key factor in the success thus far of WoW. The particular background and style of the current Project Leader noted as the ideal combination. The educational background of the Project Leader co-ordinating a school based reading support programme in a field that is outside the realm of other Barnardos staff member's has been very useful and possibly necessary in the introductory phase of WoW. This may not however be sustainable model for the future of the programme.

The work load of the Project Leader appears to be at full capacity coordinating WoW in four schools. This work load includes strategic planning, day to day operational issues, substituting for volunteers when necessary and training and supporting volunteers. There does not appear to be potential to increase the number of schools, if desired under this level of workload. Additional resources would therefore be required. The sustainability of this level of commitment for an individual worker over time is also a factor.

Possible options for future development may include:

- A change in focus of the WoW Project Leader to concentrate on the strategic development and overall vision of WoW.

- The WoW staff team could be expanded with additional WoW project workers employed to oversee the operational aspects of the programme.
- Experienced volunteers could be offered a lead role in WoW supporting and training their colleagues, co-ordinating day to day reading sessions and overseeing the programme in the schools.

Involving Parents

The involvement of parents in the WoW programme is also an area for future consideration. Although not a feature of the Experience Corps model and many school based programmes are run without strong parental involvement there is a sense that the parental and family involvement in WoW could be increased. As noted the Service Design team decided to implement WoW in the first instance without parental involvement with a view to reviewing this decision. Barnardos are very aware of not involving parents in the programme; this is also reflected in the school staff also keen to include parents and family members in their children's education.

The essence of WoW is more than teaching reading skills with an aim to bring about a change in the children's attitude to reading. Increased family involvement and a more seamless introduction of reading and books into the home environment on a family wide basis would strengthen this aim. This more traditional family support principles and practice of Barnardos has perhaps a stronger role in WoW than originally envisaged.

Community Based Volunteers

An increased use of local community based volunteers building on the existing efforts is also recommended in the future for WoW. Adopting a whole community perspective to the aim of changing the children's attitude to reading would further enhance and strengthen this. The use of community based volunteers with a strong emphasis on reading on a family wide basis supported by the school has the potential for attitudinal change for all children in the community. Again, this reflects the more traditional approach based on an ecological perspective embraced by Barnardos in their community based family support services.

A more ethically diverse volunteer group would also reflect both the cohort of children involved in WoW and contemporary community life in Ireland more generally. Consideration could be given to advertising and recruiting volunteers from support groups, a varied faith base and social outlets to increase the diversity of the volunteers.

Funding

The funding for the WoW programme is currently through grant aided through Atlantic Philanthropies. Should the programme be proved successful and should Barnardos wish to continue with and possible expand WoW the continued funding will be an issue for the organisation. Currently there is very little outgoing expenses to the volunteers as many do not claim expenses available to them. With an expanded programme and therefore more volunteers the potential for increased and more realistic expense claims would probably increase.

The Department of Education and Science
A direct link with the Department of Education and Science could be established (at the appropriate point in the WoW pilot) to introduce WoW to the relevant personnel and consider future possibilities (depending on the research outcomes) for expanding WoW.[17]

7.3 WoW Children
The children currently involved in WoW who participated in the research study thoroughly enjoy their time in reading and are very receptive to WoW. There was a clear understanding of why they attend reading, a positive description of the sessions themselves and also of their relationship with their volunteers.

A very definite improvement in the WoW children's reading was emphasised by many participants in the research. The children themselves readily volunteered a view that their reading had improved, specific examples of techniques used to learn and understand new words were offered and their progression in the ORT reading levels outlined clearly for the researcher.

Parents likewise described an increase in their child's interest in reading (both books and other material), an improvement in their reading and this new technique of 'sounding out words'. Children mentioned their reading session and many parents knew the particular volunteer their child read with.

Class teachers observed positive changes in children's reading, a new found confidence at attempting words, use of the sounding out technique, an enthusiasm to read aloud in class, a positive and special relationship between the child and volunteer and a general sense that the children enjoyed their time in WoW. Volunteer described many instances and examples of positive change and literacy development.

There is a special and unique relationship between the children and their WoW volunteers with the children's confidence and self esteem

The overall opinion is that WoW is a very positive and productive experience achieving its intended aims of improving both literacy development and emotional wellbeing for all children involved.

7.3.1 Future considerations
Future considerations are specific to the eligibility and targeting of children participating in WoW.

Targeting of Children
As stated, the WoW programme is aimed at targeting children in both first and second class, who are approximately twelve months behind in their reading ability. However, in reality the referral criteria are not always so definite with a wider range of children nominated by the schools. Targeting children correctly is an on going challenge for WoW with referrals ranging "*from three months to fifty months*" in terms of a reading

[17] Since the research was completed a meeting has been arranged by Barnardo's with the DES for July 2009.

delay. The WoW staff team continues to *"explore the issue of a lower and a higher limit or threshold"* as part of the ongoing programme development and in part, for the purpose of the evaluation.

Teachers have emphasised in this research the potential for WoW to promote reading improvement in children who are one year behind in their reading. This issue requires considered and specific attention if WoW is to meet its intended target group and have the desired results.

The emotional wellbeing of children is also an important component of the WoW relationship and children's emotional and behavioural wellbeing is also a consideration in selecting children for WoW to ensure their suitability for this type of programme.

Possible options for future development may include:

- A threshold at both the higher and lower level of need is necessary to ensure children are not incorrectly placed in WoW thus compromising their opportunity to receive a more appropriate level of reading support. This agreed threshold must be clearly and consistently communicated to all relevant school personnel in advance of children being nominated for the programme.
- Given the skill base and background of a number of volunteers in WoW, particularly those from teaching backgrounds WoW could in future consider paring children with additional emotional and behavioural needs with a volunteer who felt confident to offer this support. This possibility could be discussed with the volunteer group.

7.4 WoW Volunteers

There is a genuine recognition and heartfelt appreciation of the commitment of the WoW volunteers across all four schools and by the Barnardos staff. The research highlighted repeatedly how dedicated, supportive, hard working, friendly and giving the volunteers were. The WoW volunteers themselves were on the whole very impressed with WoW and their involvement in the programme. A number of specific reasons were attributed to this.

The all encompassing support offered by the Project Leader to the volunteers was highlighted as a key factor in their enjoyment in and satisfaction with the WoW programme. At practical level providing materials required for reading club, liaising with the school personnel, providing training and support and generally being available to the volunteers ensures a very safe and secure experience for the WoW volunteers.

The welcoming nature of the school staff is also particularly instrumental in their satisfaction with the programme. A strong sense of belonging to the school team was evident with the volunteers. This was true for both those volunteers from a teaching background and those with different experience.

A very definite and distinctive role within the school also contributes to the success of WoW in the school setting. There WoW volunteers have a clear identified role in relation to reading support with specific tasks attached and there is no deviation from

this. There are therefore no expectations or assumptions that volunteers may get involved in any ancillary pieces of work in the school.

Meeting with the wider Barnardos staff members and having their views actively taken on board and their opinions considered facilitated a sense of belonging and a of having a specific role in the Barnardos agency also.

A strong support network and friendship is evident within the volunteers group. This support network is viewed as both a positive factor in the WoW programme and also as an unexpected additional bonus on a more personal level.

The volunteers do however minimise their impact on their WoW children. While they recognise an improvement in reading and also in the self esteem and confidence of individual children they tend not to attribute this to WoW and their work. There is a general perception that the WoW time is so short it is difficult to attribute changes in children to the programme.

7.4.1 Future Considerations

Future considerations are specific to the role of the volunteers in WoW and supporting their ongoing involvement with the programme.

Possible options for future development may include:

- Given both their life experience and obvious commitment to WoW an increased and expanded role could be encouraged with a number of volunteers. As noted above this would assist the Project Leader role but also increase the responsibility of experienced volunteers if interested.
- A formalised ‘mentoring’ or ‘shadowing’ system of experienced volunteers supporting more recently recruited volunteers could also be introduced.
- The impact of the volunteer’s involvement with the WoW children, particularly from an emotional view warrants further consideration. Additional and more focussed supports may be necessary for the volunteers in relation to this area. This would help ensure the WoW experience is a positive one and encourage continued participation from year to year.
- A formal recognition event with senior Barnardos personnel and (if possible Department of Education representative) at a future point would impress on volunteers the worthwhile and valued role they play in the overall Barnardos’ agency.
- As noted previously a more culturally diverse group of volunteers and an increased number volunteers from the communities in which schools are based is recommended.
- The timing of recruitment on a rolling basis throughout the year will need consideration if WoW is expanded to ensure adequate number of volunteers. This would help alleviate the delay with Garda clearance requirements and also natural fall off in recruits.
- The amount of training hours volunteers are required to attend are significant. While the induction received by the volunteers is described as comprehensive and helpful there is also an overload of information noted for volunteers to assimilate in the early stages of their involvement with Barnardos and WoW. A more gradual and phased approach where possible is recommended.

- A review of the template for record keeping and the accompanying folder in collaboration with a representative group of volunteers and key Barnardos staff is recommended.

7.5 Conclusion

Barnardos embarked on a detailed and thorough service design process to introduce a new reading support programme, WoW as part of their overall support service to children and their families. Both the focus of the programme; to improve the learning and the emotional wellbeing of children and location (school based sites) were a new departure for Barnardos. The rigour of this process and dedication of the design team resulted in a well researched logical model of reading support based on evidence based initiatives elsewhere.

The WoW programme has been very well received by all key stakeholders involved. Children, their parents, volunteers and agency staff have reported high levels of satisfaction with the programme. Both the initial introduction and the implementation of WoW has been well organised with strong collaborative systems underpinning the ongoing running of the programme. Ensuring the correct target group receive the programme is an ongoing challenge for the WoW team but one that is under review. All stakeholders are very keen that the programme continues with school personnel strongly supporting the continued involvement of Barnardos in WoW with expansion to other schools.

Appendix A

Interview Schedules and Volunteer Questionnaire

Wizards of Words

Questionnaire for Volunteers

Please answer the following questions or indicate your level of agreement by *circling* the appropriate response

All information provided will be treated anonymously

Section 1 Demographic Questions

1. Gender of Respondent Male ❑ Female ❑

2. **Martial Status** Single ❑ Married ❑ Separated/ Divorced ❑

Widowed ❑

3. In which age category do you fall?

1. 55-60 ❑
2. 60-65 ❑
3. 66-70 ❑
4. 71 or over ❑

4. Do you have children? Yes ❑ No ❑

5. Did you complete your education at: Primary Level ❑ Secondary level ❑ Third level ❑

5a. Are you currently working in paid employment? Yes ❑ No ❑

5a. If yes, is it: Part time ❑ Full time ❑

6. Do you have any previous experience of working with children?
Yes ❑ No ❑

If Yes please outline:

_____

6a Have you worked as a volunteer elsewhere before? Yes ❑ No ❑

If Yes please outline: _____

_____

_____

_____

7When did you start to volunteer with WoW? 2007❑ 2008 ❑ 2009❑

7a. How many children do you tutor in a WOW reading session?

One ❑ Two ❑ Three ❑ Four ❑

7b. How far do you live from the school(s) in which you tutor?

Section 2 Your Experience as a WoW volunteer

8 “Overall, I would describe my experience of being a WoW volunteer as”;

Very positive Positive Fair Negative Very Negative Don’t Know

9. How would you rate your experience of the recruitment process for WoW volunteers?

Very good Good Fair Poor Very Poor Don’t Know

10. Overall, how would you describe your experience of the training received to become a WoW volunteer?

Very satisfactory Satisfactory Unsatisfactory Very satisfactory Don’t know

Please outline any further areas you would like training on;

_____

_____

_____

_____

10a Overall, how would you describe your experience of the school induction to becoming a WoW volunteer?

Very satisfactory Satisfactory Unsatisfactory Very satisfactory Don’t know

10b How would you rate the ongoing supports and feedback sessions from Barnardos staff?

Very satisfactory Satisfactory Unsatisfactory Very satisfactory Don’t know

11. How would you rate your level of satisfaction with using the WoW manual?

Very satisfactory Satisfactory Unsatisfactory Very satisfactory Don’t know

12. Are there aspects of the Wow manual that you would change?

Yes ❑ No ❑ Don’t Know ❑

If yes please outline: _____

_____

_____

_____

13. Please outline your level of satisfaction on using the WoW record keeping system;

Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Fairly Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Don't know

If not satisfied please explain: _____

_____

_____

14. How would you describe the WoW reading programme overall ?

Very good Good Fair Poor Very poor Don't know

15. "I have the necessary skills and aptitude to be a Wow volunteer"

Strongly agree Agree Unsure Disagree Strongly disagree Don't know

16. How would you rate the time commitment involved in being a WoW volunteer?

Less than expected As expected More than expected Don't know

17. Overall, has your experience of becoming involved in the WoW programme met with your original expectations?

Yes ❑ No ❑ Don't Know ❑

Please explain: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

18. Would you recommend volunteering with WoW to others?

Yes ❑ No ❑ Don't Know ❑

Please explain: _____

Please use the space below to make any additional comments

Thank you for completing this questionnaire

Please post in stamped addressed envelope to Carmel

Section 3 Your WoW Child

Please complete this section for each child you tutor

1. Please describe your relationship with your WoW child;

Very good Good Fair Poor Very poor Don't Know

2. Have you noticed a change in your WoW child's self esteem?

Yes ❑ No ❑ Don't Know ❑

If Yes; please rate the change;

Greatly Improved	Improved	Somewhat Improved	Somewhat Disimproved	Greatly Disimproved

3.Please give your opinion on your WoW child's experience of the sessions

Very Positive	Positive	Average	Negative	Very Negative	Don't Know

4. Have you noticed a change in your WoW child's reading ability?

Yes ❑ No ❑ Don't Know ❑

If Yes; please rate the level of change;

Greatly Improved	Improved	Somewhat Improved	Somewhat Disimproved	Greatly Disimproved

WoW
Volunteers Focus Group
March 2009

1. Please describe how you got involved with Wow
   (How you heard about the programme, what prompted you to get involved)

2. Once involved, what is your view on the training received from Barnardos?

3. How did you find the induction received form the schools?
   (experience of working in the school setting)

4. What is your view on the ongoing support from Barnardos?
   (Strengths and limitations of <u>all three</u>)

5. Please describe a typical reading session
6. How do you find using the WoW manual?
7. What is your view on the record keeping required as part of the WoW programme?

8. How did you form a relationship with your WoW child (ren)?
   (Please offer specific examples to techniques, approaches used)

9. What was this experience like for you?

10. If you have noticed improvements in your child (ren) self esteem/ confidence please outline examples of this?

(*Please offer specific behaviours, examples of changes in your child behaviour)*

11. Looking back, has been involved in the WoW programme been as you expected?
    (Time commitment)

12. Overall, have you any specific comments on the WoW programme?

13. Have you any additional comments

WoW Parents
Interview Guide

1. How did you hear about the WoW reading programme for _____?
2. Do you know why _____is attending WoW reading
3. What are your thoughts on _____ attending WoW?
4. Does _____ talk about his/ her reading time in WoW?
5. Do you see any change in _____ reading?
6. Do you see any change in _____talking about school?
7. Do you know who _____has reading time with?
8. Is there anything else you would like to say?

Thank you for taking part

Carmel

WoW *Children*

Interview Guide

Q1. Why do you come to Wizard of Word Reading time with *Volunteer name?*

Q2. Do you like coming to the WoW reading time?

Q3. If yes; what do enjoy about your reading time?

Q4. Is there any part of reading you do not enjoy?

Q5. How would you describe *Volunteer name*?

Q6. Who would you talk to if you were not enjoying the reading time?

Q7. Is there anything else you would like to say about reading time?

Thank you for taking part

Carmel

WoW Interview Schedule
Barnardos staff
April 2009

Please answer questions relevant and applicable to your role in Barnardos only.

Programme development

1. From your perspective what is your understanding of why Barnardos developed a literacy support programme?

2. Describe the process of developing the programme?

3. What factors have supported the successful implementation of the programme?
4. What factors have inhibited successful programme implementation?
5. What are the key learning points for future programme implementation from your experience of WoW thus far?

Programme Operation

6. How was the programme initially introduced to schools?
7. On what basis were schools selected to participate in the programme?
8. How receptive have the schools (principals and teachers) been to the programme thus far?
9. Overall, how would you describe relationships between programme staff and principles and teachers?

10. How were volunteers recruited, selected, and inducted to the programme?
11. Overall, how would you describe relationships between programme staff and volunteers?

12. Has the programme operated as you initially intended?
13. If not, in what areas has programme implementation differed from the original model?
14. Is the programme working with the intended children (those envisaged in the programme model?)
    If not, why?

Programme Impact

15. Have you had any feedback on the impact of the programme to date
    - On children?
    - On schools?
    - On volunteers?

Any other comments you would like to add.

Appendix B

Figure 1; Profile of WoW Volunteers

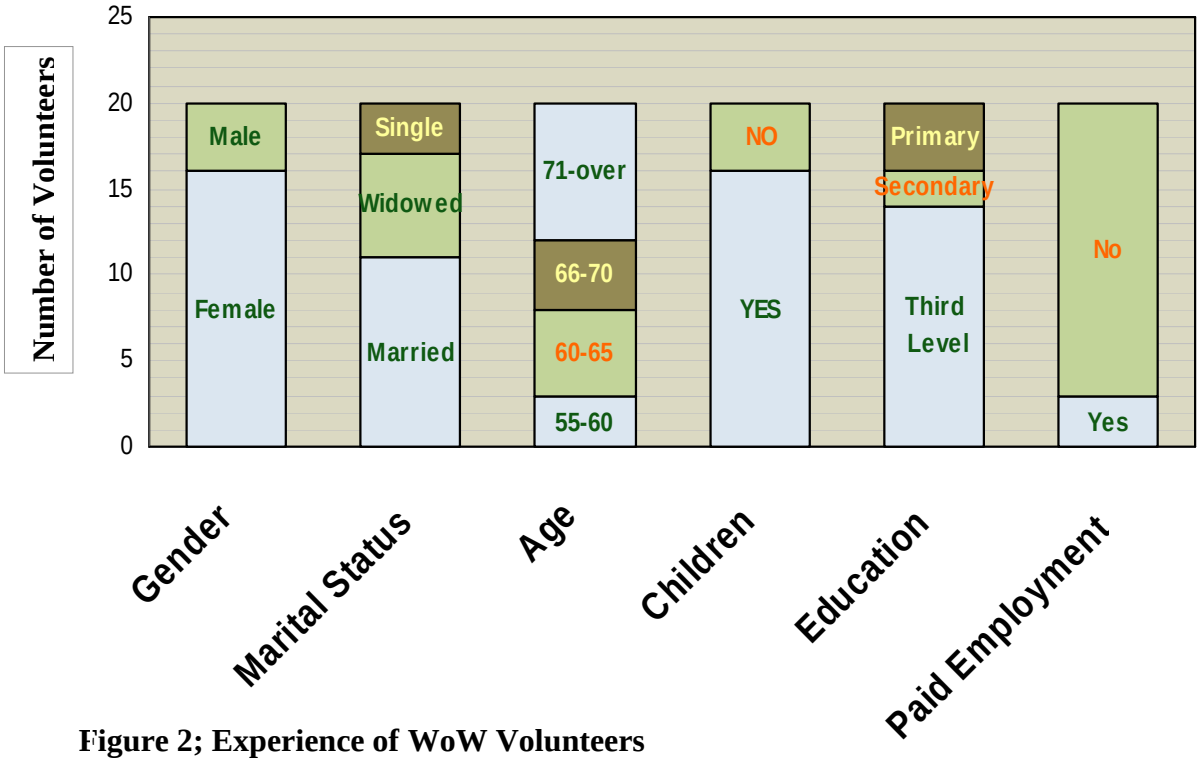

Figure 2; Experience of WoW Volunteers