Learning and Teaching Children´s Literature in Europe - Final Report

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Background

This project is a two-year investigation into the learning and teaching of children's literature in Europe, undertaken by the University of the West of England (UK), the University of Akureyri (Iceland), Gazi University (Turkey) and the University of Murcia (Spain), with funding from the Comenius sub-programme of the European Commission's Lifelong Learning Programme. The aim was to gather, analyse and disseminate information about the current role of children's literature in schools and in children's lives in Europe, focusing particularly on the 8-11 age group. This involved a comparison of reading habits, learning and teaching methods, and the cultural place of reading. The data for the project was gathered largely by means of surveys administered to pupils and teachers, and by focus group interviews conducted with both groups.

The current project combines children's reading views, teachers´ views and the current reading priorities of each partner country: Spain, Turkey, Iceland and England. Equally important is its practical emphasis on outcomes and impact, which will include both general recommendations and highlighting of good practice contained in this report, and a number of Continuing Professional Development packs for use across European countries, using the identified good practice examples. Opportunities will be taken to learn from children and teachers and the project website can be used as a resource both for academic researchers and educational practitioners. The project thus brings together academics and practitioners, ensuring not only a project of academic significance but also one of practical application for the benefit of children within the partner countries, and in support of intercultural understanding and European citizenship goals.

The research group

The participating countries were Spain, Turkey, Iceland and England and the participants were:

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Historical review

To begin with, the project built on work done in a variety of different areas: comparative children's literature (e.g. Emer O'Sullivan, *Comparative Children's Literature* (2005)); comparative work on education and culture (e.g. Robin Alexander, *Culture and Pedagogy* (2000)); single-country reading surveys (e.g. Broddason, 1996, *Declining book reading among Icelandic youth 1968–1991*; Maynard, Mackay, Smyth and Reynolds, *Young People's Reading in 2005* (2008)), pan-European studies of other cultural activities (*Surfing the Net* (2008)) and the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) cited in Lockwood (2008) - comparing the literacy standards of ten-year-old children from 41 countries; as well as previous projects such as the Comenius 3 Network BARFIE.

Children's literature is of interest as a subject in its own right and as a key feature of children's development as readers. Children's literature has an essential role to play in the teaching of reading (Aðalsteinsdóttir, 1982; Appleyard, 1990; Jennings, 2003; Meek, 1991) and then "once children can read to themselves, the quality of the books they read will have a direct influence over their motivation to read and an impact upon their future as readers" (Goodwin, 2008, p. 5). Understanding the connections between the reading processes as the role of literature is of growing significance in the light of shifting reading patterns across Europe (PIRLS).

Reading has long been recognized as a complex activity. In the early twentieth century Huey (1908/1968, p. 6) analysed reading and described it as one of the "most intricate workings of the human mind." Later in the century, Gates (1949, p. 3) stated that reading was a "complex organization of patterns of higher mental processes…[that]… can and should embrace all types of thinking, evaluating, judging, imagining, reasoning, and problem-solving". More recently, Anderson, Hiebert, Scott and Wilkinson (1985, p. 7) compared reading to the "performance of a symphony orchestra".

In the 1980s and 1990s as the literature-based curriculum movement developed, the study of children's literature at school became increasingly important as a field for research. Within this field the complexity of the constructs of literature, readers, and contexts for reading as well the interaction among readers, texts and contexts for reading, all became key focuses for research (Galda, Ash and Cullinan, 2000). The questions posed, the methodologies employed, and the theoretical arguments used in Galda´s et al. (2000) research reflect the complex nature of researching children's literature. Studies on the transactional nature of literary response (Rosenblatt 1978 and 1995), views of reading (Pearson, 1986) and learning (Vygotsky, 1978), together with the influence of contexts on the nature of the reading transaction (Beach, 1993) have deeply influenced

the way children's literature pedagogy has been researched. Studies such as those by Galda and Cullinan (1991), Martinez and Roser (1991), Monson and Peltola (1976), Monson and Sebesta (1991), Morrow (1991), Purves and Beach (1972), Hearne (1988), and Short (1995) have all contributed to a body of research on children's literature teaching, as well as on children´s literature itself.

Early studies of children's literature focused primarily on the preferences and interests of children. Although such lines of enquiry continue, there has also been a growing interest in children's responses to their reading material. Children's and young adults' reading interests and preferences have been the subject of various studies. Monson and Sebesta (1991) have provided theoretical frameworks and broad generalizations concerning interests and preferences which are still used to select books for children. For example, age affects interests, fiction is preferred over non-fiction, and boys and girls prefer different types of books, with boys favouring adventure books and girls enjoying stories about family and school life. Individual differences in terms of abilities and interests as well as cultural, environmental and social influences have all been seen to be decisive factors when analysing children's responses to reading literature (Beach, 1993; Martinez and Roser, 1991).

The National curriculum (2007) in Iceland states that reading ability is the foundation of education; it is the prerequisite and motivation for being interested in reading and able to enjoy literature and teachers are obliged to report upon the importance of reading throughout the primary and secondary school (Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, 2007). When the first PISA surveys was conducted in Iceland, in the year 2000, pupil´s reading comprehension skills in the country were above average, but since it has been measured below average. Since then there has been a considerable decline in pupils´ reading performance, compared to nations scoring the highest. In 2003 though, it was striking, that girls in Iceland showed much better reading comprehension than boys. The main conclusion though was that the difference between schools in the country was smaller than in most of the other countries participating in the PISA survey, which may indicate more social equality in Iceland than in other countries (Jónasson, 2008 pp. 268–269). Broddason has, since 1968, conducted surveys within mass communications. He, and later he and his associates, have provided evidence as to considerable shifts in the voluntary reading habits of Icelandic youth (10–14 year old) as well as demonstrated important social changes, which do have relevance for understanding of the role of children´s reading (Broddason, 1996).

In Turkey, Aytaş (2005) states that reading is as important as observation and listening, and that it has an important function in the completion of these two skills. Unfortunately, studies on reading education are inadequate in this country and published opinions on how to teach children to read tend to be repetitive of each other, but special attention has recently been paid to bringing a different perspective and dimension of evaluation to teaching reading. It has been noted that reading is a skill which is acquired over time, and the reading process and the main elements related to this

process need to be evaluated on a regular basis. The need to work on the various dimensions of reading education, the main problems that might come up during this process, and the practices to be followed in order to solve these problems, is obvious. There is a strong need to consider the fact that reading is something which is not only needed in education and teaching periods but also in every stage of people's lives.

Reading in primary schools in Spain is regulated by the Ley Orgánica de Education (LOE). The LOE (2006) pays specific attention to reading. In the §2 of this law it is stated that "encouraging reading and the use of libraries" is one of the key factors to increase the quality of teaching. In §19 of the same law it is also stated that in primary education "some time will be devoted to reading every day with the objective of increasing reading habits". According to Merlo Vega (2006) in 2001, the Spanish Ministry of Culture initiated its plan to promote reading (Plan de Fomento de la Lectura), which has periodically been reviewed and updated. The national plans encompass different actions relating to the promotion of reading in collaboration with a variety of actors, which always include libraries, publishers and booksellers. Collaboration programmes with schools are usually included as well. Likewise, many regional and municipal authorities have initiated specific plans to promote reading. It should also be mentioned that recent educational legislation has included the promotion of reading as part of the basic content of the educational system. In the 2004 law establishing the primary education curriculum, through a "Plan to Promote Reading and Develop Reading" Comprehension (Plan para el fomento de la lectura y de la Comprensión Lectora). This plan makes it mandatory for all schools to organise reading promotion activities, using the library as an essential resource centre for any school initiatives.

These views of reading provide the background context to research on reading acquisition and the influence that different types of instruction has on the rate of progress in learning and on the way the child attempts to learn.

More recent research on children's habits and attitudes towards reading

Lewis and Ellis (2006) outline the importance of learning to read and suggest the far reaching consequences of mastering, not only the skill of reading but also the development of children who are readers, able to use their skills for pleasure and purpose. An analysis by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) concluded that 'being an enthusiastic reader' and 'being a frequent reader' were more significant in terms of advantage than 'having well-educated parents' (OECD, 2002, p. 3) and 'finding ways to engage students in reading may be one of the most effective ways to leverage social change' (OECD, 2002, p. 3).

The focus of political activity in the United Kingdom has been around the teaching of early reading – how to ensure that all children are able to read with "increasingly cognitive accounts of

reading" but "just because someone is able to read does not mean that he or she will choose to do so" (Clark and Rumbold, 2006, p. 7). An analysis of children's habits and preferences is therefore an essential element of building a picture of the health of a reading country.

In 2001 the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS cited in Lockwood, 2008, p. 5) reported that English pupils came first in terms of attainment in reading for literary purposes [but] were placed 27th in terms of attitudes to reading (Lockwood, 2008, p. 5). This translated, in the PIRLS 2006, to an overall mean score and so ranking of 19 for England, 30 for Spain and 32 for Iceland (Turkey is not part of the PIRLS study). The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) conducts a similar survey with a focus on secondary aged students. In the 2006 study (published in 2007) the UK was ranked 17 (a decline in rankings); Iceland 25; Spain 36 and Turkey 38. Sainsbury and Schagen (2004) in the UK study, *Children's Attitudes to Reading* also identified this decline in children's reading enjoyment.

Since 1968 Broddason and his associates have followed up on his first survey on mass communication, with six additional surveys. In each survey, the respondents have answered the following questions: "If you think carefully, how many books, apart from school-books, do you think you have read during the past 30 days?" (1968 and 1979); and "Have you read any books during the past 30 days?" (Again, the authors exclude books related to school-work) (1985, 1991, 1997, 2003 and 2009). Broddason et. al. (2009) have presented results that indicate a drastic decline in book reading among children and youth in Iceland. All the above surveys have shown a clear difference in reading habits in terms of gender and age, with girls reading more than boys and young children reading more than youth (Broddason, 1996; Broddason, Ólafsson and Karlsdóttir, 2009; Broddason, Ólafsson and Karlsdóttir, 2010). Broddason et al. (2010) trace this consistent trend in reading habits to the growing importance and prominence of television and more recently other new media, particularly the internet. The authors state that the overall trend between 1968 and 2003 is unmistakeable. The ranks of "non-readers" are growing especially fast. However, the last survey in 2009 revealed an exception, as book reading among children and youth had risen. This growth in reading, the authors explain, may be caused by the emphasis and campaigns in reading within schools in the country.

Sainsbury and Schagen (2004) emphasize Twist's (2004) suggestion that a decline in the enjoyment of reading is a long term phenomenon, which may be resistant to the influence of teachers, a number of reports (Office for standards in education (OFSTED), 2004 and 2005) have identified the significant role of the class teacher and school leadership in developing positive reading attitudes, dispositions and habits.

The first national plan to promote reading in Spain was initiated in 2001 and extended until 2004. Among the activities included as part of this plan were numerous publications and national

conferences for reading and library specialists. A sizeable budget was earmarked for advertising reading campaigns on television, radio, and in the press, and for advertisements on bus shelters and in stations, in cinemas and in football stadiums. Education-related initiatives included a parents' guide to beginning reading, literary tours for secondary-school students and author visits to schools. Another action that focused on elementary and secondary schools was the creation of the Reading Promotion Award (Premio de Fomento de la Lectura), aimed at recognising the schools themselves. In the first plan, as would occur with the subsequent ones, a large part of the budget was allocated to public libraries, to building and restoring facilities in order to expand public reading areas or to providing free Internet access at these libraries. One noteworthy experience from this plan, which is still active because it has proven to be so useful, is the Reading Guidance Service (Spanish acronym SOL, http://www.sol-e.com), where books for children and young people are featured and discussed (Federación de Gremios, 2007).

Baker, Dreher and Guthrie (2000) identified the benefits of reading and so the more a person reads the greater the benefits in terms of reading skills, abilities and wider knowledge. Those who choose not to read, we may conclude, are not only making a choice about how they use their time but also, possibly unknowingly influencing their future abilities, skills and understandings. Cox and Gutherie (2001) found that the amount that children read for enjoyment is a major contributor to their reading achievement. Juel (1988) as cited in Clark and Rumbold (2006) reflects on the "vicious circle in which poor readers remain poor readers." Pressley (2000) details how extensive reading promotes fluency, vocabulary and background knowledge. Irwin (2003) identifies what she calls "*aliteracy*": the lack of a reading habit in capable readers who choose not to read. So encouraging children to develop regular reading habits, positive attitudes to reading and the ability to make informed choices about their reading is essential. This is summed up clearly in the report *Literature Circles, Gender and Reading for Enjoyment*:

> Children who say that they enjoy reading and who read for pleasure in their own time do better at school. Reading for enjoyment is positively associated with reading attainment and writing ability (OECD, 2002). Pupils who read for pleasure also demonstrate a wider general knowledge (Wells, 1986), a better understanding of other cultures (Meek, 1991) and more complex insights regarding human nature, motivations and decision making (Bruner, 1996; Cunningham and Stanovich, 1998).
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> Allan, Ellis and Pearson, 2005, p. 5

It is worth noting that when considering children's reading preferences Clark and Rumbold (2006, p. 13) have found that research findings are also likely to present only a temporal snapshot of children's and young people's reading preferences.

Motivation and encouragement

Children need to be motivated to become good and enthusiastic readers. Motivated readers seek to understand; they enjoy learning and they believe in their reading abilities. They are intrinsically motivated; read with involvement and curiosity, and enjoy the challenge of reading. These qualities are good predictors of children's reading frequency and comprehension.

In the report, *A review of Inspection Evidence - English 2000–05*: (Ofsted, 2005) it was recognised that teachers often selected texts not because of their quality and 'opportunity for personal response to the ideas and feelings' but because they offered a 'kind of manual' for the teaching of writing. Moss (2010, p. 228) considered the transition of children from supported readers to independent readers and found that "input from school has a vital role in encouraging children to find things they think are worth reading' and suggested that teachers needed to "extend and diversify" the reading experiences of children. The development of a 'community of readers' (Cremin, Mottran, Collins and Powell, 2008; Moss, 2010) is seen as paramount as part of the pedagogy of the teaching of reading.

The school is one setting that children can learn the value of literature, and the value of becoming a reader. Cremin et al. (2007, p. 2) found that teachers themselves say they lack time to read personally for pleasure and have a limited knowledge of children's books, relying on their own childhood experiences of books despite the growing number of quality children's literature on offer. Cremin et al. (2007, p. 11) also found many teachers continued to read aloud to their class for pleasure but that this reading aloud diminishes. Whilst the majority of teachers used literature in the classroom a relatively high number [noted] the use of literature as purely functional.

An example of project that describes the motivated reader has been carried out in Akureyri, Iceland, run by the town library and the town museum. This is a summer reading course for children age 7–11 years, who are interested readers and therefore convenient subjects for recording what makes children active readers. Interviews with all the children revealed that there is much reading in the children's homes and their parents read for them when they were small. They like exciting and funny books, and in addition to being very active, practicing sports and music, they said they read a lot, most of them every day. They like reading in the evening and during the winter and attend libraries frequently, not least the school library. They like to discuss books with their friends and their mothers. They found it hard to explain the reading habits of their friends, but said it was important to recommend books to others. These children seemed to have a notable self-perception (Þórarinsdóttir, 2009).

Clark, Osborne and Akerman (2008) discussed the role of children's self-perceptions as readers and the influence this had on their future reading. It was found that children perceived a

particular sort of text as being valid within school and this was the sort of text they based their self-perception as a reader on. The research highlighted a discrepancy between pupils' own reading choices and the materials they perceive to be promoted by schools (2008, p. 21). Fiction books were seen to be privileged in school and not reflected in children's own reading habits. Millard (1997) argues that there is also a gendered bias in the reading curriculum offered to children, favouring fiction over non-fiction.

Gambrell (1996, p. 20) identifies some key factors in developing reading motivation in the classroom, "teacher who is a reading model; access to a book rich classroom environment; being able to choose books oneself; being familiar with books; social interactions with others about books; incentives that reflect the value of reading."

Guthrie et al. (1996, p. 323) suggest classroom activities with text should allow children choice and collaboration emphasising the social construction of meaning. OECD (2002), as cited in Lockwood (2008) adds the importance of making links between reading inside and outside the classroom. The nature and quality of classroom interaction therefore, determines children's "rich understanding of texts [in] a rapidly changing world" (Dombey, 2010, p. 176). She considers this in relation to the purposes of using literature in the classroom with a focus on 'Cultural Transformation' as oppose to 'Cultural Reproduction'. Dialogic teaching, it is argued, is 'an agent' of this transformation. If reproduction of cultural values and philosophy is required then monological teaching is sufficient but potentially detrimental to a child's development and self-perception as a reader.

Guthrie (2008) identifies six practices which serve as principles for supporting more engaged classroom reading which include: using knowledge goals; linking real-world experience to reading; supporting students' autonomy; using a variety of texts; learning collaboratively and encouraging the use of cognitive strategies.

The classroom reading environment is also important in supporting both enthusiastic readers and less skilled readers (see e.g. Eggertsdóttir, 2009; Óladóttir, 2010). Some features of positive reading environments include: book-displays which are accessible, well organised and clearly labelled; the inclusion of a range of texts including books that support learning to read, picture books, poetry, information books, traditional tales from a range of cultures, funny books, puzzle books, comics and magazines, children's own published texts, stories on CD/tape with accompanying books; books related to class topics on display in the room alongside interactive displays and a carpeted book area for browsing and collaborative reading with maybe posters inviting children to read and cushions and plants to make the area attractive. In addition, there may be a class reading journal or wall display of children's comments on the books which they have read; talking books may

be available on the classroom computer and there may be multiple sets of some books for guided reading.

In the UK there has been much debate contrasting the use of reading scheme books with 'real books'. Using a reading scheme, children typically read their way through a graded series of books with carefully controlled vocabulary until they become competent and confident readers. The sequence of their reading is thus determined and choice permitted within a limited range of similar books. In contrast, schools favouring a more progressive approach to reading have encouraged the adoption of 'real' books – books written by 'real' authors who are not constrained by controlled vocabulary and particular sentence constructions (Wyse and Jones, 2001).

Recent research questions the advantages of reading schemes for developing competent readers and indeed for low achieving pupils. Solity (2006) cites studies which suggest that too great a concentration on basic reading schemes is not appropriate and these children in particular need to experience a combination of both real books together with a focus on core phonic and sight vocabulary skills.

The limitations of reading schemes in motivating and introducing children to a range of interesting and exciting literature have been noted by scholars for several decades (Meek, 1988; Beard, 1990) and Bruner (1984) cited in Browne (2009) observes that scheme books do not provide opportunities for children to enter into real world experiences. The limitations of schemes in developing positive attitudes to reading were also noted by Her Majesty's Inspectorate (HMI) in England in their report on *Reading for Purpose and Pleasure* (Office for standards in education, 2004).

It could be argued therefore that children may receive a variety of messages about the value of reading and also ways in which reading different texts are enjoyed. Monson (1995) cites three questions to consider in selecting literature: "Does the book succeed in arousing emotions? Is the book well written? Is the book meaningful?" (Monson, 1995, p. 113). These are useful guidelines to consider when selecting literature in the classroom. Besides content, the layout of the book should also be taken into account. Some characteristics such as the number of pages, size of print, use of illustrations may be crucial deciding factors in children's choices (Browne, 2009).

The teaching of reading

Children have different approaches to reading and Beers (2003) categorises readers as motor readers, auditory or visual readers. Motor readers vocalise or move their lips as they read and as a result, their speed of reading slows down because they artificially keep their speed down to the rate at which they can pronounce words. Such an approach may lead to poor comprehension since readers are concentrating more on the mechanics of reading instead of reading for ideas. Auditory

readers on the other hand 'hear' the words they read, but they do not sub-vocalize to themselves. Thus auditory reading is faster than motor reading and auditory readers may be seen as more skilful. The fastest readers are visual readers. Visual readers understand words and phrases without saying and hearing them. They read with their eyes and mind, not with their mouths or ears.

Beers' categories are examples of different approaches to reading which have profound implications for the ways in which reading is taught. There has been much debate about the teaching and learning of reading in England and since the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy (NLS) in 1998 the teaching of phonics as the prime approach to the teaching of early reading has been controversial. Goswami (2005) suggests that the orthography of English, in comparison with other languages, presents considerable challenges to the beginner reader. English has an opaque orthography, with graphemes often representing more than one sound and sounds being represented by more than one grapheme. Phonics, as an approach to the teaching of early reading is therefore not without its difficulties. Since the introduction of the NLS various reports have focused on the teaching of early reading with the most significant, The Independent Review of the teaching of early reading, by Rose for the Department For Children, Schools and Families (DCSF, 2006). Following this review the 'searchlights model' of reading that had been used in schools (a model that suggested the beginner reader draws on a range of cues to read) was replaced by Gough and Tunmer's (1986); Simple View of Reading. The Simple View of Reading identifies two components to reading: word recognition processes and language comprehension. With a recent change in government the focus on word recognition processes has intensified, with the publication of 'The Importance of Teaching' (Department For Education (DFE), 2010) which states that the evidence is clear that the teaching of systematic synthetic phonics is the most effective way of teaching young children to read, particularly for those at risk of having problems with reading. The English National Curriculum sets out the requirements for the teaching of reading and descriptions of national expectations for reading as well as identifying phonics alongside other strategies to teach reading. The National Curriculum is due to be revised in the light of the new guidance on the teaching of reading in 2012/13. It also details the range and scope of reading children should be engaged with as they develop as readers and sets out a genre range for study alongside how children should be engage with and appreciate text.

In Iceland, the primary literacy teaching occurs the first three years of school (6–9 years old). For these years it is a regular part of school, but thereafter it is less frequent. After this period uncertainty prevails concerning who is responsible for teaching literacy (Leiknisdóttir, Guðmundsdóttir, Björnsdóttir, Jónsdóttir and Jónsson, 2009). Eggertsdóttir (2009) states that in the middle years (10–14), reading rather than literacy, is practiced rather than taught. Further she claims that pupils in general have not been prepared to read to learn, and therefore they may face

comprehension difficulties when reading. Her view is consistent with an OECD-study, in which Icelandic students' comprehension skills were shown to be below average within the OECD countries, and the PISA 2006 testing proved children's comprehension was deteriorating (Halldórsson, Ólafsson and Björnsson, 2007). Notably, the outcomes from the PISA 2009 survey on reading comprehension among 15 year olds in Iceland, showed a progress in reading comprehension among these pupils, as only 10 out of 68 countries that participated in the survey showed significantly better results in reading comprehension (Menntamálaráðuneytið, 2010). This change is very important, and may indicate better teaching in reading in primary schools in the country.

Leiknisdóttir et al. (2009) claim that it is important to formally organise reading instruction in the country, not least because of children who experience reading difficulties and students in education who need more formal practice in teaching reading.

Since 2004, Eggertsdóttir (2009) has been implementing an interactive balanced reading approach – *Beginning Literacy* – in 1st and 2nd grade in schools in Iceland, now endorsed all over the country. This has been administered by the Center of School Development at the University of Akureyri. Since 2006, 67 schools out of 174 schools in the country have signed a contract with the Centre to take up *Beginning Literacy* (Eggertsdóttir, 2011). Eggertsdóttir (2009) explains that the approach highlights inclusive practices, collaboration and active participation of pupils as well as integrated language arts. Participating teachers have stated that the approach offers rich opportunities to work with vocabulary, comprehension, comprehension strategies, creative work and autonomy as well as authentic writing. Comparison of outcomes reveal that pupils using *Beginning Literacy* succeed at least as well as pupils taught by other methods and that boys get good results with this approach.

In Spain the "2005-2006 Plan to Promote Reading" was based on six lines of action:

1. Development of analysis tools to learn the current situation of reading, libraries and bookshops: statistics on reading and book-buying habits, maps and an observatory for bookshops, statistics about public libraries.
2. Projects targeting the student population at schools: literary meetings at secondary schools, university visits by Spanish authors and the "Why read the classics" programme (Porqué leer a los clásicos?)
3. Projects to develop public libraries as centres to promote reading: the renovation of libraries and construction of new ones, the expansion of new technologies, and above all, the continuation of the special plan for the allocation of resources to libraries.
4. Communication activities: television and cinema advertising campaign, different fixed and audiovisual advertising initiatives.
5. Activities to encourage reading: Taking books to the streets campaign (Libros a la calle) programmes to stimulate reading in small towns, participation at

fairs, assistance to bookshops and schools, collaboration with foundations, associations and NGOs working in this area.

6. Actions to develop awareness and cooperation with other institutions, in collaboration with Ministries, foundations and other public and private institutions.

The significance of the home- and socio economic environment

Clark and Rumbold (2006) conclude that parents are amongst the most important literacy teachers and cite Flouri and Buchanan (2004) who identify parental involvement in their child's literacy practices as a more powerful force than other family background variables such as social class, family size and level of parental education. The home environment therefore, in terms of the attitudes, habits, preferences and practices seems to play a significant role in shaping the readers of the future and their relationship with literature.

Csikszentmihalyi (1991) noted that children who saw adults gaining pleasure from reading assumed themselves that reading was both meaningful and helpful. The amount of literacy materials in the home was found to be linked to reading achievement and cognition (Close, 2001). It is not just the environment of the home that influences children's attitudes and abilities as readers but also the nature of the interactions that parents have with their children. Hockenberger, Goldstein and Haas (1999) suggest that if parents talk to children whilst they are reading, relating the book to home experiences and commenting on what is being read, children's literacy skills develop. The dialogic teaching of the classroom can in fact, have a natural home in the parent child relationship. In Turkey, several scholars have stated the importance of parents, teachers and friends, being a role model for reading habits (Dökmen, 1994; Özçelebi ve Cebecioğlu, 1990; Özen, 2001).

The benefits of reading aloud in the classroom may also be replicated in the home. Close (2001) cites numerous studies (Clark, 1976; Stainthrop, 1999; Weinberger, 1996; Wells, 1987) that conclude the benefits of reading aloud to children. These benefits include the development of their reading abilities, knowledge of vocabulary and contexts, comprehension and understanding of literary structures.

Clark and Hawkins (2010, p. 30) conducted a survey on behalf of the National Literacy Trust of the United Kingdom and found that book ownership in the home correlated strongly with greater 'reading frequency' which has been discussed earlier in this paper as a key determiner of both reading ability and positive attitudes to reading. They also identified a 'gap in access to resources (particularly books) between boys' and girls' and between children from different socio economic groups.

Socio-economic background, social class and education have been the subject of much research: Ball (1990 and 2000) considers the role of social class, effect on pupil achievement

implications for educational policy. Bourdieu (2004) explores the notion of social or cultural capital in education. Both may offer some relevant theoretical perspectives. Specifically, with regards to literacy Kellett (2009) considers the impact of poverty on literacy drawing on the work of Machin and McNally (2006) who undertook a review of research on Education and child poverty. Chall (1990, p. 3) considered similar concerns in America, finding that as many as one-third of children from low income families were reading a year or more below their cognitive abilities.

Comprehension

As we read we engage and interact with the words; we make the words 'mean' for us, in our own situations as part of our personal experiences of the world. As David (2007, p. 17) suggests, 'Comprehension without meaningful experience is difficult even for adults.'

Paris (2005) identifies two sets of reading skills, 'constrained' and 'unconstrained'. 'Constrained' reading skills are often acquired quickly but their influence on reading achievement is limited to the early stages of reading. 'Unconstrained' reading skills, including knowledge and understanding of vocabulary and comprehension, are parts of an ongoing, lifelong process (Hall, 2006). It is these 'unconstrained' skills that are at the heart of what makes a reader. Stanovich (1980) cited in Fisher, Brooks and Lewis (2002) used these ideas in the 'Interactive-Compensatory' model of reading comprehension that identified word recognition and comprehension working together to elicit meaning from text. Goodwin (2005) suggests these skills are part of an "active process of readers engaging with what they have read". Browne further suggests that comprehension involves:

> ... discovering hidden meanings as well as what is obvious. It means looking closely at how texts have been written. It involves deciding whether this is a book I care about and being able to give reasons for that decision (Browne, 2009, p. 34).

Smith (2005, p. 2) puts it another way, "reading is a habit of the mind, not an accumulation of skills. It is a way of thinking not a portfolio of competencies". Goodwin (2005) suggests there is no difference between "comprehension" and "response to text". Kispal's (2008) research report for the Department for Children, Schools and Families, on the teaching of inference, suggest there is a range of skills required for reading comprehension. These skills are similar to those of listening comprehension because they draw on the same skill set. These include the linguistic skills of vocabulary knowledge, grammatical skills, pragmatic abilities and metalinguistic awareness and cognitive resources which are essential for both reading and listening comprehension. They are also a repertoire of response to reading – avenues for discussion, avenues for thinking about what we are reading, avenues that form our habits of the mind. The development of these interrelated skills is dependent on the texts that teachers choose to use. Kispal (2008, p. 47) identified a range of

considerations for choosing texts for teaching including selecting texts that were relevant to children and their interests and that provided opportunities to infer.

The USA National Reading Panel's report (2000) suggested the teaching of five key strategies for reading comprehension: prediction, questioning, clarifying, imagining and summarising. These strategies enable the reader to build a mental model of the text as it is being read. Kintsch and Rawson (2005) called this mental model the "situation model" and suggested reading comprehension is dependent on its construction.

The term reading comprehension in the English primary classroom is often used to describe a written activity that involves the reading of an extract, whose content has little or no relationship to a context relevant to the child, followed by answering a set of questions. Harrison (2002, p. 13) cites the work of Lunzer and Gardner (1975) and Bloomer (1966) and says if these sorts of exercises on which teachers have relied for decades to play their part in reading development, may be a more or less a complete waste of time. In fact children engaged in these activities spent less than 5 per cent of their time reading, but used 65 per cent of their time writing. What is missing, according to Smith (2005), is making explicit the process of comprehension and the active engagement with the text. If the process is not made explicit for the learner then they have to rely on the meaning making processes they already have. They are not being introduced to new ways of thinking. These decontextualised experiences of reading and the lack of opportunities for interaction with text (Burns and Myhill, 2004) conspire to develop children into children that are able to read but are not readers. Martin (2003, p. 14) expresses this as not teaching children to read as a minimum entitlement but focusing on "teaching for the maximum entitlement – to become a reader for life."

Meek (1988) concludes that what we learn about reading, we learn from what we read; it is texts themselves that teach readers how to read. The important element of the teaching of reading is therefore about the selection and use of texts in the classroom. Some texts are better than others at teaching children how to tune into a text and to think about it (Smith, 2005, p. 34). Some demand little of the reader: they do not use unusual or challenging vocabulary; they do not have multiple layers of meaning; they do not challenge our view of ourselves or the world. Pressley and Afflerbach (1995) drew together research on reading comprehension and used this to offer teachers effective pedagogic approaches. Underpinning this was the understanding that comprehension was enhanced through engagement with the text (Harrison, 2002, p. 17). "The teacher therefore plays a crucial role in selecting texts that will engage children, selecting texts that offer possibilities for interaction (asking why questions, reciprocal reading) active engagement (generating mental images and activation of prior knowledge) and transactional strategies (discovering texts alongside other children and the teacher)" (Ibid, 2002, p. 17).

The Project - Method

The aim of the project

The aim of the project was to undertake a two-year investigation into the learning and teaching of children's literature in Europe. The aim was to gather, analyse and disseminate information about the current role of children's literature in schools and in children's lives in four countries in Europe; Spain, Turkey, Iceland and England, focusing particularly on 8–11 year old children. This involved a comparison of reading habits, learning and teaching methods, and the cultural place of reading. The aim was also to produce recommendations with regards to:

a) best practice in learning and teaching
b) criteria for the choice and range of texts selected for teaching in schools and
c) strategies for promoting international (and particularly pan-European) awareness of children's literature

The project also produced case study material for continuing professional development of teachers, a website for discussion and dissemination, and a series of dissemination and discussion events for academics and teachers.

The project aimed to identify and disseminate good practice in the learning and teaching of children's literature across national boundaries, and to identify how children's literature is best used to improve literacy skills and to encourage reading for pleasure.

The project has the possibility to increase teachers' cultural and diversity awareness through exposure to children's literature on a European-wide scale, and to provide a platform for networking and the sharing of best practice for teachers.

The procedure

Children´s own experience of reading in schools and at home was investigated through a questionnaire, as well as teachers´ experiences and approaches to children´s literature in class. In order to aid the analysis, focus groups were used to discuss various aspects of children's literature. The questionnaire was administered in schools in the Murcia region in Spain; the city of Ankara, Turkey; Akureyri and Húsavík in Iceland; and the city of Bristol, England.

The questionnaire was administered during the spring of 2010. The questionnaire was first piloted on a group of students and teachers, in all the participating countries, in order to acquire appropriate feedback. In order to eliminate possible misunderstanding, by students and teachers, of concepts and constructs central to the study, the questionnaire was designed in group sessions by the research team, which included members from all the participating countries.

It was decided to select schools, based on a convenient sample that would secure an appropriate number of participants, including (where applicable) an economic and cultural cross-section of the schools in the participating cities. In order to help with carrying out a comparison between the countries, each country would survey a similar number of students as well as teachers. Educational authorities were contacted and appropriate permits received. The study was presented to parents, giving them the opportunity to withdraw their children from the survey. Questionnaires could be answered and submitted online through the project's webpage (http://www.um.es/childrensliterature/site/). In all the countries, except Turkey, the participants answered the questionnaires electronically and had the assistance of class teachers and IT teachers. In Turkey both children and teachers answered using a paper survey, administered and collected by the research team.

The participants

In Spain, seven schools were chosen for the survey. One of the schools is a private school, with approximately 1500 students, located in the city centre and attended by children whose parents belong to a higher or middle social-class. Another school is a public school in the suburbs of Murcia, attended mostly by immigrant-children and children more inclined to have a difficult family- and social circumstances. For a high number of those children, Spanish is a second language. The rest of the schools surveyed are public schools, located in small villages surrounding the city. Most of the families have a low-medium income level and work in the service sector and jobs linked to agriculture.

In Turkey, five schools were chosen for the survey. The schools are from the capital city, Ankara and the schools were chosen to represent different socio economic levels of the city. Two schools are close to city centre and have more facilities; most of the parents of those children are working in the service sector. The others schools are more crowded and have fewer facilities; the parents of these students generally have a lower income level. The students speak Turkish as a native language and a high percent of the students are same origin (Turkish) and they are Muslim. All the schools are required to follow the same curriculum implemented by the Ministry of Education.

In Iceland, eight schools were chosen for the survey. They are operated by local municipalities, like almost all schools in Iceland. Seven of the schools are located in town of Akureyri and the one in Húsavik, a neighbour town. With few exceptions the first language of the participating students is Icelandic. All schools are to follow the same curriculum. All the participating schools are operated by local authorities. One of the schools is especially prepared to accept immigrant students.

In England, seven schools were chosen for the survey. All are state-run schools, located in different areas of Bristol, catering to a variety of economic, ethnic and religious populations. They

range from a school from a relatively deprived inner city area, with a high proportion of children speaking English as a second language and/or having Special Education Needs to a school from an affluent area of the city, at which a large proportion of parents are employed in professional or academic jobs. Also included are schools from the suburbs and from the large housing estates at the edge of the city; as well as schools with a religious (Roman Catholic and Church of England) ethos.

Analysis and ethics

Questionnaire responses were coded and entered in a SPSS data structure. The quantitative and qualitative data were analysed according to the following independent variables:

> Children: *Background information, Reading and reading habits out of school, book covers, reading in school.*

> Teachers: *Background information, using children´s literature in class, What is important when selecting children´s literature for teaching, reading habits, who is reasonable for promoting reading for pleasure, reading aims, strategies and processes.*

The relationships between variables and various issues that the study aimed to explore, such as "use of children's´ literature in class" or "reading habits", were examined. A chi-square test was used to determine whether or not a significant relationship existed between variables. The chi-square test is the most widely used tests of significance when dealing with nominal data (Ary, Jacobs, Razavieh and Sörensen, 2006).

Further, focus group interviews were conducted in each country with groups of teachers and children's. In each country, two focus group of teachers with six teacher in each group, and six groups of children with four children in each group, was organized. All of the participants came from schools who had participated in the survey. The interviews were taken in the spring 2010 and analysed in each country. All interviewees gave their consent to the use of the data for the purpose of the study. Questions on book covers were dispensed with as they seem not to apply to the children, the answers to them were few and unsystematic.

Data collection may be regarded as a transaction in which it is usually fairly obvious that the researcher stands to gain. On the other hand the respondents seemed to be asked to give time, thought, privacy and effort. Anything that will make this transaction less unequal and one-sided will help the quality of responses (Oppenheim, 1992, p. 82). Negotiating access is a balanced act (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983). When negotiating access the researcher needs to give clear information about the research, its aim and process, and the strict confidence in treating data.

Permission was requested and granted from appropriate authorities in each country to perform the research. Local school authorities granted permission and a letter with description, aim and procedure of the research where sent to schools and then to children's parents as parents gave their approval of their children's´ participation.

Survey Results - Children

Background information and analysis

In this section information about the number of children participating in each country, age of the children and their gender is presented. There is also an analysis of children's responses to questions related to their background. Children were asked questions like: how many siblings they have, if they have a private room, coverage of books in their home, their access to the internet, whether adults read for them or not and whether they buy their own books or not.

In all a total of 2965 children from schools in England, Iceland, Turkey and Spain answered the questionnaire (see Figure 1).
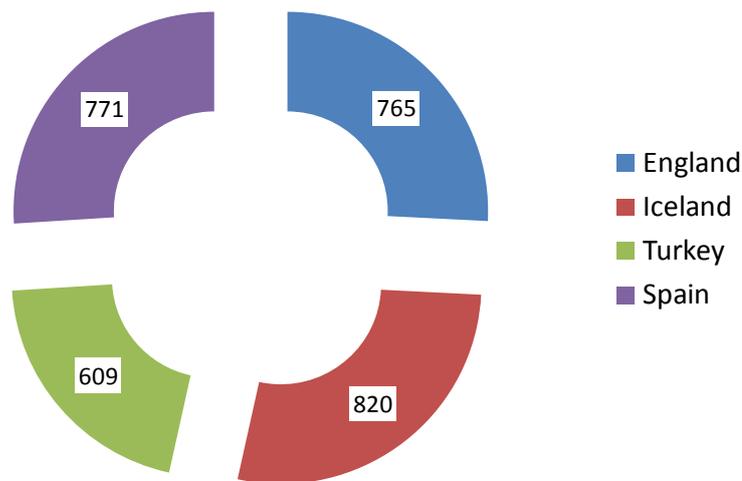
Figure 1. In which country is your school?

The number of participants in each country varies from 609 up to 820, in a proportion of 21% to 28% of the total number of participants. Children were 7 to 11 years old. The proportion of children in differing age group is further disseminated in Figure 2.

	7 years	8 years	9 years	10 years	11 years
Spain		18%	31%	36%	15%
Turkey	1%	13%	37%	35%	14%
Iceland	1%	16%	31%	37%	15%
England	6%	24%	27%	27%	16%

0%   100%
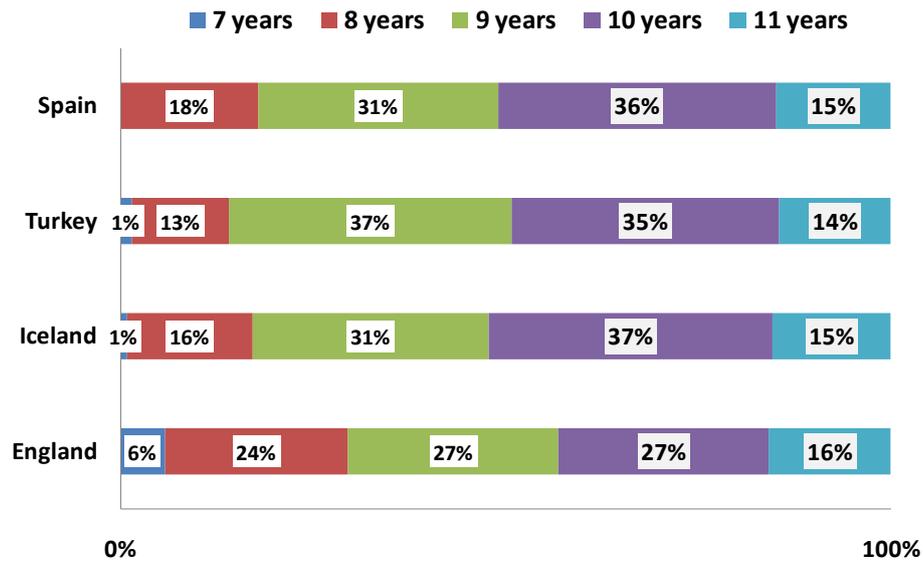
Figure 2. How old are you?

The distribution of participants by age varies somewhat, as seen in Figure 2. A few children are among the 7 years old and a clear majority is in the age groups 9 or 10 years old. In total this age group varies between 54–72%. Distribution by age is most equal for the English children while the distribution is less evenly spaced for the Turkish children.

	Boy	Girl
Spain	48%	52%
Turkey	52%	48%
Iceland	51%	49%
England	49%	51%

0%   100%
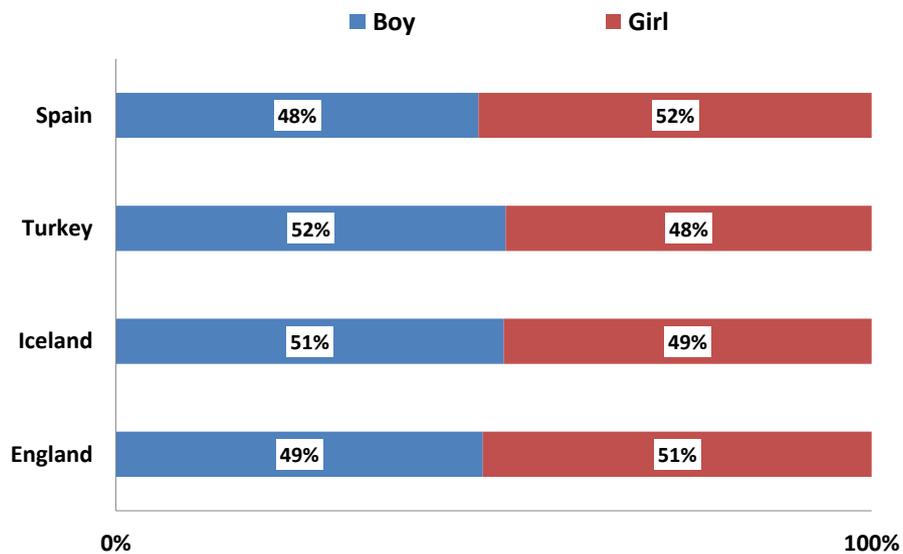
Figure 3. Are you a boy or a girl?

Overall the distribution by gender is very equal and varies only slightly between samples, as can be seen in Figure 3.
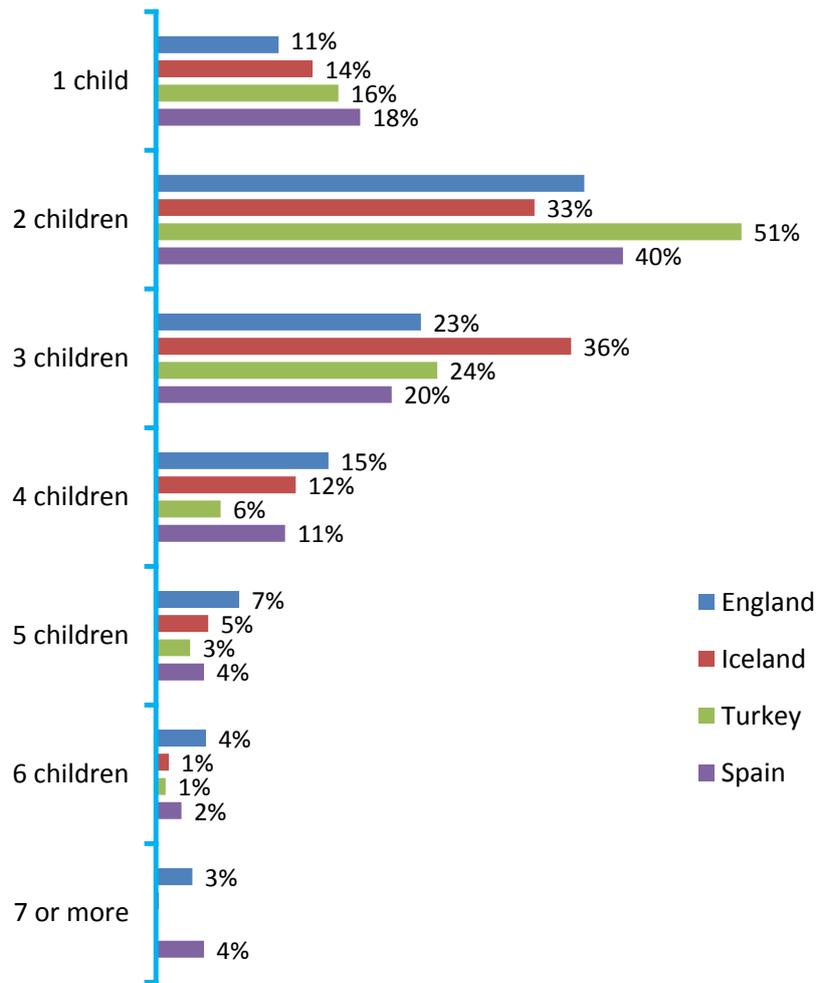
Figure 4. Number of children in the home, including themselves

Figure 4 shows that 10% to 17% of the children are "a single child" in their home and around 60% of the children say there are two or three children (themselves included) at home. There is a notable difference between countries, especially where there are two or three children at home. This is seen where 51% of the Turkish children, two children live in the home, and where 36% of the Icelandic children, three children live in the home.

None **Some** **A lot**

Spain	1% 31%	68%
Turkey	16% 49%	34%
Iceland	14%	86%
England	4% 35%	61%

0%　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　100%
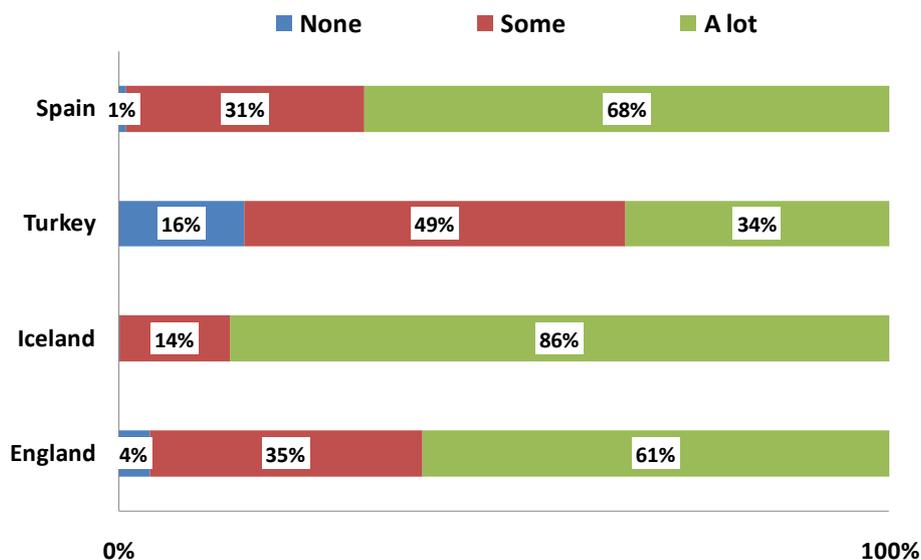
Figure 5. Does your family have books in your home?

The children from Iceland are most dissimilar in their attitude, claiming that there are a lot of books in their home (86%), while the Turkish children responses show more children saying that there are none or only some books. There is a significant difference related to age overall in that younger children are more likely than older to say that there are no books at home. Closer analysis reveals that even though this is not a strong indicator in Spain and Iceland, the data were so significant in Turkey and England that it warranted mention.

None **Some** **A lot**

Spain	2% 35%	62%
Turkey	3% 21%	76%
Iceland	3% 41%	56%
England	6% 45%	49%

0%　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　100%
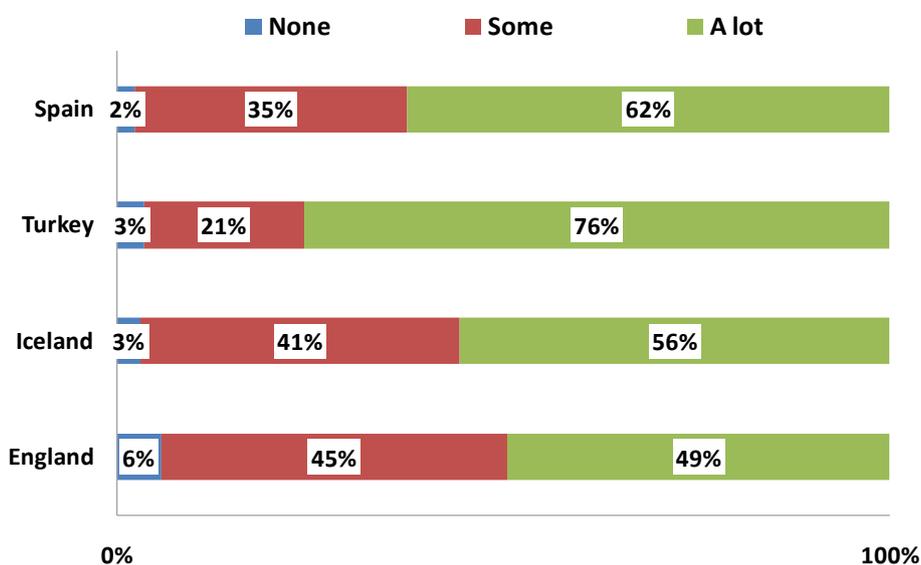
Figure 6. Are there any children's books in your home?

When asked specifically about children's books answers also vary, although not as much as in the earlier question about "books at home". The response from Icelandic children about books at their home is not as decisive in this case, and although 16% of the Turkish children say there are no books at home only 3% say there are no children's books at home. Overall there is no significant difference in responses related to age but there is a difference related to gender, in favour of girls.

No　　**Yes**

Spain	35%	65%
Turkey	28%	72%
Iceland	11%	89%
England	34%	66%

0%　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　100%
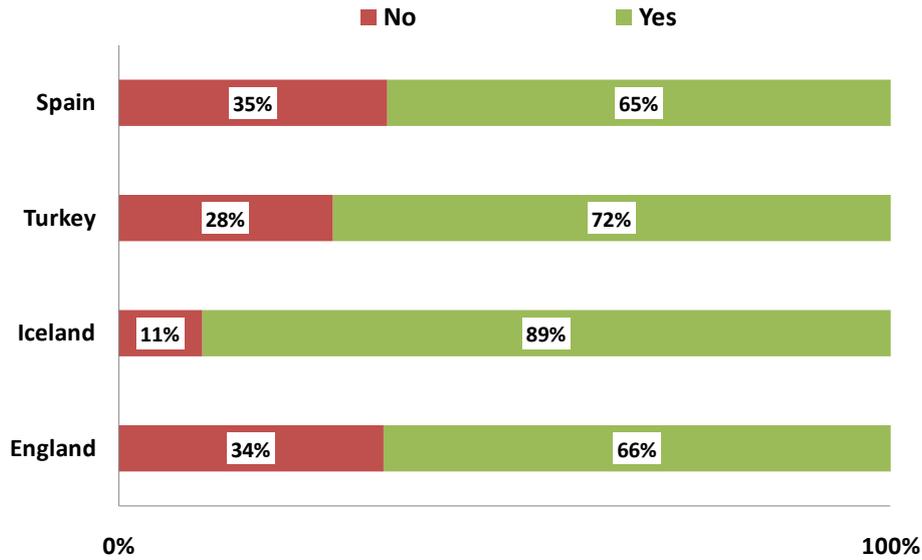
Figure 7. Do you have a room to yourself at home?

In Iceland, 89% of the children say that they have their own room at home (Figure 7). A slightly smaller proportion of children from Turkey say they have their own room at home (72%). Around two thirds of the Spanish and English children also have their own room at home, 65% in Spain and 66% in England. Only in responses from the Spanish children is there a significant difference related to age. This is not linear, and shows a Yes response from 8 years to 10 years but then dropping down in the 11 years group. There is no difference in responses related to gender.

No　　**Yes**

Spain	27%	73%
Turkey	36%	64%
Iceland	2%	98%
England	8%	92%

0%　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　100%
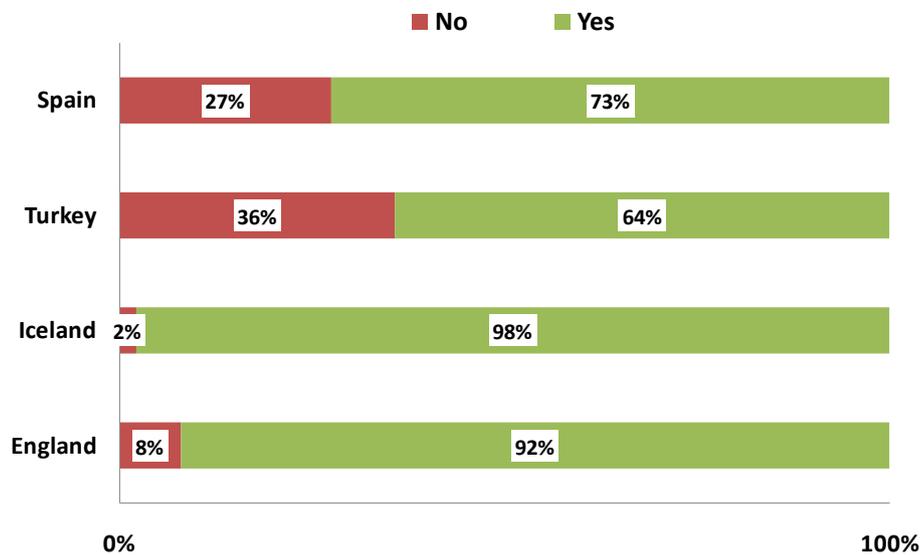
Figure 8. Do you have internet at home?

A total of 98% of the Icelandic children and 92% of the English children have access to the internet at home. Although a majority of children in Spain and Turkey have access to the internet at home, over a third of children have no internet access. This indicates a difference in the children's experience and background.
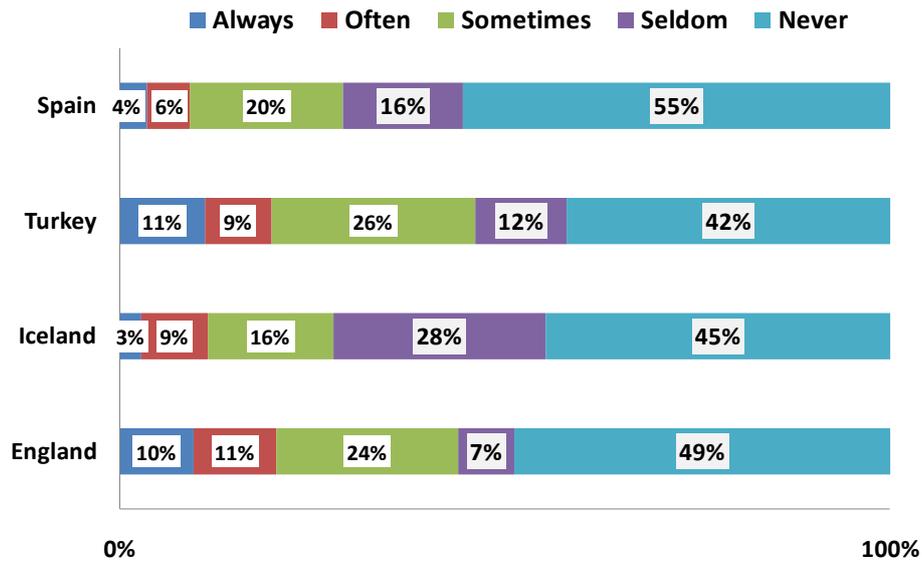
Figure 9. How often does someone in your family read for you in the evening, before you go to sleep?

When children were asked how often someone in their family reads for them in the evening, before they go to sleep answers vary rather equally between samples. The main result is that around half of the children say no one reads for them at home before they go to sleep. No difference related to gender is reported. Difference related to age however exists and between schools (see Figure 10 below).
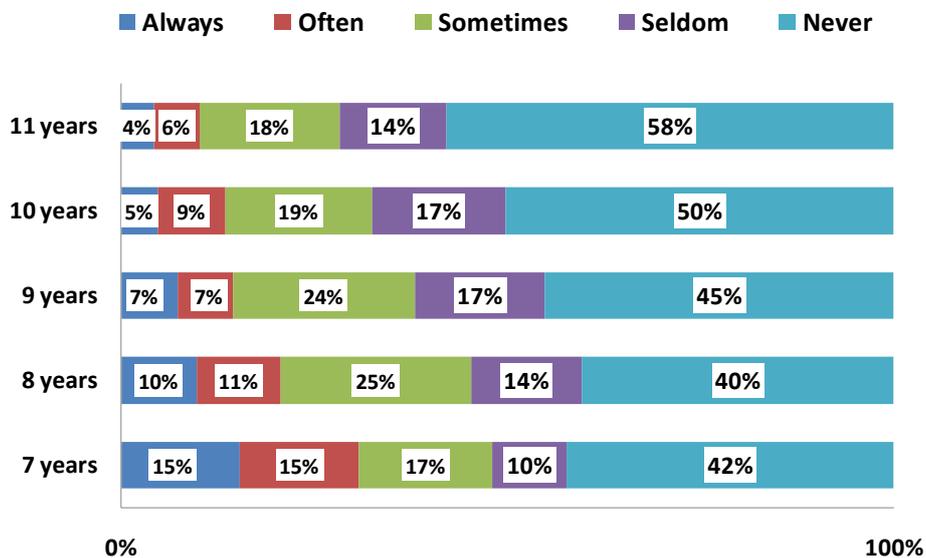
Figure 10. Age of children and time someone in the family reads for children before they go to sleep

Figure 10 shows that more often someone reads for children in the lower age groups than the upper age groups and the difference is quite linear. The reason most likely being that the older children can read, or want to read for themselves. Parents may also prefer that they do so.
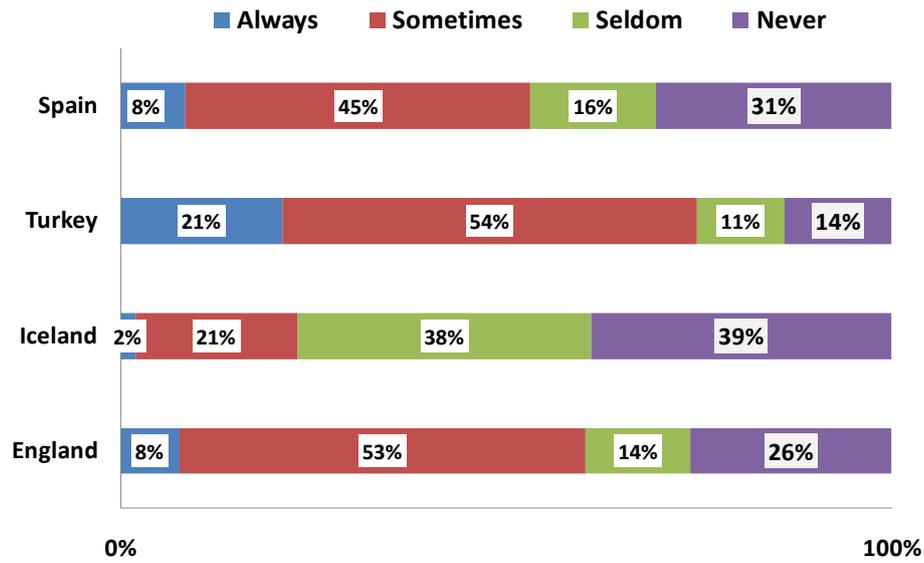
Figure 11. Do you ever buy books yourself?

When asked "do you ever buy books yourself", children's responses differ substantially between countries. The Turkish children most often say they buy books themselves but the English children are not far behind. Icelandic children are least likely to say they buy books themselves. It's not easy to explain the difference but most likely this is a cultural difference. There is no significant gender difference in responses but difference related to age does exist. It is more common for children in upper age groups buy books themselves than the younger ones.

Reading and reading habits out of school

This section contains answers to questions on reading and reading habits. The most significant questions were on what sort of a reader children say they are, where they read and how long time they spend reading, how they choose books to read, their use of libraries, whether they read books more than once and if so why, whether they read books in a series and if so why, what they like in reading books, what kind of main characters in books they prefer and what characteristics of the main characters they favour.

■ I love to read   ■ It's okay to read   ■ I don't like reading

	I love to read	It's okay to read	I don't like reading
Spain	54%	40%	6%
Turkey	78%	17%	5%
Iceland	33%	58%	8%
England	45%	47%	8%

0%   100%
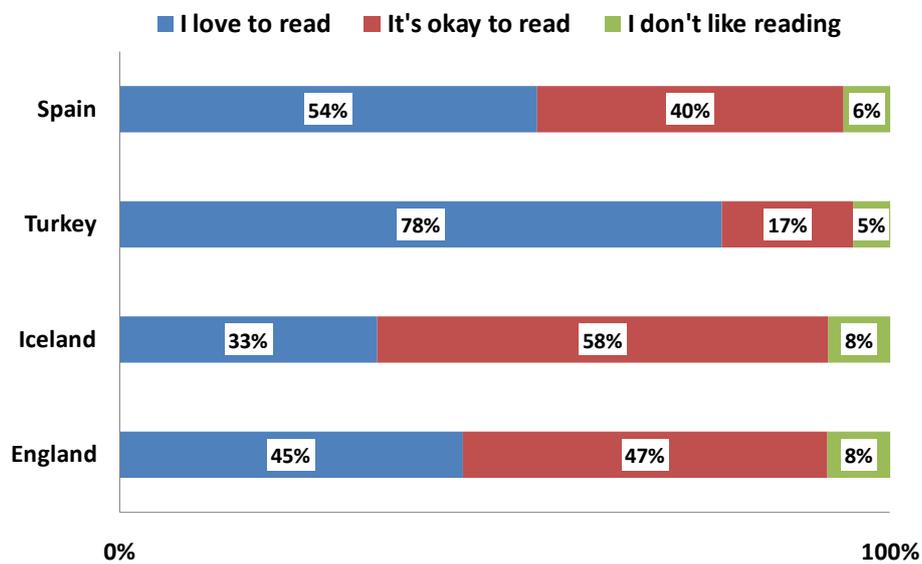
Figure 12. What sort of reader would you say you are?

Responses to the question differ between countries. Almost 80% of the children from Turkey say they love to read but the children from Iceland are least likely to express the same opinion. This may be a result of the wording of the question.
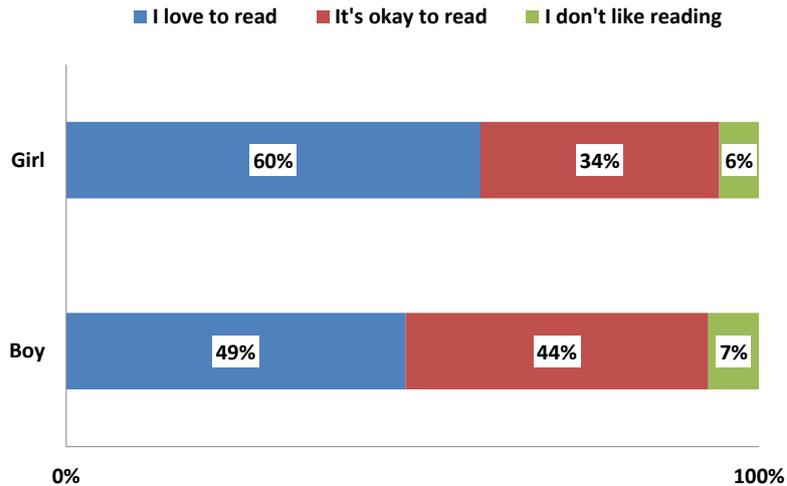
Figure 13. Gender and attitude to reading

There was significant difference related to gender, where girls seem to be more in favour of reading than boys (see Figure 13 above).
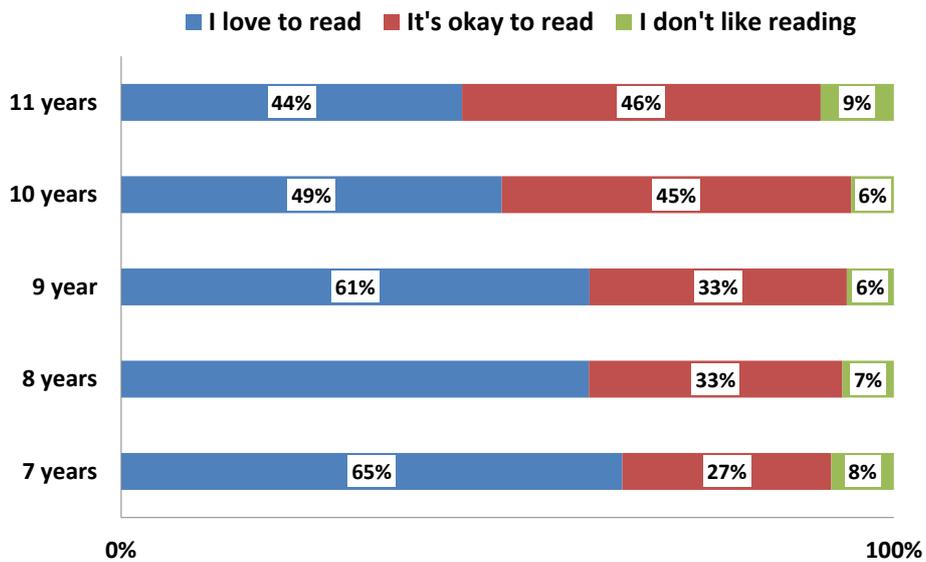
Figure 14. Age and attitude to reading

When analysing the answers a significant difference was found related to age. As seen in Figure 14, when compared between age groups, children's attitude to reading becomes slightly more negative with age. Following this question, the children were asked where they read out of school, if they do so (see Figure 15 below).

In the library
- Spain: 32%
- Turkey: 30%
- Iceland: 19%
- England: 30%

On journeys
- Spain: 26%
- Turkey: 42%
- Iceland: 37%
- England: 34%

Somewhere else in the house
- Spain: 45%
- Turkey: 58%
- Iceland: 46%
- England: 53%

In my bedroom
- Spain: 82%
- Turkey: 63%
- Iceland: 75%
- England: 76%

Legend: Spain, Turkey, Iceland, England
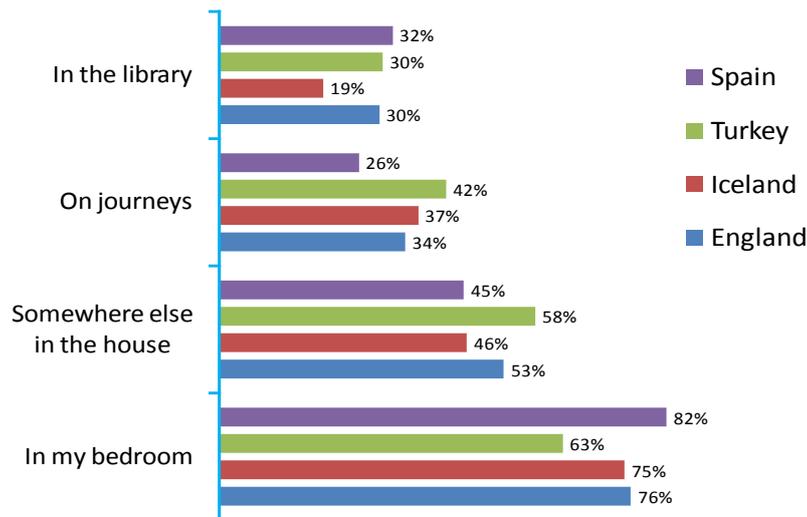
Figure 15. Outside of school, where do you read?

Most of the children read at home, either in their bedrooms or somewhere else in the house. Children will most often read in their bedroom. This could indicate that children prefer a quiet place while reading.

Legend: I don't read at home · Five minutes a day · Fifteen minutes a day · Thirty minutes a day · An hour or more a day · I don't know

Spain: 1% | 9% | 20% | 30% | 18% | 21%
Turkey: 2% | 6% | 9% | 35% | 38% | 10%
Iceland: 2% | 9% | 19% | 11% | 9% | 50%
England: 4% | 17% | 16% | 15% | 19% | 28%

0% — 100%
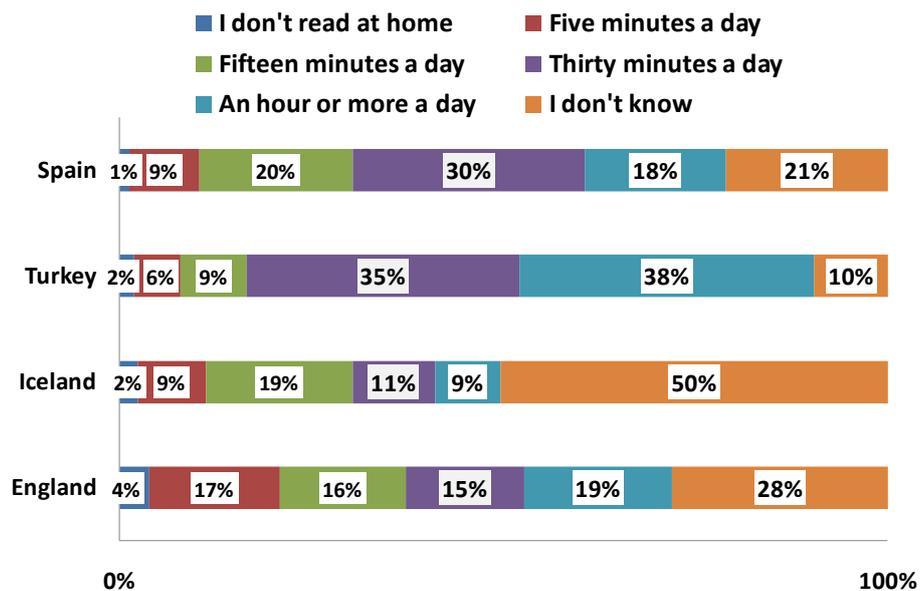
Figure 16. How long do you spend reading at home in a day?

Most of the children read from 15 minutes to about an hour a day. Interestingly the Turkish children most often answer that they read thirty minutes and an hour or more a day, while half of the Icelandic children say that they do not know how much they read at home any given day.
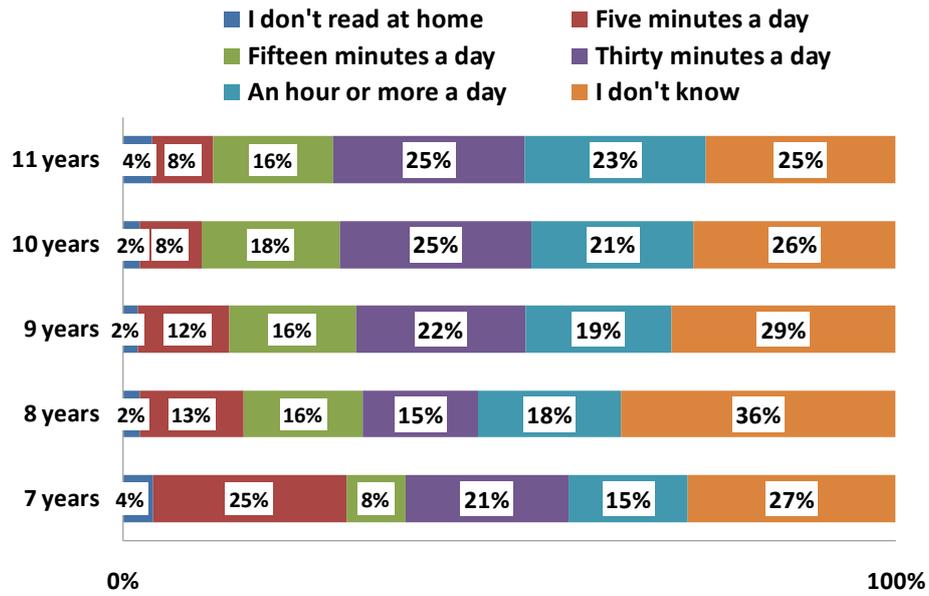
Figure 17. Age and time spent reading in a day

When answers to the question on how much time children spend reading is compared between age groups we see that the two or three oldest age groups are only slightly more likely to answer that they read thirty minutes and an hour or more a day.
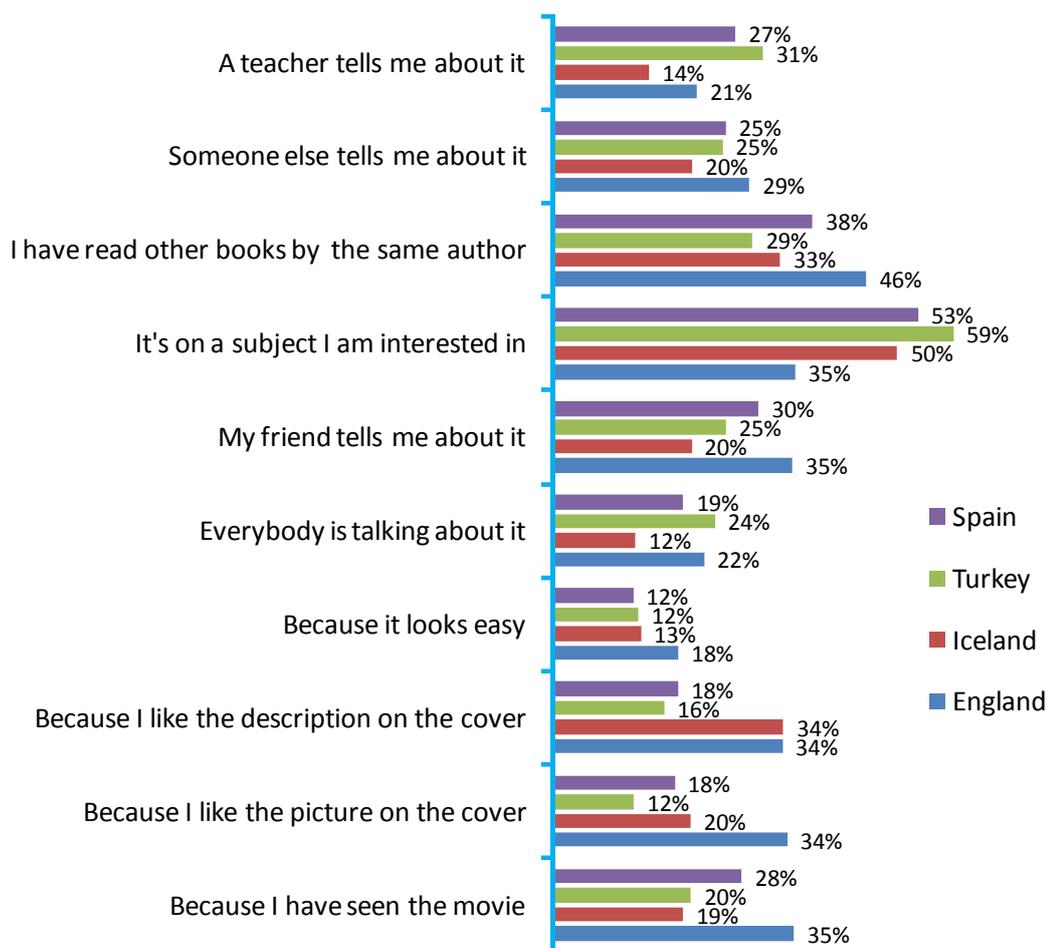
Figure 18. How do you choose books to read?

Most of the children say they choose books because its content interests them, they have read other books by the same author or friends or others tell them about the books. It seems that descriptions or images of book covers have also a significant impact on what children read and so do books that have been made into movies.

There is no overall difference in responses between genders but within countries there are a few examples of differences between boys and girls within the countries. Icelandic girls choose books by their covers more often than boys. In England this is reversed. Boys in England also choose books more often than girls if their friends have told them about the books. In Turkey girls are more likely than boys to choose a book if it has been made into a movie. In Spain there is no difference related to gender.

There is a difference related to age in four cases. Older children are more likely than younger to choose a book related to their own interests. Younger children are more likely than older to choose books if it looks easy, or because the book cover looks interesting or because the book has been made into a movie.
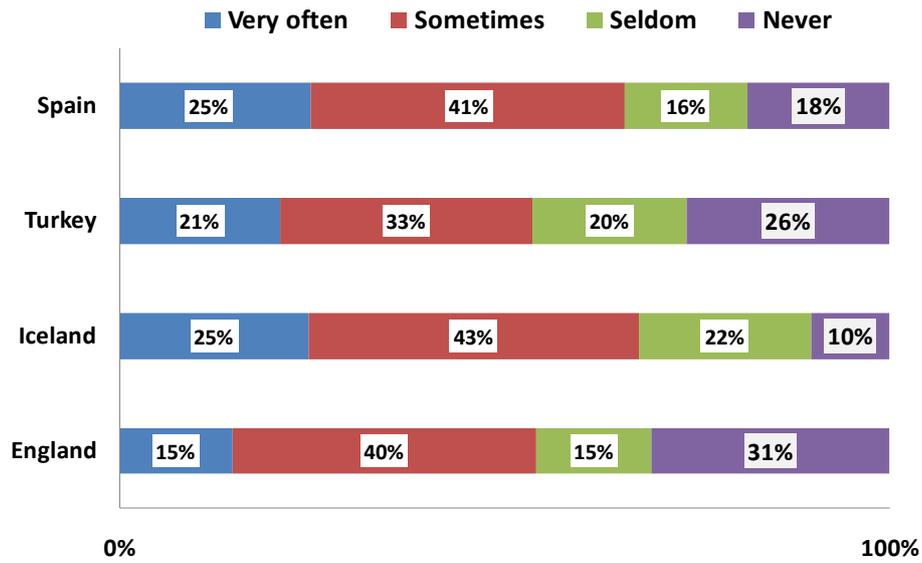
Figure 19. Do you ever borrow books from the public library?

About 70–90% of the children borrow books from a public library. Although there are differences in answers between countries, more than half of the children say they borrow books from the library sometimes or very often. The Icelandic sample differs in that only 10% of children say they never borrow books from the library but around 20–30% of the children in Spain, Turkey and England say they do so. There is no overall difference related to gender or age except in Iceland were girls significantly more often than boys say they borrow books from the public library.
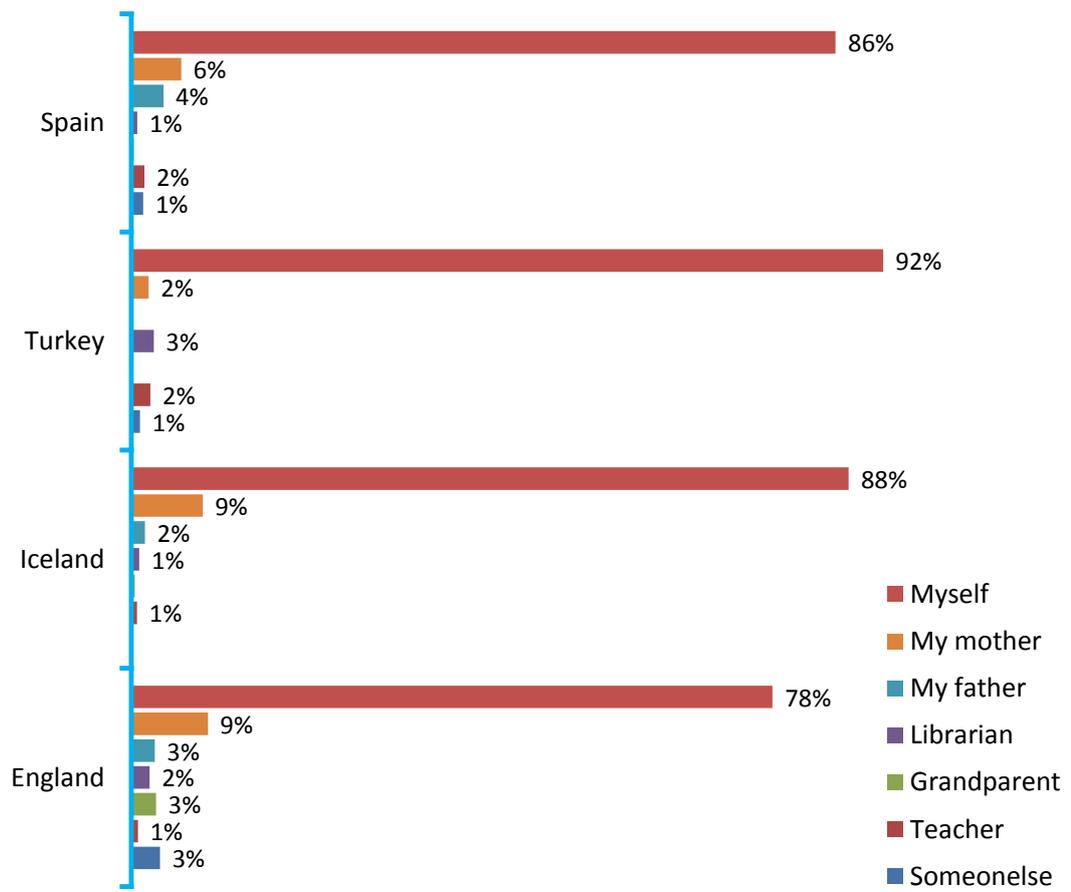
Figure 20. If you borrow books from the public library, who chooses the books most often?

In Figure 20 we see that the main finding is that children choose books themselves and if they get help with choosing, it is most often provided by their mother. Overall the results indicate children's independence in choosing books.

There is only a significant difference in responses by age for the Icelandic and Turkish children.

Often **Sometimes** **Never**

	Often	Sometimes	Never
Spain	29%	60%	11%
Turkey	22%	63%	15%
Iceland	24%	66%	10%
England	34%	57%	9%

0%   100%
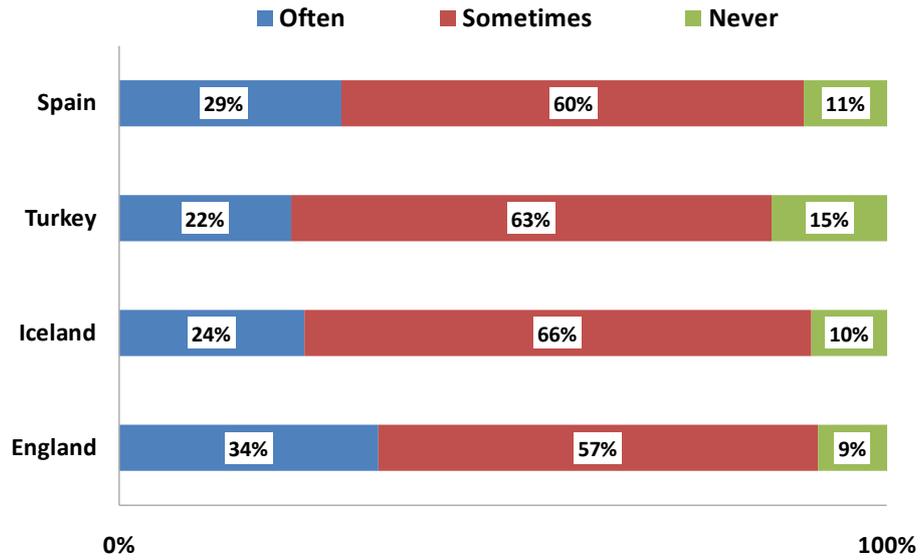
Figure 21. Do you ever read books more than once?

Around 27% of the children said they often read books more often than once and 62% said they do it sometimes. Only 10–15% of the children say they never read books more than once. Overall there is no significant difference related to gender but in Iceland and England there is a difference, with girls more often than boys saying they read books more than once.

I like the story
I like knowing what is going to happen
I see things I missed before

	I like the story	I like knowing what is going to happen	I see things I missed before
Spain	56%	33%	28%
Turkey	58%	36%	37%
Iceland	63%	25%	26%
England	57%	31%	28%

0%   100%
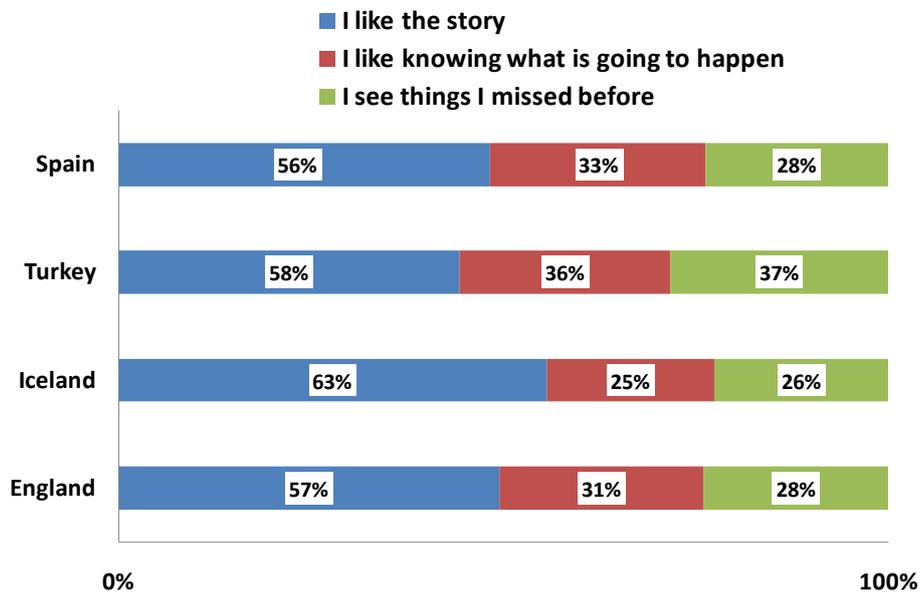
Figure 22. If you read books more than once, why?

The children that said they read books more often than once were asked why they do so. They were given three choices and an option to answer it as an open ended question. Most of the children said they liked the story and one third ticked other options. In the open ended answers, most often children said because the story was funny. Many children said they could understand the stories better when re-reading it. Some of the children said they reread books when it was a long time since they last read them.

■ **Often**   ■ **Sometimes**   ■ **Never**

Country	Often	Sometimes	Never
Spain	31%	58%	11%
Turkey	58%	37%	5%
Iceland	26%	60%	14%
England	32%	52%	16%

0%   100%
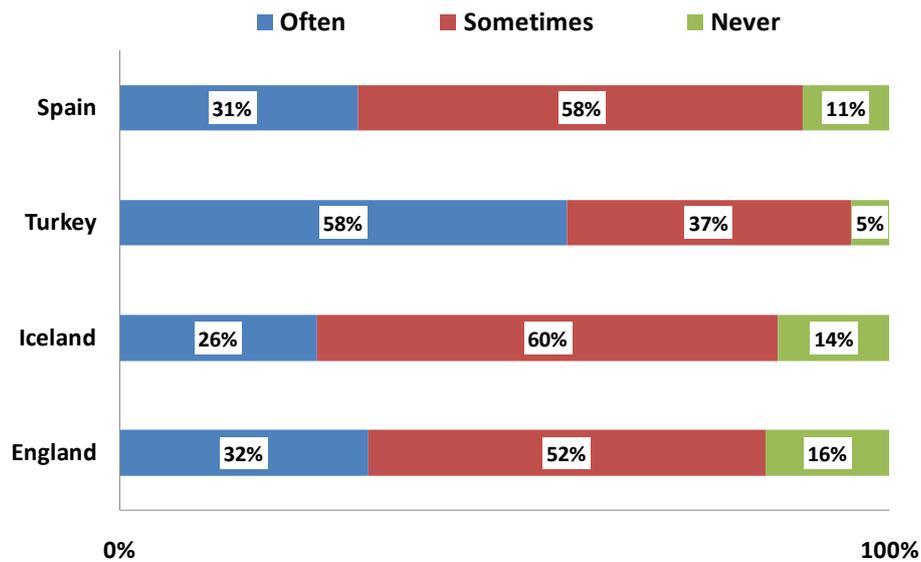
Figure 23. Do you ever read books in a series?

Most of the children answered that they read books in a series, often or sometimes. As Figure 23 reveals, the children in Turkey stand out as the proportion of those who read books in a series is nearly double the proportion of children in the other countries that do the same, which may reflect the nature of the children's books available.

■ Spain   ■ Turkey   ■ Iceland   ■ England

	Spain	Turkey	Iceland	England
I want to know what is going to happen next	49%	58%	56%	48%
I like collecting the set	33%	35%	22%	31%
I know the charecters	44%	35%	31%	38%
I liked the ones I have read before	28%	41%	45%	36%
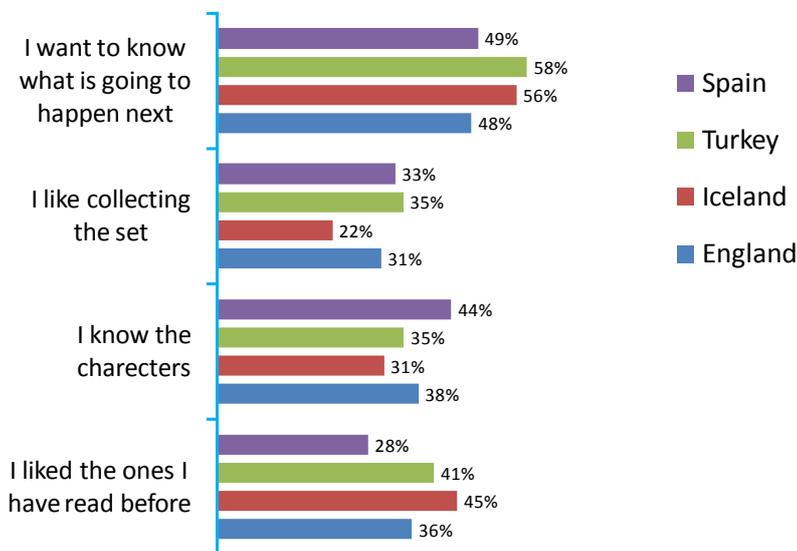
Figure 24. If you read books in a series, why do you like them?

Most of the children who read books in a series say that they do so because they want to know what is going to happen next. The distribution of answers, both within countries and the options given, are is quite even.
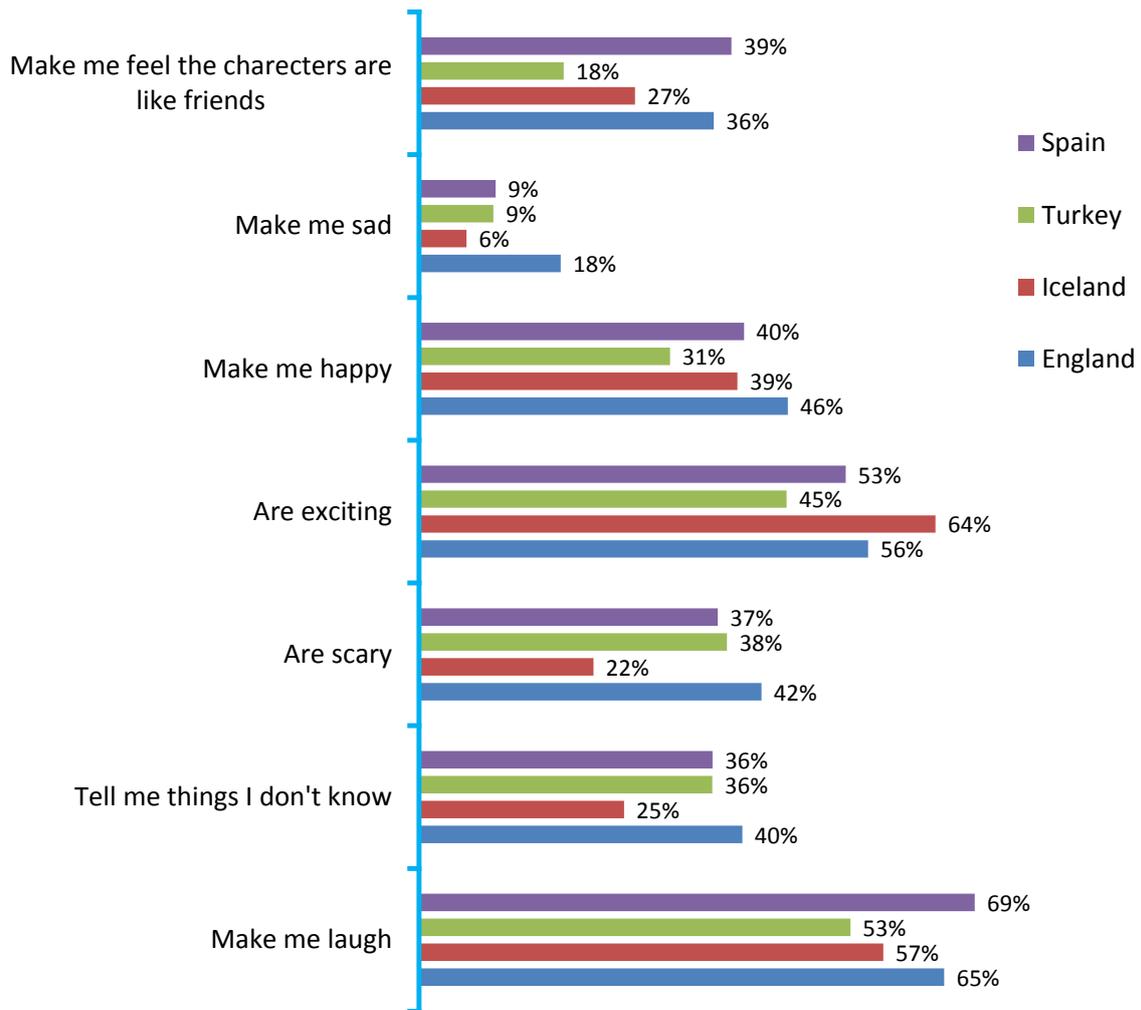
Figure 25. I like books that:

When asked what type of books children like the most, children most often say that they like books that make them laugh or they find are exciting to read. The least popular reason for liking a book seems to be that it makes children sad. Figure 24 shows us that difference between countries is sometimes considerable within the reasons given for liking books.
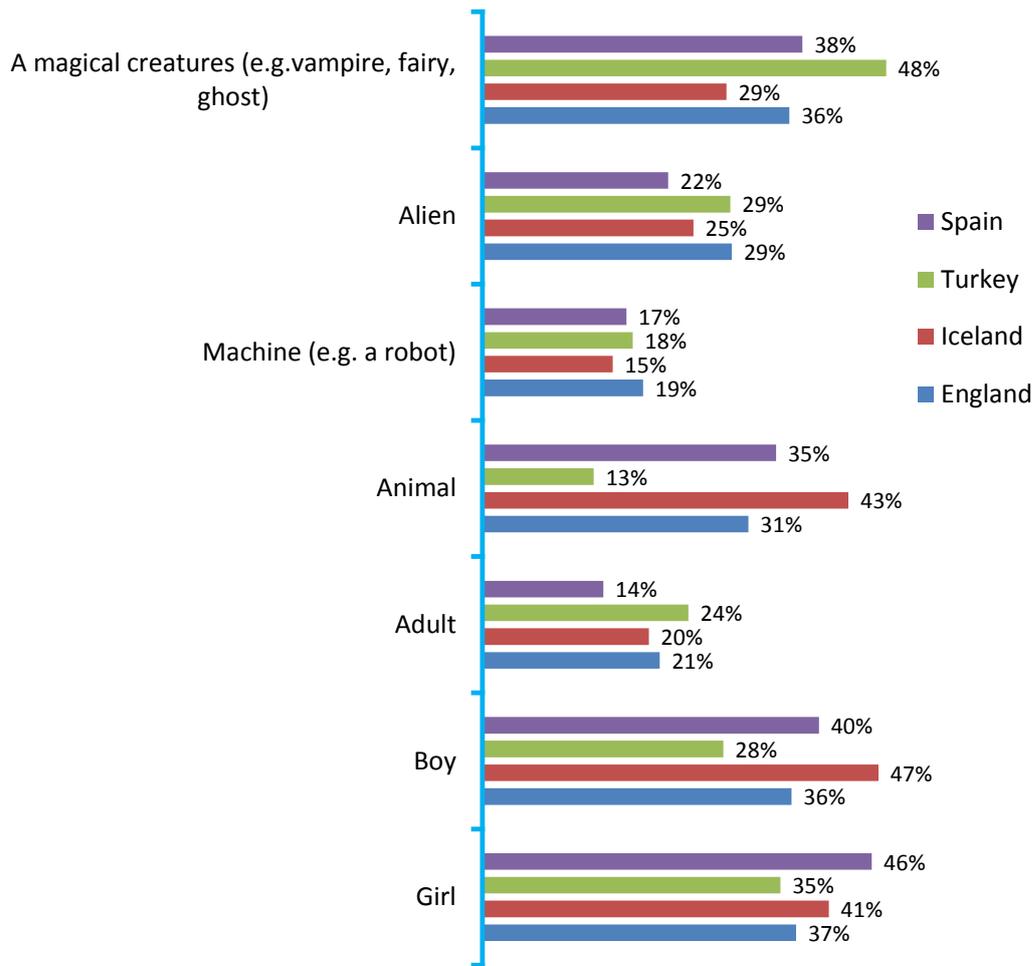
Figure 26. When you read a story, who do you like to be the main character?

The characters in children's books can take many forms, therefore the above list is not exhaustive. Overall, the findings show that children like magical creatures to be main characters in stories but they like adults, machines or aliens the least. Several options were given and the distribution of answers varies considerably between countries with these exceptions: machine, adult or alien were equally chosen. The Turkish children in the study seem to be most fond of magical creatures but the Icelandic children are least so. Whereas Icelandic children seem to like animals to be main characters, the Turkish children like this the least.

When answers are analysed by age and gender a difference is revealed. Younger children like it less if the main character in a story is a child (boy or girl) or a magical creature, than the older children. Girls like it better than boys if the main character is a machine or an alien. Both boys and girls prefer the main character to be of their gender.

...come from a family like yours
- Spain: 25%
- Turkey: 22%
- Iceland: 24%
- England: 23%

...are about the same age as you
- Spain: 38%
- Turkey: 36%
- Iceland: 27%
- England: 35%

...have the same religion as you
- Spain: 20%
- Turkey: 28%
- Iceland: 19%
- England: 14%

...are the same sex as you
- Spain: 25%
- Turkey: 37%
- Iceland: 27%
- England: 18%

...have the same interests as you
- Spain: 27%
- Turkey: 37%
- Iceland: 29%
- England: 25%

...live in the same times as you
- Spain: 27%
- Turkey: 29%
- Iceland: 19%
- England: 18%

...like the kind of people you know
- Spain: 24%
- Turkey: 25%
- Iceland: 15%
- England: 24%

...live in the same country as you
- Spain: 33%
- Turkey: 46%
- Iceland: 28%
- England: 29%

Legend: ■ Spain ■ Turkey ■ Iceland ■ England

Figure 27. If the main character in a story is a human being, is it important that they:

Responses were somewhat spread among all the options given, varying from 20% to 40% in each option. Although it is difficult to draw out features that are more or less important as a characteristic, as it generally seems that children want the main character to live in the same country, have similar interest as the children and be of a similar age as them. It is less important for the children that the main character's religion is the same or that the character is similar to people the children know well.

Overall there was no significant difference between genders or between age groups in the children's answers to the question of main character's characteristics.
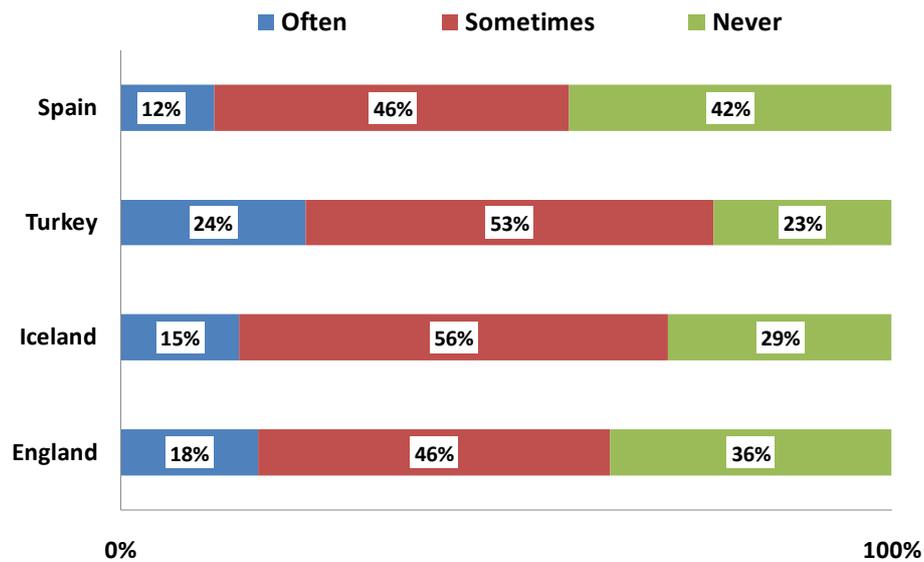
Figure 28. Outside school, do you ever read books for adults?

The distinction between children's books and books for adults can possibly be vague in children's minds. The children were asked if they read books for adults (novels, biographies, plays, etc.) outside of the school and the answer is that a rather sizeable number of them say that they do so. One quarter of the Turkish children say that they read books for adults, but only 12% of children from Spain. In Spain 42% of the children say they never read books for adults but less than one quarter of children from Turkey do the same. There is no significant difference between the genders or age groups in children's answer to this question.
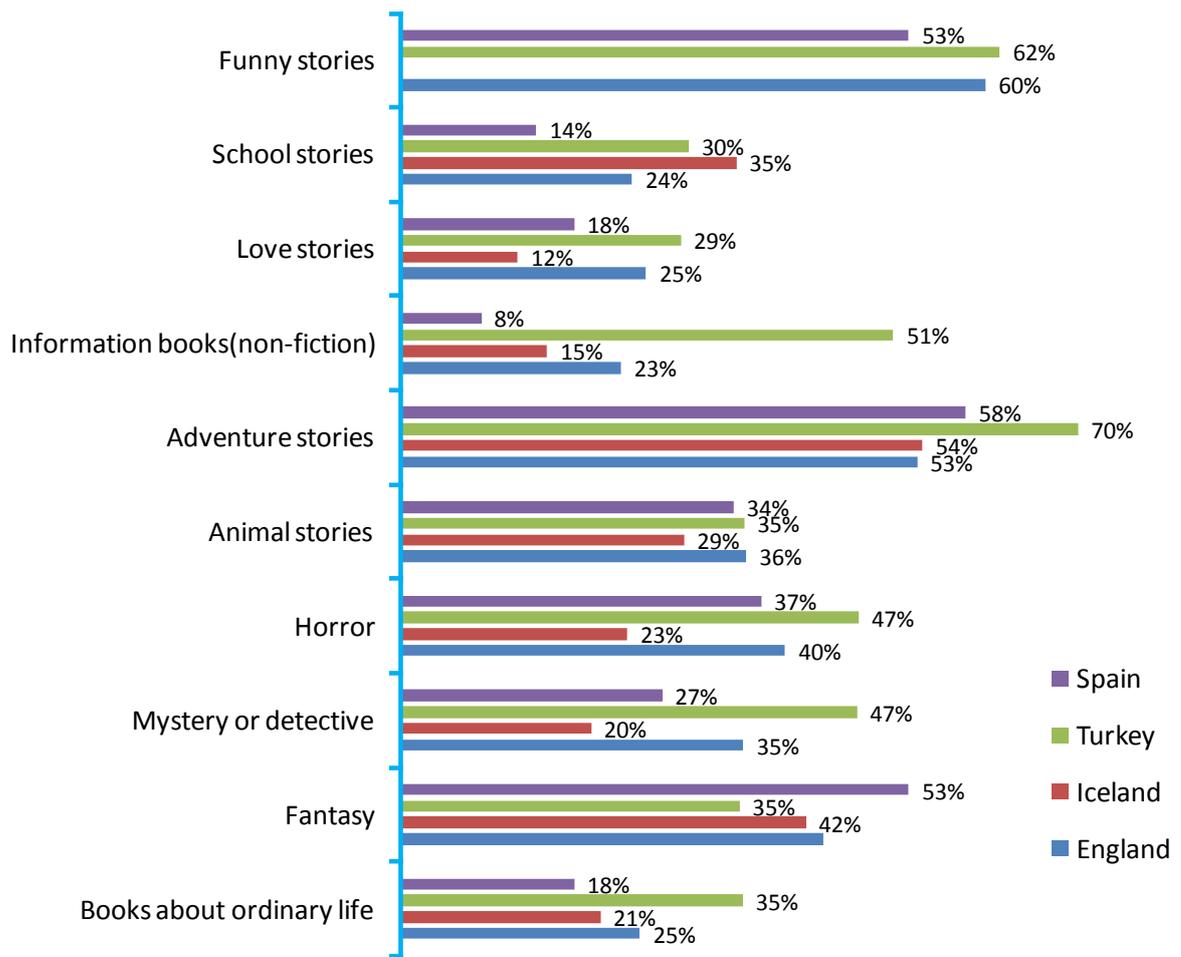
Figure 29. What sort of books do you read out of school?

When children were asked about what kind of books they read outside of school, responses varied considerably as seen in Figure 29. Funny stories (omitted from the Icelandic questionnaire due to technical error) and fairy tales seem to be popular literature with over half of the respondents and fantasies and horror stories are not far behind in popularity. The biggest variation within a response option is in the case of information books (non-fiction), where over half of the Turkish children say they read such books.

Reading in school

In this section children's responses to questions related to reading in school is analysed. The children were asked questions like: do teachers read aloud in class and if so why they think teachers do so, is reading followed by writing, what do children learn from reading in school and what activities do teachers use to help children to better understand the books they read.

Often **Sometimes** **Never**

Country	Often	Sometimes	Never
Spain	50%	45%	5%
Turkey	63%	35%	2%
Iceland	58%	38%	3%
England	44%	51%	5%

0%   100%
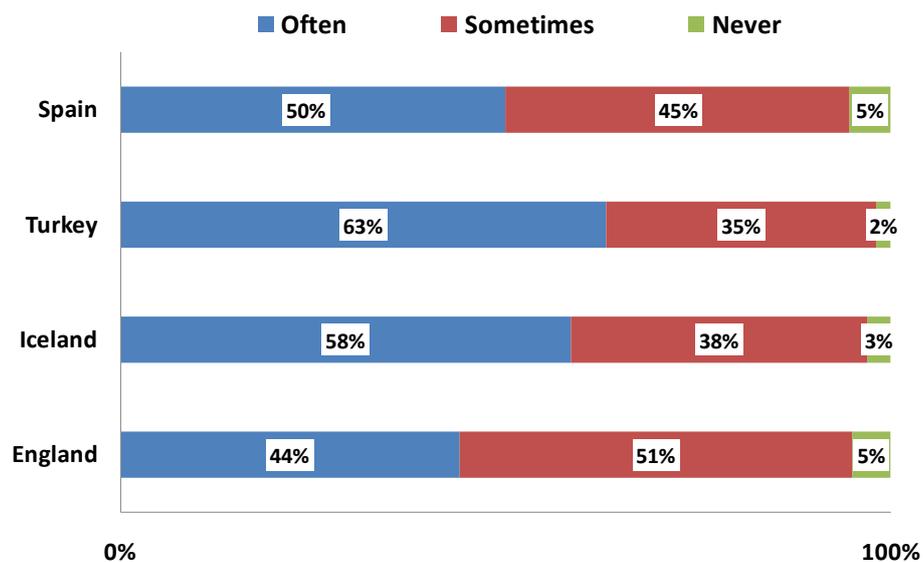
Figure 30. Does your teacher read aloud to you?

It seems to vary between countries how often teachers read for the children. The main finding is that in general teachers seem to read quite often for them. There is no significant difference related to children's gender, but in England teachers are more likely to read for the younger children than the older ones, whereas in Spain this is reversed.

Spain, Turkey, Iceland, England

	Spain	Turkey	Iceland	England
I don't know	11%	9%		11%
So we can talk about the story	49%	56%	17%	38%
So we can learn more about an author	34%	33%	13%	31%
So we can enjoy a story	35%	38%	51%	64%
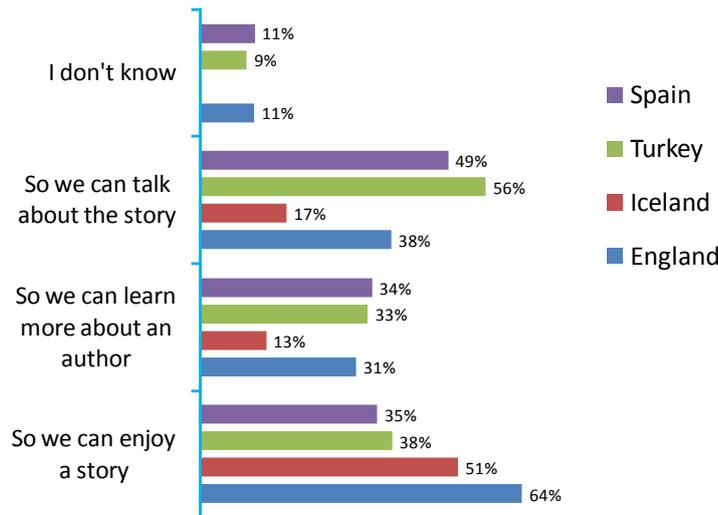
Figure 31. Why do you think your teacher reads aloud to you?

Four different options were given to the question "why do you think your teacher reads aloud to you?". The responses vary to all options given but the children's most common answer is so that they can talk about the story and so they can enjoy the story. There is a significant difference related to age and the option "so we can enjoy the story" in considerably more common for the younger children. Analysis also reveal a particular gender difference, were girls chose the option "I don't know" significantly more often than boys.

	Often	Sometimes	Never
Spain	28%	60%	12%
Turkey	27%	63%	9%
Iceland	6%	49%	45%
England	27%	53%	20%
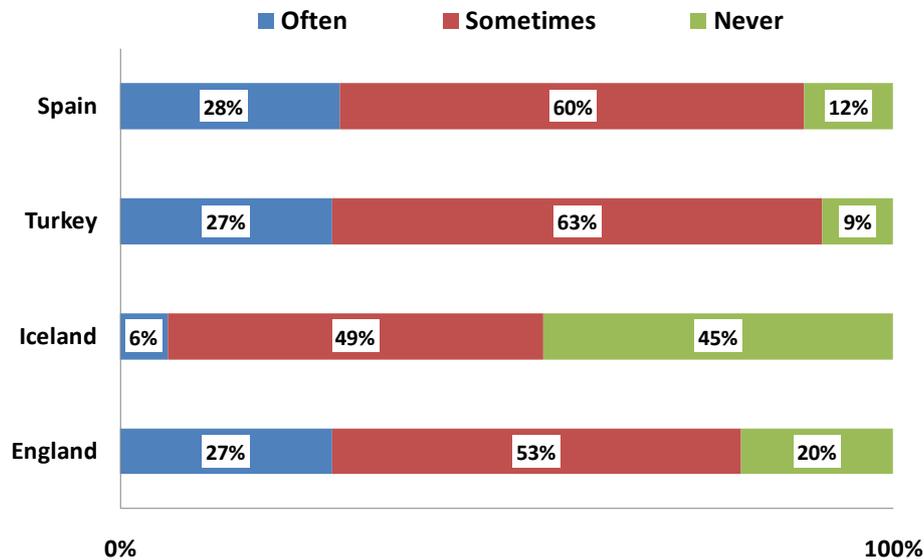
Figure 32. Do you ever write about what you read in class?

Children were asked if they ever write about what they read in class. As can be seen in Figure 32 responses from Iceland differ substantially from the other countries; just over half of children in Iceland do write about what they read compared to 80–90% of children in England, Spain and Turkey. Only 6% of the Icelandic children say the write often about what they read compared to 27–28% in the other countries. There is no significant difference related to age or gender in children's overall responses.
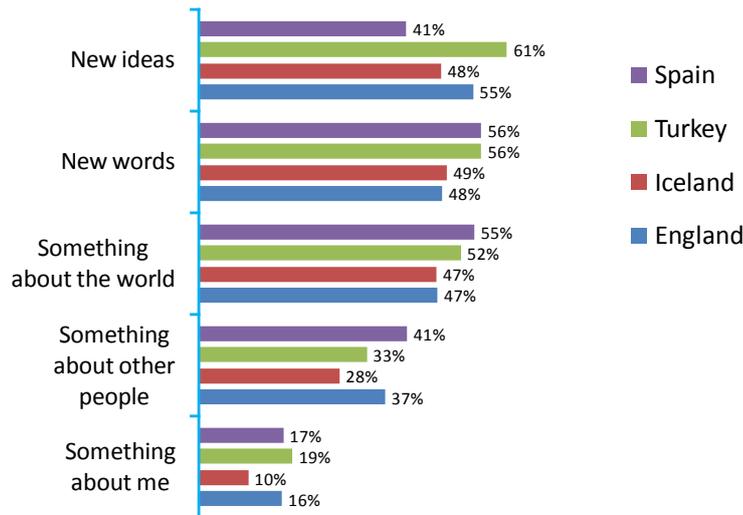
Figure 33. What do you learn from reading books or stories in school?

When asked what the children thought they learned from reading books and stories in schools, respondents most often said: new ideas, new words and something about the world. The students were least likely to say that reading taught them something about themselves and something about other people. Analysis does not reveal a significant difference between answers given by boys and girls nor between age groups.
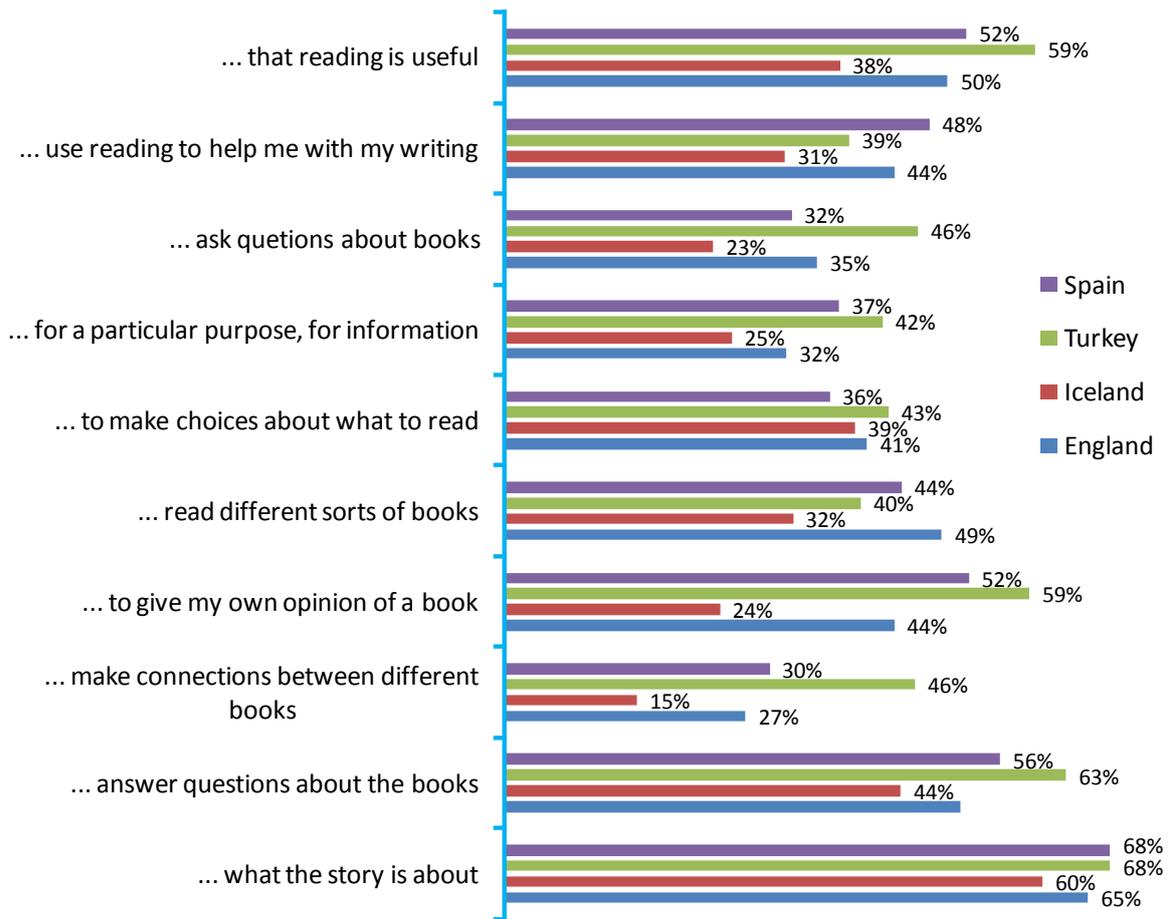
Figure 34. Here are some things that children learn about through reading in school. What do you learn in your class?

When asked about what children learn by reading in school the answers are distributed fairly evenly among the given options. The difference in answers between countries is significant except in two answers: to make choices about what to read (p=.087) and what the story is about (p=.012). In one particular case there is a significant difference related to age, younger children are less likely to say: I learn to answer questions about the book, than older children. In one case there is also a significant difference related to gender, with boys being more likely than girls to say: I learn to use reading to help me with my writing.

When we have a visit by an author to our school
- Spain: 29%
- Turkey: 22%
- Iceland: 16%
- England: 32%

When we retell a story we have read to others
- Spain: 31%
- Turkey: 35%
- Iceland: 18%
- England: 32%

When we talk about what we have read
- Turkey: 35%
- Iceland: 25%
- England: 42%

When we make notes on what we have read
- Spain: 27%
- Turkey: 30%
- Iceland: 22%
- England: 32%

When the teacher helps us to picture the story
- Spain: 43%
- Turkey: 37%
- Iceland: 26%
- England: 41%

When the teacher reads aloud to us
- Spain: 40%
- Turkey: 49%
- Iceland: 47%
- England: 48%

When I underline, highlight or circle parts of a story to help me to understand it
- Spain: 42%
- Turkey: 37%
- Iceland: 17%
- England: 37%

When we use drama and act out parts of the story
- Spain: 31%
- Turkey: 48%
- Iceland: 29%
- England: 47%

When the teacher asks questions
- Spain: 65%
- Turkey: 70%
- Iceland: 53%
- England: 59%

Legend: Spain, Turkey, Iceland, England

Figure 35. List of activities that teachers use to help children to understand books

Children were asked what type of activities help them better understand the books they read. Most often children agreed with the statements: when the teacher asks questions and when the teacher reads aloud to us. There is no difference between the genders and only in one case is there a difference related to children's age, with older children more likely to agree with the statement "When we make notes on what we read".

Survey Results - Teachers

Background information and analysis

In this section there is information about the number of teachers participating from each country, their gender and age. There is also a short analysis of teachers' responses to questions related to their background. Teachers were asked questions about teaching experience, what age group they were teaching, whether they had studied children's literature during their teacher training and if they had had training or taken courses in children's literature during their careers as teachers.

In all there were 127 teachers who participated in the survey from the four countries. The teachers came from 8 schools in Iceland, 7 schools in England, 7 schools in Spain and 5 schools in Turkey.
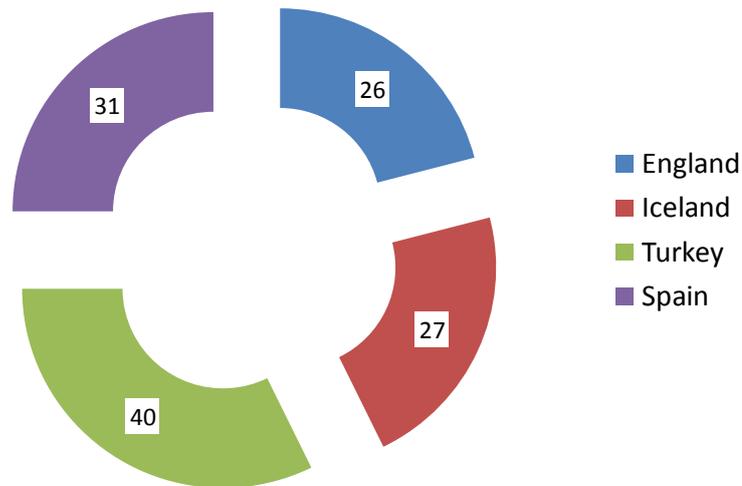
Figure 36. In which country do you teach?

The number of teachers, from each of the participating countries, varied from 21 to 40. Despite Turkey having the lowest number of children that participated in the children's survey the highest number of teachers came from the Turkish schools. The smaller number of participants overall obviously greatly diminishes the possibility of generalizing about the findings. However the answers give an indication and an insight that helps shed light on a number of issues regarding the aims of the study. The findings also help to shed light on the results from the Children's survey.

Male **Female**

Spain	26%	74%
Turkey	35%	65%
Iceland	19%	81%
England	23%	77%

0% 100%
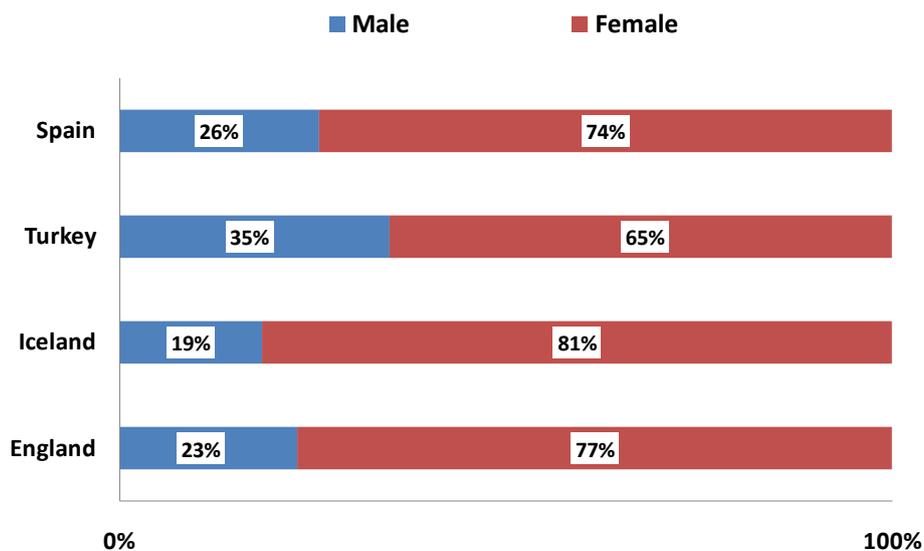
Figure 37. Gender

The teaching profession is often taken as an example of a gender segregation of the labour market. This is especially true of teachers of younger children. Figure 37 reveals an unequal ratio of male and female teachers. Under one fifth of the Icelandic teachers are male but more than one third of the Turkish teachers are men.

25-29 age **30-34 age** **35-39 age**
40-44 age **45-49 age** **50 or over**

Spain	16%	32%	13%	16%	13%	10%
Turkey	28%	28%	10%	20%	5%	10%
Iceland	4%	7%	37%	7%	44%	
England	19%	27%	19%	19%	8%	8%

0% 100%
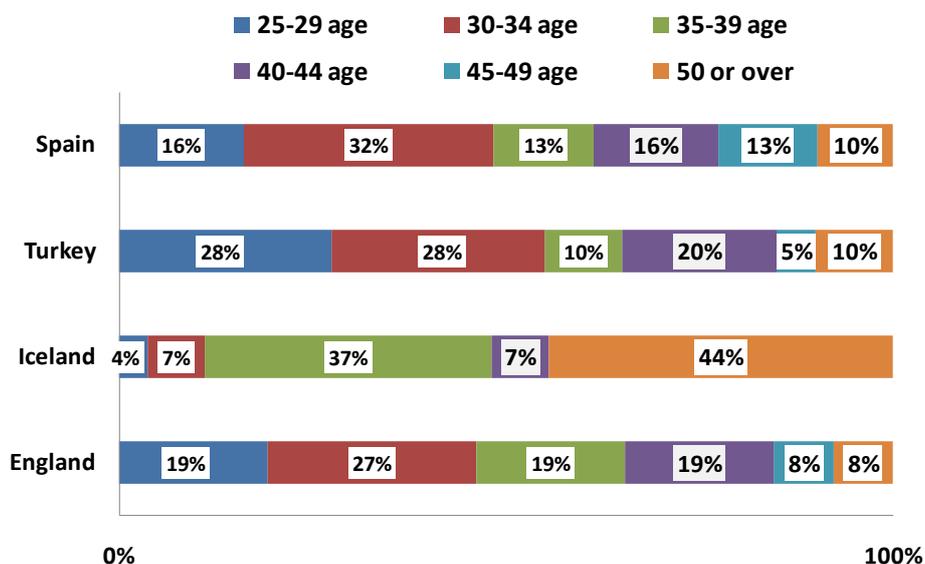
Figure 38. Age of teachers

There is a notable difference related to the age of teachers in the four countries. Figure 38 shows that the age of teachers in Iceland differs substantially from the three other countries. They are much older and the distribution in age is in contrast to the other countries. In Iceland only 11% are between 25-34 in age, compared to 46-56% of teachers in England, Spain and Turkey. 44% of teachers in the Icelandic sample are 50 years or older compared to only 8-10% in Spain, turkey and England.
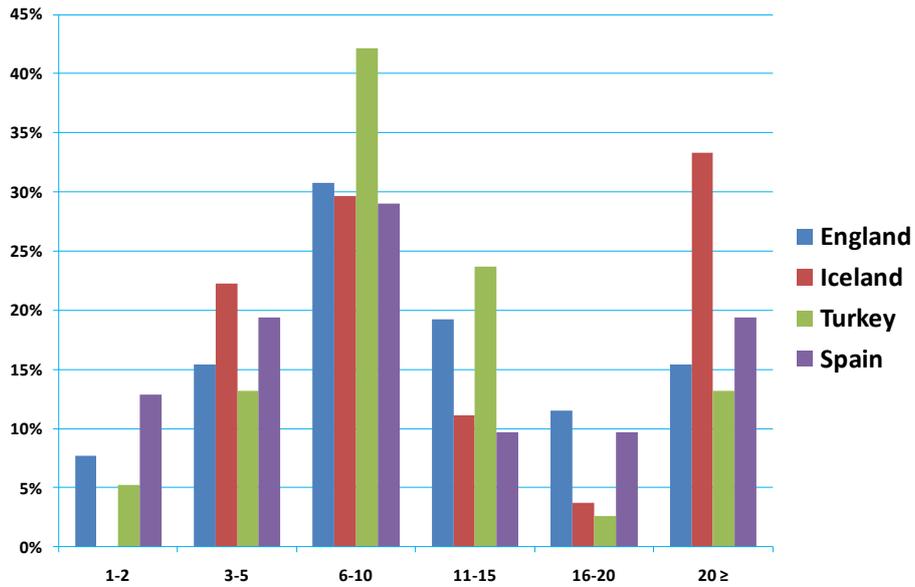
Figure 39. Teachers experience in years

Teachers experience differs slightly between the four countries. Figure 39 shows, that the Icelandic teachers in the sample have the most experience. This is obviously in part explained by the age of Icelandic teachers where the average age is the highest, thus showing that teaching experience and age seemingly correlates. Notable also is that over 40% of the Turkish teachers say they have 6–10 years of experience.
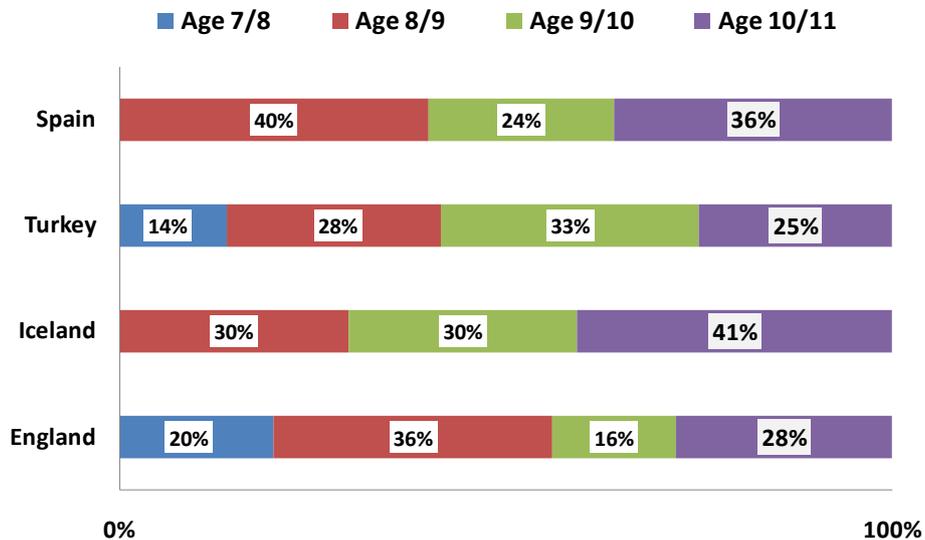
Figure 40. Age group(s) teachers currently teach

As shown in Figure 40, there are three age groups of children in Spain and Iceland but four age groups of children in England and Turkey.

No　　**Yes**

Spain	26%	74%
Turkey	70%	30%
Iceland	33%	67%
England	27%	73%

0%　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　100%
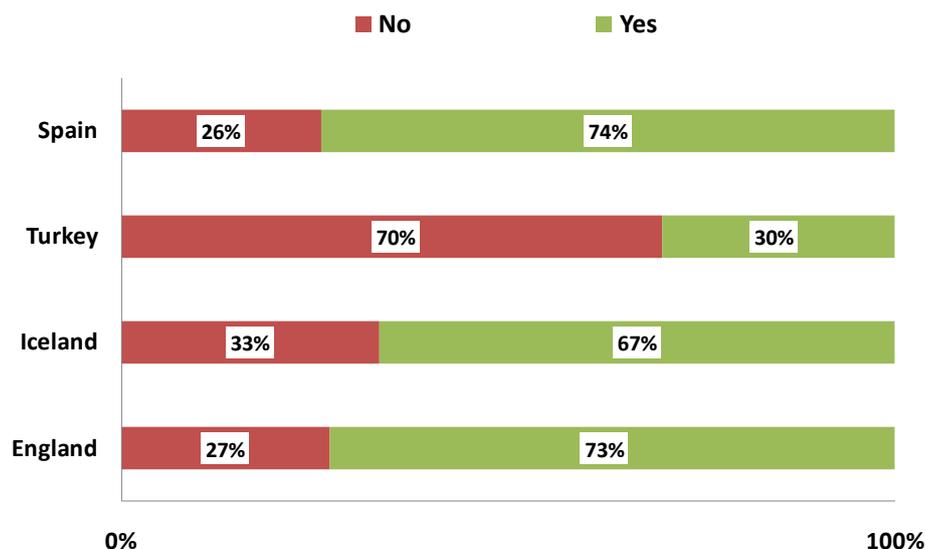
Figure 41. During your teacher training did you study the teaching of children's literature?

Here, the difference in responses between countries is significant. Between two thirds and three quarters of teachers in Spain, Iceland and England studied teaching children's literature during their teacher training. But as shown in Figure 41, responses from Turkey seem to indicate a less prevalent emphasis on teaching of children's literature.

No　　**Yes**

Spain	71%	29%
Turkey	74%	26%
Iceland	44%	56%
England	15%	85%

0%　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　100%
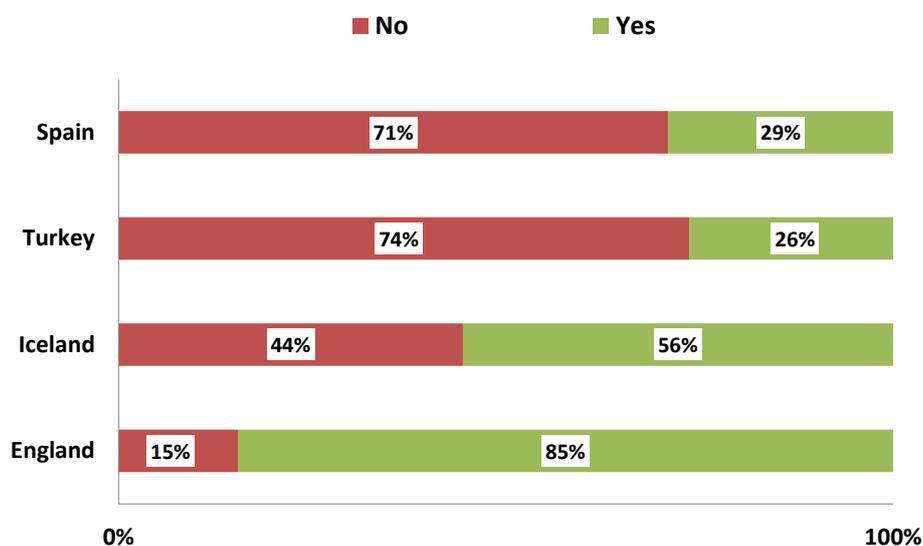
Figure 42. During your career as a teacher have you had any training or taken a course in children's literature?

Most of the teachers from England have had training or have taken courses in children's literature during their careers, while only 25 to 30% of the teachers in Spain and Turkey have done so. The responses are quite interesting compared to the earlier responses about studying children's literature in teacher training. Accordingly the teachers in Turkey seem to get less education in children's literature (30% in teacher training, 26% in career) than others, especially compared to England (73% in teacher training, 85% in career).

Using children's literature in class

In the following part, answers to questions about teaching reading are analysed. The key questions are about reasons for using children's literature to support teaching and learning in class; how often children's literature is used to support teaching and learning; whether it is a part of school's curriculum; how enjoyable children's literature is for children; whether translated or short version of stories are being used; whether children's literature is used to introduce other cultures in class and how children's literature to use in class is selected. Important also are questions on what teachers assess as being significant to take into consideration when they choose children's literature to teach.

■ **Every week**   ■ **Every two weeks**   ■ **Once a month**   ■ **Never**

Spain	82% · 7% · 11%
Turkey	44% · 31% · 22% · 3%
Iceland	67% · 13% · 21%
England	88% · 12%

0%   100%
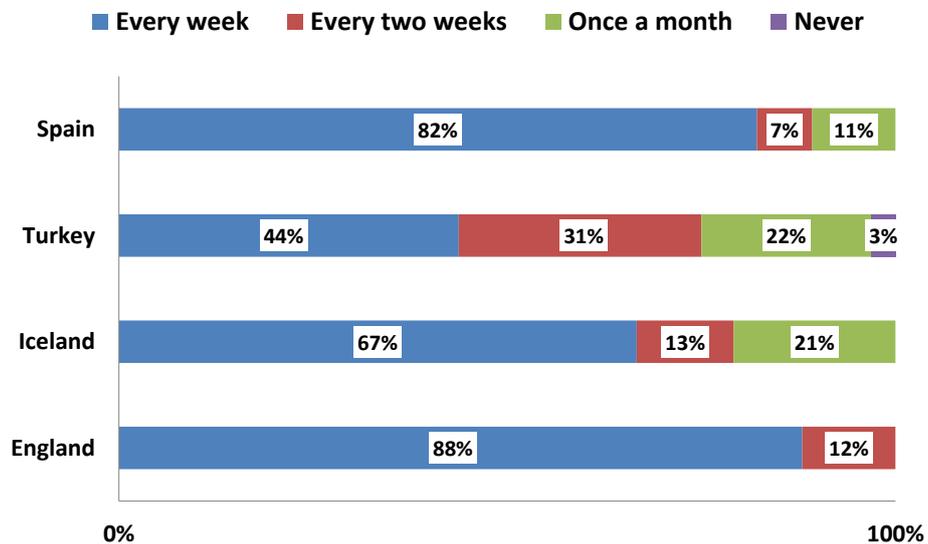
Figure 43. How often do you use children's literature to support teaching and learning in your class?

82–88% of the teachers in Spain and England use children's literature to support teaching and learning in their class every week and majority of Icelandic teachers also do so. Turkey is unique in comparison where less than half of the teachers say they use children's literature every week. One quarter of the teachers in Turkey only use children's literature once in a month or not at all and one fifth of the teachers in Iceland only use children's literature once in a month.
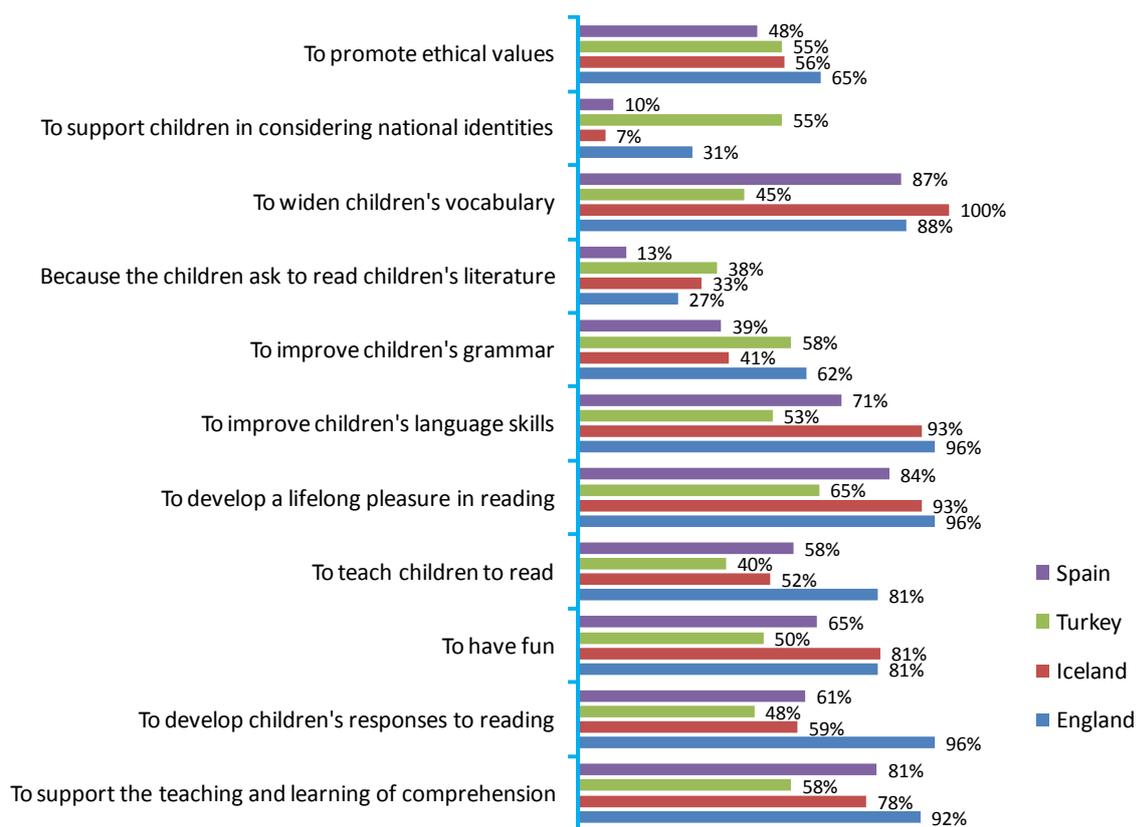
Figure 44. If you use children's literature in your class, why do you use children's literature to support teaching and learning?

There is no significant difference, between the countries, in the responses to three of the given options: to promote ethical values, to improve children's grammar and because the children ask to read children's literature. In addition two options are close to measuring a significant difference, between the counties, these are: to have fun (p=.013) and to teach children to read (p=.018). Responses to other options are significantly different between countries and in some cases the difference is only linked to responses in one country. An example of this is the difference between answers of the Turkish teachers and other countries in responding to the statement: to widen children's vocabulary and to develop a lifelong pleasure in reading. In other cases the difference is between two and two countries, as in the responses "To support children in considering national identities", where Turkey peaks with England in second place; and "To have fun", where responses from Icelandic and English teachers are on par with each other while responses from Spain and Turkey is significantly lower. There are differences in responses related to teacher's age. For example, in the case of the option: "To widen children's vocabulary" teachers in lower age groups are less likely to agree with the statement, than teachers in the age group 35–39 years are more likely to agree with the statement. In fact this age group often differs from others, resulting in the overall differences not being linear.

Always **Often** **Sometimes**

Country	Always	Often	Sometimes
Spain	40%	47%	13%
Turkey	23%	47%	30%
Iceland	15%	59%	26%
England	50%	46%	4%

0%   100%
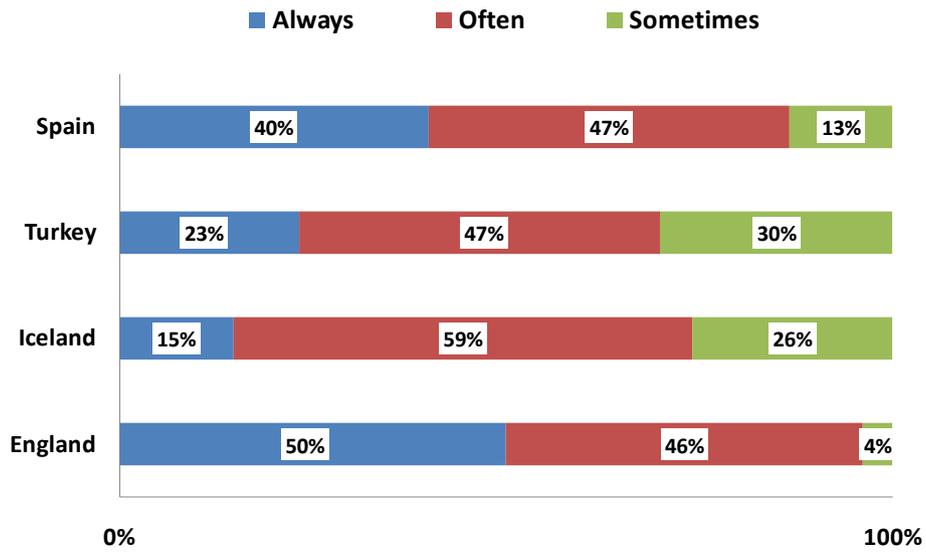
Figure 45. Do children in your class enjoy learning through children's literature?

As seen in Figure 45 responses to the question: do children enjoy learning through children's literature, varies somewhat between the countries. In England the teachers are more positive, followed by the Spanish teachers. Even though the Icelandic and Turkish teachers are not as positive as the other countries, the main result is that a majority of children (over 70%) supposedly enjoy learning through children's literature.

Yes **No** **Don't know**

Country	Yes	No	Don't know
Spain	90%		10%
Turkey	56%	38%	6%
Iceland	59%	19%	22%
England	96%	4%	

0%   100%
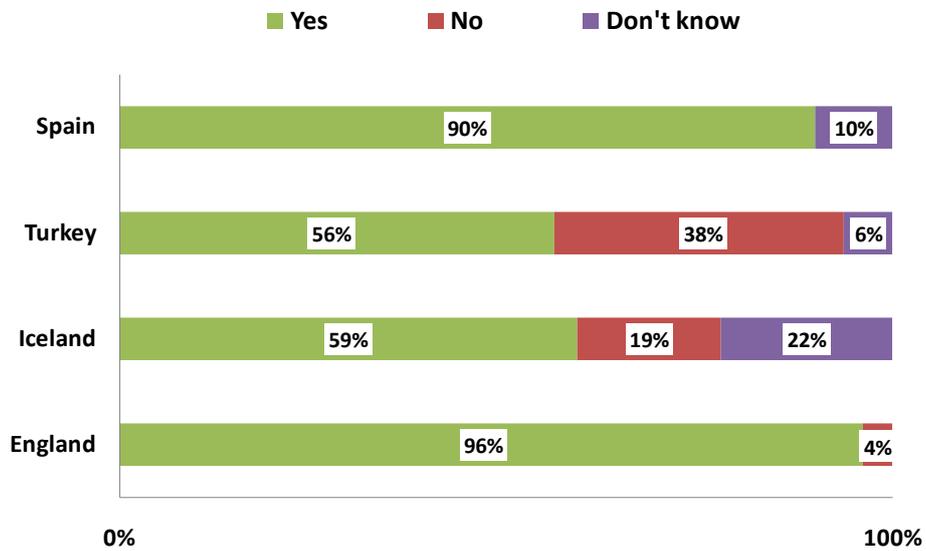
Figure 46. Is the use of children's literature to support teaching and learning an established part of your school's curriculum?

There is a difference between countries in response to the question: "Is the use of children's literature a part of school curriculum?" None of the Spanish teachers disagree with the statement, but 38% of the Turkish teachers do so. Over 90% of the teachers in Spain and England say that use of children's literature is part of their school curriculum but in Turkey and in Iceland less than 60% agree with the statement. Over one fifth of the teachers in Iceland do not know if the use of children's literature is part of the school curriculum.
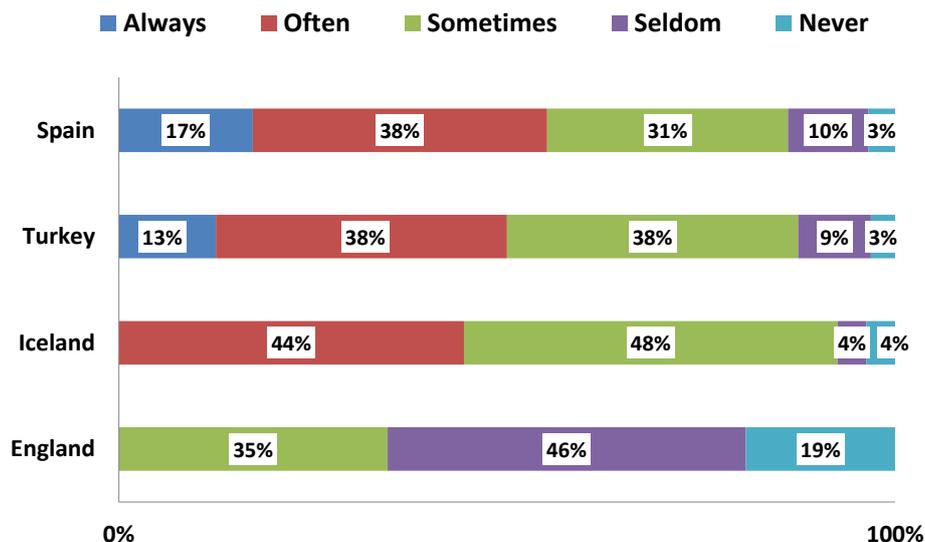
Figure 47. Do you use translated children's literature for children to read in class?

If the options always, often and sometimes are merged the difference between Spain, Turkey and Iceland is not great. Answers from the English teachers are unique in comparison. Some might say that this is because of the availability of children's literature written in the English language (non-translated), but this could also be said about literature written in Spanish, which is also is a global language.
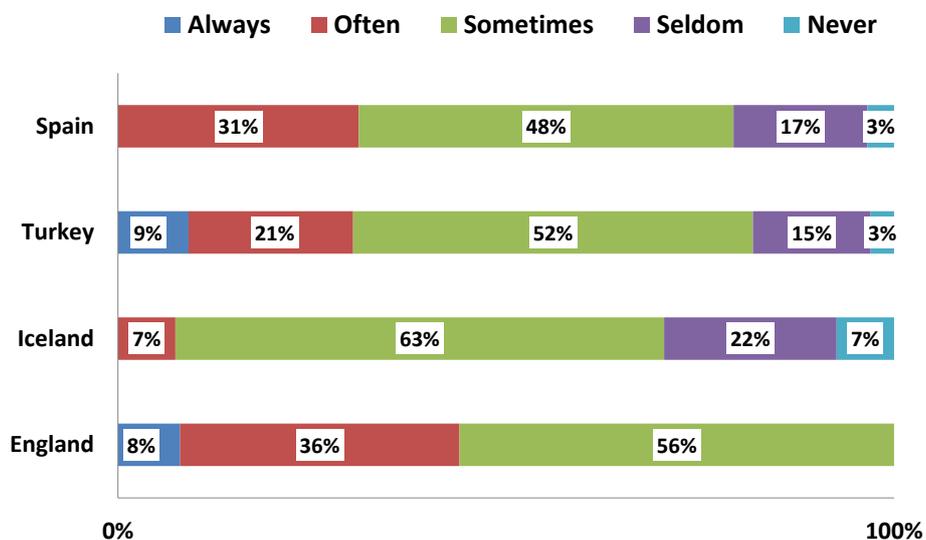
Figure 48. Do you use children's literature for introducing other cultures?

As seen in Figure 48 the Icelandic teachers do not use children's literature for introducing other cultures as often as teachers from the other countries. The teachers from England use children's literature in this purpose most often and no teacher in England say they seldom or never do so.
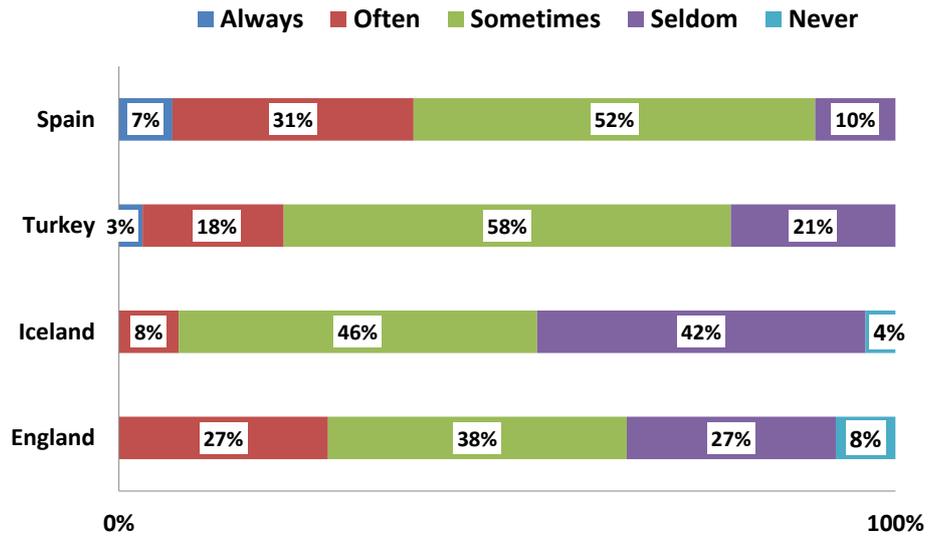
Figure 49. Do you use adaptations or shortened versions of texts instead of originals?

Adapted or shortened versions of text are often offered instead of original longer versions. This type of children's literature seems to be widely used in the four countries, especially by the Spanish and Turkish teachers. The findings show that the Icelandic teachers use shortened versions of text considerably less than the teachers in the other countries.

What is important when selecting children's literature for teaching?

The following section presents teachers answers to questions regarding what they feel is important when selecting children's literature. Five different statements were presented and teachers asked to assess their relevance. The statements were the following: broadening children's view of themselves, broadening children's views of others, teaching ethnical values, teaching about feelings and to introduce children to good literature.
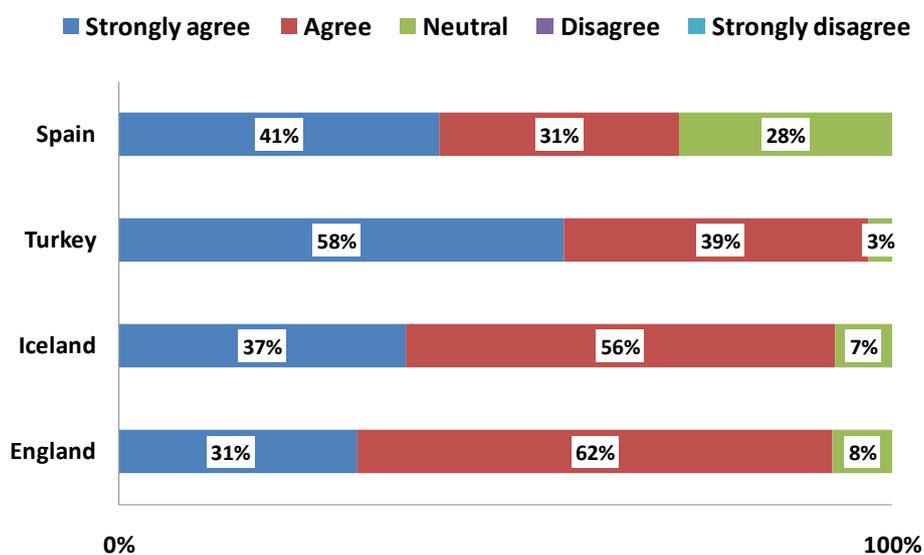
Figure 50. Broadening children's views of themselves

The main finding is that teachers in all of the countries agree with the statement that when selecting children's literature to teach, that broadening children's views of themselves is a valuable reason to do so. No teachers disagree with the statement but 28% of the Spanish teachers claim to be neutral towards the validity of the statement.

Strongly agree ■ **Agree** ■ **Neutral** ■ **Disagree** ■ **Strongly disagree**

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
Spain	45%	52%	3%	
Turkey	67%	27%	3%	3%
Iceland	59%	41%		
England	54%	46%		

0%   100%
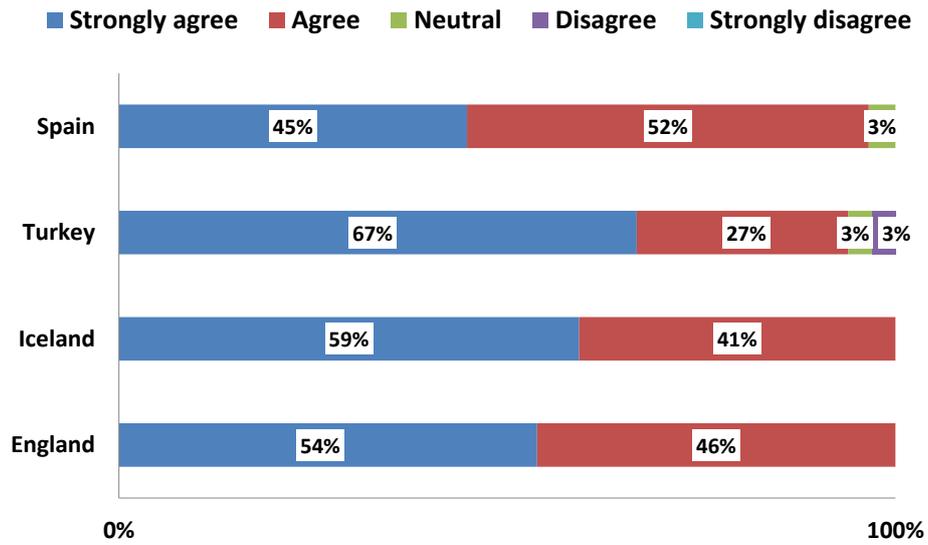
Figure 51. Broadening children views of others

As shown in Figure 51, teachers agree with the statement that, when selecting children's literature to teach, broadening children views of others is an important factor.

Strongly agree ■ **Agree** ■ **Neutral** ■ **Disagree** ■ **Strongly disagree**

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
Spain	62%	38%		
Turkey	50%	38%	6%	6%
Iceland	59%	33%	7%	
England	35%	65%		

0%   100%
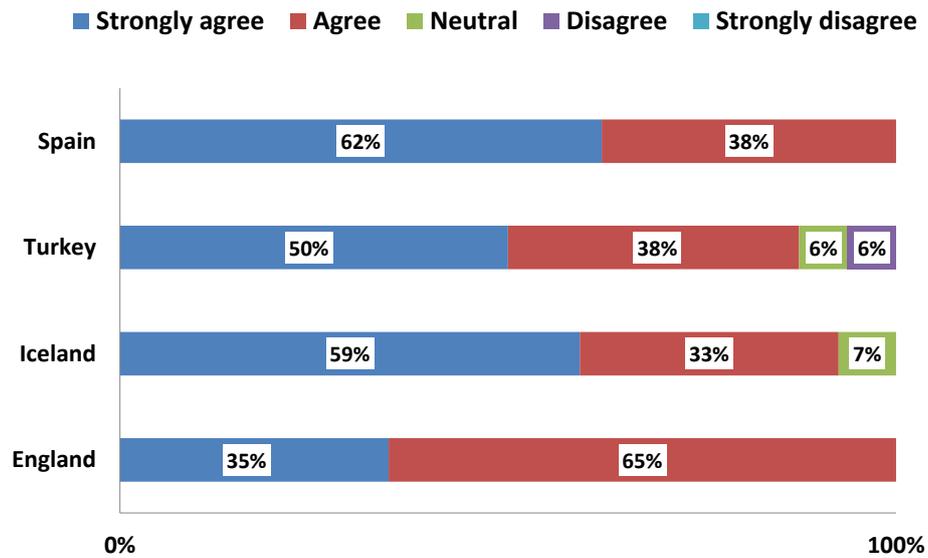
Figure 52. Teaching ethical values

Teachers agree with the statement that when selecting children's literature to teach, teaching ethical values is important. However there is difference between countries how strongly teachers agree with the statement, from 35% to 62%. Only in Turkey do some of the teachers disagree with this statement.

Strongly agree ■ **Agree** ■ **Neutral** ■ **Disagree** ■ **Strongly disagree**

Spain	48%	48%	3%
Turkey	58%	30%	9% 3%
Iceland	52%	33%	15%
England	42%	58%	

0%   100%
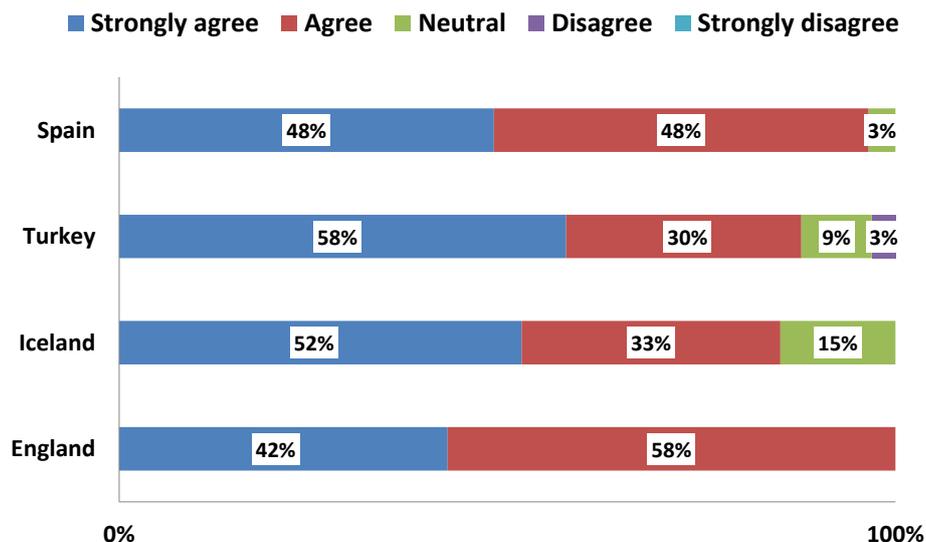
Figure 53. Teaching about feelings

Teachers agree with the statement that when selecting children's literature to teach it is important that the books or the literature teaches children about feelings.

Strongly agree ■ **Agree** ■ **Neutral** ■ **Disagree** ■ **Strongly disagree**

Spain	45%	48%	7%
Turkey	59%	38%	3%
Iceland	60%	40%	
England	73%	27%	

0%   100%
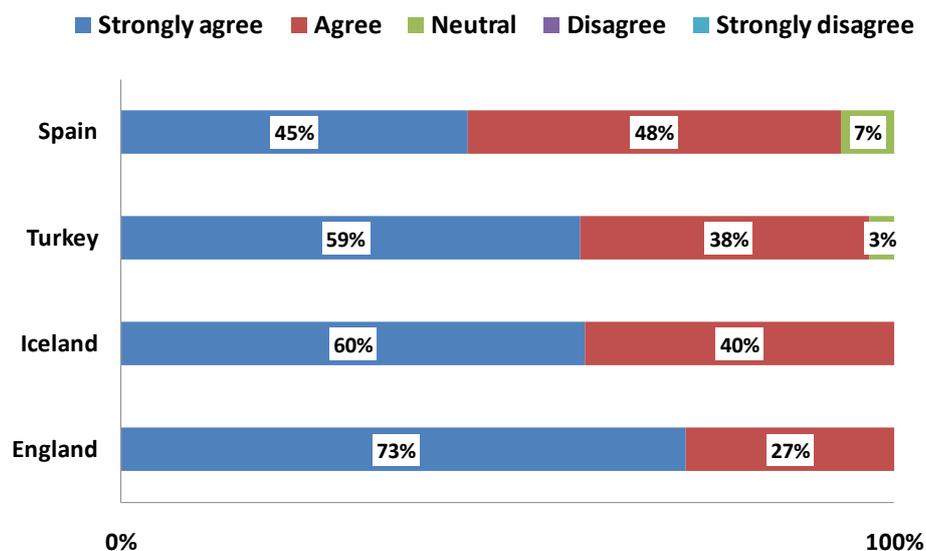
Figure 54. Introducing good literature

Introducing children to good literature is valued as an important factor in selecting children's literature to teach in the classroom. No one disagrees with the statement but the difference between countries in how strongly the teachers agree, noteworthy is the case of the English teachers who seem to agree more strongly with the statement than others.

Reading habits

In the following section, answers to questions related to reading habits in school are presented. The key questions were whether there is a reading/book corner in the classroom; who selects books to read; teachers' suggestion for reading and why; whether traditional or classic texts are used; how teachers gather information on children's literature publication; children's independent reading during school when teachers are not directly teaching them; teachers reading aloud for children and why they do read aloud, and finally who the teachers feel should be responsible for making children read.
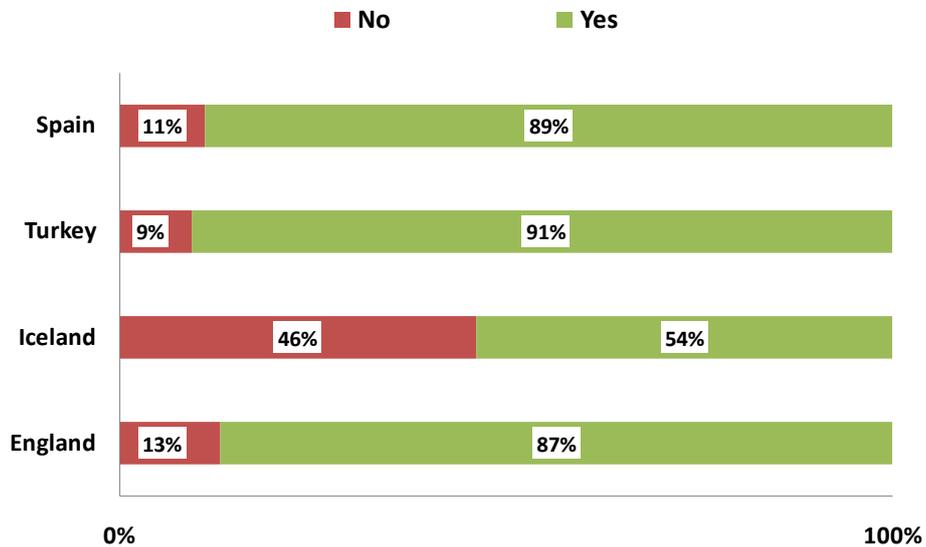
Figure 55. Do you have a reading/book corner for children's literature in your classroom?

A majority of the teachers do have a reading corner in the classroom. In fact around 90% of the teachers in Spain, Turkey and England do have one. Therefore, response from the Icelandic teachers differs from the rest as only 54% of the teachers have a specific reading/book corner in the classroom.
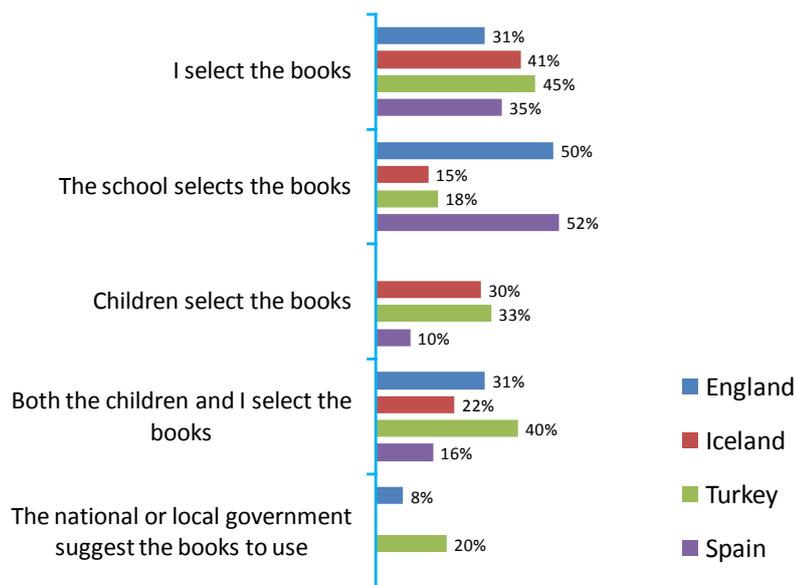
Figure 56. Who selects the books that are available in the reading/book corner?

In England and Spain, more than half of the teachers say the school selects the books, but less than 20% of the teachers in Iceland and Turkey say so. No teacher in England says children select the books, but over 30% in Iceland and Turkey say that they do so. One fifth of the teachers in Turkey say that the national or local government selects books, but only 8% of the English teachers say it does so and none of the teachers in Spain and Iceland.
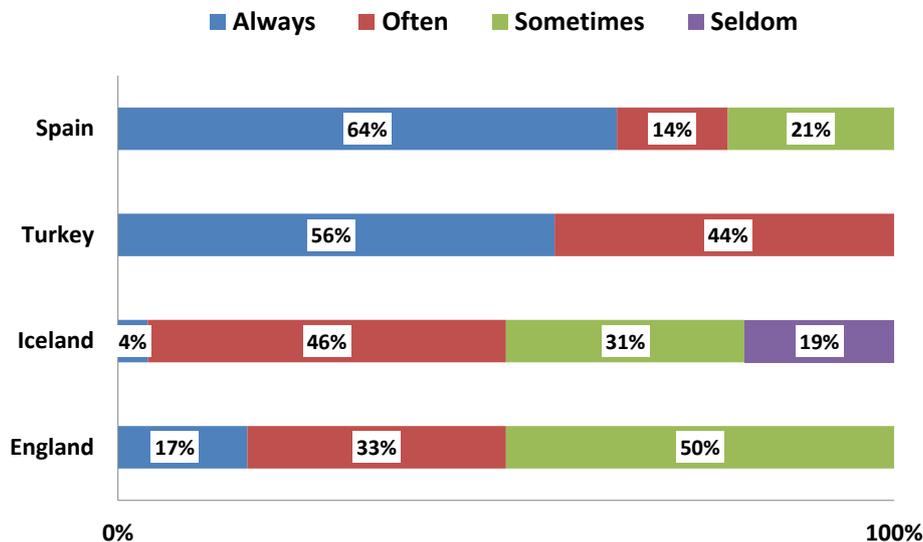
Figure 57. How often do you suggest books to the children for them to read independently in school or at home?

In the four countries the teachers say they suggest books for children to read independently – no teacher ticked the option Never. In Iceland one fifth said they seldom suggest books to read but in no other country teacher ticked this option. In Spain and Turkey majority of the teachers always suggest books to read and in Turkey all teachers suggests books to read, always or often.

Reason	Spain	Turkey	Iceland	England
The author motivates children to read more	55%	60%	44%	73%
The author raises issues relevant to children	32%	43%	63%	42%
The author can be read at many different levels, giving children a range of ways to respond to the text	16%	45%	15%	42%
The author writes engaging plots	55%	53%	63%	50%
The author uses language in an interesting manner	35%	25%	44%	58%
The author is humorous	48%	48%	33%	54%
The author is considered to be a classic author of children's literature	35%	35%	41%	42%
I remember reading the author as a child	35%	28%	48%	73%
The author is popular with children	48%	8%	63%	73%

Figure 58. If you suggest a particular author to children, why do you do it?

Teachers suggest a particular author to children for various reasons, as Figure 58 shows. In summary the Spanish teachers do so mostly because the author motivates children to read, writes engaging plots, is humorous and popular with children. The Turkish teachers do so typically because the author motivates children to read more, can be read at many different levels, writes engaging plots and is humorous. The Icelandic teachers do so mostly because the author raises issues related to children, writes engaging plots, they remember reading the author as a child and because the author is popular with children. The English teachers do so because the author motivates children to read more, writes engaging plot, uses language in an interesting manner, is humorous, they remember reading the author as a child and because the author is popular with children. The greatest contrast between countries is where the Icelandic teachers say the author raises issues relevant to children; where the English teachers most often say they remember reading the author as a child; and where the Turkish teachers are less likely than other countries to say they suggest an author because the author is popular with children.

The teachers in older age groups are more likely than teachers in lower age groups to value that the author raises issues related to children. There is also a significant difference related to gender. Male teachers are more likely than female teachers to suggest books by an author that is popular with children and because they remember reading the author as a child.

No **Yes**

Spain	68%	32%
Turkey	62%	38%
Iceland	71%	29%
England	67%	33%

0%   100%
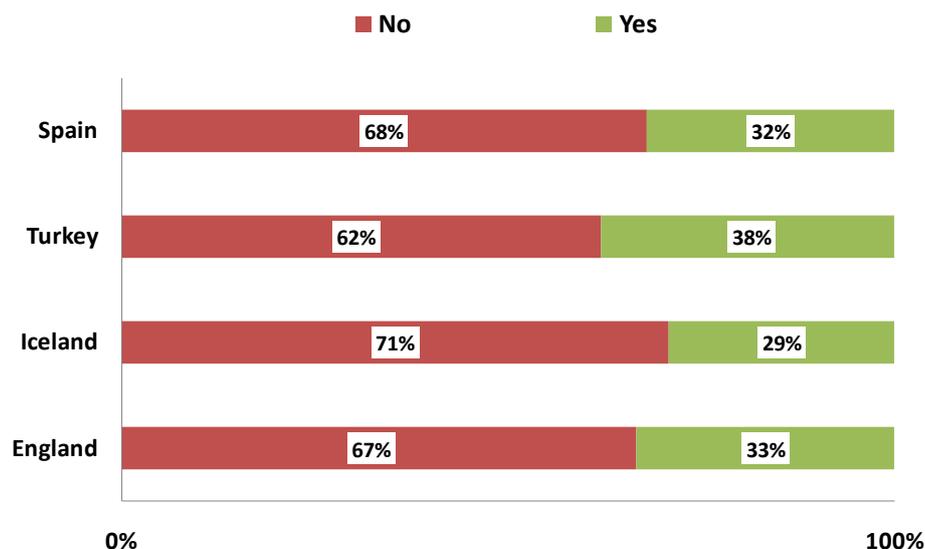
Figure 59. Are there classic texts from your own country's traditions or national literature that you regularly teach?

As shown in Figure 59 around 32% to 38% of the teachers say that they regularly use classic texts from their own country's tradition or national literature. There is however a considerable differences related to teachers age, where the percentage of teachers who agree with the statement rises steadily from 6% in the age group 25-29 years old, up to 83% of teachers in the age group 45-49 years old, but then falls again slightly down to 30% in the 50+ age group.

Always **Often** **Sometimes** **Seldom** **Never**

Spain	4%	57%	29%	11%
Turkey	10%	23%	57%	7% 3%
Iceland	62%	27%	4% 8%
England	17%	42%	33%	4% 4%

0%   100%
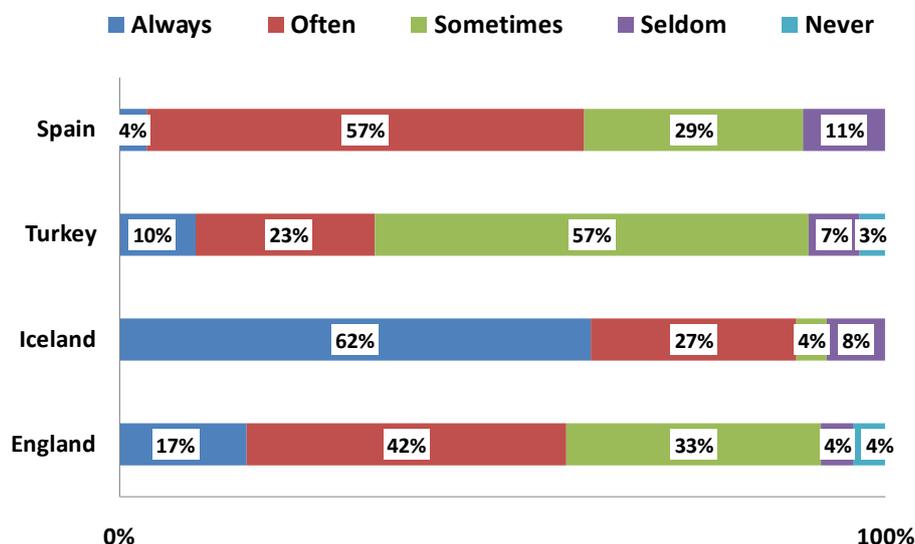
Figure 60. Do you read children's books for the age group you teach?

As shown in Figure 60 the difference between countries is substantial. Responses from Iceland are distinct, where over 60% of the teachers say they always read children's book for the age group they teach. If the options always and often are merged the Icelandic responses are still unique.

Reading brochures produced by children's books publishing companies: Spain 45%, Turkey 55%, Iceland 48%, England 8%

Through courses I have attended: Spain 19%, Turkey 40%, Iceland 26%, England 65%

By word of mouth: Spain 68%, Turkey 10%, Iceland 78%, England 81%

I don't gather information about children's literature (from any special source): Spain 3%, Turkey 15%, Iceland 7%, England 8%

By reading and watching other media: Spain 16%, Turkey 30%, Iceland 30%, England 27%

By reading children's book publications: Spain 52%, Turkey 53%, Iceland 78%, England 54%

By reading websites: Spain 61%, Turkey 43%, Iceland 30%, England 42%

By reading academic journals: Spain 19%, Turkey 5%, Iceland 11%, England 12%

Legend: Spain, Turkey, Iceland, England

Figure 61. How teachers gather information about children's literature

Teachers gather information about children's literature in various ways. There are differences in responses to many of the given options between countries, gender and age, sometimes just a slight inclination but sometimes the difference is substantial, as shown in Figure 61. A majority of the teachers read book publications and gather information by word of mouth. Up to half of the teachers read brochures and websites. A minority of the teachers mark other given options. A few teachers answered by stating either, that they gather information by reading academic journals or that they don't gather information about children's literature.

A gender difference exists within statements such as: "By reading children's book publications and through courses I have attended", where female teacher are more likely to say so than the male teachers. An age difference occurs in within the option "By reading websites", where teachers in lower age groups are more likely to say so than teachers in older age groups, although the difference is not linear.

Always ■ **Often** ■ **Sometimes** ■ **Seldom** ■ **Never**

	Always	Often	Sometimes	Seldom
Spain	25%	50%	18%	7%
Turkey	27%	47%	27%	
Iceland	58%	27%	27%	
England	50%	33%	13%	4%

0%   100%
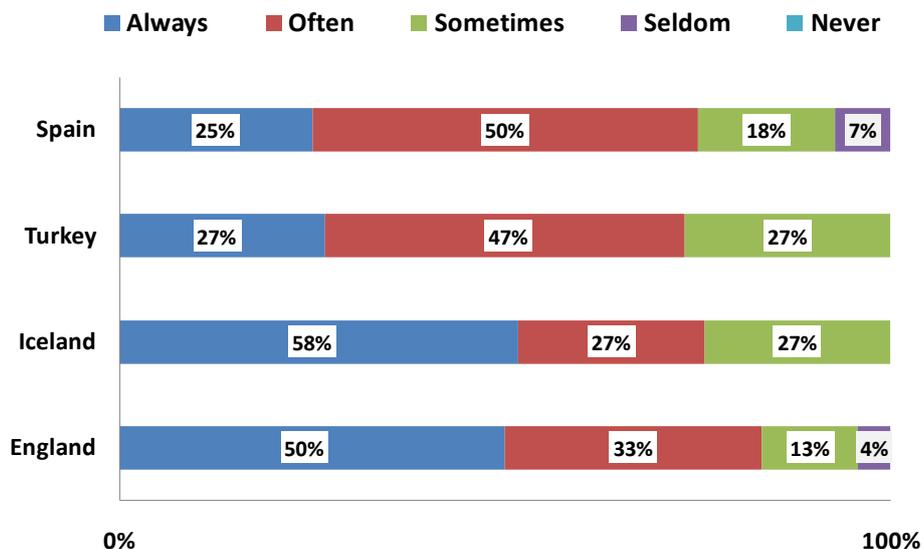
Figure 62. Do children in your class read independently during the school day other than when you are directly teaching them?

Children seem to read independently during the school day even when not directly taught. About 75–83% of the teachers, depending on country, say children always or often do so and only 4–7% say they seldom read.

■ **More than once a day**   ■ **Daily**
■ **About twice a week**   ■ **Once a week**
■ **Less than once every two weeks**   ■ **Never**

	More than once a day	Daily	About twice a week	Once a week	Less than once every two weeks
Spain	21%	50%	18%	4%	7%
Turkey	13%	53%	19%	13%	3%
Iceland	4%	77%	4%	12%	4%
England		75%	21%		4%

0%   100%
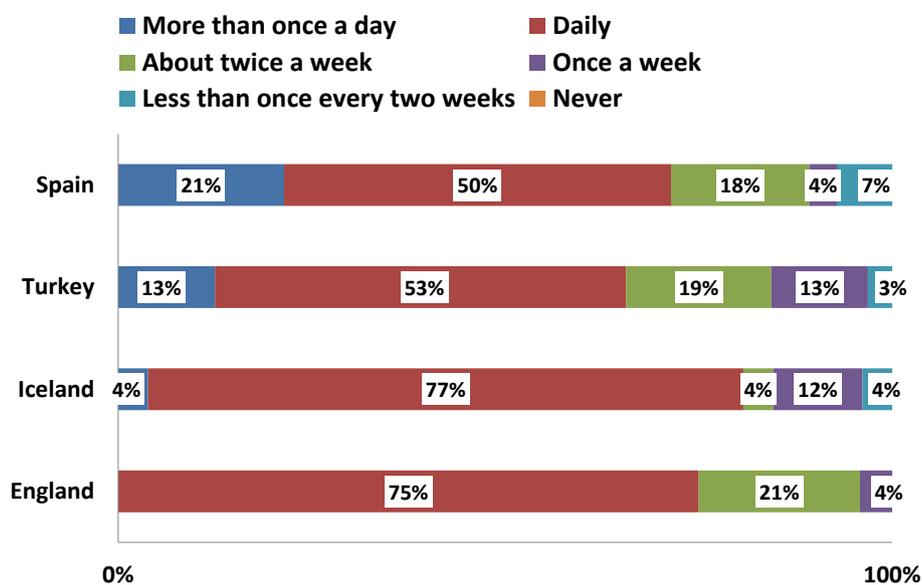
Figure 63. How often do you read aloud to children in your class?

Figure 63 shows that two third up to four fifths of teachers say they read aloud to children daily or more than once a day. A small minority of the teachers say that they read once a week or less. Teachers were then asked about the reasons for reading aloud, in following questions (see Figure 64 below).
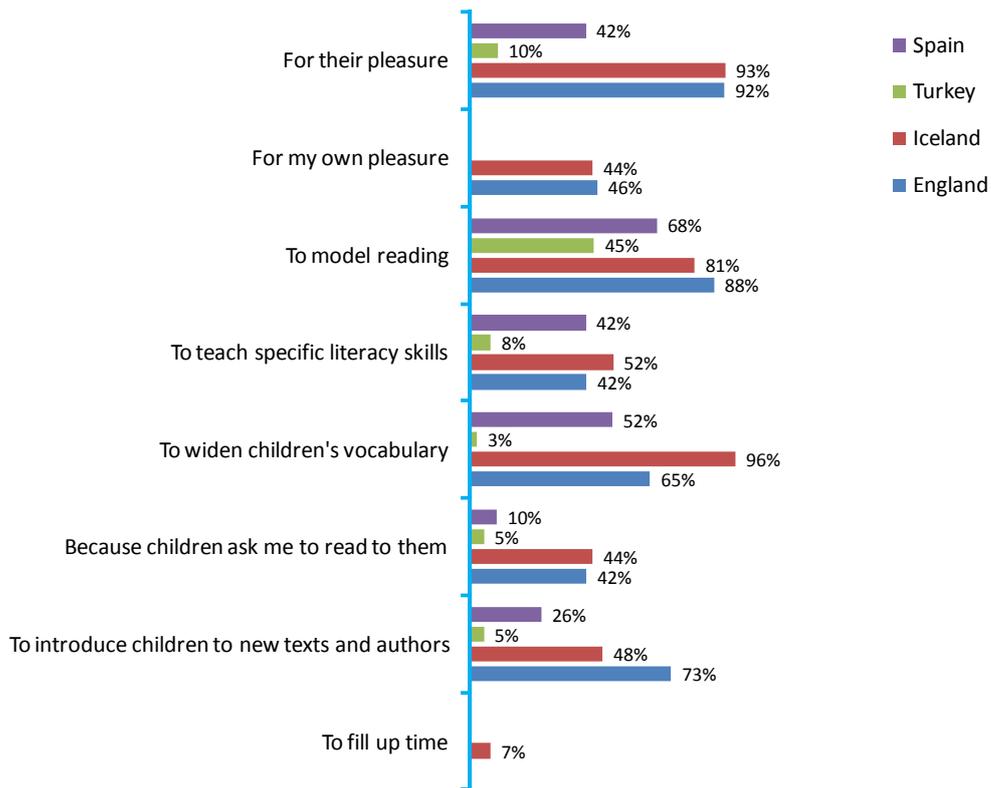
Figure 64. If you read aloud for the children in your class, for what purposes do you read for them?

The reasons given for reading aloud are different and answers also vary considerably within given options. "To model reading" is the most common reason given. The most stark difference between the teachers' answers is in the option "To widen children's vocabulary", where the highest percentage of teacher agreeing with the statement is 96% and the lowest 3%. It is also noteworthy that the Icelandic and the English teachers peak every time in percentages but equally notable is that percentages for answers of the Turkish teachers are very low, only once higher than 10%.

Who is responsible for promoting reading for pleasure

Teachers were asked who they feel should be responsible for promoting reading for pleasure. The following options were given: teachers, parents, siblings, media, classmates and friends (see: from Figure 65 below and forwards).
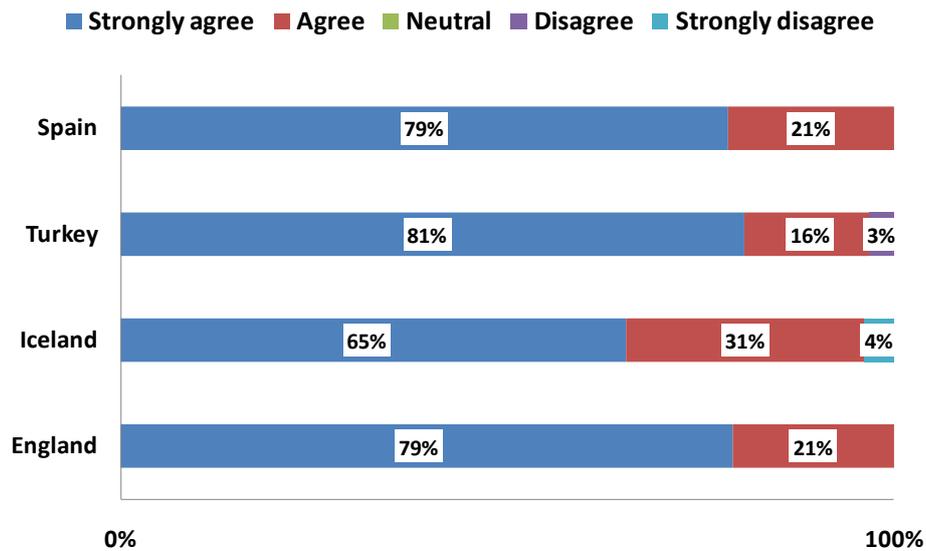
Figure 65. Teachers are responsible for promoting reading for pleasure

As seen in Figure 65 teachers feel responsible for promoting reading for pleasure. In Iceland and Turkey, a few teachers disagree, but overall 96% to 100% of teachers agree with the statement.

Strongly agree ■ **Agree** ■ **Neutral** ■ **Disagree** ■ **Strongly disagree**

Spain	89% 7% 4%
Turkey	84% 16%
Iceland	96% 4%
England	88% 13%

0%   100%
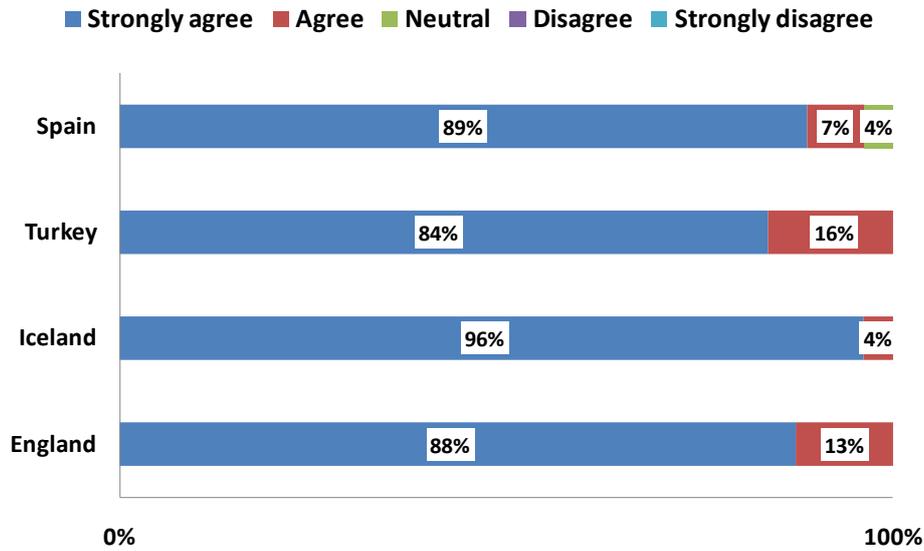
Figure 66. Parents are responsible for promoting reading for pleasure

A vast majority of teachers strongly agreed with the statement that parents are responsible for promoting reading for pleasure.

Strongly agree ■ **Agree** ■ **Neutral** ■ **Disagree** ■ **Strongly disagree**

Spain	21% 50% 21% 8%
Turkey	63% 30% 7%
Iceland	4% 22% 52% 17% 4%
England	32% 50% 18%

0%   100%
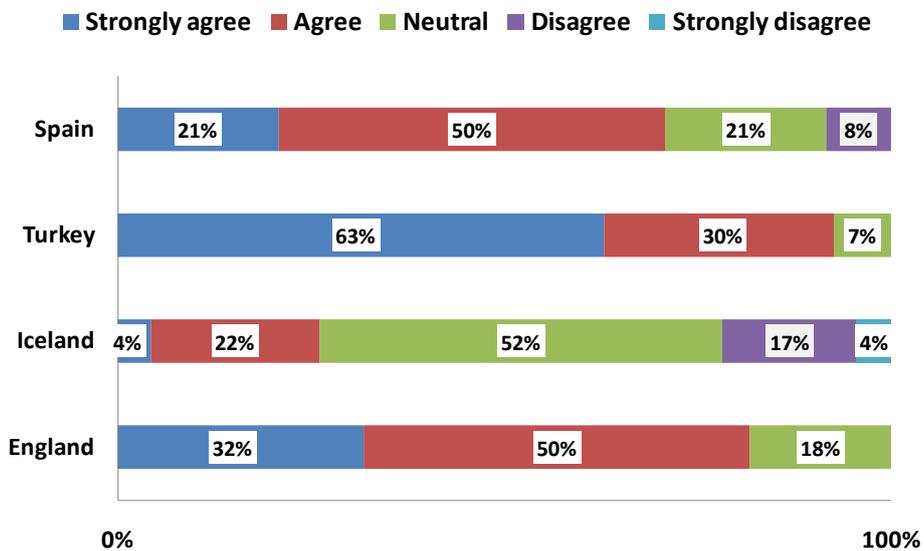
Figure 67. Siblings are responsible for promoting reading for pleasure

As seen in Figure 67 there are mixed opinions among the teachers about the responsibility of children's siblings for promoting reading for pleasure. Only 26% of Icelandic teachers agreed but 71 to 93% of teachers in the other countries. The Turkish teachers seem to agree more strongly with the statement than others, while the Icelandic teachers are more likely to say that they are neutral towards the statement.

Strongly agree **Agree** **Neutral** **Disagree** **Strongly disagree**

Spain	21% / 54% / 21% / 4%
Turkey	65% / 27% / 4% / 4%
Iceland	32% / 41% / 18% / 5%
England	45% / 36% / 18%

0% — 100%
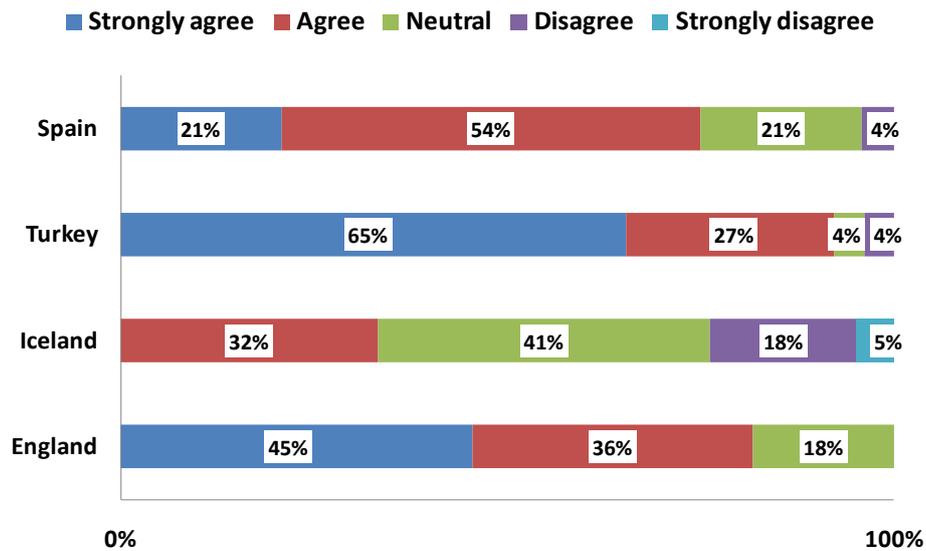
Figure 68. The media is responsible for promoting reading for pleasure

Figure 68 shows that the teachers have varied views on media's responsibility for promoting reading for pleasure. Only 32% of the Icelandic teachers agreed but 71 to 93% of teachers in the other countries. Icelandic teachers are more likely to say that they are neutral towards the statement, than the teachers from Spain, Turkey and England.

Strongly agree **Agree** **Neutral** **Disagree** **Strongly disagree**

Spain	21% / 54% / 17% / 8%
Turkey	57% / 25% / 11% / 7%
Iceland	23% / 45% / 27% / 5%
England	41% / 41% / 14% / 5%

0% — 100%
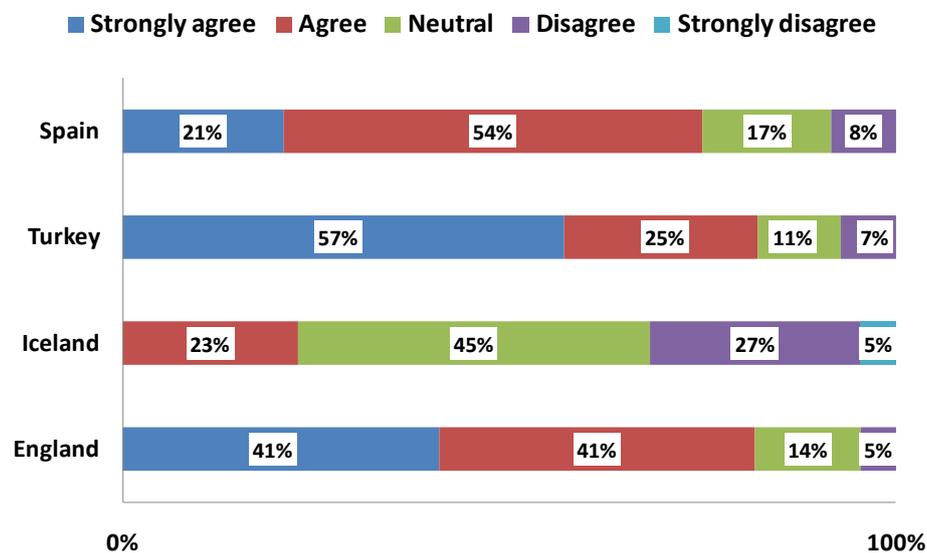
Figure 69. Classmates' responsibility for promoting reading for pleasure

Figure 69 show that there are also mixed opinions of classmates responsibility for promoting reading for pleasure. Only 23% of the Icelandic teachers agreed but 77 to 83% of teachers in the other countries. Neutrality towards the statement is close to three times more likely among the Icelandic teachers.
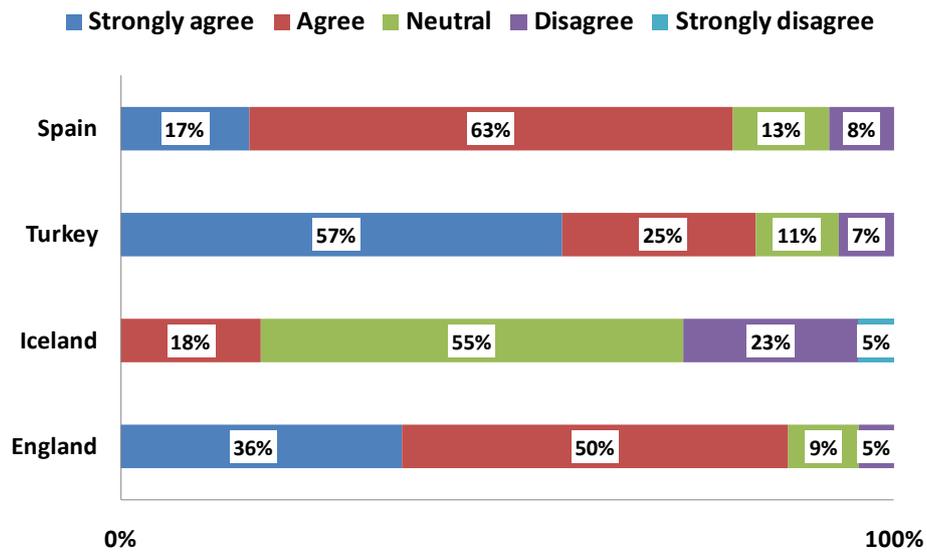
Figure 70. Friends' responsibility for promoting reading for pleasure

Figure 70 shows that there are mixed opinions regarding friends' responsibility for promoting reading for pleasure. Only 18% of the Icelandic teachers agreed but 80 to 86% of the teachers in the other countries agreed with the statement. Once again marking neutral is more common among the Icelandic teachers.

Reading aims, strategies and processes

In this section there is an analysis of teacher's responses to questions concerning what aspects of teaching children's literature they feel most confident to teach. In addition, there are answers to questions about what activities teachers use to help children better understand children's literature, how to develop and teach comprehension skills and how to assess comprehension skills.

In the following section each country response is reported separately. Teachers were asked to tick up to five of the given activities they feel most confident to teach (see Figure 71 to 74).

Activity	England
... to use reading as a model for children's own writing	62%
... to infer meaning from a text	58%
...to ask questions about a text	58%
...to comrehend the literal meaning of a text	46%
...to make a personal response to the text based on the child's own view	42%
... to read for a particular purpose, e.g. to find out information	42%
... to understand new vocabulary	42%
... to select a good book to read	38%
... to make connections between different texts that have been read	35%
... to decode a text	31%
... to infer authorial intent	31%
... to make choices about what to read	31%
... to make connections between what is read and children's own lives and experiences	27%

Figure 71. Which of these do you feel most confident teaching - England

As Figure 71 shows, the English teachers generally feel confident teaching how to use reading as a model for children's own writing, teaching them to infer meaning from a text and teaching children how to ask questions about a text.

... to understand new vocabulary	78%
... to ask questions about a text	67%
... to make connections between what is read and children's own lives and experiences	59%
... to decode a text	44%
... to infer meaning from a text	44%
... to make a personal response to the text based on the child's own view	44%
... to read for a particular purpose, e.g. to find out information	44%
... to select a good book to read	37%
... to make choices about what to read	33%
... to use reading as a model for children's own writing	30%
... to make connections between different texts that have been read	15%
... to comrehend the literal meaning of a text	11%
... to infer authorial intent	0%

■ Iceland

Figure 72. Which of these do you feel most confident teaching - Iceland

As seen in Figure 72 responses vary from no response up to 78%. The Icelandic teachers feel rather confident teaching children how to understand new vocabulary, how to ask questions about a text and how to make connections between what is read and children's own lives and experiences.
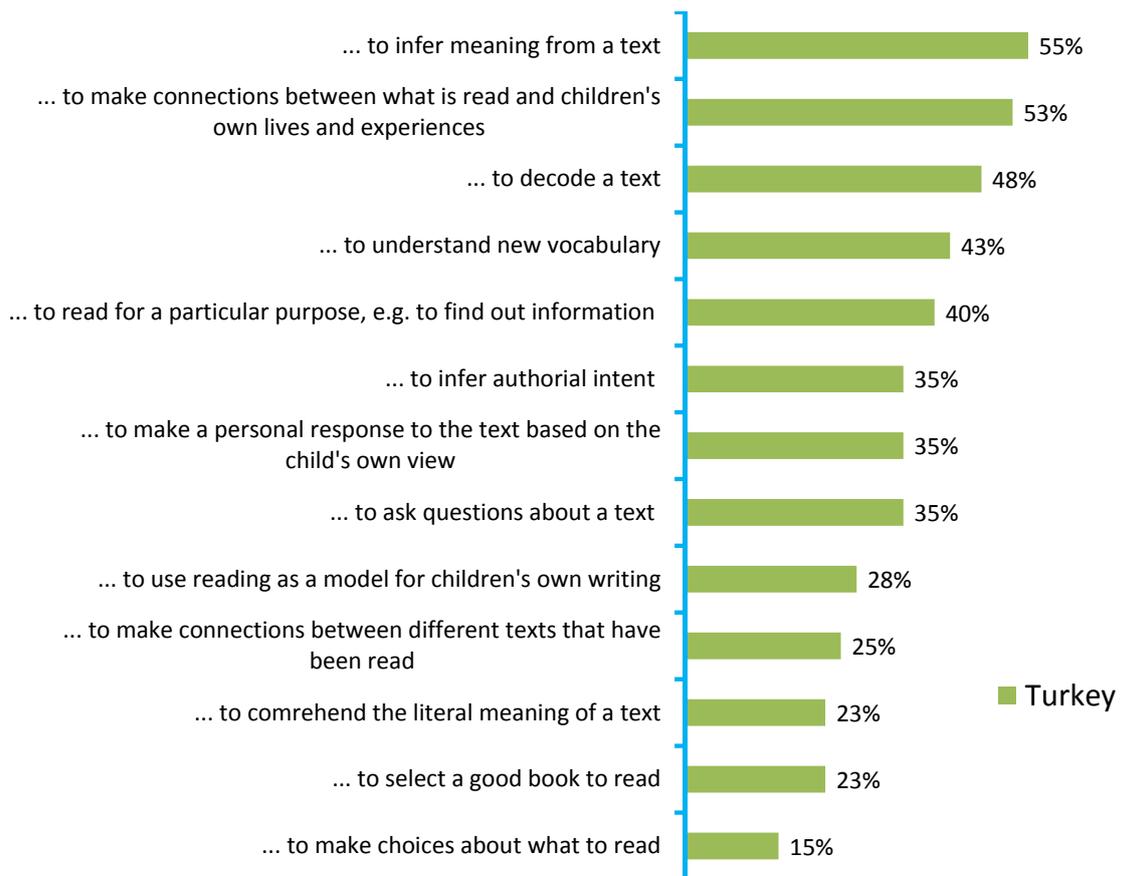
Figure 73. Which of these do you feel most confident teaching - Turkey

As seen in Figure 73 teachers in Turkey feel rather confident teaching children to infer meaning from a text, how to make connections between what is read and children's own lives and experiences and how to decode a text.

... to understand new vocabulary	61%
... to make connections between what is read and children's own lives and experiences	55%
... to make a personal response to the text based on the child's own view	45%
... to read for a particular purpose, e.g. to find out information	45%
... to use reading as a model for children's own writing	45%
... to infer authorial intent	32%
... to select a good book to read	32%
... to infer meaning from a text	29%
... to comrehend the literal meaning of a text	26%
... to ask questions about a text	23%
... to make connections between different texts that have been read	16%
... to make choices about what to read	13%
... to decode a text	10%

■ Spain

Figure 74. Which of these do you feel most confident to teaching - Spain

As seen in Figure 74 the Spanish teachers seem to feel most confident teaching children how to understand new vocabulary, how to make connections between what is read and children's own lives and experiences. 45% of the Spanish teachers said they feel confident teaching how to make a personal response to the text based on the child's own view, how to read for a particular purpose and how to use reading as a model for children's own writing.
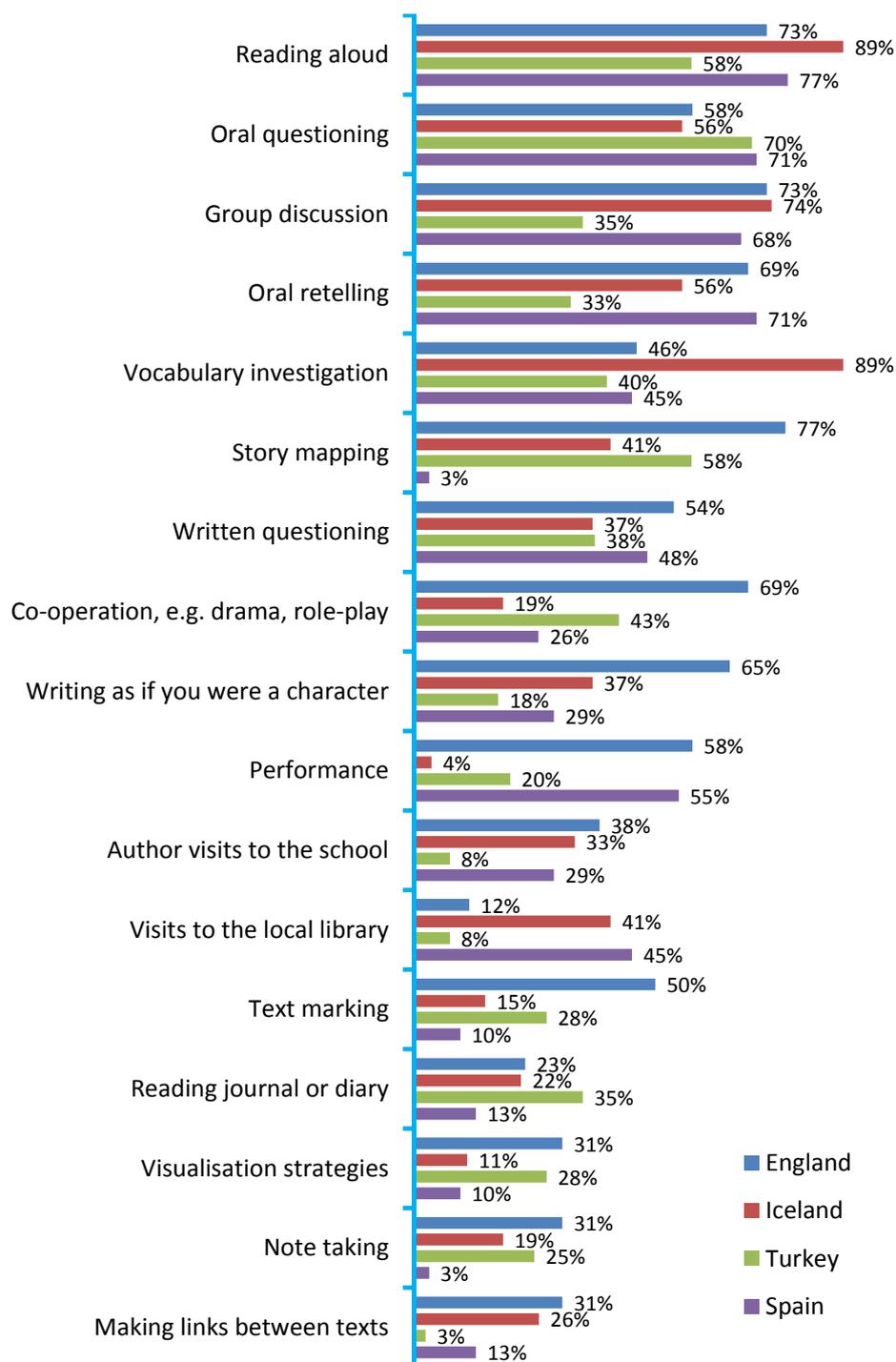
Figure 75. Activities that may help children to understand children's literature - Which do you use?

In order to simplify presentation of the findings, activities have been ranked according to the average of the four countries, where reading aloud scores the highest and making links between texts the lowest, on average.

A majority of the teachers in all countries believe it is helpful to use oral questioning and reading aloud. Activities that a majority of teachers in three countries believe is helpful is group discussion and oral retelling. Activities that a majority of teachers in two countries believe is helpful are story mapping and performance. Activities that a majority of the teachers in only one country believe is helpful are co-operation, text marking, writing as if you were a character (all England) and vocabulary investigation (Iceland).

(Figure 75 continued) It is interesting to see where the difference is considerable between the countries, and what activities score low in one country compared to another. These include co-operation (difference between lowest and highest score is 50%), text marking (40% difference), writing as if you were character (47% difference), performance (54% difference), group discussion (39% difference) and story mapping (74% difference).

In eight of the listed activities, responses from the English teachers are the highest. In three cases, responses from the Icelandic and Spanish teachers are the highest. And in one case, responses from the Turkish teachers score highest. In seven activities responses from the Turkish teachers score the lowest and in five cases the Spanish teachers score the lowest percentages.

Discussion

Highlights of the findings

A brief report is unable to capture the richness of the data contained in the survey but it intends to highlight some of the most important findings:

- There is a correlation between the number of books in a child's home and children´s interest in reading
- There is significant variation in children's interest in reading, with older children showing less interest; however the majority of children (over 70%) report enjoying learning through children's literature
- There are wide variations between countries in terms of children's response to literature and of classroom practice. For example:
  - A high proportion (80%) of the children from Turkey say they love to read while only one third of the children from Iceland express the same opinion
  - The Icelandic children´s responses differ substantially from the other countries when asked if they ever write about what they read in class, with just over half of them reporting that they write about what they read compared, to 80–90% of children in Spain, Turkey and England
- In all the countries teachers seem to read frequently for the children they teach, often with the intention of developing a positive reading ethos; however, the data collected does not support the proposition that all teachers are likely to value the importance of children´s literature in teaching
- In both England and Spain the use of children's literature to support teaching and learning seems to be an established part of the school curriculum (96–90%), while in Turkey and in Iceland less than 60% report this
- The English teachers use children's literature in more varied ways than the teachers in Spain, Turkey and Iceland; they feel confident teaching how to use reading as a model for children's own writing, to teach to infer meaning from a text and teach children how to ask questions about a text, but the Spanish, Icelandic and Turkish teachers feel more confident in making connections between what is read and children's own lives and experiences
- The teachers from Turkey appear to receive less education in children's literature, both during teacher training and during their career as teachers, than teachers in the other three countries
- Only half of the teachers from Iceland say there is a reading corner in the classroom where children can read in peace and enjoy reading, while around 90% of the teachers in the other three countries say they have such a place in the classroom

Limitations of the survey

The study has certain limitations and possibilities for bias. In Turkey and Iceland, the head teachers selected the participants. Thus, it is possible that there, the teachers were chosen because of their qualifications, which may have influenced the results. However, the questionnaire was followed by interviewing both children and teachers in focus groups. In these interviews, children and teachers described in more detail their own understanding of children´s literature in teaching.

A part of the data from the four countries varies significantly. Not only can the reason for this be related to the cultural differences in the countries, but also to the instrument used; the questionnaire. In Turkey the children used pen and paper but the others answered online, via the project website, which may have affected the freedom they felt to answer candidly. Again, although the accuracy of the translated text had been thoroughly analysed and could be regarded as fairly reliable, in a few instances it was difficult to find equivalent wording for the questions, which may have skewed some of the results. To give one example of this, in Iceland the sentence "I love to read" implies a stronger attachment than in the other three countries. Therefore the response is not quite comparable among the countries.

The findings, however, give an important insight that does help shed light on a number of issues regarding the aims of the study.

Survey results and discussion

Background information – children and teachers

In this section information about the number of children participating in each country, age of the children and their gender is presented. There is also an analysis of children's responses to questions, related to their background. Children were asked questions such as how many siblings they have or if they have a bedroom of their own. There is also information about the teachers; how many were participating from each country, their gender and age. Teachers were also asked about teaching experience, what age group they were teaching, if they had studied children's literature during their teacher training or if they have had training or had taken courses in their careers as teachers.

In all, a total of 2965 children from schools in England, Iceland, Turkey and Spain answered the questionnaire. The number of participants in each country varies from 609 (Turkey) up to 820 (Iceland), in a proportion of 21% to 28% of the total number of participants. The participants in the children´s survey in each country were 7 to 11 year-old children, with the majority at the age 9 and 10 years old, an age group that varies between 54 to 72% of the sample. Distribution by age is most equal among the English children and the distribution by gender is equal. In all, 10–17% of the

children are the only children in their home and around 60% of the children say there are two or three children (themselves included) at home.

In all 127 teachers participated in the survey from the four countries. The number of teachers, from each of the participating countries, varied from 21 to 40. The teachers came from 8 schools in Iceland, 7 schools in England, 7 schools in Spain and 5 schools in Turkey. The teaching profession is often taken as an example of the gender segregation of the labour market. This is especially true of teachers of younger children. Under one fifth of the Icelandic teachers are male, although more than one third of the Turkish teachers are men.

Although Turkey had the lowest number of children that participated in the Children's survey, it contributed the highest number of teachers. There is a notable difference related to the age of teachers in the four countries. The Icelandic teachers' age differs substantially from the three other countries. As many as 44% of teachers in the Icelandic sample are 50 years or older, compared to only 8–10% in Spain, Turkey and England. In Iceland only 11% are between the ages of 25–34, compared to 46–56% of teachers in England, Spain and Turkey. The difference in age reflects the Icelandic teachers having the longest teaching experience. Notable also is that over 40% of the Turkish teachers say they have only 6–10 years of experience.

Huck, Hepler, Hickman and Kiefer (1997, p. 39) claim that if a literature programme for children is to be successful, teachers and librarians must know children's literature, but they add that it is only half the task; it is necessary to understand children. Between two thirds and three quarters of the teachers in Spain, Iceland and England studied teaching children's literature during their teacher training. Most of the teachers from England have had training or have taken courses in children's literature during their careers. They come from one city, Bristol and the education authority in the city had invested in training for at least one teacher in each school to attend a course in the use of children's literature. The Spanish responses relate to the earlier observations about studying children's literature in teacher training in Spain. According to Jiménez Fernández (2008), the Spanish Ministry of Education is aware of the importance of the teachers' training, and is making an effort to provide teachers with courses to make them more familiar with children's literature. The teachers in Turkey seem to get less education in children's literature than others (30% in teacher training, 26% in their careers as teachers), especially compared to England (73% in teacher training, 85% in their careers as teachers).

Children´s home environment

In this section there is an analysis of children's responses to questions related to their background. They were asked questions like: the number of books in their home, their access to the internet, whether or not adults read to them and whether or not they buy their own books. The home and

environment in terms of its attitudes, habits, preferences and practices seems to play a significant role in shaping readers and their relationship with literature. Children who have access to literature and stories in their homes have been found to learn to read more quickly, read more fluently, and have a more positive attitude towards reading (Clark, 1976; Durkin, 1966; Thorndike, 1973; Wells, 1986; Þórarinsdóttir and Bjarnason, 2010).

When the children are asked if the family have books at home, there is a significant difference related to age. Overall, younger children are more likely than older to say that there are no books at home. Closer analysis reveals that this tendency appears only in the English and Turkish sample. The Turkish children responses show more children saying that there are none or only some books in their home. In all 34% of the Turkish children said there are a lot books in their home and 16% said there are none, compared to 1% in Iceland. These results are not consistent to the findings of Güngör (2009) who found that the majority of the Turkish students (68%) in his research stated that they have a library or a book corner at home. Gönen, Öncü and Işıtan (2004) carried out a study in schools in Ankara and found that 85% of the students have a library in their homes, but added that the results might change depending on the income and the education level of families.

In Iceland, there is a general belief that the Icelandic nation has a great interest in literature. There seems to be considerable interest in reading in the country, and the Icelandic children are most decisive in their attitude, claiming that there are a lot of books in their homes (86%). On the other hand, when the Icelandic children were asked specifically about children's books in their home they are not as decisive (56%). In her study Óladóttir (2010) found that seven out of 12 children interviewed about their reading habits, said there are a lot of books in their homes.

In England the questionnaire was considered in more detail for two schools in focus groups. One school was in an area of _high socio economic context_ (HSC), when considering aspects such as housing, employment, crime, health and education, and the other having a _low socio economic context_ (LSC) (such separation of schools does not exist in Iceland). As may be expected, the children in the HSC say there are a lot (87%) of books in their homes, against 55% in the LSC schools. The comparison between the LSC and the HSC schools was undertaken as an example of the kind of further analysis of intra-national data that could be undertaken in addition to the international analysis offered elsewhere in this discussion.

While children may have a different understanding of what "a lot" and "some" may mean in terms of number of books, the number of children saying they have "a lot" of books in the home is significantly higher in the HSC school. Interestingly, children suggested in the HSC school that there were more books for adults than for children (with a similar trend in the LSC school). Children in the HSC school, it could be assumed, seem to see books as a normal part of their home life and the lives of the adults they live with. They are, it could be suggested, surrounded by more books. It is possible

therefore to conclude that they regularly see their parents and other adults within the family home reading and engaging with text. In the LSC school over half of the children have "a lot" of books in their home; this represents over half of the children and suggests therefore a relatively literate background. However, this figure becomes more significant when compared with the much higher percentage in the HSC school. This is important since, as noted above, Clark and Rumbold (2006) have shown that children who see their parents engaging in reading as an enjoyable experience are more likely to see reading as a worthwhile activity and so become more motivated to read themselves.

Cox and Guthrie (2001) found that the amount children read for enjoyment is a major contributor to their reading achievement. Juel (1988), as cited in Clark and Rumbold (2006), refers to this as the "vicious circle in which poor readers remain poor readers." Pressley (2000) details how extensive reading promotes fluency, vocabulary and background knowledge. Irwin (2003) identified what she calls "*aliteracy*": the lack of a reading habit in capable readers who choose not to read. So encouraging children to develop regular reading habits, positive attitudes to reading and the ability to make informed choices about their reading is essential.

Some texts demand more of the reader: they extend vocabulary, challenge thinking and offer new insights into familiar problems. Such texts can allow children to rehearse issues that may arise in their own lives or communities and so support cognitive development. It is therefore useful to consider how the experience of home and school influence children's reading choices. Close (2001, p. 11) reviewed the research evidence on parental involvement and literacy and identified "home influences [as] the strongest indicators of children's attainment scores on entry to pre-school" and so the differences shown in the HSC and LSC schools are important in terms of the impact on the child as a reader. The data from the two schools resonates with that of Roberts et al. (1999) who concluded that the number of books in the home relates to social class differences, and Twist et al (2007, p. 8) stated "there was a clear association between the number of books in the home and reading attainment." However, as Snow et al. (1991) pointed out, it is not just about the number of books in the home but about the conversations between adult and children about those books that is significant.

When asked, in the focus groups, about reading in the home, these comments were indicative of the responses at the HSC schools in England:

- At home, it's much more like a library.
- I like *Noughts* and *Crosses* [Malorie Blackman]. Jack, my brother, introduced me to it. He has a special shelf of books he likes.
- At home there are no boundaries to what you read.

The comments related not just to reading at home but the ethos of the reading environment within the home. Clark (2007) considered the nature of this reading environment and suggested that parents who created a "home environment that encourages learning, communicates high, yet reasonable expectations for achievement" positively influenced a pupil's achievement. It was noted that this was "a more accurate predictor" of achievement than "parental income or social status".

When children at the LSC school were asked about reading at home, in contrast, their responses related solely to where and if they read at home:

- I read in bed.
- I read a lot at home.

Children in the two schools in England (LSC and HSC) described the role of peers, including how peers influenced them as part of the formal teaching of reading in the classroom and also in informal moments in school. When asked about influences on book choice the children in the HSC school (44%) were more likely than children at the LSC school (32%) to cite a friend as an influence. Girls at the HSC school, in particular, cited friends as a key influence. This was further supported in the focus group data, where children talked about their relationships to their peers in school reading activities:

- We get put in groups that are the same ability. I like taking turns, sharing with friends.
- I can be quite patient if I am in the wrong group. I don't mind helping people. I'm no good at PE and they might help me with PE.
- On some days we share reading. In literacy we read stuff together.
- I like the way you can share books if you want and share your imagination with a friend.

In the HSC school, there appeared to be a collegiate and collaborative approach to reading, where friends and peers were positive influences in both formal and informal contexts. In contrast, the children at the LSC school identified peers as sometimes problematic, where the children said:

- If you get a book you like you don't tell anyone else. This friend told others and they weren't very nice to her.
- People tap you on the shoulder when you are trying to read.
- Some people laugh at you when you say a book.
- I sometimes go to the [school] library with friends but they get bored.

A couple of the girls in the LSC school talked about keeping their reading habits quiet for fear of being made fun of and many children talked about managing the distractions caused by their peers during quiet reading in the classroom. Howe (2010, p. 6) explored the "significant and enduring contribution" of peers in children's development and Clark, Osbourne and Akerman (2008, p. 28) noted that peers influenced children's aspirations (wanting to be like their peers) as well as their reading choices. This research showed that children who categorised themselves as non-readers

believed their peers viewed readers as "geeky/nerds and boring" whereas children who categorised themselves as readers thought their peers had a "positive view of readers". The children at the HSC school seemed to view their peers through the lens of "a reader" and so were generally positive. The children at the LSC school, who may have categorised themselves as readers, seemed to suggest that the non-reader view was dominant and was therefore threatening. Consequently, the readers "kept quiet" about reading.

Broddason, Ólafsson and Karlsdóttir (2010) state that their long-term research project shows, that the general pattern for all new introductions to the media market seems to be that there is a time when each particular medium changes from being new and exotic to being an everyday phenomenon. The internet seems now to be an integral part of or an everyday phenomenon in the homes of Icelandic and English children. A total of 98% of the Icelandic children and 92% of the English children said they have access to the internet at home. These results indicate that their experience and background is different as a third of the children in Spain and Turkey do not have internet access at home. This may recoil on the Turkish and Spanish children as it has been found that computer learning may help students self-regulated learning, the earlier they start; they will develop the necessary skills to demonstrate academic achievement (Zimmerman, 2001).

The children were asked how often someone in their family reads for them in the evening, before they go to sleep. The striking result is that around half (48%) of all the children in the sample say no one reads for them before they go to sleep and only 30% of the seven years old and 21% of the eight years old, say that someone always or often reads for them before they go to sleep. No difference related to gender is reported. Reading for children and talking to them about a book seem to be of great importance, as these interactions with parents influence children's attitudes and abilities as readers. Hockenberger, Goldstein and Haas (1999) suggest that if parents talk to children whilst they are reading, relate the book to home experiences and comment on what is being read, children's literacy skills develop. But these children not only miss the pleasure of the book content, they also miss out on the affective experience such a time can give them. Furthermore, Csikszentmihalyi (1991) noted that children who saw adults gaining pleasure from reading assumed themselves that reading was both meaningful and helpful. Hearing stories read aloud is beneficial and pleasant and a majority of children say they enjoy being read to (Krashen, 2004).

The boys in HSC are twice as likely to have a bedtime story (always and often) as boys in the LSC. Bearne (2007, p. 28) cites a significant number of studies that focus on the concern in education of the literacy gender gap that seems apparent in, not only Britain, but in many other countries. She highlights the growing moral panic around achievement and points to studies that offer reasons for the gap in attainment. She cautions however against a simplistic response and analysis and reiterates the position of Younger et al. (2005) on the importance of taking note of the specific nature of every

learning situation, since community, school and classroom cultures are shifting constructs. With this in mind it is useful to put the survey data alongside that of the focus group and alongside the data for girls.

It is interesting that there is little difference in bedtime story reading habits of girls and boys in the LSC but in the HSC boys are more likely to have a bedtime story, always or often, than the girls. There was little difference between boys and girls in terms of children that seldom or never had a story read to them. It is possible that parents in the HSC, consciously or not, are aware of the gender differences in achievement in reading and so "compensate" by enriching the home experience. Alternatively, it may be that parents are aware that their male children read less, or are less independent in their reading than their female children (Clark and Foster, 2005) and so again, the home environment steps in to ensure children's access the pleasures of reading through hearing stories read aloud. It is also possible that parents see boys reading a wider range of non-fiction text (Clark and Foster, 2005) and so balance this with story reading at bedtime. Whatever the explanation, boys in the HSC school have access to those activities that have, a significant positive influences not only on reading achievement, language comprehension and expressive language skills (Clark, 2007 refers to Gest, Freeman, Dromitrovich and Welsh, 2004) but also on pupil's interest in reading, attitudes towards reading and attentiveness in the classroom (Clark, 2007 refers to Rowe, 1991).

The data is further highlighted by the focus groups:

The boys commented:

- Being read a story at bedtime sort of tucks you into bed with a good feeling.
- My mum reads to me and I find it relaxing before I go to sleep.
- Stories stopped at about 7 but it's a relaxing end to the day.
- Dad reads Enid Blyton to me, we only have ten minutes. You can relax when someone reads to you.

The girls commented:

- My dad reads to me. I would claim that I got nightmares and couldn't go to sleep so he reads to me. The stories stopped when I was six because I was reading by myself.
- My dad reads to me. I really enjoy both my parents reading to me and they still do sometimes.
- It stopped when I was seven or eight, dad used to tell me stories. My mum still reads to me, we go into the garden.

Children in the HSC offered some detailed reasons for enjoying the bedtime reading experience, often linking it to relaxing and enjoyment. Many suggested that the bedtime story had stopped because they were now able to read on their own, but a number reported the continuation of the experience beyond the age when they could read independently for pleasure.

Children cited both parents as the reader of the bedtime story, although "dads" were mentioned more frequently. The presence of a reading male role model is frequently mentioned is significant in terms of its impact on boys as readers. The findings of Clark and Akerman (2006) were that boys were more likely to improve their attainment in reading if "their father showed an interest in their education".

The children's responses suggest a shared cultural understanding of the role of story and reading in the family. This experience is not about learning to read; it is not a formal teaching experience; it is not about "finding things out" but it represents an element of the sociocultural life of the family and in so doing establishes an ethos around one of the roles and purposes of reading. The work of Close (2001) who cites numerous studies (Weinberger, 1996; Clark, 1976; Stainthrop, 1999, and Wells, 1987) also reminds us that not only is this ethos built but almost incidentally, the skills and language of a reader are being developed.

LSC boys' responses when asked about bed-time stories:

- I know I didn't have any.
- What do you mean by bedtime stories?
- Never – they are too busy. My dad is on the X Box and my mum is on the computer. It would be nice.
- Sometimes I am in the mood, even though I am nine – it calms me down and get the angriness out of my system.

LSC girls' responses:

- I didn't [have bed-time stories] till I had a TV in my room. I just watch it until my eyes get tired. I would prefer both.
- I have my MP3 player and I go to sleep and listen to music. I just drift off.
- I used to have a story to get to sleep but not now.
- I have bedtime stories at my Nan's. She has done it since I was little. She reads it with expression and I don't. She picks out funny books.

The children from the LSC did not report that the bedtime story was a feature of the cultural practices of their home nor that was a pleasurable experience. Some comments suggest the bedtime story was a purely functional aspect of getting to sleep that could now be accomplished more effectively with a TV or MP3 player. Some children seemed to suggest that they would like to engage with a parent in a bedtime story but many others saw it as an activity confined to younger children. There did not seem to be any marked differences between the experiences of boys and girls,

although one boy claimed he did not know what a bedtime story was. One boy did however suggest that the bedtime story, for him, was a means of relaxation although this was phrased in terms of getting rid of his anger – a slightly different context to that of the discussion of relaxation by the children from the HSC.

One child talked animatedly about the bedtime story with her Nan (grandmother). She was viewed as an experienced, engaging reader who clearly modelled fluent and expressive story telling. It raises the question as to whether the parents of the children in the LSC did not see themselves as confident and competent readers who had experienced the pleasure and purpose of reading. Reading is not therefore something they wished to "pass on" to their children or something of value to be part of the shared cultural experiences of parenting. It is useful to reflect on the possible cycle of disadvantage at this point: Kellet (2009, p. 406) suggests "many of the parents [in poor families] were themselves children living in poverty whose disadvantages have been compounded and carried forward into adulthood." Consequently the literacy practices and ethos of the home reflect this historical disadvantage.

The children were asked if they ever buy books themselves. The responses differed substantially between the countries. Of the four countries, the Turkish children most often say they buy books themselves (21%). Güngör (2009) reported that Turkish children's responses to the question "how often do you buy books with your pocket money?" were distributed as follows: seldom (40%), sometimes (28%) and always (15.3%) and Sünbül et al. (2010) found that 23% of Turkish children stated that they buy books with their pocket money. Our survey supports these findings. Gönen et al. (2004) found that 42% of girls stated that they spend their pocket money on buying books while 38% of boys prefer to spend their money on food. Children in England tend to receive pocket money of varying amounts and so generally do have money that they could spend on books. Therefore, that 40% of English children say they never or only sometimes spend money on books is a finding of some significance, demonstrating that books are generally not a desired item or are obtained in some other way.

A survey conducted in 2007 identified that children in the UK spend 7% of their pocket money on books or magazines (The Office of National Statistics, 2011; *The Independent*, 2011), which is in line with what we found in this study in England (8%). The Icelandic children were least likely to say that they buy books themselves (2%), which may be due to the custom that parents, relatives and friends tend to give books as presents, both at Christmas and for birthdays. A study of this phenomenon showed that 83% of 12 and 10 year olds, and 63% of 14 year olds received a newly published book at Christmas, which supports the notion that the tradition of giving children books for Christmas is the foundation on which general publishing for children in the Icelandic language is based (Hannesdóttir, 1998).

In her survey Óladóttir (2010) asked twelve 13–14 year old Icelandic children about their reading habits and what affected their reading. The twelve participants said they were aware of the importance of reading good books and the value of literature; they talked about the pleasure of reading, that it sharpened their mind and they found it very relaxing in the evening to read. Óladóttir (ibid) found that it was a disappointment for children not to get books as gifts, e.g. at Christmas.

Reading habits in and out of school

In this section, the most significant questions for children were on what sort of a reader they consider themselves to be, where they read and how long time they spend reading, how they choose books to read, their use of libraries, if they read books more than once and if so why, if they read books in a series and if so why, what they like about reading books, what kind of main characters in books they prefer and what characteristics of the main characters they most favour. The questions for the teachers were on their suggestions for reading; whether there is a reading/book corner in their classrooms; questions about text; how they gather information on children's literature publications; children's independent reading during school when teachers are not directly teaching them, and teachers reading aloud to children.

When the children are asked what sort of a reader they are, the responses differ between the four countries in the survey. Almost 80% of the children from Turkey say they love to read but the children from Iceland are least likely to express the same opinion (33%), which might be due to the wording of the question, as the expression "I love..." a thing or an act, is generally not used that way in the language. The response to the question showed a significant difference among the children related to age and reading. It appeared that children get less interested in reading as they get older, or at least are less willing to describe themselves as such. The seven year olds are most interested in reading (65%), and the eight year olds follow (with 61%), with a great interest in reading (see Figure 14). In all, 44% of the eleven year olds express their love of reading. In Turkey, Aksaçlıoğlu and Yılmaz (2007) found positive results for the reading frequency of students. Moreover, they sought the reasons for students to read books and found that 49% of the students read for enjoyment. Güngör (2009) reported that 69% of the Turkish students he asked, like reading and they are motivated to read. Furthermore, in their study, Gönen et al (2004) found that the majority of students like reading. These findings are supported by our results. The students interviewed in the focus groups in Turkey frequently stated: "I am a good reader, I like reading". Sünbül et al. (2010) found that female students in Turkey have a higher level of regular reading habits, compared to male students. In all the countries, only a few children say they don´t like to read (5–8%).

Data from the focus groups in England revealed that girls like reading more than boys (Table 4.1), which is in line with other responses in this study as well as previous studies that reported girls reporting greater enjoyment than boys in reading (see e.g. Clark and Foster, 2005) but the significance of having positive attitudes is important to consider.

Table 4.1 What sort of reader would you say you are? (LSC and HSC Schools).

	LSC school Boys	LSC school Girls	HSC School Boys	HSC School Girls
I love to read	31%	45%	47%	61%
It´s okay to read	57%	49%	46%	31%
I don't like reading	12%	6%	7%	8%

Children who say "they love to read" could be said to be intrinsically motivated readers, reading because they want to. Motivation is a key to learning as found by Hall and Myers (1998) and later by Baker, Dreher and Guthrie (2000) who identified that if a child is not motivated to read their capacity for learning to read is reduced and so a vicious circle follows. Motivation was identified in the findings about children's experiences, highlighting extrinsically motivational school procedures offered to the children of the LSC school. A recent PISA "In Focus" report (OECD, 2011, p. 1) studied how "students overcome their socio-economic background". They found that "personal [motivation]... that arises from… internal drive rather than motivation that is prompted by external stimulus" was most significant in children overcoming their disadvantage.

It is not only motivation that influences a child's development as a reader but also their learning dispositions towards reading. The focus group data from the HSC school gave a clear insight into their thoughts in this area.

- I could have friends around and they get cross with me because I want to finish my book. I really need to read.
- Some books are hard to get into. You have to wait to get into it but you have to do it.

The following is a statement from a child who declared being dyslexic at the start of the focus group:

- You have to practise what you find hard.

Children seemed to believe that perseverance was a necessary part of the learning process and that this extended to reading as well. Children at the LSC School did not discuss this directly although they talked about texts that were long and were therefore boring. The PISA report mentioned above also identifies "resilience" (ibid, p. 2) as a key factor in overcoming disadvantage. It could be argued that perseverance is an essential ingredient of resilience.

The PIRLS report (2006) showed that students who read independently and in silence get better results in reading (Martín, 2008). When asked where the children read, the Spanish children seem most prone to read in their bedroom (82%) and seem to find time for themselves where nobody disturbs them, as many of them said in an open ended question. This is also the case for the English (76%) and Icelandic (75%) children. When the English, Icelandic and Turkish children had the opportunity to answer an open-ended option to the question about where they read, the emphasis changed. They mentioned a wide variety of places where they like to read; particularly common were outside spaces, e.g. garden, balconies and on holiday, in the car or with friends, but most of the Icelandic children said they read in the living room (in that way they differ from the others). Also noteworthy were the number of children in Iceland and England that cited the homes of grandparents as locations for reading outside of school. In Iceland it is very common that grandparents take care of their grandchildren, e.g. after school or at week-ends. In England, childcare practices are changing with 16% of grandparents providing child care for their grandchildren (Policy briefing paper, 2010).

If children read regularly it is demonstrated that this has a significant benefit for the child as a reader (Krashen, 2004). Most of the children in our survey say they read from 15 minutes to about an hour a day. Interestingly the Turkish children most often answer that they read thirty minutes to an hour or more a day, while half of the Icelandic children say that they do not know how much they read at home. In terms of economic status, if we look closer at how long the children read at home, comparing the two English schools (LSC and HSC), and take the 30 minutes and one hour options combined for the children from the LSE school, this is 37.3% and for the children of the HSC School, it is 42.1%. There is not a significant difference. The percentages of children who say they do not read at all, this too is very similar, in both types of schools, with a slightly higher number of children in the HSC School claiming not to read.

The problem with the validity of the data presented here has to do with the difficulty of generalizing about children's perception of time. For children aged 7 to 11, estimating time spent doing something is a difficult task. This is also the sort of question that children may feel there is a "right" answer that they want to give, i.e. the more time you say you spend reading the more approval you get from the teacher, even though in this case, "the teacher" was an unseen (at the time of the survey) researcher. This may apply especially to the Turkish children as they were the only group who filled in paper surveys rather than online ones, and they may have therefore felt more obligation to provide a "right" answer.

In a long-term study Broddason, Ólafsson and Karlsdóttir (2009) found that children´s reading has, for some years, been decreasing in Iceland. The proportion of 10–15 year old children who had not read a book in the last 30 days rose from 11% for the year 1968 to 28% in the year 2009. For the

same period, the number of children who read the most, within a fixed scale of measurement, decreased substantially or from 10% in 1968 to 4% in 2009. In addition, Icelandic students' comprehension skills have been below average in recent years, compared to other OECD countries, and the PISA 2006 testing proved children´s comprehension has been deteriorating (Halldórsson, Ólafsson and Björnsson, 2007). Broddason et al. (2010) state that the trend between 1968 and 2003 is evident, especially as the proportion of "non-readers" increases from 11% in 1968 to 28% in 2009. However, the last survey in 2009 revealed an exception, as book reading on the whole, among children and youth had risen. This growth in reading, the authors explain, is confounding, but may be caused by the emphasis on and campaigns in reading within schools in the country.

The majority of the teachers in the survey have created a cosy reading corner in their classroom, where children can sit comfortably and enjoy reading. In fact around 90% of the teachers in Spain, Turkey and England have such facilities in their classrooms. On the other hand, the Icelandic teachers differ from the rest as only just over half of them have such a corner in the classroom. There are significant differences in the ways that books are chosen for these corners, perhaps indicating the extent to which children or teachers claim "ownership" of this space. In England and Spain, more than half of the teachers select the books for the corner, while less than one fifth of the teachers in Iceland and Turkey do so. The teachers in Iceland and Turkey (30%) also say that children choose the books they read in the corner themselves. One fifth of the teachers in Turkey say that the national or local government selects books to read in class, while only 8% of the English teachers say it is so and none of the teachers in Spain and Iceland. Guthrie (2008) identifies six practices which serve as principles for supporting more engaged classroom reading which include: using knowledge goals; linking real-world experience to reading; supporting students' autonomy; using a variety of texts; learning collaboratively and encouraging the use of cognitive strategies. The classroom reading environment is also important in supporting both enthusiastic readers and less skilled readers (see e.g. Eggertsdóttir, 2009; Óladóttir, 2010).

In all the countries, the teachers suggest literature for children to read, as well as recommending particular authors. This they do for various reasons; teachers in Spain and Turkey say they choose books where the author motivates children to read, writes engaging plots, is humorous and popular with children. The English teachers add to this list the author´s use of language, and their own memory of reading the author as a child may also be a factor in their choice. The Icelandic teachers mostly agree with the teachers in the other three countries, but the greatest contrast between countries is the importance place by the Icelandic on a text's raising issues relevant to children; where the English teachers most often say they remember reading the author as a child; and where the Turkish teachers less than in any other county suggest an author to children because

the author is popular with children. Most (62%) of the Icelandic teachers read the children's books for the age group they teach, before they present them. In that way they are unique.

In all 60–70% of the teachers in the study say that they regularly use classic texts from their own country's traditional or national literature. The teachers gather information about children´s literature in various ways. A majority of them read book publications and gather information by word of mouth. Up to half of the teachers read brochures and websites. Female teachers are significantly more likely than the male teachers to say they have gathered information about children´s literature through courses they have attended.

It is also of interest that teachers often use adapted or shortened versions of text instead of the original, longer versions. This type of children's literature seems especially to be used by the Spanish (38%) and the Turkish (21%) teachers. The findings show that the Icelandic teachers use shortened versions of text considerably less (8%) than the teachers in the other three countries. In Spain at present, a high number of books are published every year, and in 2008, 15% of books published, were children's literature (Ministerio de Cultura, 2007). The situation in Iceland was very similar, with 14% of all published books in 2009 (Statistic Iceland, 2010) being for children. Having such a wide variety of books being published every year may be a reason for the teachers to try to present the students with different texts.

It is of considerable interest to see how the children themselves choose books to read. Firstly they say, they choose books, when the content interests them, or they have read other books by the same author. Their friends also tell them about interesting books. Older children are more likely than younger to choose a book because of their own interest. In all 70–90% of the children borrow books from a public library, and more than half of them say they do so sometimes or very often. In Iceland girls borrow books from the public library significantly more often than boys. The Icelandic participants differ from the rest in that only 10% of children say they never borrow books from the library but, in Spain, Turkey and England this figure is much higher, at around 20–30%. The high percentage of English children, who do not borrow from public libraries is in line with the National Literacy Trust Report, which identified that 56% of children did not use public libraries (Clark and Hawkins, 2011). This is of particular concern in light of other findings that suggested that children reading below the expected level for their age were twice as likely not to use their local libraries. It is suggested that children are more likely not to visit a library if their parents do not use the library. Only 2% of the population say they have never used a public library, but it appears that this figure will increase if children do not become used to using a library when they are young (Museums Libraries and Archives, 2010). The Spanish Educational Law encourage reading and the use of public libraries is one of the key factors to improve children´s reading in primary school (Ley Orgánica de Educación, 2006, § 2). Many schools in England have their own school library and, although these

vary in size and quality, most English children have had the opportunity to use a library. However, in the year since this survey was undertaken both public and school library services have been subject to very heavy cuts. The data from the English focus group showed a number of responses about school library visits. These were generally positive, although children often complained that they did not visit the school library frequently enough. The focus group data also showed innovative projects that gave each class of children money to spend on books. These books were then made available to all children in the school library. This had a positive effect on children's views of both the library and on the amount of control they had over their own reading. In Turkey, Sünbül et al. (2010) found that the percentage of students stating that they borrow from public libraries is only 15%. This may be due to lack of a availability: according to a recent study, 78% of students stated that there is no public library close to their homes (Güngör, 2009). The findings of Gönen et al. (2004) are consistent, as they found that the number of public libraries close to their respondent's home in Turkey is small (34%). In our study, carried out in Ankara, we see that the students marking the options "seldom" and "never" have a limited opportunity to make use of public libraries, because of their scarcity. Moreover, Sünbül et al. (2010) found that 61% of Turkish students stated that they make use of school library or classroom library. Many schools have their own school library which gives most Turkish children the opportunity to use a library. The results for Spain when choosing books show no difference related to gender, which correlates to the findings reported in the PIRLS report from 2006 (Instituto de Evaluación, 2006).

In all the countries, the children favour humorous books, followed by books that are exciting to read. The least popular reason for liking a book seems to be that it makes one sad. The biggest variation within the response options is in the case of information books (non-fiction), where over half of the Turkish children say they read such books, but majority (70%) of the Turkish children stated that they like reading adventure books. Güngör (2009), Balcı (2009) and Sünbül et al. (2010) all reported findings that seem to be consistent to this finding.

Krashen (1993, p. 50) refers to Wertham (1954), who asserted that comic book reading interfered with learning to read and with language development, claiming that such reading could cause reading difficulties; that they are a causal and reinforcing factor in children´s reading disorders. Wertham´s claims have not been supported. Rather, Krashen (1993) claims that "there is considerable evidence that comic books can and do lead to more serious reading". Comics can serve as a conduit to heavier reading and some studies show that comic book readers read as much as or even more than non-comic books readers (Krashen, 2004). Therefore, it seems controversial to rule out comic books for reading, but some children in the Icelandic focus group said they get a clear message from teachers that comic books are not valid reading material in schools. Enforcing such opinions may however be counterproductive for promoting reading for pleasure.

Most of the children in the Icelandic focus groups in Iceland expressed their pleasure in reading in school. They said they like it most when they can choose the books themselves, and some said they like it best when the reading is work related. It also emerged that it is desirable to have time for reading because it is relaxing, interesting and can be educative and "you feel well; you learn about people, feelings, right and wrong, other countries and new words."

In England, the most popular books were those linked to either a celebrity (e.g. Mylie Cyrus); a pop band (e.g. JLS); a TV programme (e.g. *Top Gear* (a programme about cars) and *Dr Who*) or a film spin off (e.g. *High School Musical*). The following authors were particularly popular: Jacqueline Wilson (n = 35), Jeremy Strong (n = 27), JK Rowling (n = 24), Roald Dahl (n = 22), the Twilight series – Stephenie Meyer (n = 20) and Enid Blyton (n = 17). These books match the survey data in that a number are humorous, feature magical characters and could be considered to be exciting reads. The wider selection of books that children listed was extensive, with over 500 recommendations made by 545 children although 220 children skipped this question. The Turkish children like reading about magical creatures but the Icelandic children are the ones least excited about that. Both boys and girls prefer the main character to be of their own gender. The Turkish answers concur with the result showing that *Harry Potter* and *Twilight* are the most popular series. Moreover, the main characters (Magical Rose, Venus School Trip) mentioned by the students in the focus groups support these findings. In Iceland the most popular books mentioned were exciting reads, comics, humorous books and informative books and books about sport. The most popular books listed were *Skúli skelfir/Horrid Henry* (n = 58), *Syrpa/Donald duck and friends* (n = 43), *Fíasól* (n = 36), *Gæsahúð* (n = 35), *Dagbækur Berts/Bert Diaries* (n = 29) and *Kafteinn ofurbrók/Captain Underpants* (n = 24). The focus group interviews confirmed the status of the listed books.

In England, the percentage of children liking books that had "characters like friends", was significantly higher at the HSC school. Children may possibly become so engrossed with the text that the characters become like friends. Csikszentmihalyi (1991) introduced the idea of "flow", a total absorption in an activity. He says flow is:

> …concentration... so intense that there is no attention left to think about anything irrelevant… the experience is so gratifying that people are willing to do it for its own sake (Csikszentmihalyi, 1991, p. 71)

Csikszentmihalyi goes on to say that by achieving this state of flow, those engaging with the activity increased their "levels of performance". This seems to support further the idea that improvements in skills, attitudes and knowledge in reading can be achieved through reading more (Krashen, 2004) and so the child that reads more, because they want to, will improve and develop as a reader at a greater rate than the child that does not enjoy this level of engagement with text. The focus group data further illuminates this:

- I was so scared once I had to shut the book. It was gruesome, my heart just leapt, it felt like it was going to happen.
- Yes I know what you mean. It feels like the character is you.
- I like it when the exciting bit comes. I read it when I go to bed. My mum sometimes has to stop me. You need books to really grip you.

There were no similar comments in the LSC School data. Children in the focus groups were also asked in the survey to name their favourite book. A third of children in the LSC school could not name a favourite book. Of the books selected, approximately 15% of books in the LSC school and 12% in HSC school, were books with a film, TV or celebrity connection. There were 13 different books mentioned in this genre (12%) at the LSC school and 6 (5%) at the HSC school. Whilst both groups of children are influenced by TV and film, a greater proportion of children at the LSC school are. At the HSC school there were no books inspired by celebrities (e.g. but 6 at the LSC school). There is a suggestion here that it is the perceived relationship of the books to their lives that may be different: these books are more straightforwardly extensions of their non-literary interest in, say, music or TV. This may also explain why pupils at the LSC school are less able to recall particular book titles and authors. In all, 22 different authors were mentioned by the children of the HSC school and only 4 authors mentioned by children at the LSC school. One author at the LSC school, Jeremy Strong, was mentioned 20 times however, and this could be explained by his recent visit to the school. This author´s visit, it appears, has had a significant effect on children's reading habits.

As far as the focus group data is concerned, there were 30 different book titles and/or authors mentioned by HSC school children when they talked about favourite books in and out of school, compared with 12 book titles/authors mentioned by children at the LSC school. These children seemed to struggle naming particular authors or titles – they could recall books they had read generally but not specifically. It is interesting to surmise the possible reasons and implications for this: a similar number of children in both schools say they either love to read or like to read, suggesting that even though children at the LSC school were not able to name a variety of books they had read, they did read and enjoy text.

Around one quarter of the children in the survey said they often read books more than once and 62% said they do it sometimes. Most said they did so because they liked the story. In an open ended question many children said they could understand the stories better when re-reading. Others said they re-read because it was a long time since they first read the books. In Iceland and England more girls than boys say they read books more than once and many Icelandic children said they like re-reading entertaining books. Cain (2010) found that re-reading supports the developing of fluency and so in turn supports comprehension of text In addition, re-reading allows children to activate their

prior learning and so is part of developing the mental model needed for comprehension (Zimmerman and Hutchins, 2003; Kintsch and Rawson, 2005).

When the children were asked what is important in a story (assuming that the main character is a human being) the answers from the Turkish children differ slightly from the other participants. Almost half (46%) of them prefer the main character to live in the same country, compared to 30% in the other three countries. Gönen et al. (2011) examined books written for 7–12 year old children in Turkey and found that often themes in these books are related to social and cultural structures (30.3%) and ethics (19.2%). The least common themes in these books are related to religion (9.5%) (a subject discouraged within Turkey's secular educational system) and love for nature and animals (13.1%). Hence, it can be claimed that the reason why 46% of the children from Turkey marked the option "live in the same country like you" is because they are used to reading books from available Turkish children's literature. On the whole, responses to the question were somewhat spread among all the options given, varying from 20% to 40% in each option. Although it is difficult to draw out features that are more or less important as a characteristic, it generally seems that children want the main character to live in the same country, have similar interests to them and be of a similar age. In an article, the popular Icelandic author Gerður Kristný (2006) speculates what children like to read. She writes:

> If I had been asked at the age of eight, what I liked to read, I would have said: I like to read about an ordinary girl, in an ordinary part of Reykjavík, who had ordinary girl-friends and attended ordinary school. "Ordinary" would have meant as much as myself... This ordinary girl might easily have experienced fanciful situations, which she could solve herself. Reality would have been a good repose from light-footed fairies and magic...

Children´s reading in school and teachers´ use of children´s literature in class

In this section children's responses to questions related to reading in school is analysed. The children were asked questions like: do teachers read aloud in class and if so why they think teachers do so, is reading followed by writing, what do children learn from reading in school and what activities do teachers use to help children better understand the books they read? The key questions answered by teachers are about reasons for using children's literature to support teaching and learning in class; how often children's literature is used to support teaching and learning; whether it is a part of the school's curriculum; how enjoyable children's literature is for children; whether translated or short version of stories are being used; whether children's literature is used to introduce other cultures in class and how children's literature to use in class is selected. Important also are questions on what teachers assess as being significant to take into consideration when they choose children's literature to teach. Also, in this section there is an analysis of teacher's responses to questions concerning what

aspects of teaching children's literature they feel most confident to teach. In addition there are answers to questions about what activities teachers use to help children better understand children's literature, how to develop and teach comprehension skills and how to assess comprehension skills.

Louise M. Rosenblatt, the distinguished teacher and researcher, insisted upon attending to the human element and suggested several principles by which teachers might allow their students to find in text. To mention a few of her principles; she argued that students must be free to deal with their own reaction to text. Secondly, the classroom situation and the relationship with the teacher should create a feeling of security. Thirdly, teachers must provide time and opportunity for "an initial crystallization of a personal sense of work" (Farell and Squire, 1990, p. 33). One of the main findings in this study is that the children state that teachers in general read quite often for them, which is consistent with what teachers say themselves. As many as two thirds up to four fifths of the teachers say they read aloud to children daily or more than once a day. Teachers declare that they are responsible for promoting reading for pleasure (in all, 96% to 100% agree with the statement) and they also stress that this is the responsibility of parents as well.

The reasons given for reading aloud for children vary considerably within the given options. The most common reason given for reading in class is to model reading. One option given for reading aloud was 'to widen children's vocabulary'. The response to this option provided the largest differences in teachers' reasons for reading aloud. The highest percentage of teachers agreeing with the statement is 96% (Iceland) and the lowest 3% (Turkey). It is also noteworthy that the percentages of Icelandic and the English teachers who responded to each of the options offered for reading aloud were high for each option, but equally notable is that the percentages for answers from the Turkish teachers are very low, only once higher than 10%, which raises the question of whether the motivations for teachers' reading in Turkey are well understood by teachers themselves, or whether they were simply missed by the survey options.

Generally, younger children are more likely to say that teachers read for them, than the older ones, whereas in Spain this is reversed. Why this is so is not clear. In England a large number of children seem to believe that their teacher reads aloud to them "so they can enjoy a story". This would be consistent with the focus in Bristol, where the survey was carried out, on reading for pleasure, response and engagement. All of the schools surveyed had been part of the Local Education Authority's continuing professional development events, in the year of the survey that focused on this aspect of reading. Approximately a third of the schools were part of the Centre for Literacy in Primary Education's "Power of Reading" project, which emphasises reading for pleasure. Engagement with text is an indicator of future positive attitudes to reading and also attainment in reading and so is of particular interest.

The teachers responded significantly differently between countries concerning the use of children´s literature in class. First, a difference in answers occurred between the Turkish teachers and the other countries. In Spain and England as many as 82–88% of the teachers claim that they use children's literature to support teaching and learning in their class every week and majority of Icelandic teachers also do so. In Turkey, by contrast, less than half of the teachers say they use children's literature every week; and one quarter of them use children´s literature once every month or even never. There are various reasons why teachers use children´s literature to support teaching and learning, and there is not a statistically significant difference between the countries, in the responses to three of the given options: to promote ethical values, to improve children's grammar and because the children ask to read children's literature. In England half of the teachers claim that the children in their class enjoy learning through literature, while only 15–23% of the teachers in Iceland and Turkey are of the same opinion. The main result is that a majority of children supposedly enjoy learning through children's literature, or over 70%. Gambrell identifies some key factors in developing reading motivation in the classroom: "teacher who is a reading model; access to a book-rich classroom environment; being able to choose books oneself; being familiar with books; social interactions with others about books and incentives that reflect the value of reading (Gambrell, 1996, p. 20)."

In both England and Spain the use of children's literature to support teaching and learning seems to be an established part of the school´s curriculum (96–90%), while in Turkey and in Iceland less than 60% agree with the statement. In all almost half (44%) of the Icelandic teachers in the sample are 50 years or older (compared with 8–10% in the other three countries), and therefore they should have most teaching experience and they have also attended courses in their field of work. Therefore, it is surprising to see that over two thirds of them do not know if the use of children's literature is part of the school curriculum. Cross tabulations indicate that these teachers have received less training in children's literature than younger teachers in Iceland and therefore they might be more ignorant of the subject. In Iceland there is not much research available in this field, but Guðjónsdóttir´s (2010) results contrasts our findings. She identified that that there is a significant effort made to increase children´s interest in reading literature in Icelandic schools. However, the emphasis on literature was measured as greater with younger students (2nd grade) than the older (7th grade). The participants in her study reported having a decent understanding of the importance of literature, the positive influence it can have on language development, vocabulary and comprehension as well as on children´s development in general. Discussions in class about literature can be an ideal opportunity for children to read with the support of their classmates, and can create a productive social situation. Such discussions can help children to think, to develop the habits of mind that will support their independent efforts (Nichols, 2006). According to the regulations of the

Spanish Ministry of Education, children's literature has an important presence at school in Spain. The current Educational law pays more attention to reading then previous legislation (Ley Orgánica de Education, 2006). Therefore it is interesting to see that in Spain as many as 82% of the teachers claim that they use children's literature to support teaching and learning in their class every week, the English teachers even more so (88%) and majority of Icelandic teachers also favour using children´s literature often every week (67%). Turkey is unique in comparison, with less than half of the teachers saying they use children's literature every week. As many as one quarter of the teachers in Turkey use children´s literature once every month or even never.

There are various reasons why teachers use children´s literature to support teaching and learning, and there is not a significant difference between the countries, in the responses to three of the given options: to promote ethical values, to improve children's grammar and because the children ask to read children's literature. However, two options are close to measuring a significant difference, between the countries, namely: to have fun (p=.013) and to teach children to read (p=.018). Responses to other options are significantly different between countries. A difference occurred between answers of the Turkish teachers and other countries in response to the statement: to widen children's vocabulary and to develop a lifelong pleasure in reading. There are differences in responses related to teacher's age, as teachers in the age group 35–39 years are more likely to agree with the statement to widen children's vocabulary. In fact this age group often differs from others resulting in the overall difference not being linear. In England half of the teachers claim that the children in their class enjoy learning through literature, while only 15–23% of the teachers in Iceland and Turkey are of the same opinion. The main result is that a majority of children (over 70%) report enjoying learning through children's literature.

The teachers in this survey were asked to tick up to five of the given activities they feel most confident to teach in children's literature. The English teachers use children's literature in more varied ways than the teachers in Spain, Turkey and Iceland. Firstly, the English teachers generally feel confident teaching how to use reading as a model for children's own writing, to teach to infer meaning from a text and teaching children how to ask questions about a text. By interrelating these factors and skills, the English teachers seem to understand the fundamental importance of writing in class; it seems to be a reality to them that they teach writing and that the teaching is embedded in reading (Cowley, 2004). On the other hand, the Spanish, Icelandic and Turkish feel very confident to make connections between what is read and children's own lives and experiences. By this, they must initiate discussions which Rosenblatt argues, is one of the important principles necessary for students to deal with the human element. Rosenblatt states that teachers must find points of contact among the opinions of students, which she says is one of the fundamental principles for discussion in the classroom. She continues by claiming that literature serves a socializing function that integrates us

into society (Farell and Squire, 1990). The teachers in the survey also place emphasis on teaching children how to understand new vocabulary and how to ask questions about a text. A majority of the teachers in all countries believe it is helpful to use oral questioning and reading aloud. An activity that a majority of teachers in three countries believe is helpful is group discussion and oral retelling. Activities that a majority of teachers in two countries believe is helpful are story mapping and performance. Activities that a majority of the teachers in only one country believe is helpful is co-operation (England), text marking (England), writing as if you were a character (England) and vocabulary investigation.

The above results are mirrored in the children's answers. When asked what they thought they learned from reading books and stories in schools, the children most often said: new ideas, new words and something about the world. The children were least likely to say that reading taught them something about themselves and something about other people. This seems to indicate that children are not aware of learning about their own identity when they read. These results may lead to the assumption that the teaching of reading is not focused on the children´s own feelings and thoughts, which may be practised e.g. through the process approach that is well known in the UK (Jónsdóttir, 2010). It is also worth considering that Solity (2006) suggests that too much emphasis on basic reading schemes is not appropriate and children need to experience a combination of both real books together with a focus on core phonic and sight vocabulary skills. The limitations of reading schemes in motivating and introducing children to a range of interesting and exciting literature have been noted by scholars for several decades (Meek, 1988; Beard, 1990) and Bruner (1984) (cited in Browne [2009]) observes that scheme books do not provide opportunities for children to enter into real world experiences.

The question "what do you learn through reading in school", relates directly to the pedagogic approaches taken by schools to text. It is noteworthy, that there is a significant difference between the answers from the Turkish and the Icelandic children´s answers, with the answers from the Icelandic children lowest in all cases (Table 4.2):

Table 4.2 What do you learn through reading in school?

I learn:	Turkey	Iceland
... that reading is useful	59%	38%
... ask questions about books	46%	23%
... for a particular purpose, for information	42%	25%
... to give my own opinion of a book	59%	24%
... make connections between books	46%	15%
... answer questions about a book	63%	44%
... what the story is about	68%	60%

The data from the focus groups in England revealed that the children at the LSC school are more likely to think that the teacher reads for them so that they can learn more about authors. This was not the teacher's intention as stated in the focus group interviews, where developing a positive reading ethos was the prime reason given for reading aloud. It is possible that by teaching children more about authors the children would exhibit an indicator of a positive attitude to reading (knowing more about books and authors) but this is a result of a positive attitude rather than a prerequisite. Their recent experience of an author visit (see above) may also have been a factor in the LSC school children's focus. The children of the HSC school, on the other hand, possibly already inducted into a positive ethos around reading from their home experiences, saw their teacher's reading aloud as being for the main purpose of providing enjoyment. The HSC school children recognised this as a valid reason for a classroom reading activity. They did not feel they were being "taught about" a particular author. The data is further highlighted when looking at the gender differences (Table 4.3).

Table 4.3 Why do you think your teacher reads aloud to you? (LSC and HSC Schools).

	LSC School Boys	LSC School Girls	HSC School Boys	HSC School Girls
So we can enjoy the story	70.2%	63.0%	79.7%	87.3%
So we can learn more about an author	36.9%	43.5%	27.1%	23.6%
So we can enjoy the story	70.2%	63.0%	79.7%	87.3%
So we can talk about the story	27.4%	41.7%	45.8%	36.4%
I don't know	16.7%	10.2%	10.2%	12.7%

The boys at the HSC school were more likely to say that their teacher reads aloud for their pleasure than the boys at the LSC school and the boys at the HSC school felt that talking about the text was a key purpose. When comparing differences in gender within the schools, the HSC school boys seem to take on a more common view of boys as not enjoying reading as much as girls (Clark and Foster, 2005). It is the girls from the LSC school that see reading aloud as a teaching moment rather than an enjoyable encounter. More boys at the LSC school claimed they did not know why they were being read to, possibly suggesting a lack of interest – a "not bothered" response as much as a "don't know" response. Children at the LSC school talked about their teacher reading aloud:

- We want to know what happens and she only reads every few days – she should read it every day.
- She asks us questions and its home time – it doesn't give us enough time.
- She should stop the questions – it's boring.
- On the blurb on the back it says Carrie does something she isn't proud of and she has been reading it to us for 5 months and we still don't know what it is.

Again the children suggest that little time is made available for reading aloud and so they lose the continuity of a story, decreasing the pleasure of the read. The children seemed frustrated by this.

Four different options were given to the question "why do you think your teacher reads aloud to you?" The responses vary for all options given but the children's most common answer is so that they can talk about the story and so they can enjoy the story. There is a significant difference related to age within the option "so we can enjoy the story", being considerably more common for the younger children.

It has been identified that the class teacher and school leadership have a significant role in developing positive reading attitudes, dispositions and habits (Office for standards in education (OFSTED), 2004 and 2005). The school is one setting that children can learn the value of literature, the value of becoming a reader. Óladóttir (2010) found that it is of profound importance that the teacher is a model; that she/he demonstrates interest in reading, and reads for the students as well as taking them more often to the library. However, there seems to be an obstacle, as Cremin et al. (2007, p. 2) found; teachers themselves say they lack time to read personally for pleasure and have a limited knowledge of children's books, relying on their own childhood experiences of books despite the growing number of quality children's literature on offer. Cremin et al. (2007, p. 11) also found that many teachers continued to read aloud to their class for pleasure but that reading aloud diminishes considerably in older classes. Whilst the majority of teachers used literature in the classroom a relatively high number reported the use of literature as purely functional.

Children need role models for reading. Hearing a teacher or other adults read aloud allows a child to hear the phrasing, inflections and expressions as well as being an opportunity to expose students to good literature. Listening develops listening skills which may benefit a student in life. For some children, this can be the motivation they need to read more themselves. Edmunds and Bauserma (2006) found that students were motivated to read when people read to them and share what they were reading. Further they recommend that teachers take advantage of the influence that peers have on children's reading motivation. The authors suggest that teachers provide opportunities for classmates to share what they are reading with one another, as their study showed the effect peers have on their reading motivation by frequently mentioning them when asked how they found out about a book and when asked who motivated them to read.

In this study, the children were asked if they ever write about what they read in class and the responses are quite intriguing. First, the Icelandic children´s responses differ substantially from the other countries', as just over half of them say they do write about what they read compared to 80–90% of children in Spain, Turkey and England. Only 6% of the Icelandic children say they often write about what they read compared to 27–28% in the other countries. It is therefore noteworthy to see that nearly half of children at the HSC school say they never write about what they read in class compared to less than a fifth of children at the LSC school (Table 4.4).

Table 4.4 Do you ever write about what you read in class? (LSC and HSC Schools).

	LSC School	HSC School
Often	24 %	7%
Sometimes	61%	48%
Never	17%	45%

Reading is a "work based" activity for the children of the LSC school and an explicit means to support learning in other aspects of literacy. Cremin et al. (2008, p. 449) state that the changes in the UK government agendas and policies about the teaching of reading have led to a "practice that is fragmented and limited" and "in which the purpose of reading may be short changed and the pleasures of reading sidelined". Lockwood (2008) notes that too often reading is used merely as a vehicle to identify the features, vocabulary and organisation of text in preparation for writing. Jónsdóttir (2010) claims that writing should be an indiscrete and integrated part of teaching reading, but this has not been emphasised enough in schools in Iceland. She claims that the "process approach", a teaching approach that involves teaching writing over a long period of time, has been practiced and popular in many countries, but not in Iceland. The method places emphasis on writing in which children can express them freely, which gives them an opportunity to tackle real problems and express complicated thoughts, which obviously can be beneficial for their development and learning. In the last few years Eggertsdóttir (2009) has been implementing an interactive balanced reading approach – *Beginning Literacy* – in schools in Iceland. The approach is meant to offer rich opportunities to work with vocabulary, comprehension, comprehension strategies, creative work and autonomy as well direct work with orthography. The approach is interactive and highlights inclusive practices, and therefore it should be welcomed in schools in the country.

In England there has been national training for all teachers by the Primary Strategy on aspects of reading pedagogy over the last ten years. At the time of the survey, teachers in Bristol had

received training in approaches to using text and this may have influenced the survey results. A key approach has been to use reading to support the teaching of writing; by using a quality text in a particular genre, teachers are able to demonstrate the language features and organisation of the text type to children. Children are then able to use these to support them in writing. Children will also be aware of the range of genre they have been introduced to for this purpose (as set out in the English National Curriculum) and this may explain the slightly higher responses in these areas for the English sample.

The English teachers claim they only sometimes or seldom (46%) use translated children´s literature in class, and as many of them as 19% say this is never the case. One could argue that this is because of the wide availability of children's literature written in English language (non-translated). However, as Spanish is also a global language, such a statement is questionable; in all 55% of the Spanish teachers insist they always or often use translated children literature in class. Translated children's books build bridges between different cultures, and therefore it seems important that teachers use them in children's learning:

> When studying translated children's literature, social and pedagogical factors come into the foreground. Children's books do not only provide entertainment and help develop children's reading skills... they convey knowledge about the world, about values, customs and accepted behaviours... They can be used to shape identities, values, cultural expectations... (Fornalczy, 2007, p. 94).

Teachers in all the four countries agree that broadening children's view of themselves is a valuable criterion when selecting children's literature to teach. No teachers disagree with the statement although 28% of the Spanish teachers claim to be neutral towards it. According to the information obtained in the focus groups in Spain, the teachers use children's literature in the classroom mainly to present the children with new ideas, enlarge their vision of the world and educate in values, apart from using the literary texts as a springboard for improving their general reading abilities.

In Spain, Mata (2008) found that it is implicitly thought that reading is a means of self-knowledge and perfection. However, Chartier (2008) argues that self-knowledge is acquired not only through reading but by experience. He writes about the two main characters of the well-known Spanish novel "Don Quixote" and their relation to reading. Don Quixote's problem was not being able to manage the way in which the imagination and empathy fostered by reading articulated with the world beyond literature. As the survey answers show, children and teachers value both these skills.

Fornalczy (2007, p. 99) stresses that if one of the functions of children´s literature is "building bridges between cultures", it seems essential that translations retain as much original flavour as

possible, and help familiarize the young reader with foreign (or "other") culture, which can be achieved e.g. by showing respect to names in their original form. It is important to highlight that, although the English teachers' use of translated children´s literature seem to be limited, they use children's literature for introducing other cultures most often compared with the other three countries. And there is more to consider, when selecting literature for children. Almost all the teachers agree with the statement that teaching ethical values is important and as well as to teach children about feelings. Therefore, they also endorse the value of introducing good literature to children.

Implications of the findings and the theoretical Issues arising from the study

Scholars (see e.g. Farell and Squire, 1990 and Lewis and Ellis, 2006) have for long stressed that learning to read is a vital foundation to becoming a literate, educated person. Reading offers opportunities for enjoyment, to acquire knowledge of the world and for enhancing imagination and creativity. In this study, there are obvious indications that teachers' perceptions and teaching are crucial classroom factors that influence pupils' learning and environment. The results showed that the quality of teachers' commitment to using children's literature is generally high, but that there are wide variations both within and between countries in terms of the degree of expertise teachers have in children's literature; the pedagogical uses to which they put it and the methods they use teaching.

Literature is a powerful tool for helping children to understand themselves and the world, to use their imaginations and expand their vocabulary. We believe that family members and teachers who read stories for children can widen their horizons. The influence of a quiet and peaceful time, reading and listening to a good book can be longlastng. This study shows an appetite for and enjoyment of reading amongst children, which finds expression in many different genres and reading situations, within and beyond the classroom. It also suggests, however, that the habit of reading is not assured, and that teachers, parents and others need to be alert to the changing needs and tastes of children as they grow, and be ready to adapt accordingly. Particularly important is the reading environment enjoyed by children: the availability of books at home, in school and in libraries, and the assumption that reading is a normal and worthwhile activity.

The different cultural contexts of each set of survey results also needs further study. For example, Turkish children seem more motivated as readers than children from other countries and report enjoying and reading more, even though their teachers appear to place less emphasis on children's literature. This surprising result requires further exploration of the wider cultural influences on reading. The relationship between time spent reading (inside and outside school) and children's view of reading as an activity should be investigated as part of this. Further exploration is needed of the ways in which reading is taught across Europe, and in particular of how pedagogy

influences children as readers. There are some initial indications from this study that suggests links between children's perception of reading and the pedagogical approaches used. Such an investigation could usefully include the role of assessment in each country.

Literature can reflect the children's own society as well the world around them. In spite of our differences, multicultural children's literature can help children understand that all people have feelings and longings. Those feelings can include love, sadness and fear and the desire for fairness and justice. Selecting good multicultural children's books begins with the same criteria that apply to selecting good children's books in general, but selecting good multicultural books can involve a commitment to challenge prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination. It may be suggested that a wider use of translated books should be encouraged, but also a recognition that cultural differences lie within as well as between national borders. Given children's expressed preference for reading about people and situations like their own, we may expect a certain resistance to a greater diet of multicultural books, but this may be partly overcome by stressing (at least in the initial stages of such exposure) the similarities and analogies between the experiences of people in different cultural situations, as well as the significant differences.

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Appendix I

The four universities

The University of Murcia

The University of Murcia in Spain is an institution devoted to providing higher education to the public. Among its main objectives are the creation, development and research into science, technology and culture and the transmission of such knowledge through education. As the university approaches its centenary, its complete approach to education commits the students to their social environment. Quality, technology, compliance with society and a broader internationalisation (focusing on the European Higher Education Area) are key concepts in our university development process today. More information can be obtained from: http://www.um.es

Gazi University

Gazi University in Turkey carries out its educational and research activities with its 14 faculties, 5 colleges, 9 vocational high schools, 35 research centres and 5 institutes. With its 50 thousand students and more than 3000 academic staff the university is close to the world average in terms of the number of students per instructor. Gazi includes faculties from education to communication, from fine arts to engineering, sports to forestry, medicine to pharmacy, dentistry to science and arts, economics to technology. Gazi University Faculty of Education was founded as "College of Secondary-School Teacher Training" in 1926. In view of its history, quality of education and academic staff, and the number of students, Gazi Faculty of Education is the prominent faculties of Turkey. The department of History Education offers B.A., M.A., and Ph.D. programmes. More information can be obtained from: http://gef.gazi.edu.tr/english.php

University of Akureyri

Teaching and research constitute the core elements of the operation of the University of Akureyri in Iceland. It has been a significant aim to create the best possible conditions and support for students and teachers to practice their study and research, contemplate and to create new knowledge. The UofA has had an impact in many areas of Icelandic society and for the benefit of the community at large. Highly competent scientists teach and carry out research at the UofA in academic fields which will grow in importance for Icelandic society, and in matters involving international cooperation. By means of this international cooperation the university will gain ground on the international scene where it will make a contribution to areas of knowledge which are of particular significance, both for progress within of Icelandic society and the development of theoretical and practical knowledge on a global scale. http://www.unak.is

University of the West of England (UWE)

The principal objectives of the University of the West of England (UWE) are concerned with the provision of higher education, research, consultancy and professional development. Its mission is to 'advance an inclusive, civilized and democratic society and its enrichment through education, research, consultancy and public service'. In the 15 years since achieving university status, UWE has grown in every way – in reputation, in quality and in size. Its vision, amongst others, is to promote educational opportunity, create a markedly international environment of scholarship, postgraduate work, research and consultancy while maintaining a particular commitment to its region. More information can be obtained from: http://www.uwe.ac.uk

Appendix II

The four countries and their school systems

Spain - the Country

Spain officially the Kingdom of Spain is a country and member state of the European Union located in south-western Europe on the Iberian Peninsula. Its mainland is bordered to the south and east by the Mediterranean Sea except for a small land boundary with the British Overseas Territory of Gibraltar; to the north by France, Andorra, and the Bay of Biscay; and to the northwest and west by the Atlantic Ocean and Portugal. Spain is a democracy organised in the form of a parliamentary government under a constitutional monarchy. It is a developed country with the ninth largest economy in the world by nominal GDP, and very high living standards (20th highest Human Development Index), including the tenth-highest quality of life index rating in the world, as of 2005. It is a member of the United Nations, European Union, NATO, OECD, and WTO.

Spain has always been a catholic country, albeit at present it is a secular country.

Murcia is a region situated in the south east of Spain. With a population of 436.870 inhabitants is the 7th bigger town in Spain. The most important industries in the area are the food industry, as well as the chemist, building and furniture industries. It has also a large and ancient University with more than 35,000 students. Murcia is located in a very rich area and the rate of immigrants is very high, 25% of the total population mainly coming from South America, North of Africa, and East of Europe.

The schools chosen to complete the surveys are located in different areas of the town in order to get a significant sample in terms of socioeconomic and cultural status.

Education in Spain

The main principle in Spanish education is that all children should have full access to free education. The Educational system can be seen as consisting of four levels:

> Pre-school - 3 to 6 years of age
> Primary School six years of schooling - 6 to 12 years of age
> Compulsory Secondary Education four years of schooling - 12 to 16 years of age
> Post-Compulsory Schooling two years of schooling - 16 to 18 years of age

Children 3 to 6 years old in Spain have the option of attending the Pre-school stage, which is non-compulsory and free for all students. It is regarded as an integral part of the education system with infants' classes at almost every primary school. There are some separate nursery schools.

Children (whose parents chose that they should) enter pre-school in the autumn of the calendar year in which they turn three years old. Following this pattern, the ages given here as corresponding to the different phases are the ages turned by children in the calendar year in which the academic year begins.

Spanish students aged 6 to 16 undergo primary and secondary school education, which are compulsory and (like the preceding preschool from age 3) free of charge. Successful students are

awarded a Secondary Education Certificate, which is necessary to enter the post-compulsory stage of Schooling for their University or Vocational Studies. Once students have finished their Baccalaureate, they can take their University Entrance Exam which differs greatly from region to region. The compulsory stage of secondary education is normally referred to by its initials: ESO.

The Primary school is structured as three 2 year cycles:

- First Cycle (6 to 8 years of age)
- Second Cycle (8 to 10 years of age)
- Third Cycle (10 to 12 years of age)

Compulsory Secondary Education is structured as two cycles of two academic years each (total 4 years):

- 1st Cycle (12 to 14 years of age)
- 2nd Cycle (14 to 16 years of age)

Upon finishing ESO the student has a number of options, including: Spanish Baccalaureate (post-compulsory diploma), vocational training or work (it is only possible to get a job from 16 onwards).

Schools in Spain can be divided into 3 categories: State schools, privately run schools funded by the State, purely private schools

According to summary data for the year 2008-2009 from the Spanish Ministry of Education, state schools educated 67.4%, private but state funded schools 26.0%, and purely private schools 6.6% of pupils the preceding year.

All non-university state education is free in Spain. There are private schools for all the range of compulsory education. At them, parents must pay a monthly/termly/yearly fee. Most of these schools are run by religious orders, and include single-sex schools.

Primary school hours at present are typically from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and from 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m., or full time classes from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., depending on each school, except during June and September when they work mornings only, 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. There is a move towards a single session day in primary schools which would bring them in line with secondary schools. To achieve this, each school submits to the education authority a programme of extra-curricular activities to be offered in the afternoons, and if approved, the proposal to move to a single session day is put to a vote by the parents for their approval. Children have 1 or 2 , 30 minutes break depending of the schedule of the school.

Most schools have a dining room and provide lunches. Many schools offer the possibility for working parents to take their children as early as 7:00 a.m., which in some cases includes breakfast as well as providing sport or leisure activities.

Primary Students study the following subjects: Spanish language, Mathematics, Natural Sciences, Geography, History, Physical Education, Art and Craft, a second language (usually English but in some areas it may be French or both), music, and children can choose between Catholic Religion or Ethics.

The state system also provides support teams consisting of a psychologist, social worker and speech therapist which are shared by several schools. Children normally have the same class teacher/tutor for each two-year cycle for Spanish language, Mathematics, Natural Sciences, History and Geography. For the rest of the subjects children have specialist teachers.

A maximum of 25 students are allowed per class in primary schools; however, in most of the schools the average number of students per class is around 20. Most of the schools have their own library and those which don't have a library receive a bibliobus (a bus with books) every week for children to borrow books. In all classes there is a reading corner/book self. All schools have computer rooms and it is compulsory for children to use them.

According to the law issued by the Ministry of Education the schools should produce curricular projects detailing objectives, content, methodology and assessment criteria. These projects should take into account the general objectives of the cycle as well as the socioeconomic and cultural context of the school and the characteristics of the students.

Evaluation should be continual and the teachers will assess both the product and process of the learning process as well as their own teaching practice in relation with the achievement of the objectives proposed.

At the end of each cycle the tutor considering his/her own evaluations and those of the rest of the teachers involved will decide on the promotion of the student to the next cycle.

Children's literature is not taught as such; it is used to develop and reinforce children reading comprehension and skills all over Spain as recommended by the Ministry of Education. There are not specialist teachers for teaching children's literature. Children's literature is taught compulsorily in the time devoted to Spanish language, usually one hour per week. However, children are encouraged to go to the school library and take as many books as they want. There is a library in most of the schools and a teacher in charge of it. Apart from that, most classes have their own reading corner or book self.

Turkey - the Country

Turkey, known officially as the Republic of Turkey, is a Eurasian country that stretches across the Anatolian peninsula in western Asia and Thrace in the Balkan region of south-eastern Europe. Turkey's location at the crossroads of Europe and Asia makes it a country of significant geostrategic importance.

Ankara is the capital of Turkey and the country's second largest city with 4.4 million population after Istanbul. Centrally located in Anatolia, Ankara is an important commercial and industrial city. It is the center of the Turkish Government, and houses all foreign embassies. It is an important crossroads of trade, strategically located at the centre of Turkey's highway and railway networks, and serves as the marketing centre for the surrounding agricultural area. Ankara lies in the center of Anatolia on the eastern edge of the great, high Anatolian Plateau. The region's history goes back to the Bronze-Age Hatti Civilization.The city subsequently fell to the Romans, Byzantines, and Seijuks and then to the Ottomans .It again became an important center when Kemal Ataturk chose it as the base from which to direct the War of Liberation. The city is a cultural center with museums, theather and ancient sites.

Schools are required to maintain data on the number of children in the school that government schools from low-average-high socio economic areas of Ankara. For the current project 5 schools were selected. The 2 schools with big computer labs, library, social clubs, sport centres for children (high and socio economic level) and 3 schools (low and average socio economic level) with little library, canteen and with fever opportunities.

In Turkey the predominant religion by number of people is Islam--about 97% of the population, the second by number of people is Christianity--0,6%, according to the World Christian Encyclopaedia. The country's official language is Turkish. The population of Turkey is 73.72 million.

Turkey is a democratic, secular, unitary, constitutional republic, with an ancient cultural heritage. About Turkeys' economy, we can say, Turkey has the world's 15th largest GDP-PPP and 17th largest Nominal GDP. The country is a founding member of the OECD and the G-20 major economies. More than 73 million people live in Turkey, three quarters of them in towns and cities, and the population is increasing by 1.5% each year (according to the 2011 census) .

Turkish Constitution defines a "Turk" as "anyone who is bound to the Turkish state through the bond of citizenship"; therefore, the legal use of the term "Turkish" as a citizen of Turkey is different from the ethnic definition. However, the majority of the Turkish population are of Turkish ethnicity. The Kurds, a distinct ethnic group concentrated mainly in the south-eastern provinces of the country, are the largest non-Turkic ethnicity, estimated at about 18% of the population.. Minorities other than the three officially recognized ones do not have any special group privileges, while the term "minority" itself remains a sensitive issue in Turkey. Reliable data on the ethnic mix of the population is not available, because Turkish census figures do not include statistics on ethnicity.

Education in Turkey

Education System in Turkey was built in accordance with the Atatürk Reforms after the Turkish War of Independence. It is a state supervised system designed to produce a skilful professional class for the social and economic institutes of the nation.

According to the Constitution of the Republic of Turkey, every citizen has the right to education which is free of charge for the compulsory primary education. Except in specially licensed and foreign institutions, Turkish must be taught as the mother tongue.

The Ministry of National Education (MEB) runs educational administration of the country and is responsible for drawing up curricula, coordinating the work of official, private and voluntary organizations, designing and building schools, developing educational materials and so on. The Supreme Council of National Education discusses and decides on curricula and regulations prepared by the Ministry. In the provinces, educational affairs are organized by the Directorates of National Education appointed by the Minister, but working under the direction of the provincial governor.

The central government is responsible for all educational expenses of the public; about 10% of the general budget is allocated for national education.

The academic calendar generally begins in late September and extends through to early June, with some variations between urban and rural areas. The school day usually has a morning and an afternoon session, but in overcrowded schools there is a split session. Schools are in session for five days a week (Monday to Friday) in a total of 35-40 hours. There is a two week winter break in February. The Turkish National Educational System is composed of two main sections: Formal Education and Non-formal Education.

 Formal education is the regular education of individuals in a certain age group and given in schools. Pre-Primary education is for children between 3-6 years of age who are under the age of compulsory primary education. The purpose of this education is to ensure physical, mental and sensory development of children and the acquisition of good habits, to prepare children for primary education, to create a common atmosphere of growth for those living in inconvenient circumstances and to ensure that Turkish is spoken correct and well. Pre-school education is given in kindergartens,

day care homes, nursery classes in primary schools, and in private nurseries, all under the supervision of the Ministry. They are usually concentrated in larger towns and cities.

With a new Law in 1997, eight years of Primary school is compulsory today (former system was five years of compulsory primary school, followed by three years of middle or junior high school education). Primary education is compulsory for all boys and girls at the age of 6, and is given free of charge in public schools. These schools provide eight years of uninterrupted education. There are also private (and paid) schools under State control. In most of the primary schools, foreign language lessons start from 4th class. Most elementary school students dress similarly in a type of uniform to avoid any social class differences between rich and poor students. If the children fail to pass the class, he/she has to repeat the same class next year. At the end of 8 years, successful students get their Diploma and can go for the Secondary education.

The purpose of primary education is to ensure that every child acquires the basic knowledge, skills, behaviours, and habits to become a good citizen, is raised in line with the national moral concepts and is prepared for life and for the next education level parallel to his/her interests and skills.

Iceland – the Country

Iceland is a free and sovereign state by state breakdown of the executive, legislative and judicial. Election to Congress is at least every four years in parliament and the government is formed, usually in coalition of two or more parties. Iceland was under Danish sovereignty but got full independence in 1944. Iceland has been in good cooperation with its neighbouring countries in Europe, especially Scandinavia. Iceland belongs to the European Economic Area and has been involved in Western cooperation for security and economic issues.

With a population of 318,000 inhabitants, Iceland may be regarded as one of the smallest countries in the world. However, the country has a national language and a distinctive history and literature. In half a century, Iceland's economic status has shifted from one of the poorest in Europe to one of the fastest growing OECD countries. For decades, the rate of unemployment has been one of the lowest among the OECD countries, being approximately 2% 2008. For the last two years financial crisis has reduced the country's economic status and unemployment has increased and is up to 7–8% (*Statistical Yearbook of Iceland*, 2010). Life expectancies are among the best known, men nearly 80 years and women over 83 years and life expectancies is believed to be extended coming years and decades (Statistics Iceland, 2010).

Education in Iceland

The educational system in Iceland is divided into pre-primary education (1-6 years), primary school (6-15 years) and vocational schools level (16-20 years) and tertiary education. The educational level of younger generation is comparable among countries in Europe but according to the Icelandic Ministry of Education the educational level of 25 to 64 years in Iceland are among the lowest in Europe.

The primary school is for children and teenager between 6 and 16 years of age. Pupils attend the school nearest their home. Private schools are rarely operated in the country. According to the Educational Act of 2008, the role of the primary school is to prepare pupils for life and work in a continuously developing democratic society. The fundamental principle of the Icelandic education system is that everyone should have equal access to education, irrespective of gender, economic

status, residential location, possible handicap, and cultural or social background. The law stipulates that all children are to receive suitable instruction, taking into account the nature of the pupil and his or her needs and promoting the development, health and education of each individual. Tolerance, Christian values and democratic co-operation shall therefore guide the educational methods (Educational Act, 2008). Thus, inclusion is an official government policy in the country. The aim of the Icelandic National Curriculum (1999, 2006) is to clarify the objectives of teaching and learning. The curriculum has to satisfy the requirements of the Act, which are that the curriculum should be carefully considered and broadly based as well as differentiated, so that what is taught is according to individual pupils' abilities and aptitudes (Educational Act, 1995: §29 and §31).

Each year, all schools in the country are required to issue a school curriculum. The head teachers are held responsible for overseeing the work, which is carried out by teachers. The school curriculum is a further expansion of the National Curriculum (Educational Act, 1995). National examinations are held, in 4th and 7th grades in Icelandic and Mathematics (Regulation no. 415/2000), and 10th grade pupils take final National examinations in core subjects. Each primary school is responsible for applying methods to evaluate school processes, such as teaching and management, for interaction within the school and for external relationships. On behalf of the Educational Ministry, an inspection should be conducted every five years on the school's evaluation methods (Educational Act, 1995: §49). The principles in the Educational Act of 1995 are in coherence with the Educational Acts of 1974 and 1991. The year 1996 the Icelandic primary school was decentralised and transferred from state level to local community level.

The Icelandic state is responsible for high school education (16–20 years) and seven different universities are now operating in Iceland, four of them entirely driven by the Icelandic state which also grants in part to the private universities.

To qualify as a teacher in Iceland at compulsory school level, three-years teacher training at university level have been required. This year, a five-years teacher training takes effect. The University of Iceland and the University of Akureyri offers graduate and postgraduate programme for teachers leading to a qualification (300 ECTS), diploma in education (60 ECTS) or MA or M.Ed.-degree (120 ECTS). In both these Universities, special emphasis is placed on distance learning and the use of information technology. Teachers' participation in training or continuing education is not compulsory but it is recommended that teachers attend training courses at least every second year (Ministry of Culture and Education, 1995; University of Akureyri, ed.; University of Iceland, ed.).

Teachers' interest in continuing education has been considerable. Postgraduate programme for teachers and head-teachers have been received with considerable interest. An investigation on continuing education in Iceland shows that the opportunity has had a substantial effect on teachers' practice and self-esteem; teachers expect to gain knowledge and skills, but in addition they find this type of education challenging, and that it has encouraged them to initiate innovative changes within their schools.

According to the *Statistical Yearbook of Iceland* (2010) 4978 teachers were employed at compulsory school level in Iceland in autumn 2009. Most teachers are qualified, although a few teachers outside the densely populated area may not be.

England - the Country

The United Kingdom is an industrialized, Western European social democracy with a long history of international trade and empire, as well as a complex historical and cultural relationship with its

continental neighbours. It has been a member of the European Union (Common Market) since 1973. The population is somewhat over 60,000,000, and its economy is the third largest in Europe, after Germany and France. Although the United Kingdom is a fairly centralized state it enjoys devolution at the level of nation (for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, although not for England) and at local level. Within England, educational policy is set by the UK Secretary of State for Education, but some powers and funding decisions lie in the hands of Local Education Authorities and, increasingly, with individual schools.

Bristol is a port in the south-west of England, and is the major industrial, financial and cultural centre of its region. Its population is approximately 430,000, making it the sixth most populous city in the country. The city consists of relatively sharply defined districts, often with distinctive cultural, economic, racial and religious characters, and this is reflected in the diversity of its schools. According to 2007 estimates by the Office for National Statistics, the population of Bristol was 88.1% White British. 4.6% Asian or Asian British, 2.9% black or black British, 2.3% mixed race, 1.4% as Chinese, and 0.7% as Other, percentages that broadly reflect the population of the country as a whole. The figures are however far higher in the school age population. The Bristol City Council data in the report to the Strategic Planning & Performance Team - Equalities Impact Assessment of the Bristol Children and Young People's Plan (2007) reported that just over 24% of pupils were BME (Black and Minority Ethnic). This figure rose to over 30% for nursery aged (ages 3+) children. Numbers of BME pupils and pupils with English as an Additional Language (EAL) are rising disproportionately in the inner city.

The majority of Bristolians described themselves as Christian at the last census in 2001, and there has historically been a high proportion of non-conformist protestant denominations within the city; although active participation is relatively low. Muslims are the next largest religious group, accounting for approximately 2% of the population.
Approximately 18% of families live in social housing in the city and there are areas of the city where social housing dominates. Large estates of social housing were constructed during and after the 1930s and these estates remain largely in public ownership.

Schools are required to maintain data on the number of children in the school that have 'Free School Meals' (FSM). These children are often (although not always) from lower socio economic backgrounds as children are eligible only if parents' joint income falls below a certain level. Schools also have data on the percentage of pupils who have 'English as an Additional Language' (EAL) and of children who have Special Educational Needs (SEN).

For the current project 12 schools were selected. The 12 schools include four with a high proportion of children having FSM, four with a high proportion of children who have EAL and within this group of eight three with both high levels of FSM and EAL. The eight schools generally had higher than average percentages of children with SEN. A further four schools were selected that had low indicators of FSM, EAL and SEN.

Education in England

People outside of the UK are often surprised to find that the four territories that make up Great Britain and Northern Ireland, England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland each have their own schooling systems and curriculum structures. This section describes the system of schooling and curriculum in England.

The statutory age for starting school is 5 years old, although many children begin school in the year before their 5th birthday. Pupils currently in secondary schools may choose to end their schooling aged 16, or continue to study in a school or college up to the age of eighteen. National policy change means that younger pupils will continue in some form of education or training until they are eighteen. Although there is a national structure for state schools the nature of school type varies a great deal, and recent governments have encouraged diversity in the range of schools available. The types of school in any local district vary between each Local Authority (LA) and considerable variety can exist within one authority.

The National Curriculum was introduced to ensure conformity between schools and help raise standards. Pupils in state schools study a centrally designed curriculum from age 5 to 14 for most subjects, and after this follow a range of examination courses, which are tested at age 16, when pupils can choose to stay on at school until age 17 or 18, or can seek employment or a place in a college to study further.

All primary school children have been entitled to foreign language teaching since 2010. Citizenship, Personal, Social and Health Education is non-statutory for primary aged children, although the English government provides guidance on these subjects. Outside of the National Curriculum, all pupils in state schools are required to study Religious Education - this is a study of world religions and ethics rather than religious instruction. Schools usually also offer a programme of personal, social and health education or PSHE.

The National Curriculum Programmes of Study provides details of the knowledge, skills and understandings to be learned within each subject at each Key Stage. The Foundation Stage Curriculum for very young children is organised within different areas of learning rather than distinct subjects.

The curriculum in England has been monitored and managed by the Qualifications and Curriculum Development Authority, although this is now under review. In England schools are inspected by an independent inspectorate called Ofsted (Office for Standards in Education). The aim of inspections is to judge quality standards of schools and teaching and promote high quality achievement. Inspection reports in England are published on the internet.

In England, over the last two decades, pupils have national tests called Standard Assessment Tasks (SATS) aged 7, 11, and 14. These tasks involve some teacher assessment and examination papers which every child in a state school must complete on certain days. These tasks measure attainment against the National Curriculum Levels (descriptions of skills/abilities defined within the National Curriculum document). In England the results of primary children's attainment in maths and English are published as totals for each school within Local Authority in 'League Tables'. Details about the National Curriculum in England can be found at http://curriculum.qca.gov.uk/

Addendix III

The Children´s questionnaire

1. All About You

United Kingdom

Iceland

Turkey

Spain

*1. In which country is your school?

○ United Kingdom   ○ Iceland   ○ Turkey   ○ Spain

*2. What is the number of your school? (Your teacher should have told you this.)

School Number [   ]

*3. How old are you?

○ 7 years

○ 8 years

○ 9 years

○ 10 years

○ 11 years or older

4. Are you a boy or a girl?

○ Boy

○ Girl

5. How many children live in your home, including yourself?

○ 1

○ 2

○ 3

○ 4

○ 5

○ 6

○ More

6. Does your family have books in your home?

	None	Some	A Lot
.	☐	☐	☐

7. Are there any children's books in your home?

	None	Some	A lot
.	☐	☐	☐

8. Do you have a room to yourself at home?

○ Yes

○ No

9. Do you have internet at home?

○ Yes

○ No

2. When, Where and How Do You Read?

10. What sort of reader would you say you are?

	I love to read	It's okay to read	I don't like reading
.	☐	☐	☐

11. Outside of school, where do you read? (Tick as many as you like)

☐ In my bedroom

☐ Somewhere else in the house

☐ On journeys

☐ In the library

Elsewhere (say where, if you like)

12. How long do you spend reading at home in a day? (Tick the answer that is closest to the truth for you.)

○ I do not read at home

○ Five minutes a day

○ Fifteen minutes a day

○ Thirty minutes a day

○ An hour or more a day

○ I don't know

13. How often does someone in your family read for you in the evening, before you go to sleep?

○ Always

○ Often

○ Sometimes

○ Seldom

○ Never

14. Do you ever buy books yourself?

	Always	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
.	☐	☐	☐	☐

15. How do you choose books to read? (Tick as many as you like.)

☐ A teacher tells me about it

☐ Someone else tells me about it

☐ I have read other books by the same author

☐ It's on a subject I am interested in

☐ My friend tells me about it

☐ Everybody is talking about it

☐ Because it looks easy

☐ Because I like the description on the cover

☐ Because I like the picture on the cover

☐ Because I have seen the movie

☐ Other...

16. Do you ever borrow books from the public library?

Very often	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
☐	☐	☐	☐

17. If you borrow books from the public library, who chooses the books most often?

○ myself

○ a librarian

○ my mother

○ my father

○ a grandparent

○ a teacher

○ someone else

Other (please explain)

3. Your Reading in School

18. Does your teacher read aloud to you?

	Often	Sometimes	Never
.	☐	☐	☐

19. Why do you think your teacher reads aloud to you? (Tick as many as you like.)

☐ So we can enjoy a story

☐ So we can learn more about an author

☐ So we can talk about the story

☐ I don't know

Other (please explain)

20. Do you ever write about what you read in class?

	Often	Sometimes	Never
.	☐	☐	☐

21. What do you learn from reading books or stories in school? (Tick as many as you like.)

☐ Something about me

☐ Something about other people

☐ Something about the world

☐ New words

☐ New ideas

Other (please explain)

22. Here are some things that children learn about through reading in school. Tick the ones you learn in your class.

- ☐ I learn what the story is about
- ☐ I learn to answer questions about the book
- ☐ I learn to make connections between different books
- ☐ I learn to give my own opinion of a book
- ☐ I learn to read different sorts of books
- ☐ I learn to make choices about what to read
- ☐ I learn to read for a particular purpose (for example, to find out information)
- ☐ I learn to ask questions about books
- ☐ I learn to use reading to help me with my writing
- ☐ I learn that reading is useful

23. Here is a list of activities that teachers use to help children to understand books. Tick the ones that you have found helpful.

- ☐ When the teacher asks questions
- ☐ When we use drama and act out parts of the story
- ☐ When I underline, highlight or circle parts of a story to help me to understand it
- ☐ When the teacher reads aloud to us
- ☐ When the teacher helps us to picture the story
- ☐ When we make notes on what we have read
- ☐ When we talk about what we have read
- ☐ When we retell a story we have read to others
- ☐ When we have a visit by an author to our school

Something else (please explain)

4. Book Covers (a)

**24. Judging by their covers, which of these books would you be most likely to want to read?**

(You may see the same covers more than once in this and the following questions. Don't worry! This is on purpose.)

◯ a)   ◯ b)   ◯ c)   ◯ d)   ◯ e)   ◯ f)   ◯ None

a)

b)
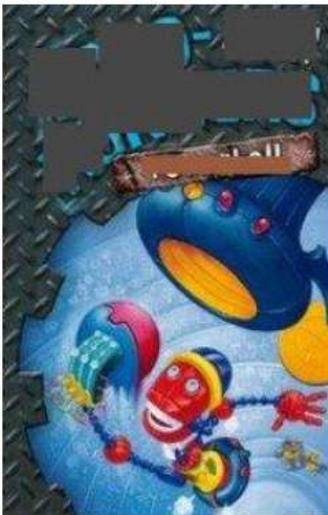
c)

d)

e)
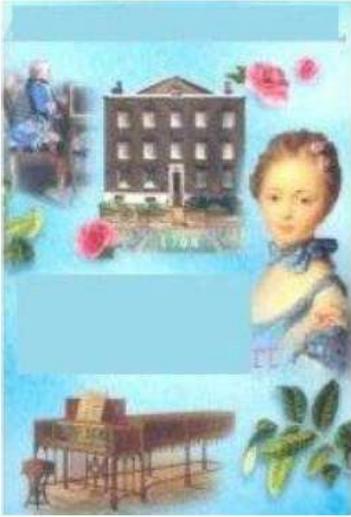
f)
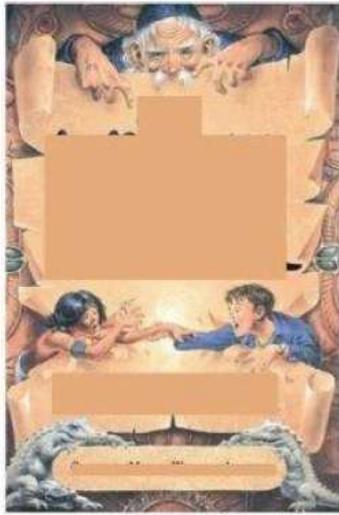
5. Book covers (b)

25. Judging by their covers, which of these books would you be most likely to want to read?

◯ a)   ◯ b)   ◯ c)   ◯ d)   ◯ e)   ◯ f)   ◯ None

a)
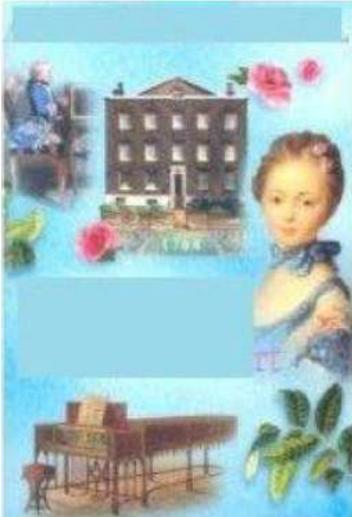
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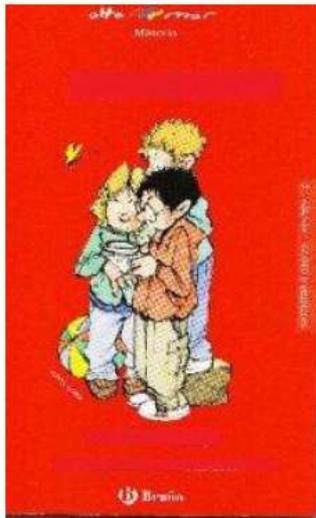
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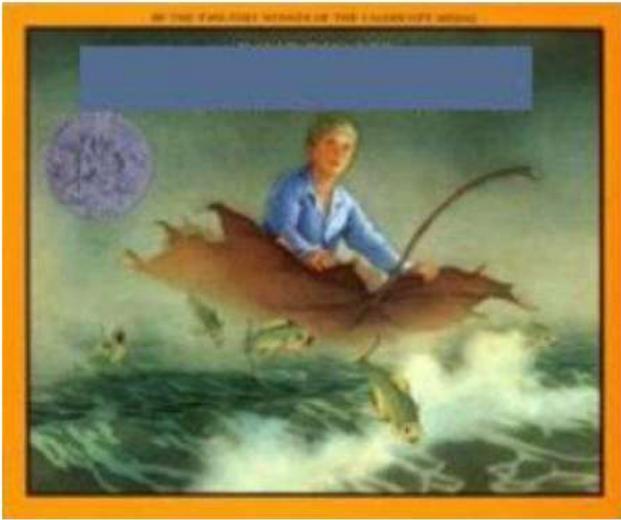
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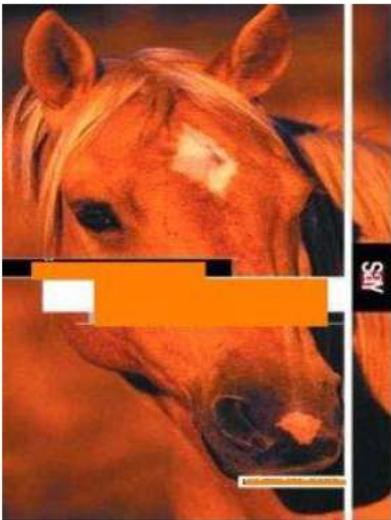
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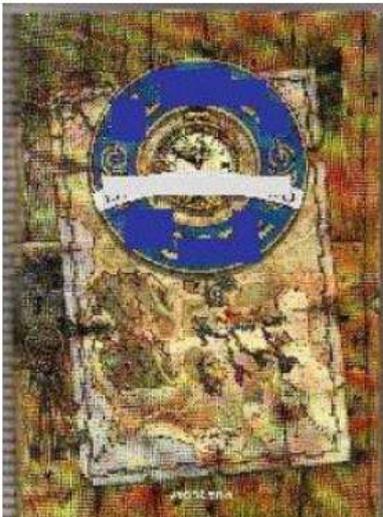
6. Book covers (c)

26. Judging by their covers, which of these books would you be most likely to want to read?

  ◯ a)   ◯ b)   ◯ c)   ◯ d)   ◯ e)   ◯ f)   ◯ None

a)
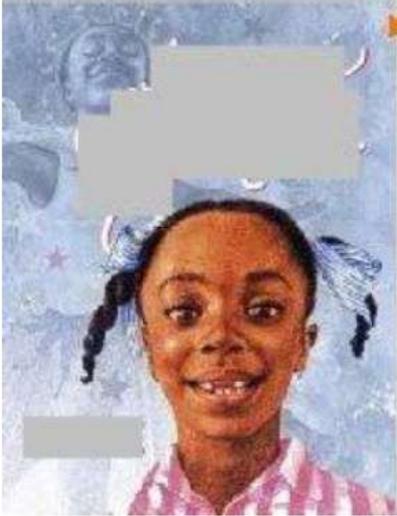
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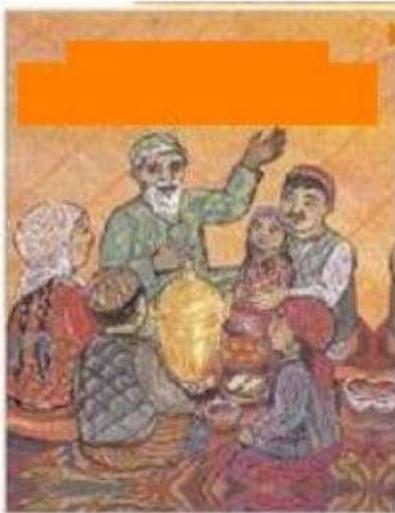
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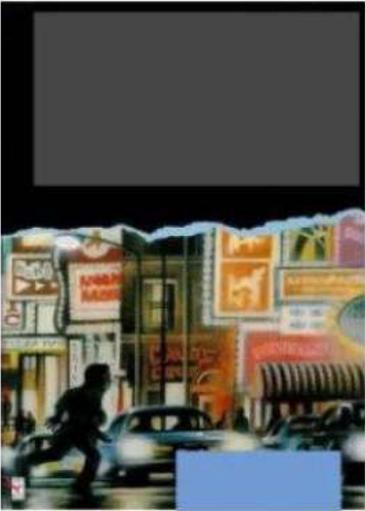
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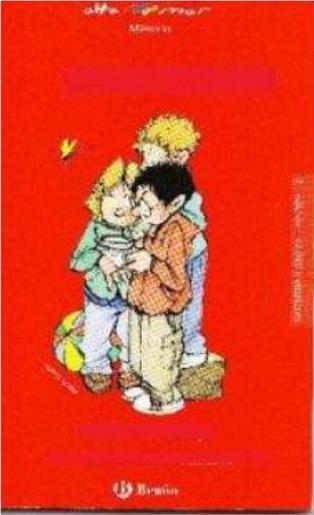
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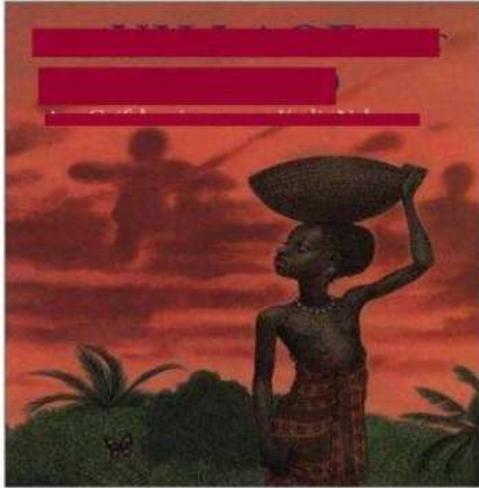
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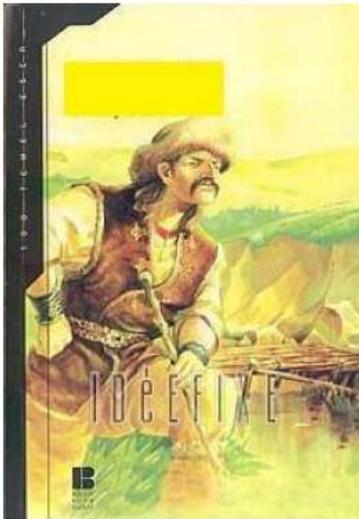
7. Book covers (d)

27. Judging by their covers, which of these books would you be most likely to want to read?

○ a)   ○ b)   ○ c)   ○ d)   ○ e)   ○ f)   ○ None

a)
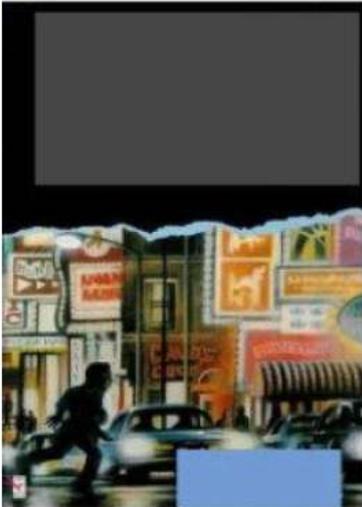
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c)
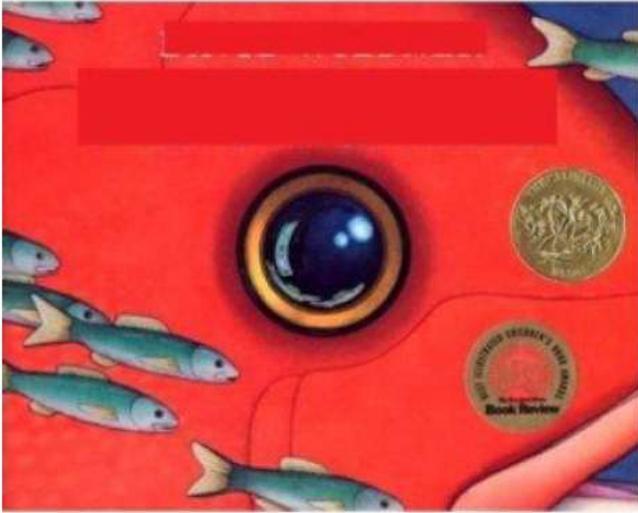
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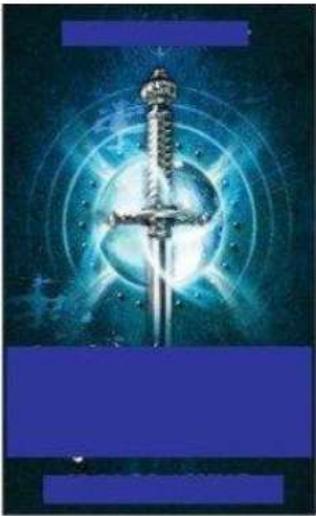
f)
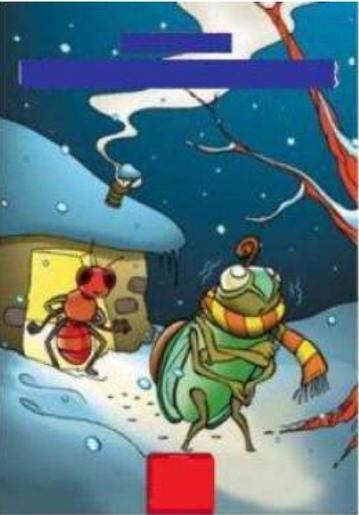
8. What Do You Like Reading?

28. What sort of books do you read out of school? Tick as many as you like.

- ☐ Books about ordinary life
- ☐ Fantasy
- ☐ Mystery or detective
- ☐ Horror
- ☐ Animal stories
- ☐ Adventure stories
- ☐ Information books (non-fiction)
- ☐ Love stories
- ☐ School stories
- ☐ Funny stories
- ☐ Other

.Other (please explain)

29. Do you ever read books more than once?

	Often	Sometimes	Never
.	☐	☐	☐

30. If you read books more than once, why? (Tick as many as you like.)

- ☐ I like knowing what is going to happen
- ☐ I like the story
- ☐ I see things I missed before
- ☐ Other

31. Do you ever read books in a series?

	Often	Sometimes	Never
.	☐	☐	☐

32. If you read books in a series, why do you like them? (Tick as many as you like.)

☐ I liked the ones I have read before

☐ I know the characters

☐ I like collecting the set

☐ I want to know what is going to happen next

☐ Other

33. I like books that: (Tick as many as you like.)

☐ Make me laugh

☐ Tell me things I don't know

☐ Are scary

☐ Are exciting

☐ Make me happy

☐ Make me sad

☐ Make me feel the characters are like friends

☐ Other

34. When you read a story, who do you like to be the main character? (Tick as many as you like.)

☐ Girl

☐ Boy

☐ Adult

☐ Animal

☐ Machine (e.g. a robot)

☐ Alien

☐ A magical creature (e.g. vampire, fairy, ghost)

☐ Something or someone else

35. If the main character in a story is a human being, is it important... (Tick any that are important to you.)

- ☐ That they live in the same country as you
- ☐ That look like the kind of people you know
- ☐ That they live in the same times as you
- ☐ That they have the same interests as you
- ☐ That they are the same sex as you
- ☐ That they have the same religion as you
- ☐ That they are about the same age as you
- ☐ That they come from a family like yours

36. Outside school, do you ever read books for adults? (Novels, biographies, plays, etc.)

	Often	Sometimes	Never
.	☐	☐	☐

37. What is your favourite book right now, if you have one? (You can put the title, the author, or both.)

☐

38. And you're finished! Thank you very much for taking part in our survey.

If you have anything you would like to tell us about your reading that we have not asked, you can use the box below...

☐

Appendix IV

The Teacher´s questionnaire

1. Personal Information

1. In which country do you teach?

- ○ Iceland
- ○ Spain
- ○ Turkey
- ○ United Kingdom

2. What is the number of your school?

Enter number assigned to your school here:

3. Sex

- ○ Male
- ○ Female

4. What is your age?

Enter number:

5. How many years have you been a teacher?

Enter number (to the nearest year):

6. What age group(s) do you currently teach?

- ☐ Children aged 7/8
- ☐ Children aged 8/9
- ☐ Children aged 9/10
- ☐ Children aged 10/11

7. For how many years have you taught this group?

Enter number (to the nearest year):

8. How many children in your class speak English as an additional language?

Enter number:

9. During your teacher training did you study the teaching of children's literature?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

10. During your career as a teacher have you had any training or taken a course in children's literature?

   ○ Yes

   ○ No

11. Who are your favourite children's authors? (You can name up to three.)

Choice 1:

Choice 2:

Choice 3:

2. Using Children's Literature in your Class

12. How often do you use children's literature to support teaching and learning in your class?

	Every week	Every two weeks	Once a month	Never
.	☐	☐	☐	☐

13. If you use children's literature in your class, why do you use children's literature to support teaching and learning? Tick as many answers as you wish.

☐ To improve children's language skills

☐ To develop a life-long pleasure in reading

☐ To promote ethical values

☐ Because the children ask to read children's literature

☐ To develop children's responses to reading

☐ To teach children to read

☐ To support children in considering national identities

☐ To widen children's vocabulary

☐ To support the teaching and learning of comprehension

☐ To improve children's grammar

☐ To have fun

14. Do children in your class enjoy learning through children's literature?

	Always	Often	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

15. Is the use of children's literature to support teaching and learning an established part of your school's curriculum?

○ Yes

○ No

○ Don't know

16. Do you use translated children's literature for children to read in class?

	Always	Often	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

17. Do you use children's literature for introducing other cultures?

	Always	Often	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

18. Do you use adaptations or shortened versions of texts instead of originals

	Always	Often	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

19. Do you use passages and/or extracts of children's literature in your teaching? (Tick as many answers as you wish.)

☐ I use extracts of passages I select myself for teaching

☐ I use whole texts for teaching

☐ I use extracts of passages from a course book or published scheme for teaching

20. When selecting children's literature for teaching, the following is important:

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Broadening children's views of themselves	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Broadening children's views of others	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Teaching children ethical values	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Teaching children about feelings	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Introducing children to good literature	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

3. Reading Habits

21. Do you have a reading/book corner for children's literature in your classroom?

○ Yes

○ No

22. If you answered Yes, who selects the books that are available in the reading/book corner? (You can tick as many answers as you wish.)

☐ I select the books

☐ The school selects the books

☐ Children select the books

☐ Both the children and I select the books

☐ The national or local government suggest the books to use

23. How often do you suggest books to the children for them to read independently in school or at home?

	Always	Often	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

24. If you suggest books for children to read, what do you primarily base your suggestions on? (You can tick more than one option.)

☐ My own knowledge of current children's books

☐ My favourite authors

☐ The school/librarian recommendations of children's books

☐ What children recommend

☐ Reviews on the internet

25. If you suggest a particular author to children, why do you do it? (Tick all that apply.)

☐ The author is popular with children

☐ I remember reading the author as a child

☐ The author is considered to be a classic author of children's literature

☐ The author is humorous

☐ The author uses language in an interesting manner

☐ The author writes engaging plots

☐ The author can be read at many different levels, giving children a range of ways to respond to the text

☐ The author raises issues relevant to children

☐ The author motivates children to read more

26. Are there classic texts from your own country's traditions or national literature that you regularly teach?

○ Yes

○ No

If Yes, name up to three that you use most regularly

27. Do you read children's books for the age group you teach?

	Always	Often	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

28. How do you gather information about children's literature? (Tick all that apply.)

☐ By reading academic journals

☐ By reading websites

☐ By reading children's book publications

☐ By reading and watching other media

☐ I don't gather information about children's literature (from any special source)

☐ By word of mouth

☐ Through courses I have attended

☐ Reading brochures produced by children's books publishing companies

29. Do children in your class read independently during the school day other than when you are directly teaching them?

	Always	Often	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

30. How often do you read aloud to children in your class?

○ More than once a day

○ Daily

○ About twice a week

○ Once a week

○ Less than once every two weeks

○ Never

31. If you read aloud for the children in your class, for what purposes do you read for them? (Tick as many as apply.)

☐ For their pleasure

☐ For my own pleasure

☐ To model reading

☐ To teach specific literacy skills

☐ To widen children's vocabulary

☐ Because children ask me to read to them

☐ To introduce children to new texts and authors

☐ To fill up time

☐ Other reasons to read aloud:

32. The following people are responsible for promoting reading for pleasure:

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Teachers	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Parents	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Siblings	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Media	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Classmates	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Friends	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

33. In which ways do you promote reading for pleasure? (Give up to three answers.)

i

ii

iii

4. Reading aims, Strategies and Processes

34. What do you aim to teach pupils about children's literature? (Give up to three answers.)

i

ii

iii

35. Which of these do you feel most confident to teach? (Tick up to 5 options.)

☐ How to decode a text

☐ How to make connections between different texts that have been read

☐ How to infer authorial intent

☐ How to ask questions about a text

☐ How to make a personal response to the text based on the child's own view

☐ How to use reading as a model for children's own writing

☐ How to read for a particular purpose, e.g. to find out information

☐ How to select a good book to read

☐ How to make choices about what to read

☐ How to make connections between what is read and children's own lives and experiences

☐ How to comprehend the literal meaning of a text

☐ How to understand new vocabulary

☐ How to infer meaning from a text

36. Here is a list of activities that may help children to understand children's literature. Tick those you use regularly.

- ☐ Co-operation, e.g. drama, role play
- ☐ Author visits to the school
- ☐ Visits to the local library
- ☐ Story mapping
- ☐ Oral retelling
- ☐ Text marking
- ☐ Group discussion
- ☐ Vocabulary investigation
- ☐ Reading aloud
- ☐ Writing as if you were a character
- ☐ Oral questioning
- ☐ Reading journal or diary
- ☐ Visualisation strategies
- ☐ Performance
- ☐ Note taking
- ☐ Written questioning
- ☐ Making links between texts
- ☐ Other (please describe)

37. How do you develop and teach comprehension skills?

38. How do you assess children's reading comprehension?

39. What is your favourite children's book at the moment? (You can put the title, the author, or both.)

40. Are there any other comments you would like to add?