



2025 Coronation Book Week: Where stories spark imagination and learning

This year's Coronation Book Week classrooms across the Western Cape were filled with colour, curiosity, and creativity. Funded by Coronation CSI and delivered through the Principals Academy Trust's (PAT) Teacher Support Programme (TSP), the initiative reached 42 schools and 407 classrooms. Foundation Phase (FP) teachers were provided with storybooks, lesson ideas, and themed resources, empowering them to bring literacy to life through art, music, numeracy, life skills, and creative play.

The Reality in Western Cape schools

While Grade 4 learners in the Western Cape often outperform those in other provinces, the challenges remain significant. According to the World Bank's analysis of PIRLS (Progress in International Reading Literacy Study) data, 62% of learners in the province are functionally illiterate, meaning they are unable to read for meaning in any language.

Coronation Book Week responds to this challenge by igniting a love for reading and helping teachers reimagine how meaningful learning can happen through playful, interactive, and joyful experiences.

Building a culture of curiosity – one page at a time

Each Foundation Phase teacher received a storybook to share with their class. In Grade R, *Yawning is catching* was enjoyed. Grade 1's explored *Let's Play*, Grade 2's *The Best Meal ever* and Grade 3's loved *Wanda the Brave*.

These stories became springboards for a full week of theme-based, integrated lessons. Classrooms were transformed into imaginative spaces and reading nooks appeared, doors were decorated, and a Book Character Dress-Up Day rounded off the festivities.

A much-loved ritual was Drop Everything and Read (DEAR). Whether reading quietly or listening to stories read aloud, these moments gave learners a genuine emotional connection to reading and, for many, a first real taste of reading for pleasure.

In schools where economic circumstances made dressing up difficult, teachers found clever alternatives and encouraged learners to craft props or costumes from classroom materials.

Highlights included seeing Rene Sinclair (Head of TSP) dressed as Alice in Wonderland and Bonita Engelbrecht in a homemade Pip and Pop Penguin costume. They were joined by many enthusiastic principals and teachers who dressed up to delight their learners.

Flexibility and Innovation in the Classroom

What stood out across schools was how teachers adapted Book Week to suit their unique classroom contexts and balanced, assessments, curriculum demands, and learner needs while still making the week feel memorable and joyful.

Looking Ahead: From one week to long-term impact

More than just an event, Book Week has sparked a shift in thinking. Many teachers are planning to:

- Create permanent reading corners.
- Use themed, story-based learning more regularly.
- Extend cross-curricular integration beyond literacy.

The timing of Book Week in Term 3 this year, worked well for schools. Feedback from 2024 led to earlier communication and better preparation in 2025, ensuring smoother implementation.

Coronation Book Week 2024: Teacher Survey Results

Participation and Engagement

69.7% of this year's Book Week teachers participated in Coronation Book Week 2024.
99.5% of respondents are **looking forward to the 2026 event**, showing overwhelmingly positive anticipation.
95.9% feel **empowered to run the 2026 event**, either independently or collaboratively, with a book of their choosing.

Creativity and Classroom Activities

97.4% felt they had the opportunity to be more creative during Book Week.
95.8% enjoyed decorating their classroom door, with **93.8%** receiving positive feedback on the door decorations.
96.9% tried to incorporate the book into literacy, numeracy, and life skills.
97.4% observed that learners enjoyed creative sessions including art, music, movement, and drama.

Student Involvement

68.0% of classes made dress-up props or costumes during art sessions.
92.2% managed to implement DEAR (Drop Everything and Read) time in their class.

Key Takeaways

Strong enthusiasm and creativity were evident, with nearly all teachers reporting increased engagement and enjoyment during Book Week.
A large majority found ways to integrate the event into core subjects, suggesting good alignment with curriculum goals.

There was no correlation between prior participation and future confidence which suggests the structure and clarity of Book Week enables all teachers, regardless of past involvement, to feel supported and capable.

Reflections and Impact

Teachers reported real growth both professionally and in how they saw their learners engage. Many noted the power and enjoyment of using South African-authored stories, which added cultural relevance and encouraged identity affirmation among learners.

Coronation Book Week impacted more than just literacy. Teachers noted growth in:

- Confidence
- Creative expression
- Learner-teacher connection
- Joyful, multi-sensory learning

This initiative brought full-circle engagement, including - visual, auditory, and performative. Teachers were re-energised, and learners felt seen, inspired, and more optimistic.

Conclusion

Book Week is a valuable and unique educational tool that goes far beyond books. It builds bridges between literacy and other subjects, between teachers and learners, and between schools and their communities.

An enormous and heartfelt thank you to Coronation CSI for funding storybooks, resources, and refreshments; to the dedicated and enthusiastic TSP team, the committed teachers and principals, and PAT coaches. All role players played a vital part in making this a meaningful, memorable week of learning.

“

Quotes From Coronation Book Week 2025

“It was my first time participating in Book Week. I really enjoyed the vibe that was created at our school”

“I felt there was a shift to joy-based learning”

“I think Book week has inspired many learners to love books and join the library which is wonderful.”

"Decorating my classroom door with my learners was so enjoyable. They also loved reading and acting out the story."

“The activities encouraged a love for reading and created opportunities for learners to share their own experiences and strengthening their connection to literature.”

“I love the way Book Week helps learners improve their imagination and confidence in reading, writing, and storytelling.”

“It was great to learn together in a playful way.”

“Dressing up with the learners was the cherry on top!”

“Reading aloud every day made my kids excited.”

”