

Positive Peer Pressure - A Reading Initiative in a Fair Trade school



Luke Hammond recommends
Off Side by Tom Palmer
Borrow it from the Library

Lesley Langlands

Dumfries and Galloway

Education

September 2011

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Last year, when the Scottish Premier League launched its 'Reading Stars' initiative, it presented Lockerbie Academy library with an unique opportunity to do some in-house promotion of our own.

The 'Reading Stars' are Premier League footballers who love getting into a good book. One player from each of the twelve SPL clubs is nominated to be a 'Champion for Reading' and each club is linked to two local libraries to help encourage families to read together. Promotional materials are provided by Skills Development Scotland, the organisation responsible for the scheme. The players' favourite book from their childhood and their favourite adults' book choice are printed on eye-catching, glossy cards and posters which can be displayed in the library and around the school. Each choice has a few lines written by the player explaining why they have chosen those particular books, what it is about them that they have enjoyed and why it is special to them.

Here at Lockerbie Academy we are lucky to have our very own Glasgow Rangers player. Fifteen year old Luke Hammond who travels to Glasgow each week on a day release programme, has a youth contract with the team and plays for the Under 17 side. We decided that asking Luke to be our very own 'Reading Star' would be a great way to promote *Off Side* which was a recent addition to the shelves. We photographed Luke

holding the book and produced a poster which was displayed alongside the official 'Reading Stars' ones. The response was remarkable. Within a short space of time we had a steady stream of pupils, mostly, but not exclusively boys, beating a path to the door of the library to ask for 'the book that Luke's reading'. This generated interest in the other books in the *Foul Play* series which are now also in high demand.

As Lockerbie Academy is a Fair Trade school we were pleased to be able to show how the *Foul Play* stories help to promote Fair Trade issues. We quickly realised that there was an opportunity for the school to use the book to create a cross-curricular activity. At a staff meeting, teachers were asked to consider ways in which their subject could be linked to *Off Side* through problems such as human trafficking, slavery and exploitation. One suggestion for example, was that the maths department could look at foreign currencies, including Ghanaian Cedis, and calculate how much Kofi's parents were being asked to pay to allow him to come to Britain.

This project has proved to be a great success. When our local newspaper heard about the promotion of *Off Side* they covered the story which helped to increase awareness of what we were doing. Library borrowing figures have increased considerably and Tom Palmer has now become our fifth most borrowed author. It hasn't done Luke's street cred any harm either!

