



# St. Nicholas' Primary School

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Roderick Hunt and Alex Brychta

I have been in the educational profession since 1976 as a classteacher, deputy head and now headteacher. I have worked throughout the south of England and have taught all primary ages from 3 to 11years old. I have 4 boys who have been through Primary schools and feel I can comment on the process of reading in schools.

In 1988 I returned to teaching after a small break with 3 pre school children. The world of reading had been transformed! As literacy Coordinator, it was my task to resource a school with a large amount of money. The Oxford Reading Tree Scheme had arrived. I soon became aware of Roderick Hunt, who had managed to write books for pre readers, struggling readers, more able readers, average readers ,teachers and parents. How did he do it? He has used and continues to use, real life situations that really happen. He has managed to open the hearts of a culturally diverse country by making his stories both multi cultural in characters and inspirational in reaching the needs of all children regardless of gender or ability.

The stories rate very highly as imaginative, funny and totally inspirational for all readers. Children become familiar with the characters pre school and our nursery children have a selection of characters to familiarise themselves before even meeting the books. The stories are written in a way to enable both adult and child to share the humour. Children are able to learn to read without the grind so well remembered from the past.

Rod could not achieve this without the support of artist Alex Brychta who brings the books to life. His illustrations are now a trademark to thousands of children throughout primary and secondary schools. His style is unique, often showing more detail than necessary to entertain the more observant reader who is continually looking for that pair of glasses!! Alex designs the books with a child in mind, the characters are real and children relate to them. Children are always asking about the characters and want to know ages, background and even birthdays, which is so needed to help children want to read. Children who are struggling to read can use the books without text to make up their own stories and the illustrations alone enable the

child to become a writer. I have worked in many classes with children, who have little language, who have managed to tell a story using the illustrations from an Oxford Reading Tree book and that feeling of success is what every teacher, parent and child craves for. This is not possible without Rod and Alex and Oxford Reading Tree, so I say thank you for allowing so many children to read, regardless of background and with such enjoyment.

Rachel Crouch