

Reading



Reading is not only a vital key to unlock barriers to learning; it also brings great pleasure and enjoyment into our lives. Our aim is that all children at our school are motivated to read and see themselves as readers, whatever level that might be.

Children who have an early introduction to books benefit in many ways; educationally, socially, culturally and emotionally. We encourage parents to share stories, books and rhymes as this introduces children to a wide tapestry of knowledge and culture, which can help them understand who they are and the place they have in the world. There is nowhere better than stories for children to take risks, test their courage, face their fears and to indulge their humour. It is a way of growing up in a safe environment, testing out personal feelings and responses through others' experiences.

Like anything else, reading is a skill that becomes better with practice. Reading for pleasure is critical for ensuring that the practice needed to become fluent becomes part of the learners' everyday life. It is something we all do every day, and should not be seen as just a classroom-based activity. For this reason sharing a book or undertaking other reading games and activities, are the most vital parts of the homework we provide every week.

We believe that children become successful readers by learning to use a range of strategies to make sense of the written word. The range of strategies can be depicted as searchlights, each of which sheds light on the text. Because children learn in different ways, it may be that one method may prove more accessible than another in the early stages of learning to read, however, successful readers use as many of these strategies as possible.

<p>Phonics (sounds and spelling) - this method teaches children that words are made up of spoken sounds, and how to blend sounds to read a word. It supports writing by segmenting sounds within words to spell accurately.</p>		<p>Word recognition and graphic knowledge - this method is good for children who see words as images, with a particular shape or pattern. Children learn flashcards before meeting the words in a book, speeding up reading.</p>
<p>Knowledge of Context - this method helps children to decode an unfamiliar word by looking at the meaning of the sentence it is in, or by using surrounding pictures as a clue.</p>		<p>Grammatical knowledge - this teaches children the importance of word order, punctuation or using our voice to alter meaning (intonation or inflection).</p>

The following tips will help parents to implement our 'searchlight' method of teaching reading at home:

Phonic

- Use the initial letter to help you think of a word that makes sense
- Build the word up, then blend the phonemes together
- Look for familiar clusters, digraphs or trigraphs within the words

Grammatical Knowledge

- Re-run from the beginning of the sentence and use awareness of grammar to predict words
- Use awareness of the need for grammatical agreement (does it make sense?)
- Use punctuation to get meaning from the text
- Look for familiar prefixes and suffixes
- Read on to the end of the sentence and look for clues

Context

- Look carefully at the pictures
- Have the confidence to make a guess, then check it makes sense
- Read the sentence aloud to check it makes sense
- Predict what the word might be from what has already happened
- Re-run from the beginning of the sentence
- Use prior knowledge of the genre to predict words/phrases
- Use any predictable patterns in the language, e.g. rhyme
- Read on to the end of the sentence and look for clues

Word Recognition and Graphic Knowledge

- Look at the shape of the word
- Look for words within words
- Read the word in 'chunks', then blend them together
- Locate high frequency or familiar words
- Use analogy with known words to solve new words

We give our children a carefully balanced and structured range of guided reading books that are chosen to promote the above skills. Our books are chosen to provide a gradually cumulative vocabulary and sensible grammatical structure, but also to have a lively, engaging context, and from a range of genres to appeal to both boys and girls. Alongside these books we use carefully structured books specifically chosen to practice vital phonic skills, and books that the children can choose freely, according to their own interests and tastes.

<p><i>High-frequency word schemes:</i> Ginn 360 Early Start New Way Big Cat Open Door Lighthouse Rigby Star Bug club - online reading scheme</p>		<p><i>Phonics schemes</i> Floppy's Phonics and Songbirds Sound Start Dandelion readers Jelly and Bean Big Cat phonics Rhyme World Phonics Bug Club - online reading scheme</p>
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