

Reading in the Early Years Foundation Stage

In Early Years we know that reading ignites creativity, sparks curiosity and stimulates the imagination and as such we want it to feature significantly across our provision. Therefore, we ensure that nursery rhymes, songs and stories form part of our everyday routine and use these to promote positive engagement and relaxation. We actively encourage pupils to make choices and to develop preferences in what they hear and what they do and do not like.

Developing a love for books in our Early Years classes is paramount in our early reading development. We introduce this by providing the opportunity for pupils to be exposed to a wide range of high quality and captivating books with accompanying symbols and props. Before beginning a story, we will introduce key vocabulary and props, in a fun and engaging manner, such as the use of a 'What's in the bag/box' activity. We will then encourage the children to develop the concepts of reading by asking them to help turn pages and find items in the pictures. We will often choose texts to support our Literacy that have repetitive language and will share the same book several times over a few weeks. This enables our children to begin to join in with the repetitive phrases or complete sentences that we might begin for them.

In order to develop an interest in books and the concepts of reading we ensure that there are always books and other reading materials accessible to our children and that these are appropriate to their needs and interests. These are accessible in both our inside and outside areas and will include letters and words building activities within sensory media, key words such as children and adult names and rhymes and stories. We encourage our children to share books with not only adults but also each other and to make up their own story from the pictures. We will support these with puppets and other small world props that will help capture the interest and extend their imagination.

We believe that this will set our children up for reading readiness and help lay the basis for future successes as they progress through school.

It is important to ensure our parents support us in embedding early reading skills and to encourage them to do this, we provide parent open afternoons where we model reading a story with pupils, using a range of different props and sensory opportunities that engage and capture the pupils. Modelling the use of total communication opportunities to enable pupils to respond to questions or make observations about what they are exposed to.

In the first Term in Reception, we make links with the charity Bookstart, who provide a free book for each pupil with accompanying reading tips and website link, these can be differentiated to meet the needs of our more sensory pupils who are more reliant on the feel. The charity website offers a range of tips and guidance to further develop reading passion with young children.

To further develop an interest in reading, and to encourage our pupils to experience the wider community in Term Two we arrange a visit to the local library. During this experience a Librarian will read/tell a sensory story to the pupils. This enables all of the pupils the opportunity to be exposed to props that will help them to understand the story and make connections between the language and the objects. Following the story, the pupils are all given the opportunity to explore the books and share in stories with the staff or accompanying parents.

Alongside encouraging a love for books, stories and rhymes, we take a very holistic approach to the teaching of phonics. Much of our focus is on Phase 1 where we familiarise pupils with both environmental and instrumental sounds by exposing them to different sounds and enabling them opportunities to explore making sounds. We provide opportunities for children to create sounds with their body, such as clapping and stamping feet, modelling rhythms and patterns.

We place emphasis on listening to the sounds that are made by adults when they are reading stories and provide opportunities to hear a range of different reading elements including rhyme and alliteration. We encourage children to become familiar with segmenting and blending techniques through practical activities within the environment and exposure to familiar words such as names.

As pupils become more attuned to language, we begin introducing individual phonemes through exposure and games that support this, such as 'What's in the bag/box?' We model the letter formation and explore objects that relate to the phoneme.

Throughout all learning opportunities staff promote the use of pure sounds, modelling with mirrors and encouraging the pupils to see the movements made by their mouths in order to make the sounds. Attention and listening skills are promoted during games such as Sound lotto to encourage pupils to focus on individual environment sounds.

If you would like further information on how to support your child with reading please speak to the class teacher.