



21<sup>st</sup> September 2018

## READING IN YEAR 5

Dear Parents

Reading is a skill that unlocks the door to many of the building blocks of life, be they in the classroom or at home. It develops language skills, the mind, imagination, empathy, creativity and helps us to discover new things. And so, at the start of the new academic year, I thought it would be valuable to share some of our ideas about how to help your child with reading, especially as the structure of reading with the children within the school day, and at home, has changed.

Mr Hall is writing to parents of pupils in his set to explain the way in which he encourages children to read from a reading list this term. Set 2 and set 3 will continue to have one library lesson a week. Pupils may either choose to read a book that they bring from home, or may select a book from the library to be their 'reading book' – it will not, however, be from a reading scheme. They should choose a book at an appropriate level (guidance will be given by Mrs Beasley, Miss Basey and Mrs Wootton) but they should also not be afraid to experiment.

We would like to shift the emphasis from hearing a child read to being able to talk about what they are reading, and this is where you, as parents, can help. We would encourage you to hear your child read for at least ten minutes each day, asking them different kinds of questions, to encourage them to articulate what they understand, not just about the literal level of the text, but also about the characters, their motivations, the use of words etc. Children in Sets 2 and 3 will have a reading record, similar to the one they brought home last year, and we ask that you sign this reading record. Suggested questions to ask are on the left hand page of the reading book. It would be useful if you could tick to show which questions you have asked. With this approach, your children will be given an opportunity to share thoughts and ideas, justify their reasons, and take a step towards becoming a confident reader and speaker.

In addition to this method of recording their reading habits, we successfully launched reading forums on Firefly last year, where Year 5 pupils could recommend titles they had enjoyed and respond to comments made by classmates.

Children must have their reading book with them at school, so they can read during any quiet moments during the school day in addition to the short time spent reading silently at the start of their English lessons.

I would also like to take this opportunity to point out that reading cover to cover fiction is not the only route to success. In fact, there are many different types of reading materials, which must also be credited: reference books, biographies, manuals, joke books, poetry, graphic novels, newspapers, magazines and plenty more. Whilst we recommend material, ultimately the choice of what and whether to read or not to read is down to your child.

It should be pleasurable and not a chore and if we can find a route in through other channels, this can only be a positive step.

Another worry you may have is that the material is 'too easy'. However, if the book happens to engage their attention and has brought entertainment, it can only be a good thing and there is the hope that it will lead to better books afterwards.

I would also encourage you to read aloud to your children – it is something we can carry on doing for as long as our children want to hear us. It is possible to read and talk about some wonderful novels which are perhaps beyond a child's ability to read for themselves, but not beyond their understanding. They may not understand every word, but they will hear the words, and be able to talk about what is happening, and the experience can be a shared pleasure, rather than supervised homework. Downloaded audiobooks or CD's (available from our library) can make long journeys, or the trip to and from school, more of an adventure.

In English lessons, work will be based on a different text or genre each term, and continued exposure to poetry and other pieces of writing will broaden the children's experience of the written word. However, whatever we as teachers do to develop children's reading skills, and however exciting it may be to appreciate the way in which words work, there is nothing to beat the pleasure of reading for its own sake.

In the coming year there will be some exciting reading events with visiting authors, book sales, reading challenges and World Book Day celebrations to name but a few, with the hope that these will continue to inspire your children to pick up a book, take some quiet time out, and read in this increasingly demanding, fast-paced world we live in.

I am often asked to recommend books, which is not straightforward as there are so many good books bursting onto the shelves of Waterstones and each child is so different in their preferences. But as a starting point, you might pick one from the attached list recommending some of the best new titles of 2018. You will also find a list of boy appeal authors. Our librarian, Mrs Wootton, is always able to recommend new titles too and regular displays of new books bought for the school library are continually refreshed and the notice board in the foyer of the Dearnaley building also displays ideas for reading material.

I hope everyone enjoys the term ahead – and happy reading!

With best wishes

Yours sincerely



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