



## Reading for pleasure: a whole-school policy

'Open a book  
and  
you're a pilgrim  
at the gates  
of a new city.'

Hebrew proverb

Learning to read is the foundation for all educational success. The Ofsted report on *Reading by six* (November 2010) showed that the best primary schools teach virtually every child to read, regardless of their socio-economic circumstances, their ethnicity, the language spoken at home and most special educational needs or disabilities. It concluded that: 'If some schools can do this, it should be a moral imperative for all primary schools.'

This aim of this policy is to make sure that our children not only have the opportunity to learn to read (a time-limited skill) but to become lifelong readers for purpose and pleasure. They will become people who not only **can read**, but **do read from choice** a wide variety of texts on paper and on screen.

We believe that:

- the active encouragement of reading for pleasure is a core educational entitlement, whatever the pupil's background or attainment;
- exposing pupils to a wide range of texts makes a huge contribution to achievement;
- making reading a pleasure is at the heart of our day-to-day activities.

By giving our children the gift of reading, we show them that books, especially literature and poetry, have the power to inspire, to console, to heal and transform for the rest of their lives.

To achieve this **aim of creating a community of lifelong readers**, we will use the following strategies:

- All staff will act as role models for active, engaged reading by sharing their pleasure and enjoyment of texts of all kinds in the planned curriculum and informally. Sharing and talking about books and other reading materials will be frequent and regular, inside the classroom and outside, during lessons and at other times. Adults will make explicit how reading has an essential role in their lives.
- All pupils will have access to a wide range of fiction, poetry and non-fiction in different formats, and support in enjoying them, where necessary. We will widen our knowledge of what is available to interest all our children, to include picture books and graphics texts for all ages and the use of technology, such as e-readers. Non-fiction will include material such as magazines, catalogues, comics, leaflets, newspapers, as well as traditional non-fiction texts. Developing comprehension through the use of audio-books, both whole and shortened, will play an important part in increasing enjoyment and access to texts for all.
- Reading will be at the heart of the curriculum with links to planning for reading for pleasure for all pupils across all subjects and classes. Every topic, theme or subject area will include specific linked texts, poems and appropriate websites.
- We will harness the power of reading aloud as the key driver in increasing reading for pleasure and developing pupils' positive attitudes towards this key skill. Staff will choose from a selection of high-quality texts for each year group, supplemented by texts of their choice, and make reading aloud sessions an integral part of each day. Listening to adults

read aloud is enormously beneficial as it allows pupils to soak up the tunes and rhythms of the language. Being removed from the need to translate the marks on the page gives freedom for the mind and imagination to move at leisure. Older pupils need this experience just as much as younger ones. Pupils can access texts of greater difficulty and depth than their current independent reading skills allow, mediated through the expressive reading of a skilled adult, creating meaning through the text and the voice.

- We will provide time for shared, guided and independent reading across the curriculum. Shared reading, where everyone has access to the text through Big Books, individual copies or through a visualiser, teaches reading at a challenging level with adult support. Guided reading allows children to read at a level at the edge of their independent skill alongside children of similar reading ability, with adult support. Independent reading is wide-ranging and becoming an independent reader with preferences and the willingness to 'have a go' takes dedicated time and needs to be developed from an early age.
- We will encourage and help parents/carers to support their children's reading through a range of strategies suitable for each age group. We will stress that teaching reading does not stop once children have gained decoding skills and that reading aloud to children is as important as listening to them read. We will involve them in as many ways as possible in supporting reading at school and at home.
- We will audit our reading resources regularly, involving the pupils in the process of choosing books and other reading materials for class and library stock. We will keep book areas and displays up-to-date, tidy and attractive, again involving the children in maintaining a high standard. The message that our school is a vibrant reading community will be clearly visible.
- We will make sure that our school library is a central learning resource, well-used and well-maintained by staff and pupils. We will make the library welcoming, accessible for all ages and comfortable. We will audit the stock regularly to make sure it is relevant, up-to-date and attractive.
- We will develop our links with the library service and encourage families to become members of their public library as well as encouraging children to become owners of books at home.
- We will provide training and professional development for all staff so that we develop an embedded, sustainable culture of reading for pleasure which is not dependent on the enthusiasm of one or two people.

## Ideas to support reading for pleasure

- **Read yourself.** The UKLA *Teachers as Readers* project showed that unless teachers are readers and know about authors and books, they find it hard to introduce their pupils to a broad range of literature. Teachers' enthusiasm for reading transmits itself to their pupils.
- **Make the best books available to pupils.** Make an effort to find out about the best authors and who your pupils' favourites are. Make sure those books are available, The Centre for Literacy in Primary Education (CLPE) Core Booklist is a helpful list from the EYFS to Y6: [www.clpe.com](http://www.clpe.com)
- **Share recommendations regularly.** Encourage children to tell others why they should read a book. Ask them to read a short extract aloud as a 'taster.' Tell your class about a good book you have read that they might like. Tell them about other books and poems by authors they like. Find a book for a child: there is nothing more powerful than giving a book saying 'I saw this and thought of you...'
- **Keep up-to-date.** Find out about what is being published by reading reviews, visiting bookshops and libraries and by using booklists on the web. The Centre for Literacy in Primary Education and the Readingzone regularly publish newsletters on the web: [www.readingzone.com](http://www.readingzone.com)
- **Make your book area** as attractive as possible. Remember that 'less is more' when displaying books. Ruthlessly get rid of old, tatty, out-of-date materials. Avoid shelves that are so crammed with unattractive books, displayed spine outwards, that choosing is difficult. Tempt children to read. Show library monitors how to organise and display books attractively.
- **Build time into your timetable for reading for pleasure.** Then make sure it happens.
- **Read across the curriculum.** Find a poem to go with every topic. Find excerpts from contemporary newspapers and documents for history; stories linked to history and geography; diaries; biographies and autobiographies.
- **Perform.** Ask a child, or group of children to read, then perform, a short section of a story or a whole poem for the class. Rhyming and repetitive texts work well. You can start by making suggestions, then let the children choose their own. They can add their own simple props, or costume items, to get in the mood. This activity makes children read and re-read texts to express the layers of meaning.
- **Set up book clubs.** Either target particular children or open it to everyone. Encourage children to recommend books to each other, bring books in and take books from your selection home.
- **Watch the film of the book** and talk how about how it was interpreted. Listen to an audiobook and talk about how the reader interpreted the text through voice and expression.
- **Encourage children to join their local public library.** Take them on an introductory visit (with parents) and show them the range of materials available.
- **Visit your local bookshop.** Take the children (and again, some parents) along to look at the stock, buy for the school and class libraries, and maybe talk to an author.
- **Use assemblies** to talk about new books, tell stories and act out stories.
- **Invite local people** to read a story and to talk about books and reading in their work and personal lives.
- **Start a book swap scheme.** Children bring in books in good condition that they are willing to give away in exchange for another of their choice. Adults need to vet the condition and quality of all books. Then the children get a counter for each book donated, which can be exchanged when there are enough books available for a swapping session. This is a good way of encouraging book ownership at no cost.
- **Catch a child reading.** Adults could give out 'house points' whenever they see someone reading from choice anywhere in school.