

Reading at Our School

At Cornholme we promote a love of books and reading from the children's first day with us. We foster a reading culture that starts with sharing books and texts for sheer pleasure and that ethos permeates through the school.

In the Foundation Stage, we share books and rhymes with children daily to continue the work that parents start at home. We have a 'rhyme of the week' in the Nursery class, helping children to develop their awareness of sounds and meaning in an enjoyable and interactive manner. We frequently spend time looking at illustrations and encourage 'book talk' from all of the children. We read to the whole class and in groups looking at a range of stories from traditional tales to well established authors. We love to read together and through this we develop the children's concepts about print. Some of the earliest teaching points for reading are outlined below:

Concepts About Print

- Where to begin writing or reading, going from left to right
- Where to go after the end of the line (return sweep)
- The print, not the picture, carries the message
- Word by word pointing (one-to-one correspondence)
- Concept of a letter, word, sentence
- Concept of first and last part (of the word, sentence, story)
- Letter order in words is important
- There are first and last letters in words
- Upper and lower case letters have purpose
- Different punctuation marks have meaning

Alongside the work carried out to foster a love of reading we also begin to develop children's understanding of letters and sounds through the teaching of synthetic phonics. In the Foundation stage the earliest work is carried out by looking at sounds in our environment and listening to different sounds that we can make with instruments, our bodies and a range of other items. Listening to rhymes also plays an important part in this development process. We move onto looking at phonics to break down words into individual sounds. We teach the children how to segment and blend so that we can read on our own and use synthetic phonics to develop these decoding skills. We model how to read a book changing voices through pitch and tone to make our reading more interesting.

In Key Stage 1, we continue the work started in Foundation Stage. Daily phonics lessons help children to decode the language they encounter each day and, as the children get older, we move towards helping use our phonics to develop skills to segment words, spelling through investigating sounds and exploring the patterns of our language.

Children are encouraged to read for meaning. At Cornholme we have a clear understanding that decoding sentences correctly is not sufficient to become an accomplished reader and therefore the meaning of the texts must also be accessed at every level. Children use their reading to help them with their writing skills and staff often apply their knowledge of 'Talk for Writing' where published texts can be explored in conversation, effective words borrowed and structures reused for the children's own work.

Guided reading takes place daily across the school and children love being able to read with an adult. In a small group, children look through a book at a suitable level and then teachers 'walk through a text' with the children before they begin to read, to explore the presentation, text type and discuss difficult language, in order to empower the children to accomplish higher levels of independent reading. Through this process the children are taught the skills of reading. Children remind each other of what to do if they encounter a difficult word and then have some time to enjoy the text. Following the reading, teachers and children discuss many focussed aspects in line with our assessment guidelines for reading and this is where the true meaning of reading is explored.

Reading books are sent home daily and parents can write comments about how well their children are doing in the accompanying home/school diary. These books are placed in coloured bands that get gradually harder as the children progress. They start with books which have no words to develop good reading behaviours and progress to complex fiction and non-fiction texts. When children become fluent readers, they begin to explore their own tastes in reading, choosing their own books from the school and class library where they can browse and select a range of books. This develops their skill of looking at books and making a quick summary based on a short reading time and the blurb on the back of books. In addition to the children's taught guided reading sessions, children are also given several opportunities throughout the week to read on an individual basis, where the level of text is assessed and features such as fluency and expression are analysed in more detail. The skills that the children are applying in order to read are noted and this information feeds into the group guided reading sessions.

We have specialist teachers who run intervention programmes for children who are not at the same level as their peers and use reading buddies from Key Stage 2 to encourage more frequent reading for some children who need it.

We celebrate World Book day each year and love dressing up for all sorts of themes to promote reading. We also carry out promotional book sales with assisting companies and these are well supported by our fantastic parents who play such a big part in teaching their children to read.

By the time children leave us, we aim to have developed fluent readers who are interested in reading and are able to use it as a key life skill for a successful future.