

Teaching Literacy in our School

Literacy skills are essential to attainment in school and to fulfilling potential opportunities throughout life.

How can children access stories, poems and other texts if their minds and imaginations not fully engaged? We have found that immersing children in a range of creative activities before reading the text means that they are fully prepared, and excited, about the reading journey ahead of them.

The National Curriculum for English aims to ensure that all pupils:

- read easily, fluently and with good understanding
- develop the habit of reading widely and often, for both pleasure and information
- acquire a wide vocabulary, an understanding of grammar and knowledge of linguistic conventions for reading, writing and spoken language
- appreciate our rich and varied literary heritage
- write clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting their language and style in and for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences
- use discussion in order to learn; they should be able to elaborate and explain clearly their understanding and ideas
- are competent in the arts of speaking and listening, making formal presentations, demonstrating to others and participating in debate.

Reading and Writing

What's the point of reading and writing anything if you don't know why you're doing it? We aim to provide children with a clear purpose to all reading, and especially writing tasks. Whether it's an invitation to the Head of School to attend a class assembly, an email to an author or an article for a school newspaper, our children know why the quality of their writing matters: because there will be a real audience for their published work.

Take a trip to our school and you'll find classroom environments that inspire adults and children alike. Not only is the children's work displayed creatively, but there is a range of learning prompts to inspire and support all pupils. We want to encourage our children to discover new texts, genres and authors, so our reading areas are inviting, well resourced and highly organised.

In the Early Years and Key Stage 1, phonics is streamed, so all children can benefit from tailored teaching, making maximum progress as a result. All phonics and spelling activities are fun, multi sensory and as physical possible, the aim being to meet all learning styles in the class.

Reading for pleasure

The new curriculum's intention is that children should read widely and voraciously for pleasure and for meaning. While the current curriculum stipulates that children should experience a range of literature and non-fiction and non-literary texts - the new curriculum highlights the pivotal role of schools in ensuring that reading takes place beyond the school gates.

Grammar

Grammar cannot be taught as a stand alone activity. What's the point of that? Children begin to understand grammar concepts, and start to apply them in their own writing, when they start to read with a writer's mind. Punctuation rules and techniques are drawn from shared texts; texts which the children have already been

immersed in and have a good understanding of. Exploring these, and embedding them creatively is how the learning takes place.

Focus on the Fundamentals

In the new curriculum, there's a much deeper focus on learning grammar explicitly. Where the current curriculum requires that pupils be taught 'some of the grammatical features of written standard English', and learn to 'consider' language structure when composing their own texts, the new curriculum contains a long list of often complex grammatical concepts, punctuation and spelling rules that children will have to identify and label as well as use.