

Phonics and Early Reading at Gorsemoor

We believe that reading is the most important skill our children must master at school. Reading is the necessary condition for all learning. Learning to read is about having access to the 'world of words'. We believe that the more a child reads, the more new words s/he comes across and the more s/he will think and talk about the ideas and concepts that these new words generate. We know that children access this world of words through lots of talking and lots of reading. As parents and teachers, our primary goal must be to make sure that every child learns to read and every child talks about what they see, watch and read throughout the school day and at home.

We ensure that our curriculum gives our children rich opportunities to talk and listen in a wide range of contexts. This also contributes to developing our children's familiarity with books and stories and their knowledge of the meanings of words. From entry into our Nursery we have a strong focus on developing our children's capacity to listen, concentrate and discriminate between sounds.

Children learn to read at a quicker pace when they are taught systematically using synthetic phonics. Synthetic phonics is simply the ability to convert a letter or letter group into sounds that are blended together into a word. At Gorsemoor Primary School, we use a synthetic phonics programme called '*Read Write Inc*' produced by Ruth Miskin. This involves the children learning the pure sounds letters make, blending them together to read and write words and using these learnt sounds in their reading and writing.

At the core of *Read Write Inc.* is the vigorous teaching of synthetic phonics. Children learn 44 common sounds in the English language and how to sound-blend words over a short period of time, alongside letter formation and spelling. This is a process our pupils begin in the Early Years as we recognise the importance of developing our pupils' early reading skills. They then, importantly, read books with words they can sound-blend, so they get early success in reading. The more sounds they learn, the greater the range of texts they can read.

We are very fortunate at Gorsemoor because we have a vast array of reading materials available for our pupils. Early on in our children's reading careers we provide them with short, fully decodable texts in which they can apply their phonological knowledge. These books allow our very earliest readers to feel a real sense of achievement and take pride in the fact that they are reading. Levelled reading resources are available for every class and children are encouraged to choose books at an appropriate level.

At Gorsemoor we are keen to ensure not only that the pupils are able to read but also that they read because they like it. We strongly advocate reading for pleasure and therefore, we aim to expose our children to lots of 'real' texts, both fiction and non-fiction. This means providing many high-quality texts, both literature and non-fiction, and ensuring that children are introduced to these through cross-curricular projects and the promotion of books and reading by teachers to children. Story time at Gorsemoor is a fundamental part of our learning. In addition to this, we run programmes such as Reading Champions and Reading Angels in order to provide our pupils with positive reading role models.

At Gorsemoor we recognise and value that parents and carers are the most important influence in a child's life and that school is most effective when there is partnership between parents, children and school. We feel effective partnership between home and school is key to our pupils early success and achievement in reading. As a result we arrange a number of parent workshops throughout the academic year to inform and update our parents on phonics, reading and the wider curriculum. This enables our parents to have a valuable insight into our teaching methodology and allows them to offer more tailored support for their children outside of school. Furthermore we hold extra-curricular reading events for parents and pupils; arrange book fairs; celebrate World Book Day and send home an array of resources and materials that we feel benefit our parents/carers in supporting their child to read.

We believe our focus on early reading is essential to our children's progress and achievement throughout the curriculum. We want to develop our children to be passionate readers for life who can confidently convey their attitudes towards reading and their knowledge of books and authors.