Reading at Holmfirth JIN

Reading for a range of purposes is a key element of the curriculum at Holmfirth JIN. Underpinning reading as a whole is the aim and intent to make reading fun, enjoyable and a life-long passion. We firmly believe that reading helps to shape thinking, challenge views, spark imagination and promote discussion. Ultimately, reading is a vehicle that has the potential to positively impact on the formation of our pupils’ characters.

With this in mind, we start everyday by providing the children with a wide range of phonics and reading activities either in whole class situations or in smaller groups supported by teachers, teaching assistants, parents, grandparents and other members of the community – including Mr Curly Wurly, the school’s adopted dog! This thirty minutes daily reading focus is engaging and really helps to bring books to life. Many year groups adopt the **“Power of Reading”**, which engages teachers and children in the literacy curriculum through using high quality books and proven teaching approaches. We use a range of fiction and non-fiction guided reading books. Our aim is to develop enthusiastic and independent readers who appreciate different text types and genres including poetry and drama. This daily celebration and promotion of reading has been recognised by outside agencies, including Ofsted as a real strength of the school.

Phonics are the building blocks for future reading and as such this is a key focus in Foundation Stage and Key Stage One. We teach phonics through the “Letters and Sounds” Scheme. Our youngest children in Nursery begin with Phase 1 phonics which is all about tuning into sound and the idea of listening. By the time the children reach Year Two, they will have progressed through Phases 1-6.

Running alongside the phonics programme is the Oxford Reading Tree Scheme (including the Oxford Owl online and Purple Mash). This helps to structure the children’s reading and is continued at home – where the children are encouraged to read with adults daily and record their success in the home-school record book. As the children move through school to Key Stage Two, the expectations of reading at home remains similar – about twenty minutes per day but their understanding may be shown in different ways for example through book reviews, creative and exciting homework projects and comprehension activities.

Support for children (in all Year groups) who are finding reading challenging is provided through the [“Nessy”](Nessy.docx) reading and spelling computer programme which is carefully designed to identify areas of weakness and take the children through sequences of small steps to ‘close gaps.’

At Holmfirth JIN, we recognise the clear links that connect an enjoyment of reading with the development of writing. The wide-ranging topics that are taught across the different year groups are supported by exciting and challenging books. Examples of this include Varjak Paw in Year Four, Street Child in Year Five and Wolf Brother in Year Six. This in turn promotes creative and ever-developing writing which helps us to inspire pupils to feel confident in communicating in either the spoken or written word. You can view the reading milestones for each year group in our End Points document, found under the tab, “Curriculum 2019-2020”.