

Reading at Sparkenhoe

At Sparkenhoe, we aim to foster a love of reading for all children. Our school is reading rich and reading is promoted through a wide variety of initiatives and events. All classrooms have a dedicated library area which children access regularly to choose books to take home. Each class has librarians who organise the books and check the books in and out. A love of reading is promoted through regular discussions with children about their choices, book recommendations and Bookflix displays. Other events include dress up days, World Book days, author visits, Our Best Book and Our Best Picture Book competitions, book fairs and library visits.

From the moment children arrive at Sparkenhoe in Foundation 1, they begin to explore the different sounds in the environment, including instrumental, voice percussion, rhythm and alliteration. Children are encouraged to orally segment and blend in order to prepare them to read and spell when Phase 2 phonics starts in Foundation 2.

In Foundation Stage and Year One (with Year Two children as appropriate), children take part in a daily phonics session until they become successful readers. The whole class sessions last 20 minutes. Our systematic teaching of phonics is only one strand of our approach to teaching reading but this does form a central focus. We use a variety of resources and books to support the teaching of phonics, with the core of our phonics program being ALS Phonics. This scheme provides a rigorous and sequential structure to children's progress.

From FS to Year 2, children are encouraged to read for 10 to 15 minutes each day at home. This forms part of our homework offer and children can earn certificates through completing this regularly. We provide children with decodable books that link with the phonics being taught in school and match the child's current phonics knowledge. The home reading books provide a combination of phonetically decodable words that link with the phonics recently taught in class and the High Frequency words that the children learn with each block. Children also take a library book of their choice that can be enjoyed with family members at home. Children in FS and KS1 therefore take home a few books each week but this always includes one they can phonetically decode. Children in KS2 who need further phonics intervention continue to have decodable books as well as a book they choose. When the children are secure with their phonics, they will then take home a book matched to Accelerated Reader to broaden their vocabulary and challenge comprehension skills. The children have a choice of books to read and they complete a weekly AR quiz to support their understanding of the text they read. This continues throughout KS2 where children choose one or two books linked with Accelerated Reader and a book from the class library.

Children can earn a word count for their class which motivates them to read more frequently in their own time. Homework achievements and 'Word Counts' are celebrated as part of our awards assemblies.

Using regular assessments of both phonics and reading throughout the school, we are then able to plan interventions. Staff regularly meet to discuss children who are not meeting age related expectations and these discussions lead to identifying children who need additional support in all year groups.

In addition to whole class phonics and small group interventions, we also model good reading strategies with the children through weekly small group 'Reciprocal Reading' sessions. These last for around 20 minutes. This approach teaches the children strategies to unpick texts, make predictions, clarify new words, ask questions about a text and summarise what they have read. As they become more confident with these skills, the children begin to take ownership of these group reading sessions and lead the group accordingly.

Across KS2, children continue to develop comprehension skills such as understanding vocabulary, predicting, summarising, inferring, visualising and using their background knowledge. Pupils explore a widening variety of texts types as they progress through the school, including age appropriate and challenging fiction, non-fiction and poetry. Exposure to reading high quality texts can be seen in the classrooms, in visits to the local library and from authors visiting our school. In addition to specific skills being taught in English lessons, pupils take part in shared reading sessions which also focus on specific skills and group reading sessions which give them further opportunity to use and apply skills they have been taught. The choices made about what high quality texts to use for English and reading lessons for each year group, are based on a clear understanding of the context of the school, the class, and the wider curriculum. By the end of primary school, we aim for our pupils to be able to show critical and imaginative skills and to broaden their capacity for cultural understanding.

We foster reading for pleasure through a culture where reading is celebrated. Teachers regularly read engaging books to pupils and provide opportunities for peers to discuss and select their own texts, express their opinions and recommend books to one another. This provides our children with the skills to be able to become questioning and well-informed members of society and to continue their love of reading right into adulthood.