***Our Lady and St Philomena’s Catholic Primary School***



**Reading is the Key!**

We give pupils a variety of reading opportunities throughout the school week in all curriculum areas: quiet independent reading; whole class shared reading; whole class VIPERS; small group guided reading; and reading one-to-one with an adult or an older reading buddy. However**,** it is **vital that pupils also read at home.**

Please encourage your child to read at home, or better still read with them.

**Reading is the Key!**

Studies have shown that children who read independently on a regular basis become: better spellers; as writers, have a greater understanding of sentence and text structures; have a better grasp of punctuation and grammar; make more progress in other subjects as they become independent learners and researchers; can communicate better and suffer less feelings of frustration and anger.

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Please encourage your child to read regularly at home each night. A little reading on a regular basis is more beneficial than prolonged periods of reading now and then (just 10 minutes each night). Read on to find support on how best to help your children read at home: **please support us in this drive to encourage our children to read more**. The benefits cannot be over-estimated!

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In school, we aim to develop pupils’ ability in a number of different reading strands. At home, you can support us in helping children to:

* read words accurately (split words up into chunks and then blend together, or look for words inside words or words that belong to the same word family that might help us, use the context to help us guess the meaning of words);
* identify themes of texts and speak about how writers make us feel a particular emotion;
* how to find things out and come to conclusions from the clues that we are given in texts (deduction) or use our real life experiences to guess how characters might feel or what might happen next (inference);
* develop their understanding and comprehension of texts (check that what they are reading makes sense to them or that they can summarise what they have read);
* recognise why writers use certain words, phrases or images to make us feel a certain emotion or think a particular way.

The most important thing is that children enjoy their reading experiences!

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When you read with your child, make sure that you are both comfortable. Make it a cosy event so that your child enjoys it. Focus on the reading – for a few moments switch off the television and other electronic gadgets. Read for short periods but on a regular basis.

Talk about the book before you start reading it. Talk about what is on the cover. Try to guess what you think might happen in the story. If you have previously started the book, remind each other about what has happened so far – what is the plot and who are the characters?

Once you have started reading, don’t be afraid of helping your child read words. Parents/carers often tell us that they are not sure with how much support they should offer in decoding words. Try techniques such as splitting the word up, thinking of similar looking words or words with a similar spelling pattern that they might be able to read, but if your child struggles for more than a few seconds, sound the word out for them and then ask them to say the word on their own. Use pictures to help them make sense of the text, but be careful if you are practising comprehension skills – pictures and illustrations can be helpful in helping us make sense of text, but when answering comprehension questions, we must obtain our evidence from **written text** not pictures (if they answer a comprehension question with, “Because it’s in the picture” encourage them to find evidence in the writing to back up their response).

Praise your child while they are reading and when they have finished. Make the reading process positive as well as comfortable. When you have finished reading, encourage your child to summarise what they have read. Make sure that they have understood it. Talk to each other about the text – share your opinions, discuss your favourite characters and parts of the story (give reasons and encourage them to say why they did/did not like the text).

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Reading comprehension is not simply a matter of having a good memory (although the better memory that children have, the easier they will find retrieving information and the more that children read, the better their memory will become). Frequent reading improves children’s skills at remembering what they have read and the more accomplished they will become at summarising and explaining what they have read.

When you finish reading with your child, always take time to discuss what you have read, put questions to them and encourage them to refer back to the book to look for evidence of their answers. Revisit any new words that your child has come across in their reading – extending their vocabulary is one of the biggest benefits of regular reading.

Parents/carers should ask a range of question types to develop children’s comprehension skills (not only when the children are reading themselves, but when they listen to others reading, or watching films or television programmes). Below are some examples of the types of questions that you can ask your children (whether they are in Reception or Year 6). Just make sure that the questions are relevant to what they have read and that the answers can be found in the **written text.**

The types of questions below are examples of some of the questions that you could ask your child when reading with them. They should of course be age appropriate and relate to the text being read. Some questions would not be appropriate for emerging readers. They are simply examples of the types of questions that you could ask.

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Examples of **literal retrieval** questions:

What does “smartly” mean?

“Light” can mean more than one thing – what does it mean here?

What happened at the beginning?

Where did Peter Rabbit go?

What did the bear do?

Which word tells you that this is not the first edition of the comic?

Describe the Giant.

Which paragraph tells us that they were safe?

Where are the man places that pandas can be found now?

Why do lots of young children like nursery rhymes?

**Answers to these types of questions can be one-word or phrase. In these types of questions the answers can be found somewhere in the text, it is a matter of encouraging your child to scan the text for the answer. Encourage them to do this rather than trying to rely on their memory. Comprehension tests are aimed at testing their understanding NOT their memory.**

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Examples of **deduction, inference, interpretation** questions:

How did Lyddie know that the others had reached safety?

What words tell us that the writer of this letter is a child?

Why did she stand with her back to the family?

What does the word “plush” imply about the owner of this house?

What ideas are given about fox hunting in this article?

What does the writer think about the invading army?

How did Charles react to the danger?

How was the atmosphere different in the street outside compared to inside the shop?

What is the importance of the clock in this story?

**Answers to these types of questions are more difficult because the answer will not be explicit in the text. Children will have to use clues from the text or their life-experiences to answer them.**

**Reading is the Key!**

Examples of questions that encourage **identification and comments** on the **structure and organisation** of the text.

What is the purpose of the diagram on page 6?

How does the layout help the reader?

Why is this paragraph in bold print?

Why does the writer use subheadings on page 9?

What is the purpose of the arrows on page 5?

In what ways are the two texts similar?

Why does the writer use fact boxes?

Why does the author choose to use such a short paragraph at this point?

Why does the article include a picture of a bus?

Why does the writer use a different font for the postcard?

In what ways is the third verse in the poem different from verses 1 and 2?

**Answers will range from things like “the subheadings help us to know what each piece of text is about”, or “the diagram helps to explain what’s written in the paragraph next to it” or “the picture of the bus helps me to understand how big an elephant must be compared to a bus.” The point of these types of questions is that children begin to consider and understand why publishers use illustrations, diagrams, different fonts etc.**

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Examples of questions that encourage **understanding** of a writer’s choice of **language**.

Explain why two different spellings of Superkid have been used.

Why does the writer compare Hadrian’s Wall to a molehill?

What does the phrase “a multi-coloured snake” tell us about the crowd?

Why did the writer use this simile/metaphor?

How does the comparison of the shopkeeper to “a raging bull” help to explain his behaviour?

Why has the author used some misspellings in the advert?

How has the writer created a feeling of panic in the first paragraph?

Why does the author use the verbs “laboured” and “struggled” to tell us how the man walked through the snow?

What does the phrase “it is believed that…” tell us about this find?

**Answers should focus on the actual words and phrases mentioned in the question for example, “She calls it a multi-coloured snake because the people are all dressed colourfully and there are lots of people there so the line goes on for a long time,” “The writer creates a sense of panic by using words like ‘fear,’ ‘peril’ and ‘destruction’ or ‘He calls Hadrian’s Wall a molehill because compared to the Great Wall of China it is very small.’**

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Examples of questions that require a level of understanding of **author’s purpose and viewpoint.**

What is the purpose of this text?

Does the author like spiders? How do you know?

Look at the descriptions of the three people on Page 3 – who is the most likely to buy this magazine? How do you know?

In what kind of magazine would you expect to find an article like this?

Why does the writer quote from Samuel Pepys’s diary?

Which article makes you care more about the environment?

Which article gives the author’s own opinion?

What can you tell about the author’s viewpoint on climate change from the article?

**Answers should include quotes from the text where possible and could range from “The text is there to persuade us to have a go ourselves,” “She quotes from Samuel Pepys because he was actually there and was an eye witness so his viewpoint is important” or “I can tell that the author is angry about climate change because he uses words like ‘foolish’ ‘pity’ and ‘avoidable.’**

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Examples of questions that relate to **social, cultural, historical contexts and literary traditions**.

In what ways is the character like fairy?

Which three of the eight superhero features mentioned on page 9 could an ordinary person have?

Give two pieces of evidence from the **text** that this is a modern story.

How did you know that there was likely to be a happy ending?

Which examples of language choices tell us that this story was written a long time ago?

Why does mother ask Clara to look after Maxi?

Could Kevin be described as a hero?

What else might make the teacher angry?

What other reason could there be for the town being so quiet on a Sunday?

**Answers to these types of questions will NOT be found in the text but give children the opportunity to showcase their understanding of literary and cultural traditions. THE MORE THAT CHILDREN READ, THE MORE EXPERIENCE THEY WILL HAVE TO DRAW ON in answering these types of questions.**

**Examples could be “She was like a fairy because she had wings and was very small,” “An ordinary person could be extremely strong, have a special suit of clothes and have a companion,” “I know this story was written a long time ago because he calls the windows ‘casements,’ travels in a horse and cart and they light gas lamps in the home.”**

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