

The teaching of reading at Derrymount School

At Derrymount School it is our aspiration that every child will become a fluent reader and that before they leave, at Y11 or P16, they will have achieved a qualification in English either GCSE, Entry Level or Functional Skills. It is our intention that our pupils are able to read functionally so that they can use their reading skills in school, at home and in the world of college and work. It is also our intention to promote the love of reading so that pupils find enjoyment and pleasure in whatever they read whether it is a book, magazine or online material.

How do we achieve this?

During the pupils' first half-term after arriving at Derrymount School we carry out a baseline assessment of their reading using (NGRT and NGST online tests). However, we recognise that at this stage it may not be an accurate assessment as initially the pupils need to trust us and build a relationship with their staff team. This is particularly the case if they have not been in a classroom or education setting for some time as they are likely to have had gaps in their learning. We continue to assess their reading in February and June each year using Age Related Expectations or other assessments depending on their ability or if any further concerns emerge.

Many of our pupils have come to us after a period of disengagement and school refusal and their experiences of learning to read may have been negative or fragmented. They are likely to have low self-esteem and lack confidence. Some may refuse to engage with a book at first. Some of our pupils are not yet ready to access a classroom or formal learning when they start and may have a more play / nurturing based curriculum to begin with.

Churchmoor Site (Primary and up to KS3)

Pupils have a 15 minute Phonics session every morning to teach reading or writing. Pupils are divided into small groups based on their reading ability and work at the relevant stage across the 6 phases of phonics, whilst fluent readers work on their comprehension.

In English lessons pupils study a class book. These are selected from a range of books which are connected to the National Curriculum Programmes of Study (adapted to pupils' needs) and which include fiction from a range of genres, non-fiction and poetry. In their English lessons pupils will listen to books and stories being read as well as participating in reading activities.

Pupils' individual reading books are banded according to the different Phonics phases so that pupils are reading books that are appropriate to their level of reading. Pupils read to staff in class and take their books home. Parents and carers are encouraged to read with

their child at home and are supported with information about the “reading behaviour” expected at each band which will further develop their skills in an active way.

Promoting the Love of Reading

Pupils have reading time in the afternoon when they read for pleasure from books and materials of their own choice. The library bus visits every term and pupils use the local library. We take part in World Book Day and classes go down to Arnold Town Centre to spend their vouchers. We have theatre groups visit the school to enhance the teaching of particular books eg Shakespeare in KS3 and offsite trips connected with the topics studied in English. Individual classes have areas set aside for reading and we have a small library in the Portacabin.

Interventions

At Derrymount we use Letters and Sounds, No Nonsense Spelling and use Switch On to Reading and Writing to support pupils with their literacy. Some pupils have opportunities to work in small groups or 1:1 to support their reading. Some of our pupils have dyslexia and we use a variety of strategies for these pupils.

Sherbrook Site

At our Sherbrook Site (Y9 – P16) pupils begin to study for either GCSE or Entry Level English or Functional Skills. They have English lessons and access a range of texts as part of their courses including fiction, non-fiction and poetry from different genres. They listen to books being read including on radio or CD as well as participating in reading themselves. As part of the Strands curriculum there are opportunities for pupils to have GCSE English booster sessions and to participate in Creative Writing sessions. Pupils are encouraged to use their reading skills functionally across a range of lessons including their Options and within the Strands Curriculum, when they are accessing learning offsite and as part of practical activities such as cooking and Independent Travel.

Promoting the Love of Reading

Pupils have time in the morning to read from their own choice of material which includes books, magazines or the newspaper “First News”. The pupils visit the local library and participate in a number of educational visits which are connected to the various topics they are studying in English, for example, the theatre. There is a reading area in school where pupils are encouraged to access reading through a wide range of books, magazines, comics and newspapers.

Interventions

Some of our pupils at Sherbrook have not yet become fluent in their reading. These pupils may still be working through the phonics phases and accessing Switch on to Reading and Writing. Some pupils are supported by our speech and language therapist who looks at how their specific learning difficulty impacts on their reading and writing particularly those pupils who have problems with memory skills and processing. Pupils taking public examinations

may have access arrangements such as extra time, whilst others may qualify for a reader or scribe or use a reading pen depending on their diagnosis and normal way of working.