

Reading Gems at St. John's C.E. Primary School

At St. John's, we are working hard to ensure our children develop as confident and capable readers, who develop a love of reading and have all the skills necessary to help them understand what they read. We are excited to be introducing a new reading strategy to improve the way we teach our children to read, which you may already have heard about: Reading Gems.

What is Reading Gems?

Reading Gems is a whole school reading strategy that aims to teach children to take pleasure in reading by themselves, listening to someone else read, and sharing texts with adults and other children. Different and specific key skills are taught explicitly to the children through discussions about texts, teacher modelling and opportunities to answer questions independently or with support where needed. Each new reading skill is allocated a colour-coded 'gem'. Every week, children focus on a certain reading gem and learn strategies to help them develop that particular skill. Phonics is taught separately to ensure the children develop the necessary decoding strategies that underpin all reading.

Reading Gems in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Alongside daily phonics, children in EYFS are immersed in a range of texts on a regular basis. Stories are used as a vehicle to engage children in their weekly topic sessions. Weekly reading sessions involve sharing and discussing texts with an adult in small groups, opportunities to self-select texts and look at them with a buddy or individually, and individual reading with adult support. This encourages children to enjoy a variety of texts and to practise decoding skills regularly. The diagram below shows the key skills taught in EYFS. In addition to the 'enjoy' and 'decode' umbrella skills that are taught implicitly in every reading session, five other key skills are taught:

Enjoy			Decode	
Define	Retrieve	Sequence	Infer	Predict
1a Draw on knowledge of vocabulary to understand texts	1b Identify / explain key aspects of fiction and non-fiction texts, such as characters, events, titles and information	1c Identify and explain the sequence of events in texts	1d Make inferences from the text	1e Predict what might happen on the basis of what has been read so far

Reading Gems in Year 1 and Year 2

Reading Gems in Year 1 initially follows a similar pattern to EYFS, allowing the children to develop their decoding skills and to develop a love of reading. They continue to develop the five key skills that are introduced in EYFS. As the year progresses, the children will move to a whole-class system, where each skill is taught individually to enable children to develop a 'tool-kit' of basic reading skills to aid their understanding of different texts they read. In year 2, this strategy continues and children are gradually introduced to a weekly 'treasure chest', where they have an opportunity to put all their skills into practice by answering questions that require them to draw on all of their learned skills.

Reading Gems in Years 3, 4, 5 & 6

As they progress into Key Stage 2, children begin to develop further reading skills that will assist their understanding of what they read: sequencing skills are developed more fully into summarising, and children learn to relate, explore and compare texts. Each week children focus on a specific reading gem. Through the weekly treasure chest, children have opportunities to practise all the reading gem skills they have been taught, and teachers are able to assess their progress. Certain reading gem skills are focussed on more often, such as defining vocabulary, retrieving information and making inferences from texts. This is because these skills are used more often. Currently reading gems isn't being taught in Year 6; however, from September, children currently in Year 5 will have reading gems as part of their timetable, having already been introduced to this strategy.

Enjoy 				Decode 			
Define 	Retrieve 	Summarise 	Infer 	Predict 	Relate 	Explore 	Compare 
2a: Give/explain the meaning of words in context	2b: Retrieve and record information/identify key details from fiction and non-fiction.	2c: Summarise main ideas from more than one paragraph	2d: Make inferences from the text/explain and justify inferences with evidence from the text	2e: Predict what might happen from details stated and implied	2f: Identify/explain how information/narrative content is related and contributes to meaning as a whole.	2g: Identify/explain how meaning is enhanced through choice of words and phrases.	2h: Make comparisons within the text

What can you do to support your child with reading?

We recognise and understand the importance of reading as a life skill. As adults, we rely on our ability to read for both work and for leisure. Reading underpins and supports everything that children do at both primary and secondary school, and in their future lives. In fact, reading is without doubt one of the most important skills they will learn in school.

In light of this, any support you can give your child with reading at home is extremely valuable. In order to become a fluent reader, it is absolutely vital that children read every day. In the same way we as adults recognise the importance of regular exercise to keep fit, regular reading is a necessity for children so that they can be fluent and competent 'fit' readers.

In order to help your child here are some things you could do at home:

- Let them see you read different types of texts so that they recognise the importance of reading
- Listen to them reading and talk about what they read
- Read to them at bedtime – there's no better end to the day!
- Discuss words that they come across and what they mean, whether they are in books or when you are out and about
- Share books together – take turns reading to encourage them
- Encourage older siblings to read with their younger siblings
- Sing nursery rhymes to develop speech and language
- Go to the town library and choose a book
- Borrow books from the school library
- Talk about Reading Gems and discuss which skill they have learned this week