



Reading @ St Thomas'

As a school we have been looking at ways that we can improve reading across all year groups as well as helping children to develop a love of reading. We really value the time and commitment that parents and guardians put into helping children to read at home and we know that children who read a lot, write well and have great vocabulary.

The school's reading scheme has been improved with a wide range of texts for different interests, and the books have been sorted into coloured bands. These bands enable us to give children books that match their reading ability.

When looking at what coloured band a child should be reading, teachers will assess how fluently they read the text and if they can answer questions about what they have read. If a child is struggling to read lots of words on a page or cannot talk about what they have just read, they may need to try a different book or read books from a lower book band in order to develop their confidence. Sometimes a child may be asked to reread a book to help them to become more fluent or think about the content in more depth.

At the start of the term, your child will be assessed and will be given a book from a certain coloured book band. There could be a chance that this could be at a lower colour than they were reading last term. If this happens it isn't a problem and we just need to help your child to develop their fluency and comprehension. If your child's reading improves quickly then the teacher will assess their reading and move book band colour so that it matches their current reading ability.

When the children are able to tackle more challenging texts fluently and have good comprehension skills they become 'free readers'. At this point it is really important to continue reading at home as this is the time when children decide what types of books they enjoy reading and will hopefully develop a life-long love of reading. At this stage, if your child is struggling to find texts that they enjoy, speak to the class teacher and they can help them to find a book that suits them.

The attached chart will show you a description of what the texts will be like for different book band colours and the bands that children should have reached in different year groups. Please remember that all children progress at different rates and we want the best for each individual child. Don't compare your child's reading with friends in the class. Instead, read with your child and enjoy the books together.

Spelling

We have been looking at spelling and how effective our current practice is throughout the school. From extensive research, as well as reviewing current spelling progress, we have found that learning a list of words for a weekly test has very little impact on children being able to spell well in their other writing. They can often get full marks in a test then fail to spell the word correctly the following week. Instead, we would like to trial a new approach to spelling. From year 1, children will complete spelling investigations for their weekly homework based on phonic patterns and spelling patterns being taught throughout the week. They will still have a test at the end of the week but will have to use the spelling rules that they have practised to spell the words. Each term, the children will have a small number of tricky words that they will have to learn to spell correctly and these will be practised regularly in class. Please speak to your class teacher if you need any more information.

