

## Making St Andrew's an Outstanding Reading School

What are the features of an outstanding reading school?

- Placing reading and books at the centre of the curriculum
- Recognising that being able to read well is a life skill for all children, whatever their background
- Believing that every child can learn to read with the right teaching and support
- Acknowledging that not all children will have had the opportunity to develop a love for reading at home, so this has to be taught and encouraged at school – just like any other area of the curriculum
- Building time for all children to read independently, read aloud and be read to during the school day
- Developing a coherent whole-school strategy for promoting reading for pleasure
- Spending time and money to support reading, including buying books and developing the school environment to support reading
- Believing that every teacher should be an advocate for reading
- Devoting time to training staff so they are equipped to support children's enjoyment of reading
- Involving parents to ensure the culture of reading that the school has developed extends into the home.

Watch:

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/good-practice-film-st-thomas-of-canterbury-salford-english>



## **Strategies:**

### 1. Supporting Staff

Equipping staff with the skills and knowledge they need to teach children to be accomplished and keen readers

### 2. Teaching Reading

Making use of every opportunity the curriculum offers to teach children to become life-long readers

### 3. Engaging Parents

Harnessing the enthusiasm of parents to ensure the culture of reading developed by the school extends into the home

### 4. The Reading Environment

Understanding the role the physical environment, including libraries, book areas, and displays can play in teaching children to be readers

### 5. Resources

Using a wide range of different reading material to teach children to become readers

### 6. Celebrating Reading

Involving the school community to raise the profile of reading and engage children

## **Strategy 1: Supporting Staff**

### **Outcomes for children's learning:**

- Word-reading skills – both phonic decoding skills and the quick recognition of common exception words (“tricky words”)
- Comprehension – including retrieving information, summarising, making inferences and using evidence from the text to justify these.

### **The Simple View of Reading:**

- Highlighted in the Rose review of early reading and forms the backbone of provision for reading.
- Developing the skills of word-reading and comprehension is the school's top priority.
- Children should apply these skills across a range of genres.

In addition to this is the development of the love of reading and books and the desire to read. A reading school explicitly teaches:

- Knowledge about books and authors
- The language of books
- Reading stamina
- Choosing books – encouraging children to choose to read and also enabling them to choose a book they might enjoy.

#### **Effective teaching of reading:**

- Teachers must have a strong grasp of the reading curriculum and the progression of skills across age ranges.
- Staff must have a good knowledge of books that meet the different demands of the National Curriculum. This also helps in supporting children in their choice of books.
- The key is a combination of a passion for teaching children to read with knowledge about how to engage children by encouraging reading and promoting books at every opportunity.

#### **Assessment:**

- Formative assessment is a major factor in teaching children to become a reader.
- Teachers must have a strong grasp of where children are as readers, both their strengths and areas for development.
- Through assessment, teachers can identify where there are gaps in children’s skills and knowledge and how best to close them.

#### **Staff development:**

- Effective professional development should close any gaps between teachers’ existing strengths and areas for development.
- Professional development can be whole staff; coaching and mentoring from experienced staff; training provided by the BPLC and/or outside agencies; use of online resources; observations and team-teaching.

#### **ACTION:**

**Staff audit to consider confidence and knowledge as teachers of reading. SLT to plan professional development from results. Revisit the audit findings at a later date to evaluate the impact of the developments undertaken.**

### **Strategy 2: Teaching the Reading Curriculum**

#### **Teaching Reading in English Lessons:**

- Using a good quality text as part of a lesson is vital. This may be a specific genre. It provides opportunities to meet National Curriculum objectives.
- Good, text-based, whole class teaching can provide opportunities for learning and reinforcing:

- Word reading – as children encounter unfamiliar words
- Grammar and punctuation – through seeing them in context and considering how they are employed for effect
- Comprehension – through listening to, reading, and discussing challenging texts
- Vocabulary and spelling – by encountering new language
- Spoken language through participating in discussions about books, learning from both specific language modelled by the teacher and also that of their peers
- Writing (both transcription and composition)
- Studying whole texts can help develop the children’s love of reading. It gives them the opportunity to read and listen to texts and authors they might not have chosen for themselves. This includes a range of genres that are new or unfamiliar.
- Teachers should be confident enough to deviate from their planning if they need to change a level of challenge or a different learning opportunity arises

*The quality of pupils’ learning was hampered in weaker lessons by a number of myths about what makes a good lesson...an excessive pace; an overloading of activities; inflexible planning; and limited time for pupils to work independently. Learning was also constrained in schools where teachers concentrated too much or too early on a narrow range of test or examination skills.*

***Moving English Forward – Ofsted 2012***

- Poems are perfect texts for reading in an English lesson. They offer a richness that can challenge and over a week may include:
  - Reading the poem several times, discussing it as a class and maybe learning some of it by heart
  - Learning about the structure, vocabulary and language of the poem
  - Discussing the idea, message or feeling the poet is trying to communicate
  - Writing, in the form of a personal response or the children’s own poems
  - Making a class anthology
  - Performance poetry

**Classroom Dialogue:**

- Talk to Write is well-established and used effectively at St Andrew’s. Talk to Read?
- Dialogue between teacher and child and between children themselves is crucial in developing spoken language and attitudes to reading.
- It is important to give children the chance to think, interact with the text, develop their understanding and critical thinking skills, and express opinions.
- Effective teacher questions can manage the discussion in such a way to move forward children’s thinking and learning in terms of what they have read.

### **Early Years:**

- Children, even by the time they are 15 years old, who have been read to frequently at an early age can remain well over half a year ahead of their peers who have not had the same support.
- It is school's responsibility to allow children to hear books read aloud.
- Children need to interact with books from the start.
- Phonics teaching continues through Key stage 1, ensuring every child can decode fluently and accurately.
- In addition to this systematic approach of word-reading knowledge and skills, children need to listen to books and stories to develop comprehension, making links between what is read and their world.
- Young children should be able to browse through books on their own.
- Classroom environments where children are immersed in books and a language-rich curriculum help the development of the love of reading.
- Good quality books support language development and can lead to other activities across the curriculum.
- Role-play areas can be based on stories the class have listened to. This allows children to:
  - Become familiar with characters and stories
  - Develop spoken language and vocabulary
  - Understand the structure of stories
  - Explore ideas and experiences that are unfamiliar to them.
- Sharing texts raises the profile of reading in the classroom.
- Children should be welcome to bring books into school from home or the library.

### **Reading with others:**

- Volunteers are a useful resource to support individual or group reading. They can also be a good adult reading model.
- Pairing children, older and younger, can be useful. This is an opportunity for children to learn from each other and enjoy reading a range of book genres/styles.

### **Reading Aloud:**

*Inspectors also noted the loss of the once popular and effective strategies such as reading stories to younger children, listening to children read, and the sharing of complete novels with junior age pupils.*

*Moving English Forward – Ofsted 2012*

- Reading aloud is popular in EYFS and Key stage 1 but opportunities to listen to books read out loud can often decrease as the children get older. Sharing a class novel or a fascinating non-fiction text should be an important part of the reading curriculum throughout the school.

*Pupils should be taught to: participate in discussions about books that are read to them and those they can read for themselves, building on their own and others' ideas and challenging views courteously.*  
**National Curriculum**

- Listening to more complex and longer texts can increase knowledge and understanding, enrich vocabulary and develop reading comprehension. It can provide a model of expressive reading.
- This is a chance to enjoy and share a story for sheer pleasure!

### **Independent Reading:**

- According to the school reading survey of parents, the main barrier to children reading at home is lack of time. Therefore, reading at school for a sustained period is an opportunity to develop children as self-reliant readers. It means children have a chance to enjoy a book.
- Pupil Premium Grant could be spent directly on a target group of pupils to purchase books.
- The school book fair allows children to purchase books of their choice.
- Opportunities should be given for children to talk about books they have chosen and are enjoying. This can have an extremely positive impact on the class reading culture and making reading part of everyday life.
- The teacher can support children to choose new books.

*Pupils should be taught to maintain positive attitudes to reading and understanding of what they read by: recommending books that they have read to their peers, giving reasons for their choices.*  
**National Curriculum**

### **Guided Reading:**

- Guided reading is a powerful way to support children's progress in reading. Children can encounter texts that interest them and capture their imagination.
- A wide range of genres can be encountered, broadening experience, helping children to form opinions about books and authors. Children have the opportunity to use literary language.
- Children enjoy being able to read a book from beginning to end.

### **ACTIONS:**

#### **Lesson observations:**

- **What is the quality of the teaching of reading?**
- **What is the quality of the questioning?**
- **How much opportunity do the children have to discuss views and listen to the opinions of others?**
- **How far do the pace and the flexibility of the teaching help to make sure that important points are considered and that all children are learning?**
- **How is the atmosphere in the classroom conducive to reading?**

- What is the teacher's/TA's role? Are they actively supporting the children?
- How are different spaces in the classroom used for reading sessions?
- Talk to the children about what they are reading.

Read Ofsted's "Reading by Six: How the Best Schools Do It." (2010)

- Use the 4 key components on p.27 for reflection and self-evaluation.

Read Ofsted's report "Excellence in English"(2011)

- Focus on the case studies from successful schools (p.8). What good practice could be implemented in the short and medium terms?

SLT to audit time across the school for sustained independent reading within the school day. Could there be opportunities for children to enjoy reading outside during break times or before/after school?

Compile a list of books suitable for particular age groups across the school. Publish this for parents either on the school website or by letter.

Compile a list of teachers' favourite read-aloud books.

Read OUP's report on Guided Reading (2013).

### Strategy 3: Engaging Parents

In September 2015, parents from St Andrew's were surveyed about reading. 142 surveys were returned.

The main findings were:

#### **How much does your child enjoy reading?**

Not at all	0.7%	A bit	23.1%
Quite a Lot	30.1%	Very Much	45.5%

#### **How often does your child read at home?**

Every day or almost	85.4%	Once or twice a week	13.3%
Once or twice a month	0.7%	Never or almost never	0.0%

#### **Which of the following does your child read outside school?**

Fiction	82.6%	Factual books	53.9%
Magazines	50.4%	Comics	40.6%
Text Messages	28.7%	Song Lyrics	25.9%

Websites	18.2%	Manuals	14.7%
Poetry	14.0%	Emails	14.0%
Audiobooks	10.5%	Newspapers	9.8%
Other	11.9%		

**How do you encourage your child to read?**

Buy books as presents	86.1%
Ask them to read to you	77.0%
Read to them	72.8%
Discuss what your child reads	72.8%
Make a point of being seen reading at home	42.7%
Encourage older children to support younger children	35.0%
Through films/TV	31.5%
Play reading-related games	25.2%

**Does your child enjoy the books that they bring home from school?**

Yes	79.1%	No	9.1%	NA	11.2%
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**Are there barriers that stop you helping your child with their reading?**

Yes	82.6%	No	16.8%	(Lack of time was cited the most)
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**Are you satisfied with the progress your child is making in reading?**

Yes	91.0%	No	3.5%	NA	5.6%
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At St Andrew's we know that involving our families plays an important part in developing the reading culture of the school.

- A reading school wants children to be reading at home through choice.
- Parents must feel that they can receive support from school with reading at home.
- Home and school are working towards the same goals.
- School should be aware that some parents may have had their own negative experiences about reading or school in general.
- Reception class parents are invited to a meeting at the start of the school year which sets out how we teach reading in school and how parents can support their child's learning of reading and phonics.



- Volunteers are used to support children's reading. These volunteers are usually parents or grandparents and may support individual or group reading. Volunteers are used to run the school library.

#### **Homework:**

- Children are expected to read with their parents or a family member as part of their homework.
- Parents cited lack of time as a barrier to listening to their children read in the recent survey.
- There are home/school books that are used to communicate on what/how children have read. This happens less as the children get older and become more independent readers.
- Teachers will see parents if there are any particular issues with their child's reading that need to be addressed.

#### **ACTION:**

**Use the school website to offer support to families. Examples include Julia Donaldson's top tips for parents**

<http://www.oxfordowl.co.uk/GetReading/index/7>

**Analyse the responses from the school's reading survey – in particular the barrier of time that was cited by so many parents in their responses.**

#### **Strategy 4: Developing the Reading Environment**

Libraries, book/reading areas play an important part in building a reading culture in schools.

A school reading environment should:

- Appeal to all ages;
- Appeal to all abilities;
- Appeal to both genders;
- Be a welcoming, working space where children visit, read, choose and talk about books;
- Be accessible throughout the day.

#### **The school library**

- This is a great resource at St Andrew's and was opened nine years ago. It has recently been improved by the addition of attractive furniture and paintings of book characters on the walls. This has made the library look even more inviting.
- This space allows children to visit to choose books that they want to read for pleasure.

- Classes are timetabled to choose books.
- Children are taught how to use the library and become familiar with its layout. Younger children are helped by staff and library volunteers.
- The library may be used for guided reading sessions.
- Books in the school library at St Andrew's range from picture books – with and without words – to novels which are kept up to date. There is also a range of non-fiction books.

Most classes now have reading areas which are used by all children. These are made to look attractive and welcoming.

The garden areas and playground now have seating where children can take a book out at playtime or during their lunch break.

The school's forest classroom is a wonderful place for sharing books and stories in an environment that is different to the main school building.

#### **ACTION:**

**To ask the School Council to check children's opinions about the library. They will lead the development of this space.**

#### **Strategy 5: Targeting Resources**

Through reading, sharing and discussing exciting, engaging texts, children will be helped to develop a love of reading. Resources, however, have to be introduced to children through excellent teaching and learning.

#### **Range of texts:**

- Books that are used for teaching reading must be carefully matched to the curriculum and to the needs of the readers.
- The school library and class reading areas should be stocked with a wide range of books of a variety of genres. This should also include non-books such as magazines, comics and newspapers.
- When children reach the stage of being independent readers they should be able to choose their own reading material. This may not always be well done but the choosing and sometimes making the wrong choice is important. Teachers and other adults can guide this choice.
- ICT resources can be used to engage children in reading.

#### **Challenging texts:**

- When teaching reading, either through guided reading or as a whole class, texts are chosen that are challenging and motivating. Sometimes this may be the only chance a child gets to experience these books.

- It is believed that the more great literature children experience at primary school, they have more chance of enjoying them before attitudes harden. Great literature is seen as a right/entitlement and not as elitist. Children can experience a world beyond that in which they live. Obviously, this has to be balanced as “wading” through the classics can be more damaging than useful.

#### **Levelled texts:**

- Children need to develop stamina, fluency, confidence and the reading skills that they need before they can move on to a wider range of books. Some texts have accompanying teacher’s books with suggested questions or activities to support learning.
- Linked resources can help parents work more effectively with their children at home.

#### **Children’s views:**

- Children themselves will tell us what they like to read. We involve them in selecting books.

*Close involvement of pupils in decisions about English, and very good procedures for getting pupils’ feedback on their learning, were key features of the success of a number of schools in the survey.*

*Excellence in English*

#### **ACTION:**

**Audit the range and types of text we have at St Andrew’s in the library and in individual class bases. Is there a sufficient range and variety? Are they aspirational enough? To what extent do they provide sufficient challenge for more able children?**

#### **Strategy 6: Celebrating reading**

At a reading school, books are celebrated and promoted every day, not just on special occasions.

#### **Promoting books every day:**

- Teachers talk about books and reading with enthusiasm, sharing good examples.
- Children are given the opportunity to recommend books they have read to their peers. This now forms part of the National Curriculum in Years 5 and 6.
- Teachers can “sell” books to a class, explaining briefly what each one is about and why it is a “good read”. This could be done through:
  - Promoting a range of books by one author
  - Offering a range of books on a similar theme or genre, at different levels of difficulty

- Reading opening paragraphs of several books and leaving them as cliff hangers
- Reading a key incident from part-way through the book
- Reading a cliff hanger and then stopping – with a dramatic pause...
- Showing children just the covers of a whole set of new books and asking them what they think the books are about
- Sharing pictures from a book, and asking children to make predictions about the story
- Asking children for their top reads
- Presenting books that have won competitions of which there are many and available for research on the internet.

#### **Partnerships:**

- St Andrew's has links with the library in Ramsbottom. Children visit the library and staff from the library can come to school.
- Interactive resources have been purchased such as Oxford Owl, Purple Mash and Espresso.

#### **Special Events:**

- Assemblies and special events such as World Book Day, National Poetry Day are used to provide school with a sense of the "special event".
- Visits from authors or illustrators can enthuse children.
- A book fair is held during the weeks of Parents' Evening.

#### **ACTION:**

**Use staff meetings to collect teachers' ideas for promoting reading. Use assemblies and other events to talk about and promote books.**

**Put key events such as World Book Day into the school calendar and plan the celebration.**

**Continue to have Scholastic Book Fair during Parents' Evening weeks.**

D Marsh

Autumn Term 2015