

Learning to Read

Our approach to reading and phonics

At Claregate, we are committed to ensuring that every child is a reader. We believe that fluency and confidence in reading enables children to become independent and lifelong learners. Therefore, we provide many opportunities for children to develop their reading skills and continuously strive to promote a love of reading in our school community.

Phonics

Synthetic phonics is a method of teaching reading which, from the Nursery upwards, teaches children to read by identifying the sounds that each individual letter or groups of letters can make and then blending these sounds together from left to right to make a word. All children in Nursery have a regular phonics session each week. Pupils in Reception and Year 1 at Claregate have a daily synthetic phonics lesson, which develops their word-reading skills by breaking words down into sounds. This continues for those children who need it in Year 2 and into Key Stage 2. We use the 'Floppy's Phonics' approach to teaching phonics to ensure that we have a consistent method of teaching children to decode (read) and encode (write) words in place across school.

Reading comprehension

Although phonics is used as the primary and most effective approach in teaching young readers to read quickly and skilfully, at Claregate we seek to develop reading comprehension skills alongside phonics from an early age. At a basic level, this involves checking children's understanding of what they have read and exploring their response to a text, as well as discussing their own reading preferences. However, as they progress, children at Claregate quickly develop a range of reading skills beyond word-reading. For example, children at Claregate learn to recognise key features of a text/genre, discuss the author's style and the impact of this on the reader, make comparisons within and between texts and much more. These broader reading comprehension skills are explicitly taught during English lessons as well as during one-to-one or group reading sessions across school.

Reading across the curriculum

At Claregate, we see reading as the stepping stone to learning across the curriculum. This begins in our English lessons, where we use whole texts as a basis to develop writing skills alongside reading skills.

Opportunities to develop reading skills in other subjects are also maximised, for example, when researching Tudor Crime and Punishment in History or reading a biography of Isaac Newton when studying gravity in Science.

Reading for pleasure

We strive to nurture a love of reading by dedicating time each day to reading for pleasure. This includes us reading aloud to the children, sharing texts which the children have brought in, as well as children reading independently a book of their own free choice. At times staff will guide pupils to higher quality reading material in order to provide a richer reading environment.

We also hold regular reading events in school, which encourage and motivate children to read, including an annual book fair, author visits and inviting teachers and members of our wider school community to share extracts from their favourite books.

Home Reading/Accelerated Reader

Every child has a reading book to take home and read independently or with an adult. Initially, children take home books from The Oxford Reading Tree scheme, which is colour banded. As their phonic knowledge becomes secure they will have access to a wider range of reading books. Teachers will use their professional judgement to decide when to move pupils across to the Accelerated Reader Programme. At this point pupils will complete a half termly Star Reading Test. This analyses their reading comprehension skills and assigns pupils a Z.P.D (Zone of Proximal Development). Pupils then have access to a range of texts, including versions of well-recognised classics as well as more contemporary fiction. Their success is monitored weekly by staff as are their reading choices. We celebrate those pupil's individualised successes through the use of certificates which are shared in assemblies. Parents are also able to monitor their child's progress using the log-on details provided.

We ask parents to support us in hearing their children read every day and discussing what they have read. We also encourage parents to make use of their everyday environment to promote reading, for example, by reading signpost, labels, menus or comics with their children.

We send home reading question prompts to help with comprehension at home.

In Reception class we will also run "Inspire" afternoons where parent / carers are invited into class to watch and join in with a lesson. This is a fun way to work alongside your child.