



Reading is one of the most important things which children will ever learn to do as it is the window to accessing huge amounts of knowledge about the world in which we live. It is not only essential for many areas of learning but can be a means of escape from everyday life and an incredible journey into other places and times.

On one of our in service days in February all the staff attended a course named Reflective Reading by Mrs Anne Glennie. Annes Glennie's work is based on sound educational research on the best ways of teaching children to be Reflective Readers with a full and deep level of understanding of what they are reading and to develop a love of reading which will stay with children well beyond their school years. What we heard inspired us to make a few changes to the way we are doing things with regards to the teaching of reading.

- Since 2000 Scotland's reading performance has declined rapidly.
- 43% of Scottish children aged 12-17 do not read for pleasure

Some of what we heard was actually quite shocking to us. In the year 2000, Scotland's reading scores were 20-30 points ahead of the OECD average, by 2012 they were around 5 points ahead of the OECD average. Previous research has proved that regularly reading for pleasure can be linked to better progress in maths, vocabulary and spelling yet there are 43% of Scottish children never reading for pleasure. At Redmyre, we are determined that won't be happening for any of our children. We want every child that walks out of that door at the end of P7 to not only be a competent reader, but to have developed a love of reading which will enrich their lives and we all, as both educators and parents have an important part to play in that.

Children whose parents regularly read aloud with their children, performed substantially better in reading at age 15 than children whose parents rarely, if ever, read to them.

The good news is, that we can all do our bit to get those OECD reading scores back to being amongst the best in the world and probably one of the most important things we can do is to read to our children often. Teachers read to the children every day in class and story time is the one time in the day when I can walk into the infant classroom and guarantee that nobody will give me a second glance as they are all so engrossed. As we read to children they learn the importance of language and they learn that the marks on the page represent the sounds and words that we speak. When we are just speaking to children we do try to only use the words which we know children will understand but from books children will be introduced to a much wider vocabulary which builds a firm foundation for building communication skills, reading, comprehension and writing. Reading to children fuels their imagination and sparks creativity and that ability to 'think outside of the box'.

So reading to the children is a very important first step in learning to read....how do we teach them to read themselves?

44 Phoneme/Grapheme Chart														
Consonant sounds														
b bell bb	c can k ck ch	d dig dd ph ff n	g get gg	h hat	j jam g ge dge	l lam ll le	m map mm mb lm mn	n nut nn kn gn pn	p pin pp	qu queen				
r red rr wr	s sun ss se ce	t top tt ed	v van ve	w win wh	x box	y yes	z zap zz s se	sh shop ti ci ch sci	ll lily nk	ng sing nk	ch job tch tu ti te	ch tch		
Vowel sounds														
a at	e egg ea ie	i in	o on a ho aw au	u up oo ou	ay say a-e ea e-e ey ey eigh aigh eo	ee see e-e ie ie y y y y	igh igh i-e ie y	ow ow o-e oe ough						
ue gus oo u-e ew ou	oo book	at at	or for oor ore aw au	air hair ir er	ou found ow ough	oy boy oi	ite ite	ear ear	ure sure					

There's more good news. The research is firmly telling us that we need to use systematic teaching of phonics to teach children to read, or at least to teaching them the 'mechanics' of reading and you'll be glad to know that this is what we do at Redmyre anyway. We begin by systematically teaching the sounds that each letter makes then we teach them the different sounds, that can be made by putting letters together or the graphemes. Then we show them how to sound out all of these phonics and graphemes to read the words....easy? So lets try it.....

&-t

%-r

#-i

o-o

*-y

~-h

£-s

>e

u-u

a-a

d-d

n-n

g-g

Here are the new symbols you are going to need. It's quite easy for you because you will already know some of them like the a, the g, the o and the d. So just really 7 new ones to remember. I'll give you a wee minute to remember them. Right, now read this....

&%* &~#£ #\\$ *ou &~#nk
%>ad#ng #£ >a£*

Try this if you think reading is easy. I think you can see what I'm trying to illustrate. Teaching the children the phonics and graphemes takes time and practice.....a lot of practice! We do it in class in as many different ways as we can, by drawing them in sand, playing snap, making them with playdough, associating them with actions, songs....you name it, we do it, anything to make those automatic. You will probably see some of the strategies we use to teach this automaticity when your in your child's class today. It really helps if you practice at home too. Even simple things like how many bs can you find on this page of our bed time story, what sounds do you think are in the word bird? As soon as recognition of the phonics and graphemes become automatic then children can begin sounding them together to read words and then the more practice they get of that the better they will become at decoding words quickly so that's them reading?No it isn't. Reading is about decoding **and** comprehension but good, quick decoding is a pre requisite to good comprehension.

What is Comprehension and how do we improve it?

- Making connections- To experiences or other stories
- Predicting – What might happen next?
- Question and infer- I wonder why he....? I think he said this because...
- Picturing or visualising – What does the scene look like in your head?
- Summarising – Can you tell me in your own words
- Monitoring- Talk about unfamiliar words and phrases.

Comprehension is the whole reason for reading. If readers can decode the words but do not understand or connect to what they are reading they are not really reading. Good readers are purposeful, active and have the skills to absorb what they have read, analyse it, make sense of it and make it their own. Strong readers use their experiences and knowledge of the world, vocabulary, language structure and reading strategies to make sense of the text and extract meaning from it.

At the earliest stages, from babies through to when children are able to decode the words for themselves, comprehension skills are being embedded every time we read to our children and talk to them about the stories making connections with their own lives and other stories or films, when we make predictions about what might happen, when we question what is happening in the story or make inference about why characters are doing or saying certain things, when we visualise the picture of what is happening in the story or by encouraging children to summarise stories in their own words. We can also build that all important vocabulary by doing something which we call monitoring which basically means talking about the meaning of new words and phrases. When children have really mastered the decoding and are able to, to all intents and purposes read, this is when we want to really step up the comprehension work at school. So by about primary 3 or 4 (and this will be different for all children because they all master the decoding at different times) you may find that they are having their reading 'heard' less frequently in school but they are given a week's worth of reading to be done at home over the course of a week. This is because we are changing things around a little. It is

still very important that children 'do ' their reading practice at home as this is what will help their fluency and confidence in reading aloud and we will still monitor this in school. The staff will be spending the time concentrating on really getting the children working on those comprehension strategies. Very often, we see children who we think are super readers but then we put them in front of a text which is not a 'reading' book' and it all goes out the window so teachers will be using a range of different styles of texts to build these comprehension skills.

So what will be different?



Because we had already been implementing many of the Reflecting Reading strategies in our practice anyway, the only change you may notice is that, from around P3/4 your child will be having reading 'heard' in class less frequently as the teacher is using the saved time to really get stuck in to the meaty comprehension stuff. Practicing for fluency at home is still very important though so we still really appreciate your support with this. What we're hoping we will all start noticing is that our children will be reading a wider range of texts with a much deeper understanding which should, ultimately lead to that 'love' of reading which we all like our children to have.