

Reading for pleasure is the single biggest indicator of a child's future success.

Reading for pleasure is possibly the single-most important activity your child can do to improve achievement in school. Research has shown that reading helps cognitive development; a recent IoE study revealed that students who read at home do 'significantly better' across the curriculum – including 9.9% better in maths – than students who don't read. Linked to this is the fact that reading is the best way to improve vocabulary, essential for success in every subject.

Reading also has social and emotional benefits. It increases self-esteem and studies show that students who read are more empathetic. Reading can help young people explore complex problems from the safe fictional world of a book.

Convincing young people of the importance and joy of reading, particularly when we live in a digitally saturated world full of electronic distractions, becomes more and more challenging. Below are some ideas and tactics we think can help to engage, encourage and foster a love for reading:

- Finding books they will want to read is key. If they are football fans, try Dan Freedman's Jamie Johnson series or his most recent book *Unstoppable*. Tom Palmer writes football and war themed books particularly aimed to engage reluctant readers. *The Ultimate Football Heroes* by Matt and Tom Oldfield is a really accessible series of football biographies that are updated regularly with the latest popular players. If they like military/action/war, then try Andy McNab's teen books. And if they are into gaming, try teen/Young adult author Alex Scarrow's books – he was a professional video-game developer before he turned to writing; Jeff Norton's *MetaWars* series are billed as 'a video game you can read').
- Encourage your child to visit our school library regularly. Our Library Manager, Mrs. Ellsmore is here to do everything she can to encourage your child to read and to help them choose books to excite and engage.
- Be enthusiastic about what they are reading: Ask them to tell you about what they are reading or to describe a character they like or don't like and why. Ask them to read aloud an exciting bit and show an interest in wanting to find out more. Ask if they think you would like it. Suggest that you could perhaps borrow it after them.
- Visit the Personal Learning Centre (PLC) and Library section of our school website for a plethora of really good sites to browse for ideas and book recommendations. There are some great book lists, particularly those compiled by www.lovereadings4kids.co.uk that are updated regularly with new titles for all ages. Have a look too on the school library catalogue – the link to which is on the same page.
- If there is a book your child sees in a shop or one that is recommended to them but they can't see it on the school catalogue, they simply need to pop to Mrs Ellsmore in the PLC to request a copy.
- Encourage a variety of reading, many young people love graphic novels or comics for example. Explore both fiction and non-fiction. Many people are more engaged with a story that is based on real life events or fact.

- Does your child struggle to read due to dyslexia or visual stress? Barrington Stoke work to break down barriers to read and produce books on heavier paper with a gentle tint to help reduce visual stresses, and in dyslexia-friendly font to make reading easier. They are a great choice for dyslexic or reluctant readers or anybody wanting a shorter/ quick read. Tom Palmer's latest book *Arctic Star* is a gripping story based on the Arctic Convoys and is short but powerful.
<https://www.barringtonstoke.co.uk/>
- Wanting a book your can't have: When you think your child is ready for a 'grittier' book, initially suggesting to them that you're not sure whether or not they are old enough to read it as it contains a more mature content, can be all it takes for making them want it all the more ! Charlie Higson's *Enemy* series is a gritty series written for teens, as is *Zom-B* by Darren Shan;
- Join your local borough library. As well as being able to borrow physical books, there are wonderful online resources and a wide and varied selection of e books to download.
- Try a 'digital free hour'. Every day ask your child to hand in their phone and refrain from their games console, TV or computer for an hour. You may need to stick to it rigidly to start with but it's worth the perseverance when the result is a daily reading habit.
- Let your child see you reading for pleasure, and talk about what you read and how you choose books. Explain to them how reading a book is a much slower journey than watching something online where the entertainment is 'given to them' instantly. The story they create in their own imagination whilst reading a book is unique to them.
- Let your children see you read a newspaper or magazine. Pick out an interesting article to read to them and ask their opinion on it. Lots of discussion and interest can result from one small topical news story. Local news events are more relatable and can have more meaning.
- Ask your older (reluctant reader) child to read to a younger sibling. It is a big confidence booster for them and can help with sibling bonding.
- Borrow a play from the library: Reading a play together and each acting out a part can be such a fun and entertaining reading experience.
- Continue to read aloud to your children (even if they are fluent readers). Choose books together, particularly ones that they wouldn't perhaps read on their own.
- Read the book of a film. Read the book version of a movie then enjoy watching the film and comparing the two and discussing the differences. *Stormbreaker*, *Eragon*, *Harry Potter*, *The Book Thief*, *I am Number Four*, *The Princess Diaries*, *The Chronicles of Narnia*, *Percy Jackson*, *The Hunger Games*, *Divergent*, *Maze Runner*, *Fault in Our Stars*, *Twilight* and *Inkheart*, *Wonder*, *Ready Player One* and *Darkest Minds* are just a few suggested films that are based on books.
- Try audio books: Libraries have free, downloadable audio books. By listening to an audio book, whilst also doing something active, your teen will pick up new vocabulary, hear complex sentence structures and engage with stories.

- Listen to audio books as a family when travelling together on a long journey. Sharing a story together is a fabulous way to bond; *Mort* by Terry Pratchett could be a good start.
- Owning your own book: Many children love to have a book of their own to keep and cherish so Book Gift Cards are a perfect present. Waterstones are such lovely bookstores to visit and spend time together browsing and choosing. The visually appealing marketing and layout of best-selling books can attract even reluctant readers and if you can find a small, independent book shop with a coffee shop, all the better!
- Visit a book festival. Hay on Wye is a town packed with second hand book shops and their annual book festival in May is one not to be missed. There are local festivals too in Birmingham and Wolverhampton. The site links to these, and many more, can be found on the Personal Learning Centre and Library section of the school website.
- Don't expect or push your child to finish a book. If it's not interesting them, they won't want to pick it up so explain it's fine for them to put a book back and find something else.
- Dormston is a school that loves to read. Encourage your child to join our PLC book club and please join our Parent and Pupil reading group. An invite will be sent to you in September.