

Early Years and Key Stage 1

Phonetically Decodable Books

The systematic and fast pace of our phonics teaching enables children to read words very soon after they start at Cliftonville Primary School. Children who attend our nursery have covered some of the early phonics scheme, too, through rhymes, songs, ipad games, etc so have a real head start when they join their reception year.

We believe it is important that children have access to a wide range of books of all genres so we don't subscribe to just one publisher scheme. Children read books from the following publishers: Collins Big Cat for Letters and Sounds, Bug Club Phonics, Rising Stars Reading Planet, Letter and Sounds and Oxford Hero Academy.

Children are allocated a phonetically decodable book at their current level of reading development which focuses on the group of sounds that they have just been taught in school. Books are changed twice a week so that there are opportunities for multiple readings at school and at home to aid the development of fluency. Children also have access to books online which are again matched to their phonics level and closely monitored by teachers.

Many children will finish reading phonetically decodable books at the end of Year 1 and move onto the traditional coloured book bands of green, orange, turquoise, purple, gold and white but some children in Year 2 will continue to practise with phonetically decodable books for longer as we strongly believe in providing an individualised learning path based on ability and not solely a child's age or year group. Once children have moved onto the traditional coloured book bands, teacher and teaching assistant assess their progress through a process called "benchmarking" to ensure they are ready to move onto the next colour band.

Children also choose a book for pleasure to take home to share with an adult and can change this as frequently as they like. At Cliftonville Primary School, we promote reading for pleasure in a number of ways including: the creative use of high quality texts in the classroom, reading aloud to children daily and providing books recommendations to children and talking about books (see our list of 50 books for each year group). We believe it is important that children are encouraged to read poetry and non-fiction as well as fiction and that they are able to access a diverse range of characters and stories that provide "windows" to the lives and experiences of others and "mirrors" that reflect their own (Emily Style, 1988).

Key Stage 2

Accelerated Reader

What is Accelerated Reader (AR)?

AR is a computer program that helps teachers manage and monitor children's independent reading practice. Your child picks a book at his/her own level and reads it at his/her own pace. When finished, your child takes a short quiz on the computer. Passing the quiz is an indication that your child has understood what has been read.

Teachers may assist pupils by:

- guiding them to books appropriate to their ability and interests
 - asking probing questions as your child reads and before quizzing
 - pairing your child with others, reading with or reading to your child
- Since they are reading books at their own reading and interest levels, most children are likely to be successful and enjoy the books and quizzes. Best of all they learn and grow at their own pace.

How can I help my child become a better reader?

As with anything, performance improves with practice. According to Renaissance Learning's research, children who read at least 20 minutes a day with a 90% comprehension rate on AR quizzes see the greatest gains. Encourage your child to read at home, discuss books, ask questions about what they have read and visit your local library.

What is a STAR Reading test?

STAR Reading is used to determine your child's reading level. It is a computer based reading assessment program that uses computer- adaptive technology. Questions continually adjust to your child's responses. If the child's response is correct, the difficulty level is increased. If the child cannot answer a question or answers incorrectly, the difficulty level is reduced. The test uses multiple-choice questions and takes approximately 10 minutes.

What is a Book Level?

Book Levels are reported using the ATOS™ readability formula and represent the difficulty of the text. The levels range from 0.5–13.5. Books are chosen based on the ZPD range recommended for each pupil by STAR Reading.

What is a Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)?

ZPD is the range of books that will challenge a child without causing frustration or loss of motivation. Your child will receive a ZPD, or reading range after taking a STAR Reading test. It is important for children to read with a high degree of comprehension and within his/her ZPD.

What are points?

Every book that has an AR Reading Practice Quiz is given a points value. AR points are based on the length of the book (number of words). Pupils earn a percentage of points according to how well they pass the quiz.

What is Interest Level?

The Interest level indicates for which age group a book is appropriate, based on the content and themes. These are recommendations only and teachers and parents are recommended to use their best judgement when guiding pupils.