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Derbyshire Healthy Schools
Community Award



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Reading and Homework

Dear Parents and Carers

As a school we place great value on reading. It is at the front and centre of all our curriculum and children are given many opportunities throughout a typical day to engage with texts.

Our school reading vision is **Passionate, Proficient and Prepared**.

We share a book at story time with each class each day. This is a book which has been carefully selected by staff and encourages children to listen to a story and enjoy being read to. This helps to develop the '**passionate**' part of our vision. This time in school is really magical. The children are engaged and immersed in a book and it becomes part of the class environment for discussions and enjoyment.

To **prepare** them for the next stage in their education we spend a great deal of time in school teaching reading. This is done in every English lesson, where the basis of all our work is a book or a text, and in our 15-minute reading session each day.

We have spent a significant amount of time assessing each child, using an accurate assessment tool. We have measured how 'fluent' each child is. The Big Cat book your child is reading may look too easy, but is precisely matched to the fluency level of your child. These books are vital for children's reading education, as they help them to become fluent readers. They are carefully written to match each reading level and are vital in helping children to become **proficient** readers. As a school, we have invested a large amount of money into this scheme as it is proven to be successful. It allows children to access high quality texts whilst teaching them the skills needed to become fluent and competent readers. This is so much more than being able to read each individual word; it involves really understanding the meaning of the text.

The hard copies of these books are very expensive and we only have a limited amount at each level available in school. However, the children have access to more than 50 books at their level on the Big Cat online system. A small school like ours would not be able to afford a hard copy of enough books to give your child this range of books. This also reduces the time in school we need to spend changing books. Children and parents can read, record and move on.

Homework at our school consist of times table practice on Times Tables Rock Stars and reading for 15 minutes a week. We encourage families to read substantially more with their children, as research shows that parental engagement is key to improvement. I would like to see all children accessing the carefully-matched Big Cat book for 15 minutes each week and parents encouraging children to read their Bakewell Brilliant Book alongside this. I know many of you read even wider with your children and this will really make a difference.

On a Friday afternoon, we have Golden Time. This is a reward for children who always work hard; who always behave well and who always do their homework. If children are unable to do these things they will be offered help on Friday afternoons. To support homework, we will provide a dedicated time and a space so that our children can access a computer and a teacher, and catch up on their homework. This is not a punishment. It is another opportunity to offer support to ensure children can make good progress in reading and arithmetic, using high quality and well-matched resources. Children will not miss their playtime or lunchtimes for not being able to do their homework.

We hope you are convinced about how important it is for all or children to be able to access Big Cat books. We can help with the loan of some hard copies of books, laptops, passwords and installing apps. If you have any question, please just ask.

Yours

Sarah Owens