

Reading at MSJ



At MSJ, we believe that one of the greatest gifts we can give children is not only the ability to read, but a love of reading. Books open doors to new worlds, develop imagination, build vocabulary and help children become confident, independent learners. As we begin a new school year, we look forward to sharing stories, discovering new favourites and welcoming all our families into the reading life of our school.

For families new to MSJ, two terms that you will soon become familiar with are Root Texts and Branch Texts, which – alongside ELS Phonics and individual reading – form the foundation of our reading provision. Our Root Texts are the books children explore together in whole-class reading lessons. Our Branch Texts build on these, offering opportunities to discover related books, authors and themes across fiction, non-fiction and poetry. Each term, we share an outline of your child's year group's Branch Texts, giving you a sense of what they are enjoying and some ideas for books you might like to explore together.

At home, reading together can be a chance to pause and enjoy each other's company. Listening to your child read, reading aloud to them or chatting about a character or an interesting fact all help to make books part of everyday life. Even as children become more independent readers, there is still plenty of pleasure to be found in sharing a story with an adult.

Our reading volunteers

We are fortunate to have a wonderful team of reading volunteers who generously give their time each week to listen to children read. Their support gives pupils additional opportunities to practise reading aloud - building fluency, expression and understanding in a relaxed and encouraging environment. These regular moments of individual attention matter. Having another adult to share stories with, celebrate successes and offer encouragement can help children grow in confidence and discover more enjoyment in reading. Our volunteers also get to know the children and their interests, often finding that a conversation about a book becomes a much-valued part of the week.

Our volunteers describe what the experience means to them:



"I decided to become a volunteer reader because it was continuation of working with children after I retired. I love that lightbulb moment when a child suddenly realises that they are able to read a text and enjoy what they are reading! I particularly remember a child from a couple of years ago – he was only interested in the scented stickers to begin with! By the end of the year, he was able to read much more of the story and talk about what was happening. I loved seeing his progress." – Mrs Laing.



"It has been my privilege to read with children from Reception to Year 4 and encourage them as they practise reading. For a long time, I have felt that it would be a great benefit to Society if everyone put a small amount into making the world around them a little better. So, I volunteered to spend a couple of hours each week helping schoolchildren with their reading. It has been encouraging to see children who didn't want to read begin to enjoy reading. I remember one child who suddenly realised they really could read, and their eyes lit up with joy. It is my hope that society, the school, families and children will have benefited a little from my input, I know I have." – Mr Kelly



“Having a few hours spare each week, I wanted to make a difference supporting children in a volunteer position. I've always read for pleasure and enjoyed sharing books with my children when they were younger. When the opportunity to volunteer arose, it felt like the perfect role. The staff and children have been so welcoming and supportive that it felt like 'home' in no time at all. I love building positive relationships where children feel safe to 'have a go' with trickier words. We often share laughter, expressing our thoughts and feelings about what we are reading. I love how honest and passionate the children are. It's rewarding watching the children progress, their skills develop, and how they sit taller with their growing confidence. I look forward to my weekly volunteer session and catching up on the latest chapters in the books.” – Mrs Rossiter



As a Reading Volunteer I have been a part of the School Community for the past 14 years. During this time I have had the pleasure of getting to know many children and staff at the School. Each week I spend time on a one-to-one basis with 10 children over 2 hours and help them to practice their reading and talk about the books they have chosen. The books are graded according to difficulty in colour bands and it's very rewarding to see pupils grow in confidence and ability as they make progress during the year. You don't need any special skills to do this job, just a little time and patience, plus the ability to encourage and support those children who need a little help.” – Mr Marshall

We would like to thank all our reading volunteers for the time, patience and enthusiasm they bring to MSJ. Their contribution is greatly appreciated by staff and children alike.

How to get involved

If you have some time available during the school week and would be interested in becoming a reading volunteer, please get in touch with the school before the end of September to find out more about what is involved. We would be pleased to hear from you.

Whether you are listening to reading at school or sharing a favourite book at home, thank you for the encouragement you give our children. We look forward to a year of good books, lively conversations and growing confidence in reading!