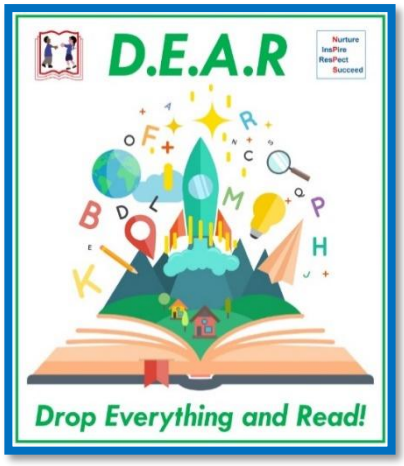
NEWFIELD PARK PRIMARY ACADEMY

Principal: Mr S Payne
Chief Executive Officer: Sir Mark Grundy MSc FRSA
Email: info@nppa.shirelandcat.net
Website: www.newfieldparkprimary.academy

Whittingham Rd, Halesowen,
West Midlands, B63 3TP
Tel: 01384 818640

Reading for Pleasure Offer

Drop Everything and Read (D.E.A.R) / Storytime



Every week, children across school will have at least two sessions (lasting approximately 20 minutes each) to 'Drop Everything and Read'. These sessions are based on the evidence that children need quality, independent time to explore their books and foster a love for reading. In addition to this and again based on research, teachers will also take this time to read their own book, role-modelling to the children what a 'master reader' looks like. These sessions are protected in the timetable and must happen each week. As well as quiet reading, the sessions are also used for 'book talk' where children can discuss, recommend and ask questions to each other pertaining to their books. Question stems are available for all pupils (and teachers) in school to aid them.

"Drop Everything and Read is something that I love because if you don't have time to read at home you can read in school! We love it." - Molly

Reading Certificates

As with some schools, our children collect 'reads' for how much reading they are doing at home *and* at school. This has been something the school has done for many years and its success continues to grow. Children are encouraged to get an adult to sign their reading record and importantly, add a comment about what they have enjoyed about the book so far. As children move through the school, this is given more priority with pupils encouraged to write in the reading records themselves!

Children are then given bespoke certificates once they reach certain milestones. It's a great way for a child to see just how much of a reading role-model they are to other children! In the last year, over 1,400 certificates were handed out to children across school, that's over 40,000 documented reads!

"I really enjoy receiving the certificates for all the reading I do at home and in school. It gets us all excited to read more pages and more books." - George

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Reading for Pleasure Offer

Author Visits

As a school we are part of the Dudley Book Group, which historically enabled us to go to the Earls High School (nearby) to hear authors speak about their books! We found this so empowering to children that we have now become one of the Dudley Book Group's key Primary schools, which allows us to have lots more authors visit us here at Newfield! Whenever possible, these author visits are supplemented by children then studying the book in school to ensure that these wonderful moments result in long-term reading engagement. Over the past few years, we've been lucky enough to have Phillip Reeve, Christopher Edge, Sarah McIntyre, Kenneth Oppel, Peter Bunzl, P.G. Bell, Jacquelien Wilson, Onjali Rauf, Frank Cotterell-Boyce, Katherine Barr and Sharna Jackson in to discuss their latest books! We also regularly take part in online visits using Scholastic, Collins Books and LoveReading4Kids.

"I really love the author visits because it's so cool to hear from a real author, especially as we can then read their book. They inspire me to write!" - Shradhaa

Secret Reader

Every week, Early Years staff invite a 'Secret Reader' in on a Friday to read to the children! The reader may be a parent, a governor, a member of staff, an older child or even a member of the local community. The Secret Reader brings along a book, poem or non-fiction text to read to the year group. Children then ask questions about the book and about their Secret Reader for that week!

Comic books, Magazines and Newspapers

Comics are available for children to read during Drop Everything and Read sessions (D.E.A.R) throughout the week. Additionally, we have a range of magazines (including National Geo Kids) and newspapers (First News) for children to read and enjoy!

"I really like reading the magazines as they tell me about real things I'm interested in and teach me things. There are cookery books too which I like to read!" - Lily

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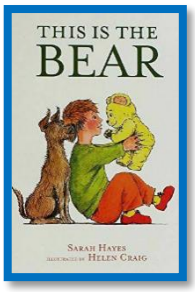
Reading for Pleasure Offer

Reading corners and libraries

In line with recent advice by the Department for Education, our Reading corners and libraries have been revamped to make them as appealing as possible to children! We have 'stripped back' our bookcases, to ensure that new, high-quality texts are front facing and enticing for children. Each teacher has spent time to create an area where children can sit and 'get lost in a book'! Additionally, teachers supplement this area with book recommendations for other children. Our communal areas have quiet, calming music so children can sit back and enjoy a book on a beanbag or sofa – they're very popular!

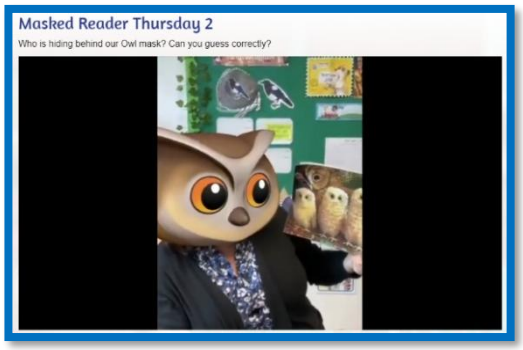
Previous Years books (Re-reading)



Research shows that children really benefit from re-reading stories and poems they have read in previous years. We've spent money to ensure that children (especially in Key Stage One) have access to some of their absolute favourites! These books are then kept separately to others, with children enjoying them during our Drop Everything and Read sessions. We're always adding to this ever-growing collection!

World Book Day events

Each year, the school does one-off World Book Day events to promote a love of reading. In recent years, children in all classes decorated their doors with their favourite books, brought books in to recommend to other year groups, visited The Portal to read e-books projected onto the huge screen and even held book quizzes! Recently, teachers became the 'Masked Reader' and read a section of their favourite book out; children had to guess the book and the teacher! We also held our own Reading Book Café where children could explore new genres and had a Reading World Cup where books competed against each other to see which was the most popular!



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Reading for Pleasure Offer

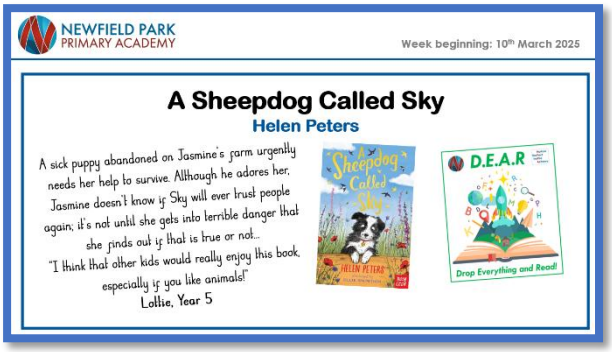
"What I'm Reading"

We're always asking the children what they are reading, but what about the teachers!? Teachers regularly update their 'What I'm Reading' on their classroom doors and also discuss this with children. The notice details what their favourite book is along with what they're currently reading. At times this may be a 'grown-up' book to show that adults read older literature, or it may be a book that could be read by the children in the year group!

Theatre visits

Every year we always want to give some of our children the experience of visiting a theatre. We then use these fantastic experiences as part of our English Teaching Sequence to help children with their reading and writing. In recent years, we have seen an adaptation of *Holes* by Louis Sachar and *One Snowy Day* by Nick Butterworth. Additionally, we've also invited theatre groups into school; recently, Year 6 enjoyed a World War One poetry workshop!

Read All About It!



There are televisions in school which are updated weekly to reflect key news stories that are of interest to the children. These news stories are available to read throughout the week at break, lunchtimes and as children walk through school. The news stories selected focus on things that are relevant to children's lives, as well as focusing (where possible) on local stories. Additionally, each week the news updated includes an author of the month, Book Brags, word of the week, did you Know facts as well as a spelling or grammar game to play e.g. Boggle!

"I always find it useful on a Monday to see what the latest news is after the weekend. The local news stories from Halesowen are also great." - Oliver

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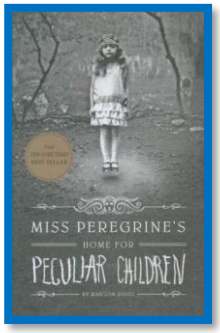
Reading for Pleasure Offer

Reading (for Pleasure) Reps!

We ask teachers from Year 4 to Year 5 to select children who have a real *love* for reading to become Reading Ambassadors. These ambassadors are used in a variety of roles, promoting reading across the whole school. They will visit other classes to recommend books, promote book-talk across school and ensure our communal areas of engaging and up-to-date. They also run a weekly reading club, during a lunchtime. Additionally, these reading ambassadors will be involved with any author visits to school.

The Book Wish Box!



Really want to read a book but it's not in the library? The Book Wish Box is for you! If children have been recommended a book that they really want to read but it is not yet in our library (often because it's a new book) they can post the 'wish' in the Book Wish Box and the school will purchase at least one copy of the book for the child to read. A recent example of this would be *Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children* by Ransom Riggs which was purchased for a Year 6 pupil! In the past year, more than 50 books have been bought and given to children across school!

> *"The Wish Box is brilliant. If there's a new (or old) book that you really want and it's not in the library you can post it in there, explaining why you'd want to read it. Then at some point it might appear for you to read with your name on it!" - Ophelia*

Superhero Readers!

Our Reading Volunteers scheme, known as *Superhero Readers* invites parents and carers in to read regularly with children across the school. Often, this will involve four or five children in a morning or afternoon for a brief session, ensuring children do not miss valuable learning time. The volunteers are trained before coming in to ensure they know how to read with the children and what kind of questions they could ask them. In 2025, we have 13 Superhero Readers currently working with over 60 children across school.

> *"Our Superhero Reader is so helpful and kind. She's helped me to improve my reading and she makes it fun. It's so kind they give up their time to read with us." - Sundus*

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Reading for Pleasure Offer

Halesowen Library

We have very good links with our local library (Halesowen) with children visiting every year to renew library cards, find new books to read and even to learn about the DEWEY system. If you want more information on your local library, click here: https://www.better.org.uk/library/dudley/halesowen-library

Recommended Author/Book Lists

We have a recommended Author List for Years 3 and 4 and Years 5 and 6 which was created by staff and children. This list includes recommendations from suggested reading spines (such as Pie Corbett), suggestions from teachers, current and previous pupils. It encompasses a mixture of contemporary and classical authors from a wide range of backgrounds and featuring various different genres.

Sir Phillip Pullman
Sir Philip Pullman (CBE) is an English author of many high-selling books, including the fantasy trilogy *His Dark Materials*, which begins with Northern Lights as seen in the image on the right. If you enjoy fantasy, action and drama, Sir Phillip Pullman is an excellent choice for any reader wanting to see how a master of their craft goes about their world.

Eva Ibbotson
Born in Vienna, Eva Ibbotson came to England as a small girl. In her long career, she wrote many books across a whole range of genres. Possibly her three most famous books are *Which, The Secret of Platform 13* and *Journey to the River Sea*. From dramatic action to slow, romantic novels, Eva Ibbotson is a true great!

Peter Bunzl
An author we hosted at Newfield in 2020 who is a brilliant choice for anyone who enjoys fantasy! His best-selling "Cog heart" series (consisting of four books) is a contemporary classic which is used in schools across the UK. His first book, Cog heart - published in 2016- was shortlisted for a whole host of awards, including the famous "Waterstones children's book prize." A great choice for fantastical, inquisitive and imaginative readers!

The Reading Newsletter

We create a bespoke reading newsletter which goes home monthly for children and parents across school. This reading newsletter is packed full of the latest releases available in school, the local library or in book shops. Additionally, both children and parents send us recommendations which make their way onto the newsletter for all to see! As of 2025, this reading newsletter is now shared across the Shireland Collegiate Academy Trust too!

"The reading newsletter is great. I love reading suggestions from the staff and children; we often go and find these in the library afterwards!" – Parent (Year 2)

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Reading for Pleasure Offer

The latest literature!

It is important that we always keep our libraries up-to-date with the latest books; we spend money each year to make sure this happens across the school. We research the latest recommended books, using websites such as The Book Trust, BooksForTopics, CLPE and LoveReading4Schools. We have excellent links with Peters book store in Birmingham, visiting the store itself to select books that link to our topics and that we *know* children will love!

The Travelling Book Bag!

In 2022, we started our Travelling Book Bag which goes home to students in Reception and Nursery. The Book Bag includes specially selected picture books for children to share at home with a parents/carers. Additionally, they have a puppet/toy which links to the story so they can act out parts of the narrative (e.g. and toy Owl for *Owl Babies*) There's even a sachet of hot chocolate for them to enjoy while they get lost in the books!

> *"Arlo was very excited about the book bag and the hot chocolate has already been drunk! Thank you for this; he's very happy!" – Parent (Nursery)*

Apps and e-Books (Collins Big Cat, CENTURY, Teach your Monster to Read)

We use a range of apps across to school to engage children in reading and help with their fluency/comprehension skills. In Key Stage One, Collins e-books are used to allow children to access a wider range of literature at home and Teach your Monster to Read is often used to help with Phonics in Year 1. In Key Stage Two, both Century Learning can be used with specific children to help with their fluency, comprehension and spelling. We check that all of these apps are having an impact on children regularly!

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Reading for Pleasure Offer

Dudley Children's Book Award

Each year, we take part in the Dudley Children's Book Award. A select group of students from Key Stage 2 have to read 5-6 books which are on a short list from the Dudley Book Group. They then discuss these as a group and vote on which one is their favourite. The children are then invited to an award-ceremony later in the year!

The Portal

Our Portal (Immersive Space) is a wonderful and unique resource which we use for reading at Newfield Park. Each year group will visit the Portal on a number of occasions throughout the year to read picture-books which are projected onto the gigantic screens! We then use this to help our learning (whether reading or writing) so children are fully immersed in the book. A picture of this can be seen here of *Journey* by Aaron Becker projected onto two walls!

"The Portal really helps with writing as it takes you somewhere that we can't actually go to, like a magical rainforest or a planet in space! It really helps your imagination and description." – Freddie

The Newfield Lunchtime Library!

Once Year 1 children have finished their lunch, they can visit the Lunchtime Library Box in the hall to enjoy a book of their choice. Whether it's a story or a fact book, this quiet time helps children develop a love of reading in a calm, relaxed setting once they've finished their lunch. The box is *constantly* being updated, so no lunchtime should ever be the same!

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Newfield ParkCast LIVE!

On Thursday mornings, older pupils take centre stage in a special assembly where they present a speech they've researched and written on a topic they care deeply about. Delivered to an audience of Years 2–6, these speeches are followed by a Q&A session, encouraging thoughtful discussion and active listening.

This initiative celebrates oracy and gives children a real platform to express themselves, build confidence, and practise essential speaking and listening skills. It also links directly to key findings in the Writing Framework published in 2025, which highlights the importance of purposeful communication and audience awareness. Newfield ParkCast LIVE helps children see themselves as writers, thinkers and communicators. They may even have the chance to record their speech on our Newfield ParkCast for the entire world to listen to!

Guess Who?

Our 'Guess Who?' reading display in the middle of school is always a very popular place to find children! Staff from across the school choose their favourite books from a selected genre. It might be teacher, teaching assistant, member of office staff or a lunchtime supervisor. You've really got to have your thinking cap on!

Children are invited to guess which member of staff picked each book, before lifting the tab to reveal the answer. It's a fun and engaging way to get everyone talking about books, sharing recommendations, and discussing their likes and dislikes with staff.

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Reading for Pleasure Offer

Latest Research and Next Steps

We are always looking at ways to improve our Reading for Pleasure 'offer' and welcome any new ideas. We are part of an Open University 'Teacher Research Group' which is focused on ways to improve reading engagement in school; a number of ideas you see above have already come from this group! Additionally, we use the latest research from the Education Endowment Fund (EEF) to identify new ways to engage pupils in reading.

If you have a fantastic idea to engage children in reading, or would like to get in contact to ask some questions about the initiatives listed above, please get in touch by emailing troddison@nppa.shirelandcat.net