

FERNDOWN MIDDLE SCHOOL

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Dear Parents/Carers,

One of our key focuses this year is improving the reading skills of our students. Reading, as I'm sure you're aware, is a crucial skill which prepares our students for their future academic careers at GCSE and A-Level, and indeed, is an essential tool which will be necessary to their lives beyond school.

To emphasise the importance of reading, and of your support at home in helping your child to become a more proficient reader, I have included some statistics which will hopefully serve to highlight some of the key impacts that improved reading skill has on our children.

Reading for progress and educational development

- There is a difference in reading performance equivalent to just over a year's schooling between young people who never read for enjoyment and those who read for up to 30 minutes per day
- Children who read books often at age 10 and more than once a week at age 16 gain higher results in maths, vocabulary and spelling tests at age 16 than those who read less regularly
- DfE analysis suggests that if all pupils in England read for enjoyment every day or almost every day, the boost to Key Stage 2 performance would be the equivalent of a rise of eight percentage points

Reading for economic development

- In England and Northern Ireland the median hourly wage of workers with the highest levels of literacy is 94% higher than for workers who have the lowest levels of literacy

Reading for well-being and emotional development

Research has indicated that reading fiction is associated with higher levels of empathy and improved relationships with others.

All statistics can be found at: <https://readingagency.org.uk/about/impact/002-reading-facts-1/>

We often get asked by parents what they can do to help their children improve their reading. Here are our top five tips for reading success:

1. Ask your child to look up words they don't understand by using a dictionary and recording their meaning
2. Check your child understands the words in context
3. Make a bullet point summary of key events in a chapter
4. Ask them questions about what they have just read to check their understanding of the plot, characters and the main ideas
5. Get your child to make predictions about what might happen next and to explain the reason for their opinion

We encourage all children to read books on our recommended reading lists, which can be found on the school website and we expect all children in school to have a fiction book with them at all times.

However, we also encourage children to read a wide range of materials so looking at newspaper articles, non-fiction books and magazines and even internet blogs and web pages can all help to boost your child's confidence and enjoyment of reading which will inevitably have a positive impact on their reading proficiency.



Grammar SOS!

We would also like to take this opportunity to request you support our focus on grammar over the coming half term. We have noticed that lots of children are not using basic punctuation in their writing; capital letters, full stops and commas are all lacking across all subject areas.

We are aiming to tackle this in school by really focusing on these basic skills in all subjects when we are assessing children's work but we would ask that you read your children's homework and help them to make sure they are using these fundamental aspects in their writing.

We set lots of grammar tasks in school but it would be brilliant if this was reinforced at home. Please see below for useful websites:

http://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/ks2/english/spelling_grammar/

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/ks3/english/reading/sentences/revision/5/>

We thank you in advance for your continued support; please don't hesitate to contact us if you have any queries.

Kind regards,

Mrs K Moloney
Subject Leader of English