



# Head's

# Update

May 2024

KEEPING YOU INFORMED FROM MRS O'CONNOR

## Alfred Lord Tennyson School Improvement Update

Dear Parents and Carers,

Reading is one of our whole school priorities—it is an essential life skill and supports children's development in so many different ways. As a school we have put lots of strategies in place to raise the profile of reading and encourage the children to read which I wanted to share with you but **WE NEED YOUR HELP!**

### Why is reading so important?

Recent research has shown that pupils who read for 20 minutes a day will experience 1,800,000 words per year. This falls to 282,000 words for five minutes of reading each day and to 8,000 words for one minute each day. This experience of words is so crucial in pupils developing not only their understanding and enjoyment of reading, but also in improving their spelling, writing, imagination and their understanding of the world.

### What does ALTS do to encourage reading?

In EYFS and KS1, reading is taught in our daily phonics sessions and as part of the English curriculum. Reading in KS2 is taught within English lessons, with one lesson per week being dedicated to comprehension, and during skills sessions which develop either a fluency or a comprehension skill. Children are exposed to a range of texts and have access to a wide range of ability-banded reading books from a range of well-established schemes. 'Free reader' books are available to pupils who have completed the reading scheme. Free reading books have been differentiated to meet the needs of younger and older pupils. Those children who receive phonics interventions using the Sounds Write approach also have access to Sounds Write reading books, which are matched to the sounds that they are learning. This year we have added lots of new books in our libraries and to our reading scheme.

Other initiatives include:

- KS2 book exchange in place at Alfred Street where children can bring in books from home that they no longer want and exchange with a book from the cupboard
- Book recommendations
- KS2 '100 Read Challenge'
- Staff sharing the books they are reading
- Reading rewards
- KS2 Reading shed—COMING SOON!
- Lunchtime Story Club





### How can Parents and Carers help?

We have seen a dramatic decline in the number of children reading at home. Parents have a really important role in helping their children to become better, fluent, and more confident readers. We are working really hard in school to develop the essential phonics skills that they need to decode the words in front of them, but reading with your children at home really helps them to progress and develop much faster.

Children are encouraged to read their school book daily at home, to enable them to practice reading skills taught at school. Children have access to the school library at least once per week and have the opportunity to borrow a school library book to read at home, in addition to our reading scheme books. Our website offers a range of resources to help parents support their children's reading at home.

### [Parent Guides to Support your Child - Alfred Lord Tennyson School \(alts.northants.sch.uk\)](http://alts.northants.sch.uk)

We ask that children in Reception and KS1 read the same phonics scheme book **3 times**. The first time is to familiarise themselves with the words in the text. The second is to develop greater fluency and expression and a possible third reading will improve this further and help with their comprehension and understanding of the text.

On the last page there is also a poster 'Reading at Home with Your Child' that has strategies to help you support your child.

### Coming Soon!

After Half term, we will be holding a 'Stay and Read' session at our Infant Site.

On a **Tuesday morning at 8.45am**, starting on **Tuesday 4th June**, we encourage you to come into the classroom and hear your child read. If you would like any support with strategies to hear your child, the class teacher will be happy to model this to you.

If 'Stay and Read' is successful at the Infants, we will extend this to our Juniors.

Next half term, for those children who are not yet free readers, we will also be putting stickers in their reading books with reading targets on. This will enable parents and carers to see what the children need to be developing in order to make further progress. Once these targets have been met, we will issue a new set of targets. We would appreciate parents support on working on these targets. When you hear them read, please comment in their reading log on how well they are developing these skills.

Children will also be given a named zip wallet for them to store their reading record and book in, to help prevent damage to the books. We have noticed that a number of books have been spoiled as a result of leaking water bottles so we hope this will help to protect them. Please encourage your child to store them in the wallet.

**NEW READING INITIATIVE!** We will also be launching a new reading whole school challenge, with the aim of encouraging every child to read every school day. Children will compete in their classes to get the highest weekly average and go into a league table. We will also run 'drop in' reading clubs within school for children to come to read, if they have not had a chance to read at home 5 times that week, and to collect a reading stamp. Our weekly key stage winners will get an extra 5 minutes play, and the overall class winner at the end of the half term will get a class reward. Our league table will be displayed in our halls and our winners announced on our Facebook Page.

