Promoting a Love of reading at the Hollybrook Schools

Research specifically shows that the benefits of reading are more likely to be felt when reading takes place through free choice. The outcomes of reading will occur more often and more strongly if reading is enjoyable in the first instance. This is why the 'for pleasure' element of reading for pleasure is so important.

Reading is not something that children should do in school; it needs to be an everyday part of our lives, something we choose to do at all ages. At Hollybrook Infant and Junior school, we want to build a culture of reading for enjoyment that will develop a lifelong love of reading which could benefit children in so many ways. We recognise that reading for pleasure will encourage children to succeed both academically and socially.

At Hollybrook Infant and Junior school we are all passionate to make a difference and promote this love of reading. We aim to empower children to explore the multitude of worlds beyond their own world. So how do we do this? First of all we need to see this beyond performance league tables and transform the whole school ethos, so that EVERYONE loves reading. Here are some of the things we do:

1. Class reading time

Reading to the class remains a priority and it doesn't have to fit into the curriculum, the timetable or have an objective which needs ticking off. Everyday, every class are read to by their teacher during a set time. It isn't gobbled up at the end of the day by tidying up and getting ready for home time. This is a non-negotiable!

2. Involving the community

At Hollybrook Infant and Junior we like to involve our parents. We aim to support parents with tips and techniques for helping children develop reading, comprehension skills and a love of reading.

We send reading books home which not only can be read to parents but books which parents can read to their children, so that stories can be enjoyed together. A comprehensive recommended book list for each year group is sent home and will be available on our school website.

3. Book Swap

Throughout the year we promote a bookshelf that is known as the 'Book Swap Station'. This is where children can bring in books from home that they no longer want and swap it for another that has been donated. If children can see a book they have brought in or recommended on the bookshelves or being enjoyed by their peers, it can really help them to appreciate the value of the enjoyment of books.

4. World Book Day or other reading events:

Like other schools around the world we too celebrate World Book Day! It is however important to remember that it shouldn't be just about the children dressing up in a superhero costume that they've bought from the supermarket. We ask the children to bring in a book from home, one that includes their favourite book character; or if the children don't have books at home, we support them in school to select from books they have read here. The timetable is abandoned and we truly celebrate books that day. Children can dress up but, more importantly, we ask them to come "in role" as their character and parade on stage in a whole school assembly. This is great fun and a Hollybrook tradition. Most staff too are great fun and also dress up and role play throughout the day.

Such an event can give children a real reason for understanding characters, expressing preferences, talking about books they have enjoyed and hearing about books from their peers that they might not otherwise have chosen to read. And perhaps, most importantly, it enables them to see the power of a shared love of reading.

5. A reading environment

It may seem obvious, but the school environment can really make a big impact. All classrooms have clearly thought out reading corners and much emphasis has been placed on not only how they look, but how accessible, welcoming they are and stocked up with good quality, appropriate books. Sometimes less is best!

Staff themselves play a big part in this as they are part of the environment as well. Teachers and other staff promote reading for pleasure simply by having a copy of a book or magazine they are reading on their desk and by being ready to discuss it with the children if they ask what they are reading.