



Kingsnorth Church of England Primary School

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Headteacher: Mr Iain Witts

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Dear Parents / Carers,

New Approach to Reading in school

We wanted to take this opportunity to share with you in more detail some of the changes to our reading approach in school.

As an English Hub school we are committed to a curriculum that prioritises reading, allowing children to be fluent and confident readers who also enjoy reading for pleasure. Research shows that reading for pleasure is the single most important factor in a child's future success and our approach to reading places this front and centre.

We are very grateful to those parents who have brought to our attention the disappointment with removing AR quizzes as part of our reading ethos in school. This decision was based on a number of different reasons;

- The wish to distance ourselves from the competitive aspect of AR quizzing. When we spoke to a number of children across the school, they told us that quizzing created additional anxiety and pressure for them.
- Recent research from EEF showing that AR has no effect on reading attainment
- Latest guidance from AR that quizzes were originally designed only for KS2 pupils in order to measure word count and not enjoyment
- Latest guidance from the DFE outlining the new approach to teaching reading in schools nationally. This guidance advises schools that pupil motivation to read;

"....should not be driven by their determination to move onto a next level or band, or to gain a certificate for reading more words. Rewarding pupils in this way may offer a short-term boost, but the motivational effect quickly wears off..... Further, if pupils' focus is on counting the number of new books or words, they are unlikely to re-read a book, even if they loved it. They begin to value themselves and others according to the number of books read or the 'level' at which they are reading."

- Consideration of the amount of screen time the children have at school
- Shared experiences with our English Hub schools

Whilst the majority of children are comfortable with this decision, we understand that there are some children who do miss the quiz experience and value it. As a result, from **Monday 11 March, children will be able to access AR quizzes at home from 4pm – 7pm**. I hope that you are able to celebrate this at home, as a family.

We thought it would be helpful to answer some of the questions raised by parents in order to clarify how we are moving forward together.



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My child is now not motivated to read because they cannot quiz

Our aim is for children to be motivated to read and not driven by rewards in school. If your child feels happier with quizzing as part of this then they are now able to do so at home. At school, our lessons have many motivating opportunities; dedicated library time, book club sessions in which children discuss and share their favourite books, dedicated story time every day, reading lessons discussing books and making connections between stories and authors

My child was looking forward to joining AR and having their name read out in Celebration Worship

AR is just being used in a different way in school and so all children will be able to join when they are ready. There are now other ways that children's reading is celebrated which are still shared in our Celebration assembly; Reading certificates, book reviews, special mentions by their Class Teacher. Children who chose to apply for a Blue Peter Reading Badge have also been celebrated.

What is an AR Star Test?

The children sit a STAR test three times a year. The children answer a number of questions on screen and the level of difficulty of the questions adapts according to the child's ability. The STAR test gives each child a reading age, fluency rate and recommended AR range for selecting books. Class Teachers use STAR tests as part of their overall assessment of a child's reading attainment and progress.

Does my child have to complete a book review before changing their books?

No! Children are invited to complete book reviews if they wish to. We have had an enormous amount of children choosing to do this and all of these fabulous reviews are also celebrated and included in the Library Book Review folder so that all children can read and be inspired by these.

Does my child just have to choose books at their range?

No! We suggest that children choose one book for fluency reading and one book that may be out of range so that they are exposed to higher level vocabulary. These may be books that you as parents could read to and with your children at home for pleasure. We have reinforced this message in classes this week. Please continue to use the reading logs to capture your daily reading at home with your child. This ensures that we continue to work as a tight team to support your child's reading and you, as parents.

I hope that this provides a deeper insight into the hard work at play in school in order to bring reading to life in school and to create a lifelong love of reading in our children.

Kind regards

Justin Clark

Kim Bate

Iain Witts