

“Every child is a unique child of God.”



Top Tips to Encourage Reading for Pleasure

Whinmoor St Paul's C of E Primary School

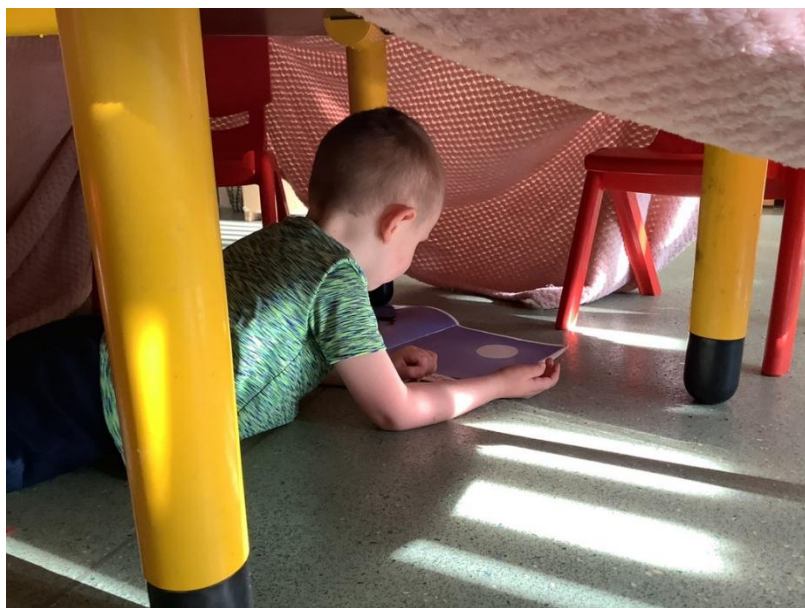


*Let Your Light **Shine!***

Reading for pleasure is something that is a key focus at Whinmoor St Paul's and all classes have a dedicated Reading Area where children are given the opportunity to access a wide range of books in a comfortable space, with input from the pupils in each class. All year groups have a wide range of designated fiction, non-fiction, and poetry books that they can choose to read in independent reading time.

A wealth of evidence is available for demonstrating how enjoyment of reading has a positive impact on attainment and wellbeing for pupils. With this knowledge, we prioritise Reading for Pleasure.

Recent research from the National Literacy Trust shows that reading for enjoyment is at its lowest level in twenty years. Only one in three children aged 8 to 18 say they enjoy reading in their free time, and fewer than one in five are reading daily outside school.¹



1. <https://literacytrust.org.uk/research-services/research-reports/parents-support-for-young-childrens-literacy-at-home-in-2024/>

Sparkling Excitement!

Whether we're parents or teachers, we all play an important part in helping children discover the joy of reading for pleasure. In a world filled with smartphones, social media, and endless streaming, getting children excited about a traditional book can feel challenging. However, there are many ways we can nurture a love of reading—and even rethink what reading for pleasure looks like.

At Whinmoor St Paul's our work with Parents, the Leeds Library Service and Noctua have taught us a great deal about supporting reading for enjoyment. Here are some of our favourite tips: simple, practical ideas to spark enthusiasm for reading, both at home and in the classroom.

1. Let Children Choose!

Autonomy is powerful. Our class Reading Surveys have evidenced that Children love to have choice and ownership over what they are reading. This means they are far more likely to engage with a book when they've had a say in picking it. Whether at home, in the classroom, or in the library, try offering a small selection and letting them choose. This sense of ownership makes reading feel like a treat, not a task.

“My favourite session is our Drop Everything and Read sessions! We get to choose our favourite books from our classroom or library and just relax and enjoy something that I am interested in reading.”



2. Mix it Up!

Who says you have to read while sitting on the sofa or lying in bed? The photos in this document show children reading in all kinds of unusual places—inside blanket forts, at a picnic or outside in tepees! At Whinmoor St Paul's we often set challenges like “read in the strangest place you can,” and children love sharing their creative photos. Switching up the reading location makes the experience feel exciting, and this sense of adventure can be especially motivating for children who aren't naturally keen readers.



3. Make Space and Time for Reading

Children need uninterrupted time for reading – children who enjoy reading will read more frequently, but also reading more frequently can increase their enjoyment.

For some children, reading targets can feel overwhelming. Try setting lower, more achievable targets, like reading for five minutes. This can really help families and children to make reading feel more manageable. Research shows that more manageable reading targets can help increase overall reading rates. Remember to celebrate those milestones, however small. Quality has much more impact than quantity.





4. Listening to Stories can make them Enjoyable and Accessible!

Listening to an adult read aloud is a wonderful way for children to develop a love of stories while feeling safe and connected. Families can make this special by choosing a comfortable spot, slowing down, and enjoying the rhythm of the words together. You don't need to finish a whole book—just a few pages is enough to spark curiosity. Pause occasionally to look at pictures, wonder aloud about what might happen next, or share a favourite part. Most importantly, let your child relax and simply listen; your voice, attention, and warmth are what make story time truly magical.



5. Make Reading Joyful Again!

Reading can be a joyful escape, and families can create that magic without spending much at all. Snuggling up together in a comfy spot, using silly voices for characters, and laughing through the exciting or funny parts can turn even simple books into a big adventure. When adults show that reading is fun—not a chore—children start to see books as a place they *want* to go, a world they can return to again and again. These warm, playful moments help children fall in love with stories and build a lifelong love of reading.

