

Northmead Reading Newsletter

May
2023



THINK BEFORE YOU
SPEAK. READ BEFORE
YOU THINK.
—Fran Lebowitz



Thank you to all families who supported our recent book fair. We took £553 in total, which meant the school has generated £271 in rewards which we can use to buy books to update our library and book corners.



Sleep and reading fluency

I recently read a very interesting article by Ross Morrison McGill of Teacher Toolkit, who summarised findings from a research paper with a very grand title: “Selective Inhibition of Mirror Invariance for Letter Consolidated by Sleep Doubles Reading fluency”

Mirror invariance refers to the ability to recognise letters regardless of their orientation (e.g., distinguishing between ‘b’ and ‘d’).

The findings of the research were, in simple terms:

Targeted training prevents mirror confusion for letter (b-d) in first graders and sleep boosts the magnitude, automaticity and duration of this learning. They found that if children slept following the training it doubled the reading fluency in the targeted group.

The researchers found that a specific type of brain activity during sleep, known as sleep spindles, plays a crucial role in consolidating letter recognition skills and improving reading fluency.

So what can we, as parents and teachers, take from this research?

Sleep can help consolidate learning, so good sleep routines for children help to develop their reading fluency and overall academic performance.

We should target our teaching and allow children time to practise identifying letters that are easily confused (distinguishing between ‘b’ and ‘d’ or ‘p’ and ‘q’).

Sleeping after targeted teaching is not possible in school (!) but perhaps taking part in reading activities before bedtime could take advantage of the brain’s consolidation processes during sleep.

If you want to read the scientific paper for yourself, click on the following link

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0960982220317425#abs0010>

Picture Books

Picture books often conjure up an image of reading with small children but they are just as captivating and beneficial for older children.

“SHARING PICTURE BOOKS WITH CHILDREN LEADS TO AMAZING CONVERSATIONS. IN THE BEST PICTURE BOOKS THERE IS A GAP BETWEEN THE PICTURES AND THE WORDS, A GAP THAT IS FILLED BY THE CHILD'S IMAGINATION.” —

ANTHONY BROWNE, CHILDREN'S LAUREATE 2009–2011

The shortlist has just been announced for the Klaus Flugge Prize which celebrates outstanding newcomers to picture book illustration. If you scan the QR code below (Or click this link https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1FWH3rNUnMH-V-6vrOIQnKrPSa4litzFqghf0-6boybo/edit#slide=id.ga3ec909640_1_139) it will take you to a presentation with guides to the books on the list.

Thank you to



Mathew Tobin
@Mat_at_Brookes

for sharing this presentation.



Wordless Picture Books

A good reader needs comprehension skills. Picture books without any words at all can be a useful tool to help develop skills of inference. With no words for guidance, they have to figure this out using the illustrations and their imagination.

Sharing wordless picture books helps your child hone their storytelling techniques, developing an increased vocabulary and enhanced verbal skills as they tell the story in their own words. You will be surprised by the volume of talk generated by a wordless book.

Click on this link to read an article which gives tips for parents about how to best share wordless picture books.
<https://www.readingrockets.org/article/sharing-wordless-picture-books>

