

Northmead Reading Newsletter

September
2023



Welcome to our first reading newsletter of this academic year



Rob Biddulph of 'Draw with Rob' fame will be visiting Northmead on Tuesday 19th September. We are excited to welcome this multi award winning author and illustrator of children's books. Many of us were introduced to 'Draw with Rob' during the coronavirus pandemic when we took part in his twice weekly online tutorials.

Rob has written a trilogy of longer novels suitable for junior aged children: Peanut Jones and the illustrated City, Peanut Jones and the Twelve Portals and the book he is promoting when he visits us; Peanut Jones and the end of the rainbow

Do visit parentmail and purchase a copy by the end of today, Tuesday 12th September if you would like Rob to sign it on the day.



Accelerated Reader

At Northmead we use Accelerated Reader. For those of you new to this system, the following may help clarify how we select home reading materials for your children.

Children firstly take a star reader test. This is a computer-based test that measures a child's reading ability through a series of 34 questions. Every test for every child is different, and the computer selects different questions for each child dependent on how well they answer the previous questions. Essentially the computer adapts the test to suit your child.

Once the star reader tests have been completed teachers are provided with an individual report for each child in the class. In the front of your child's reading record you will find two pieces of information from this report:

- Your child's reading age (in years and months)
- Your child's ZPD (Zone of Proximal Development)

The ZPD reading score serves as a guide for children as they search for reading materials that will challenge them without being overwhelming. Instead of being given a coloured band from which to choose books, children will be given this range. This is a change from last year.

Home reading material is found in the school library and every fiction book is labelled with the ZPD score so children will be able to easily select books from their range. Those children who are still at the early stages of learning to read will be allocated a book which matches their phonic ability.

Children visit the library weekly with their class, or they can visit before school each day or during lunchtimes. We expect children to independently change their book when they need a new one.

At home we expect children to read at least three times weekly, but preferably every day. This can be recorded in the reading record by the adult.

Year 6 are expected to independently write more lengthy commentaries about their reading.



If you open the front cover of any fiction reading book you will see a sticker like this one.

The **Quiz number** refers to a quiz which children will take after finishing the book.

This quiz is taken on the computer and checks children's comprehension. We recommend that children take the quiz within 24 hours of finishing a book so that the quiz tests comprehension and not memory. Children take these quizzes at school. If you would like to see an example of a quiz, click on the link below:

[Take a sample Accelerated Reader quiz - UK, Ireland and International \(renlearn.co.uk\)](http://renlearn.co.uk)

For every quiz passed children receive a raffle ticket which is entered in to a prize draw at the end of the term.

Book level relates to the ZPD which is also recorded on the front cover

Points- We do not use this system at Northmead, some schools use points to track and target children's reading

Interest level- The interest level attached to the book indicates age group appropriateness. Interest level is based on a book's content including theme, characterisation, and plot. The interest levels are based on the recommendations of the publisher and/or literary book reviews by professional organisations. To help you choose the books most appropriate for your children, Accelerated Reader books are divided into three interest levels:

- LY (Lower Years, Ages 5–8)
- MY (Middle Years, Ages 9–13)
- UY (Upper Years, Ages 14 and above)



In most cases, a book's interest level coordinates with its book level. Many books however, have a low book level but are appropriate for Upper Years and vice versa. For example, Oscar, Cat About Town by James Herriot and Noughts and Crosses by Malorie Blackman have a Book Level of 4.0 since both have short sentences and vocabulary that is simple. Noughts and Crosses, is intended for older pupils therefore it is tagged as Upper Years while Oscar, Cat About Town is tagged as Lower Years.

The bar code on the sticker is the individual code to scan out the book from the library.

What is the accelerated reader word count?

When a child takes a quiz the computer calculates how many words were in the book they have read. This number is added to the child's personal word count. Over the year we have a number of children who reach a million words read. This is celebrated in assembly and they receive a gold badge and certificate. The words read also contributes to the class word count and there is a display in the library indicating how many words each class has read.

Northmead Library

We are very proud of our library provision at Northmead which promotes high quality reading and learning opportunities. We have created a stimulating and welcoming library which is situated in the hub of the school.

The library has been designed:



- To foster and develop the children's pleasure and interest in books.
- To promote independent learning and assist children to acquire and develop information handling skills.
- To encourage children to respect and value books and reading.
- To give children access to a wide range of good quality texts. Books are relevant to the curriculum and the reading abilities of all children. They reflect positive images in terms of race, gender, and disability.

The library has separate areas for fiction and non-fiction books. Fiction books are ordered alphabetically by author, except for the lower reading levels which children can find in labelled boxes. The non-fiction materials are classified under the Dewey Decimal System.

Junior librarians will be appointed from Year 6 and this band of helpers keep the library tidy, ensure the smooth day-to-day running of the library and help other children choose a book to read.

We have spent time and money developing a good range of fiction books in our library. This year our focus is to further develop the non-fiction sections as many of these titles are now becoming outdated.



Some children like to spend time quietly watching the fish in the library!





Save the date:

11th October – 13th October



Key development focus :

To further develop our non-fiction book resources.

More information about this will be included in next month's reading newsletter