



English & Maths at Thorndown Primary School

English

Guided Reading

You may have heard your child talking about guided reading. In KS1 and Year 3, a guided reading session takes place every day. Teachers work with a small number of children to analyse a text in detail. They make sure the children can read each word and they discuss meaning of the text with them. Sometimes, the classrooms are set up as a 'carousel' of activities. This means that there will be an activity laid out on each table and the children will move round to a different table each day, for example:

- Reading topic books
- Grammar activity
- Guided reading with the teacher
- Comprehension activity

Activities may also include: phonics activities, reading newspapers, reading poetry books, role play and practising spellings.

In Years 4,5 and 6, the approach to reading is slightly different. Rather than a daily 20 minute guided reading session, the children receive the equivalent of 2 hours of reading lessons each week. Within these lessons, children are supported to analyse different stimuli (a film or picture for example) and retrieve information from them, interpret and infer actions or thoughts and discuss the choices of the author/creator. After this, each class studies a text together. As a group, the children discuss the text in depth, explore characters' or authors' choices and develop their inference skills. Already, we are seeing a huge improvement in the children's depth of knowledge around a text and their ability to decode unfamiliar texts.

Maths

Teaching for Mastery in Maths - Thorndown is leading the way!

Maths has received a lot of headlines in the press recently and the DfE is investing in a new approach in maths, known as 'teaching for mastery'. At the heart of mastery is the expectation that all children can do well in maths and we hard work to achieve deep and sustainable understanding. As you may already know, we started our journey into mastery last year, when Mrs Gerrard was one of only four teachers in Cambridgeshire selected to be trained by the NCETM (National Centre for Excellence in Teaching Mathematics) to become a Mastery Specialist Teacher. Since then, we have been developing our practice in maths and supporting other schools too. We mainly introduced mastery in Year 5 and 6 classes last year and we saw great results; 79% of our Year 6 children achieved the expected standard in the SATs tests in May, which was 9% above the national average. We have seen increased confidence in our pupils, as well as improved reasoning and problem solving skills.

Maths at Thorndown is going from strength to strength. We are now embedding mastery approaches across the whole school and we have some very exciting news. Mrs Gerrard will be part of a group of 70 Mastery Specialist Teachers who will be participating in a Chinese exchange programme. She will be travelling to Shanghai to spend two weeks visiting schools to learn about Chinese maths teaching. (China is one of the highest performing countries in the world in maths.) Thorndown has also been selected as one of only 35 schools in the country to host the return visit. Two Chinese teachers will be visiting our school in January and will work with some of our children for two weeks. Our teachers, along with many other teachers from across the county, will have the chance to observe their lessons and learn from their practice. We will keep you updated about this exciting project and will be holding open classrooms in the spring term so that you can come and see our maths lessons for yourselves.

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Reading Tip 1!

Revisiting Favourite Books

It is important for children to know that it is okay to revisit old favourites and memories - even if this may seem like 'easy reading'. There's no mad rush to keep moving on, and we all like the comfort of a favourite book sometimes. Comparing and sharing memories of real life and books will help your child to develop empathy.

Want to help you child with maths?

Then come to our

Number Sense Workshop for Parents!

On Thursday 1st November at 9am, we will be holding a parents' information session about developing number sense and fluency. Although this is largely for KS1, parents of KS2 children, who find maths difficult, may find this session really useful, as there'll be lots of and games you can use at home. Please keep your eyes open for a separate letter with details of how to book your place. This can also be found on Facebook. We hope to see you there.

We are also working to develop number sense in Reception and will be holding a workshop for these parents later in the year.

You can also check out the [National Numeracy Website](#) where you will find useful tips and activities to help involve your child with maths.
