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Helping your child with literacy



Costessey Junior School 2014

At Costessey Junior School your child may learn literacy very differently to how you learnt when you were at school. Literacy hasn't changed, just the way we teach it may have.

At Costessey Junior School your child reads daily with Accelerated Reader sessions in class. They will also get the chance to read lots of different texts during lessons as well as those they chose as their reading books.

The children are given as much opportunity as possible to write, they learn different styles of writing and are given different topics to write about.

Your child has weekly literacy skills lessons, where they learn the spelling and grammar rules of the English language.

SPELLINGS

Children are taught their sounds and words created from those sounds, following on from the sound learning they received at infant school.

When children learn to read words they are taught to blend sounds together to create different words.

They are then taught how to segment those words up again when they want to spell them in their writing.

Below are some definitions of the words we might use when working with the children.

phoneme — the smallest single identifiable sound, e.g. the letters 'sh' represent just one sound, but 'sp' represents two (/s/ and /p/)

grapheme — a letter or a group of letters representing one sound, e.g. sh, ch, igh, ough (as in 'though')

blend — to draw individual sounds together to pronounce a word, e.g. s-n-a-p, blended together, reads snap

segment (vb) — to split up a word into its individual phonemes in order to spell it, e.g. the word 'cat' has three phonemes: /c/, /a/, /t/

digraph — two letters making one sound, e.g. sh, ch, th, ph.

split digraph — two letters, split, making one sound, e.g. a-e as in make or i-e in site

vowel digraph two vowels which, together, make one sound, e.g. ai, oo, ow

cluster — two (or three) letters making two (or three) sounds, e.g. the first three letters of 'straight' are a consonant cluster.

mnemonic — a device for memorising and recalling something, such as a snake shaped like the letter 'S'

VC, CVC, CCVC — the abbreviations for vowel-consonant, consonant-vowel-consonant, consonant-consonant-vowel-consonant, which are used to describe the order of letters in words, e.g. am, ham, slam.

GRAMMAR

Children are taught grammar through the reading of different texts.

The children learn the different types of words and what they are used for when writing. For example -

Verb

A word like *(to) work, (to) love, (to) begin*. A verb describes an action or state.

Noun

A word like *table, dog, teacher, America* etc. A noun is the name of an object, concept, person or place.

Pronoun

A word like *I, me, you, he, him, it* etc. A pronoun replaces a noun.

Adjective

A word like *big, red, easy, French* etc. An adjective describes a noun or pronoun.

Adverb

A word like *slowly, quietly, well, often* etc. An adverb modifies a verb.

Article

The "indefinite" articles are *a* and *an*. The "definite article" is *the*.

Conjunction

A word used to connect words, phrases and clauses (for example: *and, but, if*).

Preposition

A word like *at, to, in, over* etc. Prepositions usually come before a noun and give information about things like time, place and direction.

The children learn how to structure their writing and why writers write in the way they do. They learnt the names of the different elements of writing, for example -

Sentence

A group of words that express a thought. A sentence conveys a statement, question, exclamation or command.

Tense

The form of a verb that shows us when the action or state happens (past, present or future).

Clause

A group of words containing a subject and its verb (for example: It was late *when he arrived*).

Phrase

A group of words not containing a subject and its verb (eg *on the table, the girl in a red dress*).

The children are taught the correct punctuation from year 3. They learn what different punctuation is called and what it is used for, for example -

Full stop (.) used to end a sentence which is a command or statement.

Question mark (?) used to end a sentence which is a question.

Exclamation mark (!) used to end a sentence, it is usually used to show an emotion.

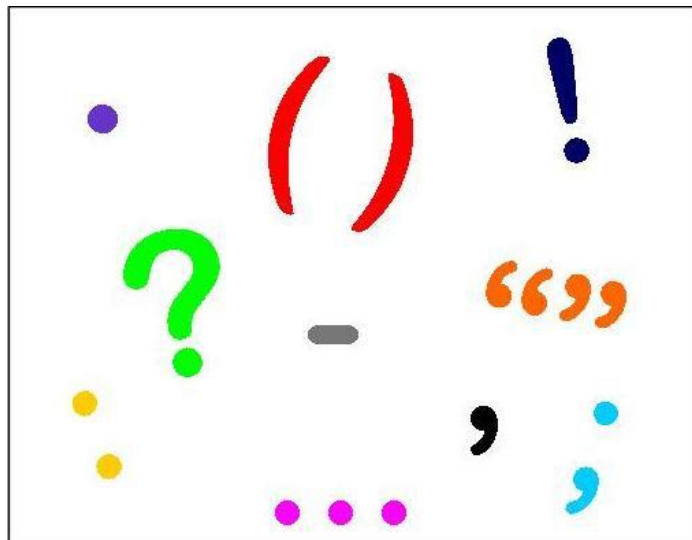
Comma (,) used whenever the reader ought to take a pause, they are used to separate items in a list.

Semi-colon (;) links 2 or more simple sentences.

Colon (:) shows an example, list or explanation is to follow.

Inverted Commas ("") used to show when a character is speaking out loud.

Apostrophe (') used to show contracted words, *don't*, or possession *John's bike*.



NON-FICTION

Children read and write a wide variety of non-fiction (factual) texts. They use these to learn the rules of different styles of writing.

Examples of the types of texts the children will read and learn about are -

Instructions - recipes, game rules and manuals.

Non-Chronological Reports - football programmes, fact files and posters.

Information - encyclopaedias, leaflets and booklets.

Newspapers - magazines and newsletters.



FICTION

Children read modern and historical fictional texts both from the UK and abroad.

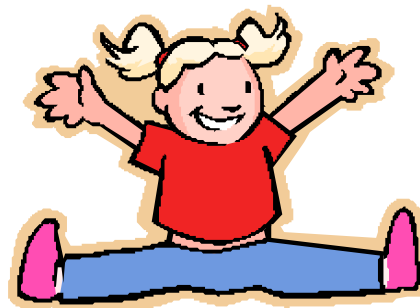
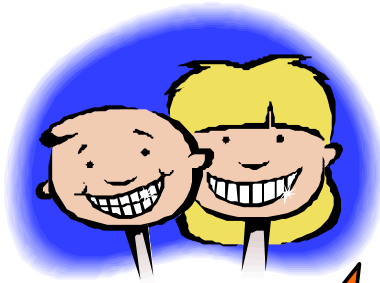
Children read and write stories and poetry. They read texts from all over the world, including Pakistan, Africa and America.

The children read different types of poetry including rhyming and narrative verse. That is a poem that tells a story, such as *The Lady of Shalot*.

As well as the texts the children study during literacy lessons each class has a half termly book linked to the learning topic. This is read to the children either by an adult or their peers. This gives them the opportunity to listen to stories, which helps them to understand how the written and spoken word are linked.

FURTHER IDEAS

- **Read daily with your child.**
Look for opportunities to read different texts, for example -
Cookery recipes, driving directions, shopping lists, road signs or labels on packaging.
- **Read daily to your child.**
Share reading together, this can be anything that your child enjoys, it doesn't need to be a 'proper book'.
Lego instructions, comics or internet pages.
- **Let your child see you writing.**
Show your child how much you write in a week. We forget how much we actually do it! For example, notes, shopping lists, text messages and even Facebook posts!
- **Encourage your child to write.**
Don't worry about spelling, it is more important that they enjoy writing things. Try sending notes to each other, or leaving messages around the house. Maybe take turns in writing the next sentence in a family story.



**Give your child lots of
praise and encouragement!**

