

Wednesday 4th November 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

One of our key priorities at Berrywood, is to instil a love of reading within all members of our school community. Our curriculum is designed to promote both the enjoyment of books and the critical-thinking that accompanies this fundamental skill.

As part of this focus, it is essential that we fully understand the experience of reading, for each child. This allows us to further develop the skills already demonstrated and to fully support any children for whom reading is still a challenge. Our classroom practice allows for significant ongoing assessment of reading and this is further supported by periodic whole-school assessment activities. As a school, we have recently invested in a further assessment tool, that will help us to add to our understanding of the reading experience for individual children and to provide further focussed support, where needed.

The new reading assessments consist of a short reading activity. The children will work individually with one of our specifically-trained members of staff to read a passage and answer some questions; this follows the format of our current whole-school reading assessments, with which the children are familiar. The crucial distinction, with this assessment, is that the text will be presented on a computer which also incorporates an eye-tracking camera. This technology identifies the pattern of focus as the child reads and is particularly useful in identifying specific reading difficulties that might otherwise not be identified until later in their development.

To access the assessment, your child's name and date of birth is required to plot the progress achieved and the areas to work on. This information is securely saved within a UK based database, is fully encrypted, and is only accessible by two-factor authentication.

As with our current whole-cohort reading assessments, we aim to complete this activity with all children in Years 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6. We hope that the short activity and computer-based text will mean that this assessment is enjoyable for the children as well as informative. We are certainly very excited to be able to use the latest technology to further understand and support the reading development of your children. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this assessment tool, please do contact your child's class teacher.

Kind regards,

Claire Gardiner
English Subject Lead

