

St. Cuthbert's Catholic  
Primary School



Reading Spine

# St Cuthbert's Primary School

## Reading Spine

At St Cuthbert's we believe strongly that school should be a place where children develop a love of reading. A place where they are read to, enjoy, discuss and work with high-quality books.

These 'essential reads' become a store of classics, creating a living library inside a child's mind. This is the 'Reading Spine'. We have provided the 'Pie Corbett Reading Spine' in our classrooms so that children have access to these high-quality texts every day.

Pie Corbett says...

*"Great books build the imagination. The more we read aloud expressively, and the more children are able to savour, discuss and reinterpret literature through the arts, the more memorable the characters, places and events become, building an inner world. A child who is read to will have an inner kingdom of unicorns, talking spiders and a knife that cuts into other worlds. The mind is like a 'tardis'; it may seem small but inside there are many mansions. Each great book develops the imagination and equips the reader with language."*

*Great stories speak to us as individuals and some children will return to certain books again and again. Great stories also build our language because around 75 per cent of our vocabulary comes from our reading. Reading develops the ability to think in the abstract; to follow lines of thought. Schools that have a reading spine, build a common bank of stories that bind the community together. These are shared and deeply imagined common experiences."*

### Nursery Reading Spine

The books chosen are almost all very repetitive and rather like songs! This makes them easier for children to join in with so that the experience of reading becomes interactive and the children begin to learn the story as they are read to. In each book, there will be much to discuss so that the children understand the vocabulary as well as what is happening.

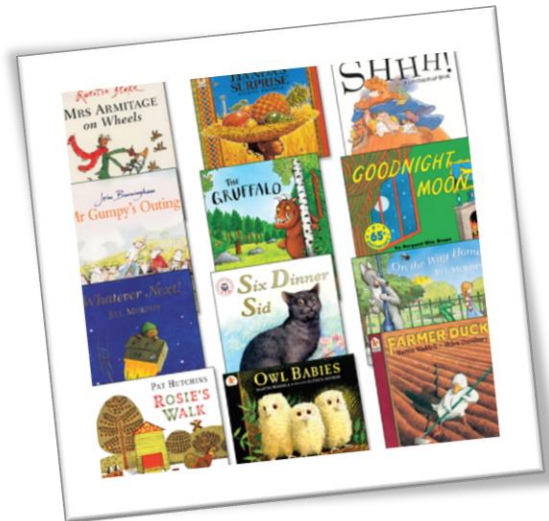
All of the books have pictures, which support the text but also compliment and add to it. It is important to discuss the pictures and what is happening in them as much as the text. After a



while, the children will get to know each story word for word, which can give great confidence to early readers in terms of fluency when reading.

### Reception Reading Spine

The books for the 4–5 age group build on the Nursery selection. They still mainly use patterned language but begin to have a stronger emotional connection with the reader. There is also plenty to discuss and to wonder about. Many of them lend themselves to retelling and creating new versions or further adventures featuring the same characters.



### Year 1 Reading Spine

The picture books in Year 1 offer deeper exploration of emotions and wonder. They are mainly rooted in the everyday crises of life. Again, most of these books lend themselves to setting up a variety of play situations – using toys, costumes and puppets – but the children also need to be involved in careful reading of the books, paying close attention to the detail and entering imagined worlds to experience the stories deeply – then talking it all through.



### Year 2 Reading Spine

In Year 2, it is important to start to move from sharing picture books into sharing chapter books. These will not only provide a meaty read, but also demand that the children use their imagination. Of course, there are also many Reception and Year 1 children who will sit and enjoy a chapter book and this should form part of their reading experience. Many of the chosen books operate on different levels – from the satisfaction of good stories to the exploration of deeper themes.





### Year 3 Reading Spine

Whilst there is just one picture book for Year 3, there are many more which will intrigue and provide a challenge for this age group such as *The Day the Crayons Quit* or *John Brown, Rose and the Midnight Cat*. Children of this age need a great storyline, but should also be experiencing deep and rich books



### Year 4 Reading Spine

This selection covers a range of stories that extends to fantasy as well as introducing Anne Fine's wonderful books. Perry Angel's Suitcase by Glenda Millar is a deeply moving book, both sad, but also full of hope – a lovely book.



### Year 5 Reading Spine

These are romping reads as well as stories that touch deeply. I have listed them in a suggested order that leads towards what I would say is the greatest novel ever written for children.



## Year 6 Reading Spine

Here is a selection of great novels for Year 6 children. Do also look out for Doris Lessing's *Through the Tunnel* which is a fabulous and challenging short story. These books are the reading rites of passage that pave the way for the great literature that lies ahead. The books are intense reads, meaty books that are crafted beautifully. They will stay with the reader forever. These books are life-changers. Do read them before sharing with the class as some touch on challenging themes

