

Progression of Inferential Reading Skills through the Primary School

Skill	Reception	Year 1	Year 2
Inferential Reading Skills	Children begin to - understand the feelings of characters in texts they listen to e.g. why Little Bear might want his mummy at bedtime, or that the Gingerbread man might be brave – when the text does not explicitly say so; use pictures in texts which give clues; feel the mood of a setting, such as a scary forest or a funny event e.g. The Enormous Turnip; guess what could happen next.	Children learn to - discuss the significance of the title and events; make simple inferences when a book is read to them e.g. how each of the bears feel when they discover Goldilocks, or why Jack is called ‘lazy’; why the title ‘Upside Down’ might be suitable for an information text about bats; why the ugly sisters might feel jealous; predict what might happen next in a sequenced story, based on what has been read so far; begin to explain their understanding of what is read to them, beyond that which is explicitly stated. In support of inference skills, pupils discuss word meanings, linking new meanings to those already known; they draw on what they already know or on background information and vocabulary provided by the teacher.	Children learn to - make some inferences, answering ‘how’ and ‘why’ questions which may reach beyond the text; guess feelings of characters and the reasons for these feelings, particularly when based on the child’s personal experiences e.g. why Owl might be afraid of the dark; predict what might happen next, on the basis of what has been read so far; explain their understanding of what is read to them, beyond that which is explicitly stated e.g. make a sequence of events, or explain a moral or message; learn about cause and effect e.g. what has prompted a character’s behaviour. In support of inference skills, children discuss and clarify the meanings of words, linking new meanings to known vocabulary provided by the teacher.

Skill	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
Inferential Reading Skills	Children learn to - with support, identify themes across the text e.g. loyalty and treachery in Lion, Witch, Wardrobe; draw inferences such as characters’ feelings, thoughts and motives for their actions e.g. why Edmund lied; begin to justify their inferences by locating textual evidence; predict what might happen from implied details or from other stories they know. In support of inference skills, children use dictionaries to check meanings of new vocabulary; with support they talk about what words mean in context.	With growing confidence, gathering experience from texts, children learn to - identify themes across the text; draw inferences such as inferring characters’ feelings, thoughts and motives for their actions; justify their inferences with textual evidence, as a familiar exercise; predict what might happen from implied details. In support of inference skills, children use dictionaries with growing independence, to define new vocabulary; they discuss and explain words and phrases to explore meanings in context.	Children learn to - draw inferences independently, often justifying with textual evidence; make predictions from implied details, both before and after events; identify and discuss themes across a wide range of texts, both fiction, non-narrative and poetry; summarise main ideas; make comparisons within and across texts, referring to both reference points; discuss and explore the precise meaning of words and phrases in context.	With confidence, fluency and independence, children - draw hidden inferences, justifying with textual evidence, including quotations which illustrate; make reasoned predictions from implied details; identify and discuss themes across a wide range of texts; summarise main ideas across whole text, note developments e.g. of a character or relationship; make comparisons within and across texts, using evaluative skills; work out the nuanced meanings of words and phrases in context.