

Our Ref: CBA/AH

31<sup>ST</sup> January 2022

Dear Parents and Carers,

We are delighted to announce that we will be welcoming the Nuneaton Academy's Reading dog onto site this week.

Introducing Cerys:



Cerys is a 9-month-old Cockerpoo who is owned by Mr Chris Jupe, our Librarian. According to the Kennel Club breed standards, they are intelligent and easy to please. The Cockapoo was established as a companion dog. Cerys has an outgoing nature and will be working in our Library after school in our Homework club and working with pupils who are reluctant readers.

Reading programmes with dogs are doing wonders for some pupils. Children who might be embarrassed to read aloud to the class or even adults are likely to be less scared to read to a dog. "It might be less stressful for a child to read aloud to a dog than to a teacher or a peer. After all, a dog won't judge or correct you." Dogs are used to encourage struggling readers to practice reading aloud. With the presence of a "calm and well-trained dog," pupils find social support and peer interaction. Dogs are incredibly calm and happy to have pupils read to them or join a group of children in the library whilst they are having a book reading session. Dogs give unconditional acceptance, as they are non-judgmental, which is especially crucial to struggling, emerging readers. The dogs also provide confidence to children as they do not make fun of them when they read, but above all they make amazing listeners, providing the children with a sense of comfort and love. Research has proved that pupils who read to dogs show an increase in reading levels, word recognition, a higher desire to read and write, and an increase in interpersonal skills among the pupils they mix with.

Cerys will be coming into school most days. There will initially need to be a period of integration for both children and dog. This means that she will only spend short periods of time with individual children or small groups until she is comfortable and familiar with the school. She will have plenty of time to adjust. When Cerys is not working with children, she will be in one of the school offices where she can rest and will be exercised in a secure area.

It is understandable that some of you may be concerned about possible allergic reactions to a dog in school. However, Cerys is subjected to a thorough cleanliness and grooming regime. Her fur is hypo-allergenic which means she is unlikely to cause an allergic reaction more than other dogs. Should you have any concerns please see our Risk Assessment on the Website. If you have any other concerns, please contact me directly: [cerina.barnes@midlandat.co.uk](mailto:cerina.barnes@midlandat.co.uk)

Yours sincerely

Mrs C Barnes  
Assistant Principal