

Reading at Home

One of the biggest ways you can support your child's education is through reading with them at home. Children's reading skills develop much quicker if they are reading at home as well as in school. Without reading support from home, pupils will find it much more difficult to meet age related expectations right across the curriculum.



In order to become a strong reader, children need to develop three key skills:

- They need to be able to **decode** the words they are reading.
- They need to develop **fluency** with their reading.
- They need to be able to **understand** what they have read (comprehension).

While they are still learning to read, your child will have different reading books for developing each of these skills. If they are still learning to decode using phonics, they will have a reading book, which is kept in school, which links to the phonics teaching they are receiving. The reading books children bring home should be at an appropriate level for them to be able to read independently with just a little support for decoding, with the intention of developing fluency and understanding. This often means that these reading books are purposely at a slightly easier level than the books used to develop decoding skills in school. Your child may have a fluency and understanding reading book from our reading scheme, or may have progressed onto our library reading books.

Until they are a competent reader, children may also need to read books from our reading scheme **more than once** in order to really develop each of these skills. The first time they read it, they will be focusing on working out all of the unfamiliar words – decoding it. They cannot be expected to develop fluency or understanding while they are still decoding. Simply 'getting through' a book does not fully develop the range of reading skills. The following approach works best:

- 1. Decoding read:** Read the book through once, supporting where needed with decoding by helping your child to 'sound out' the words or using other clues from the pictures / rest of the text. If your child says something nearly right to start with that is fine. Don't say 'No. That's wrong,' but 'Let's read it together' and point to the words as you say them.
- 2. Fluency read:** Read the book through again building up fluency, allowing opportunity for self-correction. You can model this by reading sections out loud. This stage may need to be repeated so that the child is able read the book with a real flow, developing expression that will help with understanding.
- 3. Reading for understanding:** Talk about the book. Can your child summarise what has happened? Can your child answer questions about the book? You may want to read short sections again to find the answer to questions. This is one of the most important stages of developing reading skills.

Here are some questions that can help you to develop your child's understanding:

- Where and when did the story take place? How do you know?
- What happened in the book?
- What is your favourite part of the book? Why?
- What do you think might happen next?
- Can you describe one of the characters? How do you know what they are like?
- Can you find words or phrases that tell you about the setting?
- What questions would you ask your favourite character?
- What was the most exciting part of the book? Why?
- Have you been in a similar situation to the character in the book?
- Who would you like to meet in the story? Why?
- Why do you think the author chose this title for the book?
- How would you describe this story?
- Was there any part of the book you didn't like? Why?
- Would you recommend this book to a friend? Why/why not?



It is important to talk to your child about what you are focusing on. They are more likely to be enthusiastic to read a book again if they know that this time you are thinking about fluency or this time you are thinking about really understanding what they have read. Teachers may send a reading book back home with a child if it is felt that further work is needed on developing fluency or understanding.

It is also important that children develop a real enjoyment of reading. Even if they are still on our reading scheme, they are able to choose books from our library that really interest them. These books may be too hard for them to read independently, but can be read to them by a parent. Reading for understanding can still be developed with these books, by talking about what has been read together.

If your child has progressed from our reading scheme, their library book will also be their reading book. Even with the most competent readers, it is still important to help them develop those skills of understanding by talking to them about what they have read and asking them questions.

Reading can be a wonderful shared family activity. It also gives you an opportunity to discuss interesting books and celebrate your child's progress. Here are some other suggestions about how you can help to make reading at home a positive experience.

1. Choose a quiet time

Set aside a quiet time with no distractions. Ten to fifteen minutes is usually long enough. It can work particularly well as part of a bedtime routine.



2. Make reading enjoyable

Make reading an enjoyable experience. Sit with your child. Try not to pressurise if he or she is reluctant. You can always begin by reading to them or reading simultaneously.

3. Be positive

Boost your child's confidence with constant praise for even the smallest achievement.

4. Success is the key

Parents anxious for a child to progress can mistakenly give a child a book that is too difficult. This can have the opposite effect to the one they are wanting. Remember 'Nothing succeeds like success'. Until your child has built up his or her confidence, it is better to keep to easier books. Struggling with a book with many unknown words is pointless. Flow is lost, text cannot be understood and children can easily become reluctant readers.

5. Regular practice

Try to read with your child on most school days. 'Little and often' is best.

6. Variety is important

Remember children need to experience a variety of reading materials e.g. picture books, hard backs, comics, magazines, poems, and information books.

It is most important that reading at home should be seen as an enjoyable experience and not become part of a daily battle. If you have any questions about reading, your child's class teacher will be more than happy to answer them. Please do not hesitate to get in touch with them.

Kind regards

Kathryn Robinson
Headteacher

