

Reception – Learning to read

Notes for Parents from the Curriculum Workshop

- There is overwhelming evidence that children who are supported well at home, achieve well in school – these notes will explain some of the many ways in which you can support and help your child’s reading skills, and most importantly, their desire to be confident, independent readers.
- Guidance for schools is to teach reading using a ‘phonics first’/ synthetic phonics approach. We use the Department for Education’s ‘Letters and Sounds’ programme. We support phonics through songs and actions to aid learning and embed this new sound. We ensure it is a structured, playful and multi-sensory time incorporating physical actions, songs, stories, games and activities, both inside and outside the classroom. The actions really support children in the early stages of learning the sounds.
- Throughout the Reception year we teach phonics (and hence reading) **every day**, building up to a discrete daily phonics lesson in preparation for Year One.
- As we teach the first few sounds we will start to give out reading books with these sounds in so your child can begin to blend the individual sounds together and make a word for example c-a-t cat.
- Our reading books in class are no longer colour banded but separated into the phonics sounds which have been taught. Your child will bring home a book with sounds appropriate to your child’s needs. We are constantly assessing the children to ensure they are ‘keeping up’ with the rate at which we teach each sound and provide additional support to those who require it. Therefore your child will only have a book which is applicable to their sound knowledge.
- Your child will always have the opportunity to have a ‘sharing book’ in their bag which they can borrow from the class book area. They can change this book whenever they wish to do so.
- As well as skills and strategies, children need positive attitudes to reading. They need to think of themselves as readers and expect reading to make sense – and a child who is developing confidence as a reader will demonstrate this by self-correcting their mistakes.
- Children need to understand what they have read, predict what might happen next, learn to read with expression, read between the lines to guess why something happened or a character did something (inference) and form their own opinions and preferences about books! If you continue to read aloud to your child and talk to them about what they are reading this will help to develop and reinforce these skills.
- Phonics is not the whole story! Many words in English cannot be decoded using phonics and must be recognised on sight, these are called ‘tricky words.’ In order for

your child to be a successful reader they will need to be able to read and preferably write these 'tricky words' correctly. There are 5 sets for your child to learn.

Summing up – strategies for decoding

- Use phonic cues.
- Word build (but only if it works!)
- Use memory cues (tricky words)

You can help by making sure your child:

- Continues to have lots of rich language experiences and books read to them (shared books)
- Sees how adults read for information and pleasure
- Experiences reading in a non-threatening way – 'come and share a book with me' instead of 'come and read with me'
- Read 'reading books' little and often, and receives lots of praise for their efforts
- Uses their Sound Books to practise letter formation for writing as well as to help him/her learn the sounds.
- Practises the 'tricky words' on the tags attached to the Reading Records – if he/ she can already read these words then practise writing them.
- If you have internet access at home, help him/ her to access Bug Club (log on details will be available in your child's Reading Record in due course). This is an online reading scheme with phonetically decodable ebooks, and lots of phonic games. These log in details will be available after Christmas.

Most of all, have fun!