

Reading Guidance for Parents and Carers

Banded Books

Each colour band contains a range of texts, fiction, non-fiction and poetry, with the aim of engaging readers from the very start. Children will be able to choose books from the colour book band that matches their reading level, but which also provides a degree of challenge in order to maintain progression with their reading skills. The Book Bands start with lilac, which are wordless books, and progress through to provide challenge right up until year 6. Each book will be marked to confirm which colour band it belongs to.

Developing Reading Skills

The book banding system allows children to access a broad range of texts and therefore consolidate and build confidence in reading before moving onto the next stage. Children may find some of the texts more challenging to read than others but the focus is on a whole book approach. Whilst the early bands contain books which support practicing phonics it is also important that children develop wider reading skills. The wordless books in the first band are essential for developing children's ability to look at pictures and tell a story. They are learning how books work (turning the pages from right to left), using cues from the pictures to tell a story and hopefully beginning to develop a love of books and a desire to read. As children learn that letters represent sounds (phonics) they can begin to decode simple text. However our language does not lend itself to a reliance on phonetic decoding as many words don't follow the rules! This is when children need to build up a sight vocabulary and be able to read on sight those common exception words. As they come across new words they can use their knowledge of phonics and their picture cues to make a sensible guess at what an unknown word might say. Children begin to develop an understanding of what makes sense and may be able to read the rest of the sentence and check whether the word they thought it might be is correct. Children should be following the text themselves so please encourage them to use their finger to follow the words rather than doing it for them.

The more children use and apply these skills in their reading the more quickly they will become fluent and confident readers. However there is more to reading than just working out what the words say (decoding). Children have to develop their comprehension skills, understand what it is the writer is trying to communicate. Book talk is vital for children to develop this skill. Start with looking at the title and cover and ask what might this book be about? Why do you think that? What do you think might happen? As you read through the book, stop and look at the pictures, is there any further information in them? Can you predict what might happen next? How are the characters feeling as the story progresses? Does the story end the way you thought it would? If you are reading a non-fiction book, discuss the way the information is set out. The pictures and diagrams are there specifically to add further information. Ask what new facts or information your child has learnt; show them how to use the index or glossary to locate specific information. Often non-fiction texts are more challenging as they present the child with new vocabulary. It is really important to ensure children know the meanings of these words and can comprehend the text they are reading otherwise the whole purpose of reading is lost.

As children's reading skills develop and they are able to read and comprehend the texts they have chosen, look at the writer's choice of words or text organisation and start to discuss why the writer chooses certain words, what impact does it have on us as the reader? Poems are particularly good

for this and even short poems can be very challenging to children's comprehension and help develop those enhanced reading skills.

If we are to try and foster a love of books and see children reading for pleasure it is important they make choices on which texts they would like to read. Talk to your child about their book choices and encourage them to try something different. Compare two recently read books and discuss why one was better than the other. The most important skill we can teach our children is how to read and if children learn to read and understand how writing works, they can learn to write for themselves.

Teaching and Practising Reading Skills

In school we will teach children phonics and spellings and build up sight vocabulary through the teaching of common exception words. We will share high quality texts with children and engage them in book talk. They will be expected to read in a variety of lessons and for a variety of purposes. They will be taught comprehension skills and how to make written responses to questions about a text. We will encourage children to select their own books to read and support them in using the library to develop reading for pleasure. Each classroom has an age appropriate book area and each day children are read to from a class text. We aim to give reading a high profile in school but are bound by time restraints, as there are many other areas of teaching and learning to address. In EYFS and Key Stage One your child may read 1:1 with an adult but the teaching of reading will be led by staff using whole class and group guided reading. Guided reading books are also banded so staff will be able to judge when your child is ready to move into another colour band. In Key Stage Two the focus moves away from decoding texts to higher level reading skills and developing comprehension skills, including making written responses to questions about the text. Children who are struggling with developing their reading skills will be given further 1:1 or more frequent support. T

The best way for children to continue to improve their reading is to read frequently at home. In EYFS and year 1, children will bring home two books in their book bag. Please record in the Reading Record the title of the book, the date read and any comments that may be helpful to the teacher. Books will be changed on a Monday, Wednesday and Friday. In year 2, and as children progress onto books with more text this will be reduced to one book which can be changed when completed. Children at this time can start to become responsible for recording what they have read and any responses in their Reading Record Book.

In KS2 children will select a book from the appropriate colour band and/or the library or class reading shelf and keep a record of their reading in their Reading Journal. Books can be changed when finished.

Staff will use the Reading Record/Journal to make a note of when they have read with a child and add any comments as necessary.

The front of the Reading Record/Journal will state what colour band your child needs to select books from. The teacher will change this and record in the Reading Record Book/Journal when your child is ready to move to the next colour.

Many parents express concern that their child has had the same book for a few nights or a week. They inform the teacher that they can read it easily and require a harder book. We want children to enjoy reading at home with their parents or carers. We do not want a child to believe that it is too

difficult and therefore not enjoyable but rather use this as an opportunity to build their reading confidence. Harder texts and reading challenges are given in the classroom under the guidance of the teacher and within the appropriate reading level. Giving a child books that are too difficult creates frustration and does not move learning forward. Practising reading at home, and potentially re-reading the same book, provides time for the consolidation of skills they are learning. When you hear your child read at home praise them for how they read, emphasise how smooth their voice is or congratulate them on working out an unknown word. Reading the same book can still provide a different experience each time. Have a different focus for each time you read it with them; for example focus on the use of punctuation one time or working out unknown words, the story line or what's in each picture could be the focus another time.

Helping your child with comprehension (from Kelly Pisani's Blog, *Creating A Learning Environment* - <http://creatingalearningenvironment.com/what-every-parent-should-know-the-three-reading-levels/>)

To see if a child truly understands what they have read they need to be able to answer questions about the text. These questions can be divided up into three categories:

Level 1 – Reading ON the line

The answers to Level 1 questions are found ON the line of the text. This means that in order for the child to answer a level 1 question the child needs to go back to the text, find the answer and say it. This is a very literal level and requires simple comprehension skills.

Skills for this level: Remembering and Understanding

Question starters for this level: Who, what, where, when

Types of activities for this level: List, define, cite, define, retell, explain, describe

Level 2 – Reading BETWEEN the lines

The answers to Level 2 questions are found BETWEEN the lines of the text. This means that in order for the child to answer a level 2 question the child needs to go back to the text, look for clues that might help them answer it and form their answer with supporting evidence. This is an inferential level and requires good comprehension skills.

Skills for this level: Applying and Analysing

Question starters for this level: How and why

Types of activities for this level: Categorise, examine, demonstrate, dissect, implement, compare, and contrast

Level 3 – Reading BEYOND the lines

The answers to Level 3 questions are found BEYOND the lines of the text. This means that in order for the child to answer a level 3 question the child needs to use the information from the text, their own knowledge and understanding of how the world works and apply it to form an answer. This is thematic level and requires high comprehension skills.

Skills for this level: Evaluating and Creating

Question starters for this level: What would it be like if ...? What is another possible title for this text?, What would you do if...? How does this text connect with your life?

Types of activities for this level: Create, develop, generate, produce, imagine, justify, assess, conclude

It is important that children are asked questions from all levels no matter what their age. Many parents tend to stick with Level 1 questioning because it is simple but it does not give your child enough opportunity to develop their comprehension skills. Asking questions does not have to be a formal task that is done at the end when they are finished reading the text. Ask questions throughout to gauge their understanding and help clarify if needed. Get them to point out what they used to help them answer the question. Encourage your child to return to the text as many times as they want as it is not a memory test. Teaching comprehension skills will give them a solid foundation for reading and as a result help them in all subject areas.

(from Kelly Pisani's Blog)

Concepts about Print - for developing early reading skills and understanding (Early Years and KS1)

Below is an outline of what each concept is and how you can check if your child knows each concept.

The concepts of print can be categorised into five sections.

Section 1 – Book concepts

1. Identifies front of book – does the child know where the front cover is? **“Show me the front of this book.”**
2. Identifies back of book – does the child know where the back cover is? **“Show me the back of this book.”**
3. Identifies the title – can the child find where the title is? **“Show me the name of this book or story.”**

Section 2 – Reading Concepts

4. Words carry meaning – does the child know that we read the words and not the pictures? **“Show me where I start reading.”**
5. One to One correspondence – can the child point to each word when an adult is reading? **“You point to the words while I read the story.” (Read slowly, but fluently).**

Section 3 – Directionality Concepts

6. Identifies the beginning of the text – can the child point to the beginning of the text on the correct page? **“Show me with your finger where I have to begin reading.”**
7. Left to right and top to bottom – does the child understand that we read left to right and top to bottom? **“Show me with your finger which way I go as I read this page.”**
8. Return Sweep – does the child know that when you finish one line you go down to the next line, starting on the left? **“Where do I go then?”**

Section 4 – Letter and word concepts

9. First word on page – can the child point to the first word on the page? **“Use your finger to show me the first word on this page.”**
10. Last word on page – can the child point to the last word on the page? **“Use your finger to show me the last word on this page.”**
11. Identifies one word and two words – can the child point to one word and then show two words with their fingers? **“Move your fingers until I can see one word. Now, show me two words.”**
12. First letter in a word – can the child show the first letter in a word? **“Show me the first letter in a word.”**
13. Last Letter in a word – can the child show the last letter in that word? **“Show me the last letter in a word.”**
14. Identifies one letter and two letters – can the child point to one letter and then show two letters with their fingers? **“Move your fingers and show me one letter. Now, show me two letters.”**
15. Naming 3 letters on the page – Can the child name and point to three letters? **“Show me three letters that you know on this page and tell me the name of each one.”**

Section 5 – Punctuation marks

16. Capital letter – can the child point to a capital letter on the page? **“Use your finger to show me a capital letter.”**
17. Lower case letter – can the child point to a small letter on the page? **“Use your finger to show me a small/lower case letter.”**
18. Full stop – can the child name this punctuation or identify why it is used? **“What is this called?” or “What is this for?”**
19. Question mark – can the child name this punctuation or identify why it is used? **“What is this called?” or “What is this for?”**
20. Exclamation mark – can the child name this punctuation or identify why it is used? **“What is this called?” or “What is this for?”**
21. Comma – can the child name this punctuation or identify why it is used? **“What is this called?” or “What is this for?”**
22. Quotation marks (Speech Marks) – can the child name this punctuation or identify why it is used? **“What is this called?” or “What is this for?”**

The questions above can be used every time you read with your child. You wouldn't ask all these questions each time but you may pick a few to focus on. It is important for children to know how texts work in order to have a great start as a reader.