



# Reading at Home and School



Dear Parents and Carers,

Reading is a skill we continue to develop throughout our lives, but starting this process as early as possible has significant benefits for our continued success as readers. This is why, as parents and carers, you play a vital role in supporting your child in becoming a fluent reader who is confidently able to apply their reading skills across all areas of their lives. The teaching of reading and reading comprehension within the classroom is only part of a child's learning, and the value that is given to reading at home is equally important. Reading is a fundamental skill that supports learning across all subjects and helps to develop critical thinking and imagination. We want to emphasize the importance of regular reading at home and make it an enjoyable and valuable experience for your child.

## The Benefits of Regular Reading

Reading regularly has numerous benefits for children, including:

- Improved vocabulary and language skills
- Enhanced comprehension and critical thinking abilities
- Better performance in school assessments
- Increased empathy and understanding of different perspectives
- Fostering a lifelong love of learning and curiosity

Research suggests that children who read regularly outside of school perform significantly better in school assessments. Your support at home is essential in ensuring that your child makes the progress they are capable of.

## Engaging Activities to Foster a Love for Books

We encourage you to incorporate the following activities into your daily routine to make reading a fun and engaging experience for your child:

- **Read together:** Spend time reading stories to your child, regardless of their age. Use different voices for characters and add emotion to make the story come alive.
- **Encourage independent reading:** Provide a quiet, comfortable space for your child to read on their own. Offer them a variety of books to choose from, including those from the library or their school.
- **Discuss the stories:** Ask questions about the story to support your child's understanding and engage them in meaningful conversations about the text.
- **Share reading responsibilities:** Take turns reading pages or chapters with your child to keep them engaged and make the experience collaborative.
- **Explore different genres:** Introduce your child to a wide range of genres and text types to broaden their reading horizons and discover new interests.

## Filling in Reading Records

To help us track how much reading your child is doing at home, it is important that you fill in their Reading Record regularly. Here are some guidelines for using the Reading Record:

- Ensure you write in their Reading Record every time they read, including the title of the book and the pages read (so they can track what page they are on next).
- Write a brief comment about their reading experience, such as what they enjoyed or found challenging.
- Parents should sign the Reading Record **at least** once a week minimum (ideally 3-5 times) to confirm their child's reading activities (this may cover a few sessions e.g. "read pages 1-9 this week - struggled on the 'eigh' sound but answered questions on the text well".)

*We have provided some ideas for brief comments on the last page of this letter.*

## EYFS and KSI

Your child will read with an adult at least 3 x a week in EYFS and Y1 and their reading books will be changed on a weekly basis to match the Little Wandle phonics scheme. This will be recorded in your child's reading record. The books your child reads and brings home during Little Wandle sessions will be easily decodable and matched to their reading level, which means when they share them with you, they will get a chance to show off and read them easily and fluently. Their library book and 50 reading challenge book are additional books, which may be beyond their current reading level, and are taken home to share with you, building upon reading for pleasure with an adult.

## KS2

Independent Reading: All children in KS2 have a book which matches their reading level. We have previously purchased more books, particularly within higher levels, to ensure there is a broader choice. Children can also have another book of their choice from the library and the 50 book reading hampers to read at the same time. The colour-band book is the most important for hearing your child read as it is ability matched, the other books are to enjoy and to read for pleasure.

During the week children have reading for pleasure time. The purpose is to increase children's reading stamina and for teachers to check and support good book choices, ensuring children are reading a book at the correct level and from a range of genres. **Please ensure you pop your child's reading diary back in their bag after reading so it is in their school bag every day to allow teachers to hear them read and comment in their diary.** They will be heard weekly/fortnightly as we focus on building further comprehension in KS2.

*Although your child will be taught to read at school, you can have a huge impact on their reading journey by continuing their practice at home.*

## Tips for reading:

**Encourage your child to read as often as possible:** We'd ideally like children to read five times a week for at least 10 minutes per day. Building this into your daily routine makes it a lot easier to sustain. It's important to make the environment conducive to concentration so choose a time of day which you can dedicate to reading, turn off all screens and phones and find somewhere comfortable so they can enjoy the time. It's also valuable to listen to your child read aloud as it gives them a chance to practice reading with understanding and expression.

**Reading to your child:** Your child gains so much from hearing you read a story to them, no matter how old they are. Listening to stories provides children with an understanding of how stories are structured, develops their vocabulary, and it helps provide a context for meaning. Try to use different voices for different characters and use your tone of voice to add emotion such as excitement or fear. Older children love listening to stories as much as younger ones - one way of doing this is to share and take turns at reading a page or a chapter each.

**Ask questions to support your child's understanding:** Children initially develop both fluency in reading and understanding of what they are reading alongside each other. This is where listening to stories can really support your child's understanding. You can read a book that may be above your child's current fluency level and he or she can still discuss the meaning behind the text. You can therefore ask much more complex questions compared to a book that your child has read themselves. Once children are fluent readers, the focus shifts much more towards understanding. For children in KS2, therefore, the discussion around what they are reading becomes even more important. Please use your own judgement when choosing questions, considering the age/reading ability of your child, as well as remembering we want to keep home reading sessions light and enjoyable!

## Ideas for comments to write in Reading Records

Listed below are some comments which may help you when writing in your child's reading record to describe how your child has read to you at home. The statements below are just a guide; please feel free to alter the wording and write what best suits your experiences.

Word skills	Comprehension skills	Attitude and interest
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read all the words correctly.</li> <li>• Read familiar words independently</li> <li>• Found some words difficult (not which ones).</li> <li>• Tried hard to work out new words.</li> <li>• Worked out new words by sounding them out and blending.</li> <li>• Needs to practice again to reinforce the words.</li> <li>• Was able to work out new words using the pictures to help.</li> <li>• Used the picture cues and the first sound of a word to work out words</li> <li>• Self-corrected own errors independently.</li> <li>• Read the book fluently.</li> <li>• Reading is sounding robotic and stilted.</li> <li>• He/she made a number of errors because he/she was not looking carefully enough.</li> <li>• Able to read the book with lots of help.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understood the story well.</li> <li>• Good discussion about events in the story.</li> <li>• Retold the story in detail.</li> <li>• Able to predict what might happen next.</li> <li>• Could talk about the story confidently.</li> <li>• Could identify the characters in the book.</li> <li>• Answered questions about the content of the book.</li> <li>• Needs to read again to improve understanding.</li> <li>• Used the pictures to help with their understanding.</li> <li>• Needed lots of help to understand the main events.</li> <li>• Did not understand what they read.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Was excited and motivated to read.</li> <li>• Enjoyed the story because .....</li> <li>• Fantastic expression.</li> <li>• Would benefit from reading the book again to improve fluency.</li> <li>• Has learnt all about... and could explain in own words.</li> <li>• Struggled to concentrate.</li> <li>• Was reluctant to read tonight.</li> <li>• Found the book too hard to read.</li> </ul>

### If reading becomes difficult at home:

Reading must be enjoyed to gain maximum benefit. It is important that your child reads every day, but if they are reluctant to do so:

- Avoid confrontation.
- Offer alternative reading material e.g. internet access, magazines that the children have an interest in (non-fiction sometimes appeals more than fiction), or an old and familiar book.
- Encourage reading at different times of the day or week.
- Borrow audiobooks from the library or listen online to encourage a love of language e.g. listen to audiobooks on journeys, at bedtime etc.
- Share reading activities and interact with the text together e.g. work together on the internet to explore a football team website etc.

*Your involvement in your child's reading journey is invaluable, and together, we can ensure they develop a strong reading habit and a love for books.*

Thank you for your continued support, and happy reading! 😊

## Home Reading Questions

<b>Predicting</b> <i>Children should predict what will happen in the future based on: what they have read, what is inferred and prior knowledge. It's not a guess!</i>	<b>Clarifying</b> <i>Children should clarify the meaning of words, phrases, and longer passages to make sure they understand exactly what they are reading.</i>	<b>Questioning</b> <i>Children should ask questions about what they have read to seek more information and deepen their understanding.</i>	<b>Making Connections</b> <i>Children should use what they already know from their experience, other texts or the world to help them understand what we they have read.</i>	<b>Inferring</b> <i>Children should use clues from the text and their prior knowledge to work out something the author doesn't tell them. It is often based on clues about: character; setting; mood.</i>	<b>Summarising</b> <i>Children should identify the key information and give a brief, concise explanation. It might be about the main points of a text; a setting; character; problem; event or resolution.</i>	<b>Evaluating</b> <i>Children should comment on what they liked / disliked &amp; explain why. They should comment on the effectiveness of author choices (content, layout, language)</i>
<p>Before we read this book together, let's look at the front cover and try to predict what you think will happen.</p> <p>What do you imagine * will be like?</p> <p>What do you predict is going to happen next? What makes you think this?</p> <p>What do you think * will say in response to that?</p> <p>What kind of place do you think * to be?</p> <p>How do you think * will feel?</p>	<p>What does * mean?</p> <p>Step 1: <b>Identify</b> the root word and any prefixes or suffixes</p> <p>Step 2: <b>Read</b> forward and backward to understand meaning from the context</p> <p>Step 3: <b>Substitute</b> the word with a synonym and see if the sentence makes sense</p> <p>Has it changed your understanding?</p> <p>Do you understand what has happened / the information / this part of the text?</p>	<p>Who...            What...            When...            Where...            I wonder...            Why...            How...            What if...            How do we know...            e.g. How did he/she do that?            Why did he/she do that?            Where are they going and why?</p>	<p>Does this remind you of anything you have done before?</p> <p>Does this character have any similarities with ...?</p> <p>Have you read anything that reminds you of this book?            What's similar, what's different?</p> <p>Does this remind you of anything happening in the world right now, in the past or in the future?</p> <p>How are these sections linked?</p>	<p>Using the evidence in the text, what do you think * is thinking / feeling?</p> <p>What do these words/this phrase suggest is going to happen next?</p> <p>What do you think the author intended when they said...?</p> <p>Why was...feeling...?            How do you know?</p> <p>Why did...happen?</p> <p>Why did ... say...?</p> <p>Can you explain why...?</p> <p>How does ...make you feel?</p>	<p>Can you retell the story / chapter / section to me in 20 words or fewer?</p> <p>What have you read so far?</p> <p>Summarise how the chapter made you feel in 3 words.</p> <p>Describe this character's journey/personality/ experience in 12 words or less.</p> <p>What's the main theme?</p>	<p>What was your favourite part of this chapter/poem/ book and why?</p> <p>Which character do you think was the most *caring* - what makes you think this?</p> <p>Why do you think the author has used these words to...?</p> <p>Why has the author used this heading?</p> <p>What part of this text would you change and why?</p> <p>Would you like to live in this setting? Why/why not?</p>