



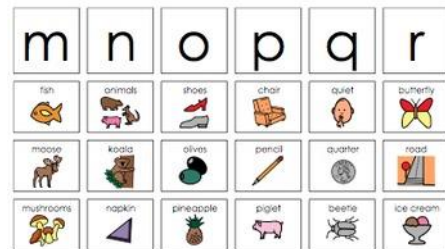
Reading at home with your child.

Learning to read is one of the most important things that your child will learn to do at primary school. Not only is reading the foundation of the school curriculum, reading opens the door to a lifetime of enjoyment through all kinds of texts. Independent readers can navigate all aspects of life more successfully, and reading for pleasure

has been shown to boost academic achievement across the school curriculum at primary and secondary school. Being an avid reader has been shown to boost children's self-image and their sense of wellbeing, as well as improving their life chances whatever their family background and experience.

Learning to read – decoding sounds

All children learn to read at different rates, but instruction in recognising sounds starts in a very informal way in nursery, where children are encouraged to listen to sounds through music and play. Formal reading instruction through the teaching of Phonics starts in Reception and continues through Year 1. The majority of children will be independent decoders by the end of Year 1, but it is not at all unusual for some children to take longer, and their phonics instruction will continue into Year 2. You can find more information about our approach to phonics teaching on the school website.



Learning to read – comprehending

Decoding is just the first step to independent reading. Once children have internalised the many different sounds of the English letter system, decoding becomes fluent and the cognitive space is freed up for children to actually think about what they are reading, ask and answer questions about their texts, and begin to develop their own reading

preferences. It is not unusual for a child to be a very proficient decoder, but to have little idea what they have actually read! It takes a great deal of practise and skill to 'step back' from the hard task of decoding and read as a 'reader', and not just a translator of sounds. This journey starts in reception and develops throughout a child's time in education as they are taught to use ever more complex skills to decipher and interact with texts. You can find out more about the comprehension skills we teach in the reading intent on our school website.



How can you help your child?

Regular reading practise at home is absolutely vital to allow children to practise the skills that they are learning at school. Teaching a child to read requires a real partnership between home and school in order for our children to progress. It is through parents and teachers working together and sharing our own reading interests, that we can nurture a love of reading in our children. Reading at home can mean practising decoding using the readers that we allocate through Bug Club. This is vital. But it is also important to share stories through the adult reading a book of the child's choice (or the adult's choice!) and talking through what you have read together.

How often should I read with my child?

Decoding practise in Reception and Year 1 should be done little and often, ideally every day if that is possible. Children are often tired after school and want to relax. Reading practise should not become stressful or a chore. One page per night is enough if the reading is regular. Children should certainly not feel compelled to finish one book per night and it should not be an onerous task. Five-ten minutes every night is plenty – though if your child wants to do more, that is fantastic. But quantity should never be prioritised over quality of decoding.



What should I do if my child can't read the words in the book?

Bug club readers are closely matched to the sounds that the child is learning so in theory, they should not be exposed to sounds they cannot read. Each book begins with a re-cap of the sounds the children are learning. If your child really cannot read a word, it is fine to prompt them by encouraging them to segment the different sounds. If they cannot remember a particular sound – for example, they are reading 'stair' but cannot remember how to sound the 'air' trigraph, then of course you can tell them the sound and encourage them to remember it, picking it out when they meet it again in the book. The reader will also contain some 'tricky' words – ie. non-decodable words like 'one' or 'the'. Again, the child will have been taught these tricky words, but if they cannot remember them, by all means, read the word for your child.

Reading is a real struggle, and I cannot engage my child at home after school.

If this is happening, the key is to keep reading sessions very short – maximum two minutes so that the child feels a sense of accomplishment. By all means use a suitable reward for reading if you would like to. Children need a lot of praise and encouragement if they find reading hard – it is not a 'natural' skill to acquire and some children find it very much harder than others for all kinds of reasons. If reading at home is not happening, please keep in touch with us so that we can find time in the school day to fit in reading practise.

How often should I read to my child?

As often as you and your child enjoy! Generally children love being read to and it is a great way to spend special time together, focusing on their interests. It does not need to be a 'teaching' experience, although you can pick out words that the child may be able to read themselves. It is fantastic to model expert reading for children, discuss the pictures as a form of early comprehension practise, and talk about the story. It is usual for children to want to hear the same story again and again



and this is great fun for adults and children alike. Be open to reading all kinds of texts with your child – there is not one ‘suitable’ kind of text. Some children will prefer non-fiction, graphic novels, comics, poetry, websites, podcasts or audio books and these are all fantastic. Sometimes great reading comes from looking at song lyrics, shop signs, cereal packets or adverts! Very often, ‘reluctant’ readers just haven’t found a subject matter or a type of text that engages them, and there is no ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ in this area. It is the exposure to language, new ideas, curiosity and expanding our mental models (or schema) that make reading in all forms such a valuable and rewarding skill.



Before reading – talk about the front cover, the title, and the ‘blurb’ of the book. Have a look through the pictures and try to predict what the book is about. Who is the author? The illustrator?

During reading – think about any new words and what they might mean. Think about why a particular word is effective or what it makes you think of. Point out any words that the child may know and be able to decode themselves. Talk about the pictures, the main characters, the events in the book, or the ending. **However** – it can sometimes be very frustrating to keep on stopping and starting when reading a good book. You don’t need to point out anything when reading, and can just read the

book straight through¹

After reading – think about what you liked or disliked. Do you want to read the book again? What type of book is it? Would you recommend it and why? How did it make you feel? Has the author written any other books you would like to read?

If you would like to discuss any aspect of your child’s reading, please get in touch with your child’s class teacher.