

Learning to Read



In Willow Class we are embarking on the exciting journey of learning to read! Here are a few top-tips that will hopefully give guidance as to how you can help and support your child develop their early reading skills.

The first thing to remember is that all children are different and learn at different rates and in different ways. **The best way to support your child is to share reading times at home every day as a 'little and often' approach will be the most effective.** We develop reading skills every day at school and will also endeavor to read with your child twice a week. Please read with your child as often as possible, writing in their yellow reading record when you have done so with a short comment or your initials.

The first books they receive may have no words at all – but there is a lot to get from a story just using the pictures. Some books will have a few words for your child to learn by sight as they read the book a few times. As they learn more sounds and begin blending sounds to read words, the books they receive will be phonetically decodable (the words can be 'sounded out!')

- before opening the book look at the cover – what do you think it is about? Read the title and the 'blurb' on the back.
- encourage your child to hold the book and take responsibility for turning the pages
- look at the pictures and talk about them – this is not cheating, it is what they are there for!
- talk about the characters, tell your child their name and find it in the text. Can you tell how the character is feeling?
- read the text to the child, tracking the words from left to right. Read again encouraging your child to join in with you
- look for letters that your child may know. Can you put your finger on the sound 's'. Be sound spotters!
- ask your child simple questions about the book, what has happened, why something happened, what might happen next
- read the same book a few times – if they learn it off by heart this is a good thing and really boosts their confidence
- give lots of praise and encouragement!

As your child becomes more confident they will begin to be able to recognise more sounds and blend them to read whole words. Other 'tricky' words which can't be sounded out we learn as sight vocabulary, for example the word 'said' has to be learnt rather than decoded.

Learning to Read

Developing further reading skills

- as your child becomes a more confident reader it is still really important to look at the pictures as often they contain a lot of clues and extra information
- 'pre-teach' difficult vocabulary by pointing it out in the sentence. This will enable your child to read more fluently. This is often a good idea with characters names!
- understanding the story or text is really important! Talking about the book is an essential part of reading. This might include talking about the setting of the story, the plot or the characters. Try asking questions beginning with 'what, when, why, where or how' this can become very challenging! You can also encourage your child to ask you questions to see if you have been paying attention!
- building confidence in reading fluently and with expression is an important part of reading and sometimes it is important to read texts that are not so challenging in order to develop these skills

Working together

Please do try and read with your child as much as possible – it is the best way to support your child through this process and helps them a huge amount. If at any time you have any concerns about your child's reading please do let us know and we can work together to try and overcome them.

Thank you,
Mrs Wesley