

Foxton Primary School

# *Reading Together*

*A guide for parents*



## Teaching Reading at Foxton

Teaching reading is a complex process and this is a brief outline. Please contact the school if you want to ask any questions or have these things explained in more detail.

As children learn to read in different ways we have to be flexible and provide activities and experiences that encourage all of them to:

- want to learn to read,
- read for pleasure,
- read for information.

## Young Children

We teach children to read using different strategies alongside a carefully balanced programme of sounds and books from the school reading scheme. When children start in 4+/Reception an initial assessment of the child's knowledge of sounds and book handling skills is completed.

Key book handling skills that young children need to understand:

- knows how to open a book and turns the pages;
- pictures tell stories and give clues;
- a book starts at one end and finishes at the other;
- letters make words;
- words make sentences;
- letters make sounds;
- different groups of letters make complex sounds;
- some letters do not seem to follow any rules at all.

This then provides a starting point as to whether your child will begin by practising letter sound recognition or a book from one of the school's many reading schemes.

Those children who are practising letter sound recognition do so to ensure that they are able to begin to apply this knowledge immediately when starting to read words.

When children begin to read they see words as images with a particular shape and pattern, and they start to remember them. This is called sight recognition. However, the number they can remember is limited, so having sight recognition is not enough.

They need to be able to analyse, breakdown or decode a word into its individual sounds and then be able to blend sounds, to build up or make new words. We teach the initial sounds of the alphabet first, e.g. a for apple.

Then the sounds two letters make when they are joined together, e.g. ch for church.

Then the sounds more letters make, e.g. tion as in station.

Some books may only have pictures, others a few words or phrases, but soon they become familiar with the characters from the Oxford Reading Tree Scheme or the New Way Reading books, Ginn 360 and Story World. These books have a controlled reading level which becomes more difficult and challenging. As children progress a wider range of books is introduced, including both fiction and non-fiction, with the older children choosing books from the library that they are encouraged to discuss and respond to.

## Older Children

A skill for future learning is accessing information. When choosing non-fiction books children are taught how to make use of:

- The contents
- the index
- the glossary

and also to:

- practise "skimming" to see if the book is appropriate;
- practise scanning to locate information.

Children are encouraged to differentiate between a fact or opinion, use correct terminology, e.g. author, plot, motive, as well as being taught the elements of grammar and punctuation and discuss their purposes.

The teacher or classroom assistant will hear a child read or spend time talking about books in a one-to-one situation. However, this is not the only time children are heard to read, group and guided reading sessions in and out of the Literacy Hour provide opportunity to hear readers. Reinforcement or extension work may be selected and put in the reading diary/homework folder. It is important that the **red reading bag** comes to school **every day**.

The more practise children get and the more they enjoy it, the more likely it is that they will be enthusiastic, independent and reflective readers.

### **Try not to be over-anxious**

- Parents show more anxiety about children learning to read than they do about anything else in school. All children are different and there is no set rate or firm age by which children will progress through the reading scheme.
- At Foxton, the reading scheme is planned in such a way that there are several routes through the books. Not all children will read the same books in the same order - books are selected according to the needs of your child which may be different to those of another child.
- Don't fret if your child is at an earlier stage than you would hope for, or than his or her friends seem to be. Learning to read is not a race and comparisons with other children are unhelpful and undermine confidence.
- It is natural that parents will be concerned if they feel that their child is not making reasonable progress. If you are worried at all, talk to your child's teacher. Anxiety can be transferred to children and far from encouraging them to make more effort, it will only make them more anxious and less likely to progress.

## Reading with your child

Your main aim should be to make reading with your child interesting and fun.

Choose the times when you are to share books and read. Best of all, this will be when they want to read and not when they are tired or wanting to watch their favourite TV programme.

Try to find about 10 minutes when you can sit down with your child and give them your full attention.

You could ask a grandparent or other family member to read with your child sometimes. Children enjoy showing off their reading skills.

If your child refuses to read, praise, encouragement and reward are more helpful than forcing or punishing them. They won't read well if you have to fall out with them over it and have a row. Talk to their teacher if you are having trouble night after night.

**Little and often is the best approach to learning to read.** The most important thing a parent can do is **praise** their child.

## Helping with mistakes

Don't feel that you have to correct every single word your child gets wrong. If it makes sense, you can let some mistakes pass.

1. Let them read on to the end of the sentence - they may be able to recognise their mistake and work out the correct word from the context.
2. Point to the picture if this helps them with the meaning. It is important for children to use these picture clues.
3. Help them to sound out the word (using phonics).
  - You can cover up part of the word to help them.
  - Ask your child what sound the first letter is and so on.
  - Prompt your child by giving the first sound.

This is more useful for some words than others, e.g. "cat" is easy to sound out but other words such as "house" are difficult for young children. It is not worth asking the child to sound out such words.



4. Read the word for them and then re-read the whole sentence. This is especially important to help keep the understanding of what the whole sentence says. Point to the words as you read them.

If your child gets stuck, first:

**Pause, then prompt, then praise.**

After your child has finished reading a story or a section of a story, encourage them to talk about it.

As questions about the story.

*"What do you think might happen next?"*

*"Why do you think she said that?"*

*"What would you do if you were there?"*

*"Which bit did you like best?"*

You could ask your child to retell the story - get them to say what happened.

These questions help your child's understanding of what they have read.

As your child gets older and a more confident reader, you will not need to hear them read in the same way.

- Set aside some time for them to read each day.
- Ask your child to choose a section of the story to read to you.
- Ask about the story, the characters, the ideas in the story, what they like about it, etc.
- Talk about the words that the author has used and check that your child understands the words. Can he/she suggest some alternatives? Try to get your child to understand what the author might be suggesting or implying by choosing some words.
- Talk about what might happen next. How will the story end? Try to get your child to predict.

*As children progress with their reading  
you may hear them read less,  
but you will need to talk more about their reading.*

## Using the reading record

The reading record acts as a diary of your child's reading. It is also a means by which you and your child's teacher can communicate. The teachers will also use it, at different times, to give children relevant exercises to help with their reading. These are sometimes supplemented with worksheets and comprehension exercises as the children progress through the reading scheme.

- Whenever you hear your child read, please write down the date and page number that you have read to.
- It is helpful if you can also write a comment. You may want to say how nicely your child read. All children thrive on praise!
- It is also helpful if you can say what your child managed well and independently or any words and ideas that they needed help with.
- Sometimes it helps to say whether your child enjoyed the story, as this helps their teacher match reading books to your child.

## Other ways to support reading

### With young children:

- read stories together
- talk about the story together
- let them see you reading and writing
- make shopping lists together
- help them to read signs and labels when you are out together
- visit the library
- share songs and rhymes
- listen to tapes of books and songs
- talk about TV programmes
- play word games like I-spy

### With older children:

- Read with them and talk about the ideas - in information books, stories, newspapers or magazines about hobbies, sport, etc.
- Encourage them to read "everyday" print - in newspapers, recipe books, TV guides, catalogues, instruction manuals, etc.
- Give them plenty of opportunities to write - in notebooks, diaries, scrapbooks, letters to friends or relatives, or on a computer.
- Help them with their spellings. You can encourage them to look at words, check and remember how words are spelt.
- Play games like hangman or word searches, crosswords, etc.

## Questions

- "What are you reading at the moment?"
- "What has happened so far?"
- "Would you like to read a bit to me?"
- "What do you think will happen next?"
- "How do you think it might end?"
- "Is there anything you particularly liked about the book?"
- "Which character did you like best/least in the book?"