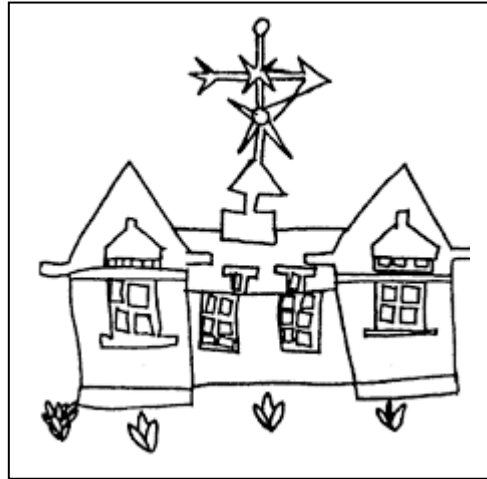


# Russell Street School



## **Supporting Your Child's Reading at Home**

## Learning to Read

One of the most beneficial reading experiences that young children learning to read can have is sharing books regularly with adults. At Russell Street School, children are taught to read in English lessons and in their weekly guided reading lessons. Parents and carers can play an important role in supporting their children's learning by making reading and enjoyment of books a regular part of home life. This leaflet outlines some of the principles for teaching reading, along with prompts that parents and carers can use at home in order to reinforce classroom learning. It also offers some ideas and tips for how to make reading together an enjoyable activity.

### Making it Enjoyable

It is not unusual for children to resist doing what they perceive to be 'work' at home, whether it be reading to a parent or practising writing key words. Below are some tips for making the task feel less arduous, and even fun, for children and parents alike.

When hearing your child read his school reading book:

1. Little and often is the key. Ten minutes each day is ideal; you need not always finish the whole book.
2. Make it part of your daily routine and try to read together at a similar time each day. This is particularly important if your child is often not keen to read at home. Once the habit is established your child will be expecting to read and will be less likely to protest!
3. Minimise distractions: a T.V. on in the background can be challenging to ignore.
4. Share the reading. Your child will enjoy hearing you read a page of his book and will be learning what fluent, expressive reading sounds like while he is listening. You can even read alternate pages of the book if this is what engages your child.
5. Enjoy your reading time together! Try to establish a reading routine that is something you both look forward to. It can involve chatting about the day and having a cuddle as well as reading your child's book together. If your child has specific interests or hobbies, you can always share books about these subjects during your reading time as well as his school book.
6. Read the school reading book a few times before you change it: reading familiar books is a valuable activity for children.

Outside of the time you make for sharing the school reading book, try to give books and reading a high profile. Reading your child a bedtime story is an important way of doing this and there are many other ways besides. Talking about books and what you love about them; getting excited about a book you are going to read together or a trip to the library; sharing books you love again and again; reading to siblings - older or younger - and other relatives as well: these are all ways to support your child on his journey to becoming a fluent reader.

## Reading in the Foundation Stage

Children who have been exposed to books and been read to from a young age already have a good idea of what a book is and how to use one. In the early years, teachers reinforce and expand children's understanding of books and stories by allowing them to get 'hands-on' with books and by talking to them about how books work. In this way, teachers can ensure that children have an understanding of which way a book is held; where we begin reading on a page; how we turn pages and how the pictures are linked to the meaning of the print. It is also important that children of this age are able to use some book-related language. Discussing the title and where we find it on the book, as well as the names and jobs of the author and illustrator are helpful activities.

When sharing books at home you could:

- ask your child to find the front cover
- ask your child to point to the title, which you then read to her
- talk about the author and illustrator - have you read any other books by them?
- ask your child to show you where to begin reading and which way to go
- make predictions together about what might happen in the story
- talk about what you can see in the pictures

Children in the Foundation Stage are also taught strategies to help them to begin to read simple texts. As well as using phonics to blend the sounds in unknown words, children will be learning to read a number of 'key words' on sight. These can be practised using a *look, cover, write, check* method and when encountered in reading books should be read without the need for sounding out. Once a child has a good bank of key words that she can read quickly and automatically, she will read with greater fluency. Key words are sent home in groups for children to practise.

## Finger Tracking

Children who are new to reading don't necessarily understand that one printed word on the page represents one spoken word, or that, in English, we track words from left to right across a page. It is important that children learn how text makes sense early, therefore ensuring that children use an index finger to point to each word as it is read is vital. If your child is reading Level 1 (pink) or Level 2 (red) books, remind her to track print with a finger. Once this is secure, children need to track print with their eyes and only use the finger for breaking words or slowly checking through a word.

## Reading for Meaning

Many of the strategies we develop on our journey to becoming fluent readers are not strictly about the print we see on the page. We learn to make predictions about what a word could be based on what we know about the book and about texts in general. For this reason, a book introduction (see page 4) is important, as is using the pictures. If the text says, *Here comes Rabbit* and the child sees the *R* and the picture of a rabbit, she has two clues to piece together to help her to solve the word.

Help your child by asking:

- What could it be? Does that make sense?
- What would make sense here?
- Could it be ... or ...? (e.g. rabbit or ring?) Which would make sense here?

## Reading in Key Stage One

As children move into Key Stage One, they encounter texts which demand they use a variety of different skills and strategies. Teachers therefore teach these strategies for decision-making, self-monitoring and self-correcting, while also helping children to become independent readers who choose appropriate strategies and are flexible about how they solve unknown words.

### Book Introductions

Because so much of our decision-making about unknown words comes from our understanding of what would be appropriate in the context of the book we are reading, it is helpful for a child to have an understanding of what a book is about before he attempts it. This is especially important if the book is not yet familiar as it will give your child helpful clues about what language to expect.

It should only take a couple of minutes:

- read the title and the author's name
- look through the book together, finding out and pointing out characters' names
- give a brief outline of the plot
- talk about what you can see in the pictures
- pick out any key phrases or words that might be unfamiliar to your child
- avoid giving away the ending if this makes your child lose motivation to read

Your child will then be ready to read the book. As he reads, prompt him to think about whether his attempts at unknown words make sense in the context of the book, 'Does that make sense?'

**Encourage your child to listen to himself as he is reading.** As well as noticing when his attempts don't make sense, he is more likely to notice if he reads words that are grammatically wrong in the sentence. If he reads, *I when to the shop*, instead of *I went to the shop*, you could ask, 'Does that sound right?' or 'Would we say that?' By listening to himself he is more likely to begin to correct his mistakes without being prompted to do so. If you want to prompt him to correct his attempt, you could say, 'Try that again.' This will encourage him to search for more information to read the word.

**Help your child look for clues that he can see.** This means all the visual information in the print and includes:

- key words that your child can read on sight
- sounding out using phonics
- noticing the initial sound of a word, middle sounds, final sound
- breaking words into chunks, e.g. look-ing; out-side; down-stairs

**Encourage your child to read fluently and expressively.** As well as modelling good reading, you might pick out short phrases from the text, particularly speech, to practise together. For example, 'Can you say *Fe, fi, fo, fum*, and make it sound just like a giant?' As a child becomes a quicker, more fluent reader, words which may before have been challenging appear easier because the child is able to use his understanding of the text leading up to the unknown word to help him to solve it. If your child's reading slows down and he gets stuck on a word, you could prompt him to 're-run' or, 'Take a run up,' meaning that he goes back to the beginning of the sentence and reads quickly up to the unknown word, giving him a better sense of the context and grammatical structure that the word must fit.

If you have any questions about how you can support reading at home, please speak to your child's teacher.