

Reading the books your child brings home

Phonics or 'decodable' texts (for emerging readers)

- Phonics is one of the ways in which children learn to read and is taught for at least 20 minutes each day in school. It is important that the children have as much opportunity as possible to apply these skills and practise decoding words. They will therefore bring home either a 'phonics' book or sheet each week.

When reading the phonics book with your child, prompt him or her to 'decode' unfamiliar words by breaking them down into a series of sounds and then blending the sounds together.

Some possible prompts and questions for the phonics book:

What's the first sound in this word?

What's the last sound?

What sound does this letter make?

What sound do and make together?

Can you think of any other words that have these two letters making this sound?

Are there any other letters that make the same sound? E.g. ai and ay

Non-decodable texts

- In addition to their phonics reading book, the children will also bring home a 'non-decodable' book each week. This will usually be from the Oxford Reading Tree scheme.

Although these books obviously have some words the children can sound out, they also have what is described as 'non-decodable' words (sometimes called 'sight words' or tricky words). These are words such as

the said no they was Mr Mrs asked could called

Children are taught these words at school and should practice them further at home. (A full list of the words for each year group is available on the school website or you can ask the class teacher)

When you are reading this book with your child you may be encouraging them to use some of their phonic knowledge (e.g. looking at the initial sound as a clue) but you will mainly be encouraging the following strategies:

- Looking at the picture for clues
- Relying on their knowledge of their sight words
- Reading the rest of the sentence and working out the missing word



Tips for the reading helper

St Mary's C of E Primary School

Before reading

When we start a new book at school, we spend some time looking at the front and back cover. We start every book with SPAT. This is where we talk about what we think the following is:

Subject

Purpose *(if it's a story it might be to entertain or there may be some sort of moral or 'lesson' involved, if it's a non-chronological report, the purpose is to inform etc...)*

Audience *Who is this book aimed at?*

Text type *What sort of text is this? Story, instructions, poem.*

This all happens **before** reading and is a good opportunity for the children to discuss what they know about different texts types in addition to it stimulating their interest. You can also discuss what might happen in a story or what the reader hopes to learn from a non-fiction text.

Please go to
www.stmarysn8.co.uk for lots
more information about reading
with your child

During reading

- When children are reading aloud, draw attention to punctuation marks and help them to read with feeling, e.g.

"HOORAY!" they shouted

- Make a note of any tricky words as they read and revisit them later

- Stop midway and ask the child to predict what might happen

- Ask a couple of questions as you are reading. This could be something about a character: *How do you think she's feeling? How do you know? Why do you think she did that? What do you think he will say about that? What sort of a person is... How do you know?*

Or about the language in the text: *How did the author describe...? Did you like the description of? Do you think that's a good word to describe...*

There are video examples of reading sessions on our website, along with a list of questions to ask during reading.

Children are read with individually **at least** once each week by the class teacher, teaching assistant or another adult.

After reading

Reading is about so much more than just being able to read the word on the page. It is important that children understand what they are reading. To check their understanding, you could ask questions about the book or encourage them to:

- explain the meaning of selected words

- summarise what happened (and in what order)

- draw pictures of scenes and characters from the book

- tell the story in their own words

- describe a character from the book, including their thoughts and feelings

As the children become more fluent readers (this point comes at different ages for different individuals) we move the children away from scheme books and encourage them to choose their own book from the class library. The information outlined in the leaflet still applies to the chosen book though and children should be read with in the same way they were when they were on a scheme. There is more information about this in our Key Stage 2 reading leaflet.