

St Mary's Catholic Primary School

A Catholic Voluntary Academy



How to help your child's reading and
comprehension skills.

Foundation and Key Stage One

At St. Mary's we know that the best way for children to make progress is for teachers and parents to work together. Reading together at home is one of the easiest but most important ways in which you can help your child. As you share books you are helping improve your child's reading skills and also showing them how important and enjoyable reading is.

Supporting Reading at Home

1. Find a place to sit together that suits you both.
2. Try to read for at least 5 to 10 minutes a day and once over the weekend. Encourage it as a pleasurable experience.
3. Find some time to talk about the book as well as reading it. Start with the title, look at the cover and briefly chat about what you might find inside. At the bottom of each page, encourage your child to predict what might happen next. If your child gets stuck, ask what word would fit best, ask them to sound it out (if appropriate), or simply supply the word yourself.
What happened in the story? Does this remind them of anything in their lives or anything they have read before?
Did they think the book was funny? Did they spot any interesting words and phrases? Did they enjoy the book?
4. Encourage your child to retell the story you have just shared. This will give you an idea of how much they have understood.
5. Do not condemn the book as 'too easy' or 'too hard'. Children need a range of reading materials. Any 'easy' book helps them to relax with reading. A difficult book can be read to your child. Both are important.
6. If your child gets stuck, you can help them by;
 - Pointing to the picture if it is relevant
 - Asking a question to remind them of the context, e.g. 'Where did they say they were going?'
 - Re-reading the sentence up to the unknown word to remind them of the context.
 - Saying or pointing to the first letter of the word.
 - Telling your child the word to avoid losing momentum.
 - If the word can be read easily by sounding out the letters, encourage them or help them to do this.

Pause, Prompt and Praise

PAUSE to help them work out the new words

PROMPT by using some of the techniques mentioned

PRAISE them for trying whether they are right or wrong

It is important to use as many clues as possible to help your child when they encounter difficulty.

After Reading

Talking about the book with your child at the end will help your child in their enjoyment and understanding of the book.

- Did you enjoy that book? Why? Why not?
- Who was your favourite character? Why?
- Which part did you like the best? Why?
- Was there any part you didn't like? Why?
- Would you choose this book/story again?

Which books are best?

1. Books your child likes.
2. Books suggested by your child's teacher
3. Books your child chooses from a library or bookshop that they want to read
4. Never be afraid of re-reading books

What else can your child read?

- Comics
- Magazines
- Instructions or recipes
- What's on television tonight
- Information books
- Manuals
- Poems
- Taped/CD/Recorded stories
- Shopping lists.....

My child is a good reader. Can I still help?

YES! Although children will often want to read in their heads when they become fluent readers and you should not insist on too much reading aloud, there are still many things that you can do.

Discuss with them what they have read – about the character, about the plot, about the important parts of the story, about what they have learnt from the information, about their feelings as they read the story...

For example;

- Which part of the story did you like best? Why?
- What do you think will happen next?
- Would you like X as a friend? Why?
- What do you think X should have done when..?
- How do you think the story will end?
- Was the information detailed enough?

- Encourage them to think about the way the book has been written; the print, the layout and the illustrations.
- Take your child to the library
- Help your child to choose books
- Try reading bits of a book together into a tape recorder using different voices!

My child won't read, no matter what I do. How can I help?

- Read to your child as much as possible
- Don't make an issue out of it
- Talk to your child's class teacher
- Working together will help

How to encourage your child to read

Read yourself! Set a good example by sharing your reading. Let your children see that you value books and keep them at home.

Keep books safe. Make your child their own special place to keep their books. Show them how to turn pages carefully.

Point out words all around you. Help your child to read the words around them: on food packets in the supermarket, on buses, in newspapers, in recipes.

Visit your library – it's free to join! All libraries have children's sections. Many also have regular storytelling sessions.

Make time to read. Read a bedtime story with your child every night. Encourage them to share reading with grandparents, brothers and sisters and aunts and uncles.

Keep in touch with school. Make sure your child swaps their home reading books regularly at school and try to make a regular time slot of about 10 minutes to hear them read.

If English is not your family's first language: You can buy dual language books. You can talk about books and stories in any language.

How to help with reading

Be positive. Praise your child for trying hard at their reading. Let them know it's all right to make mistakes.

Turn off the TV! It's easier for your child to concentrate if there are no distractions.

Give them time. Let them make a guess before you tell them the word. Help them to get the first sound or try breaking the word up into smaller sections.

Point with a finger. Encourage them to follow the words with their finger.

Don't make them try too hard! It doesn't matter if you have to tell them the word sometimes.

Let them read their favourites. It's good practice to read the same books over and over again.

Ask lots of questions. Check they understand the story by asking them questions about what happens. Use the pictures to explain what's happening.

Don't read for too long. A good ten minutes is better than a difficult half hour.

Activities to try at home

Organise a treasure hunt around the house on a rainy day. Give your child a list of things that they can find in the house and see how quickly they can collect all the items.

Create a monster dictionary by making up names of frightening monsters that begin with different letters.

How reading is assessed

We want our children to love reading, and therefore it is essential that they have a good level of comprehension in order to fully enjoy and engage in a book.

These guidelines used to help children to understand the text beyond simply decoding words.

When listening to your child read, or after they have read on their own, it would be useful if you could ask them some questions about the text using this booklet as a guideline.

IN FOUNDATION AND KEY STAGE ONE THE FIRST TWO AREAS ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT

Decode accurately. Read with understanding
Seek, find and understand the text. Literal responses to text. Text reference.
Inference and deduction (between the lines) Interpret; put yourself in their shoes; text reference.
Structure. Commenting on presentational features. Why is the text presented and organised as it is?
Language. Why did the writer use that word / phrase / image / sentence etc. Literary awareness. Impact on reader.
The Writer Writer's purpose. Writer's attitudes and values.

Question prompts to develop decoding:

Do you see a word you know?
What would make sense/ sound right?
What would you expect to see at the beginning of?
Is it like a word you already know?
Can you see a word inside the word?
Blend this part of the word.
Does the sentence make sense?

Question prompts to develop seeking, finding and understanding texts:

Where and when did the story take place?
What did s/he/it look like?
Who was s/he/it? Can you name the....?
Where did s/he/it live?
Who are the characters in the book?
What happened after?
How many....?
Describe what happened at....?
Who spoke to? Identify who....?
Can you tell me why?
Which is true false.....?
Find the meaning of....?
What is. ... ?

Question prompts to develop inference and deduction

How did ___ feel?

Why did ___ feel / think ___?

Match feelings / thoughts to parts of the story.

How do we know ___?

What does this tell us about how ___ is feeling / thinking?

Have you ever had a similar experience?

How did you feel?

Put yourself in their shoes.

Who do you know who is like ___?

What do you think will happen because of...?

If this was you – how would your friends react?

Structure begins to be covered in Y2

Question prompts to develop structure

Where could you find out about... in this book?

Where in the book would you find...?

The other assessment areas are developed in Key Stage 2.

Books that have worked well with reluctant readers

Age	Title	Author
3-5	Bumpus, Jumpus, Dinosaur Rumpus	Tony Mitton
3-5	Tom and the Island of Dinosaurs	Ian Beck
4-7	Winnie the Pooh	A. A. Milne
5-8	The Giggler Treatment	Roddy Doyle
5-8	Cool	Michael Morpurgo
5-8	Horrid Henry series	Francesca Simon
5-8	Robin of Sherwood	Michael Morpurgo
5-8	Diary of a Killer Cat	Anne Fine
5-8	The Twits	Roald Dahl
7-9	Vlad the Drac series	Ann Jungman
7-9	Big Tom	Jean Ure
7-9	War Boy	Michael Foreman

Useful Websites

Booktrust www.booktrust.org.uk

The Child Literacy Centre www.childliteracy.com (US site but has some interesting links)

www.lovereadings4kids.co.uk