

Supporting your child with reading

A guide for parents of children in year 1 and above.

Here at West Leigh we are very lucky to have support from our parents who recognise how important it is to surround their children with books and to read them. Most parents also spend time each evening hearing their child read the book we send home from school. The aim of this booklet and our reading meeting is to enable you to make the most of this time.

We will briefly look at the different stages and levels your child will go through and consider some of the challenges connected with each one and how you can support your child. As we will be talking about levels a word of warning though! Reading is a bit like learning to talk! It happens at different rates and at different ages. It is a gradual process often tied up with your child's general development. Even within the same family, parents often find that no two children are the same. For that reason it can be unhelpful to compare your child and their reading level to other children in the same year group!

A potential issue
My child is not keen to read their book!

1. Do not drag your child away from their favourite television programme or interrupt a session on a computer game. This would even make most adults livid never mind a five or six year old!
 2. Try not to choose a time when your child is too tired.
 3. Make sure the session is not too long! Little and often is best.
 4. Try to make it a special time between you and your child so that they associate reading a book with feeling close to you, the time when they have you all to themselves.
- Make sure the rest of the family know this is a special time and you must not be disturbed.
 - Make sure you can give your undivided attention.
 - Make sure you are in a relaxed frame of mind!
- Remember, no-one enjoys an activity they think they are not good at! Think how much worse this is if they think they may also be disappointing someone they love. Hide any frustration or stress! Do everything to make this a positive experience, full of encouragement.

Don't expect a child to be bothered about learning to read if they are not bothered about books or reading!

Make sure reading is not just associated with that reading scheme book and trying to read it! There has to be some motivation for learning to read so let your child choose a book for you to read to them. It could be a challenging chapter story book designed for older children, a non-fiction book on dinosaurs or a Bristol City programme . It does not matter if it makes children want to read!

There are lots of other benefits to reading to your child !

The children are listening to the sound and the flow of the language as well as enjoying the experience. It trains children to listen and use their imagination so vital for this generation where every thing is on a screen.

Being read to is also an excellent activity for getting in the mood for sleep. It calms and soothes. It distracts the mind away from anxieties. Finally, any child given the choice of, lights out and bed or a book will choose the book!

Potential issue

Reading has become a chore that just consists of sounding out words.

At West Leigh children are not given a reading scheme book until they can blend sounds together and can therefore read words simple words such as cat, dad and pig. This stage can take a very long time and so this is an exciting moment. Our first reading scheme books are chosen to allow children to practice this skill of blending. However without support some children can become so absorbed by the letters and sounds they forget this is a book where something happens, where there are characters and possibly even humour.

Top tips

1. Look at the book together before your child reads the words. Your child will now read the book knowing the story first. Some parents may think this is cheating but actually it encourages your child to draw on this knowledge they now have in addition to looking at the letter sounds. This is a vital reading skill and you are helping them to acquire it.
2. Intervene to make sure no unnecessary sounding out takes place. Your child must learn that blending is something you can do to help read a word but you might not need it. Try saying,

Do you need to use your sounds for that word?

Try saying this if a word is repeated on each page or if, with some knowledge of the book, it is predictable. Eg
"Quack, went the d....."

3. Keep the book a second night. With a known book ,your child will grow in confidence. They will feel like they are reading. They will have more time to absorb other features of the writing.

Potential issue:

Some children will have begun to learn that two letters can make a sound but the sounds are not always spotted in a word. My child might say r/a/i/n/ instead of r/ai/n.

As this begins to happen remind your child, “ two letters ,1 sound” If necessary cover up the rest of the word so they can see what you mean. The reading books that are based on one of these sounds are especially important because they reinforce phonics taught in class that week.

If your child is ever eager to do another activity you could use the target sound in the book for some spelling practice. Your child will need to say the word slowly to hear all the sounds.

Using this ai , write rain.

warning!
Be ready to rescue your child from trying to blend sounds in a tricky word!

Help! This book requires my child to make more use of other reading skills in addition to phonics.

Early reading scheme books are chosen to reinforce the phonics taught in school. At some point your child will begin to read books with tricky words they may not have seen before. There may even be words where phonics only give a clue! The books will also be longer and require more stamina to read.

An example

Dad burnt the **sausages**

Do I know that word? No I'll try sounding it out. (Failed)
What do I know about barbecues?
What could a dad burn? Burgers? That makes sense but it can't be, it begins with s.....

At this level we need to train your child to have this dialogue with themselves.

- Top tips to do that training:
1. Ignore the words, use the pictures to learn the story first so your child knows what's going to happen. Once again, this is not cheating. Your child will be much more capable of learning how to have that dialogue with themselves if they are able to look at that word and recall the story they know.
 2. Intervene. “ You haven't been taught those sounds but there is a clue it begins with s.
Dad burnt the s.....”
 3. Be a text guide. Protect you child from unnecessary failure by telling them a tricky word you know they won't get.
 4. If they do stop to work out a word, get them to reread the whole sentence. Reading is about getting meaning and this will help them to get back in the flow.

Potential issue:

Reading is accurate. What now?

At some point that exciting moment will be reached where reading is accurate! Somehow the code has clicked. However, understanding and making sense of a book is not just about reading the words accurately! At this level it is about understanding the language that the author has chosen to use. It often means getting information from the words, rather than pictures and even 'reading between the lines'. Sentences in books will be longer and more complicated.

Top-tips

These are the sort of questions to ask which will help to develop a deeper understanding of a book. They may also help children to think more about the language being used.

Can you find a word that means.....

What does this mean.....

What has happened so far?

What might happen next?

Where is the setting for the story. How do you know?

What sort of a character is..... How do you know?

Who is your favourite character? Why?

Why did that character do that ? Give a particular situation or event in the story.

How did that part of the story make you feel? Why?

What was your favourite part? Why?

Phonics in year 1

Phonics continues to be taught each day in year 1. All schools follow a phonics programme. You may have heard of some of them such as Read Write Inc , or Jolly Phonics. Here at West Leigh we follow a programme based on Letters And Sounds. The programme has different stages called phases. It is hoped that most children will reach the end of phase 5 by the end of year 1. Here is a brief overview.

Phase 2

Knowledge

The children will have learnt that sounds can be represented by individual letters. They should be able to look at a letter and say the corresponding sound.

Skills

They will know that if sounds are said quickly they merge together to make a word. We call this **blending**, an essential skill for reading. At West Leigh children are given their first reading scheme book when they can do this.

We can also start with a word, say it slowly and hear the individual sounds within that word. In order to spell the word a child then has to choose a letter or set of letters to represent the sound. This is called **segmenting**.

Phase 3

Knowledge

The children learn that more than 1 letter can make a sound. By the end of this phase they will know one way to spell every sound in the language.

ch, sh, th, ng ai, ee igh oa oo or

ur ow oi air ear ure er

They will learn to read and spell using these sounds.

Phase 4

No new sounds are learnt but the children work with words such as:

clip , chimp, train, brown, paint

In these words there are two consonants that are said very quickly ,so quickly that an untrained ear could think they were one sound.

Phase 5

The children learn that each sound can have another spelling and then proceed to learn them all!

Eg rain play mate

Strategies and spelling rules are learnt to help children know which spelling to use.

Time is spent learning how a spelling can have different sounds.

Phonics screening takes place in June and results are reported to parents in the child's annual report. During the year home activities will be sent home with children to reinforce phonics work in school.