

GREAT SANKEY PRIMARY SCHOOL



A Parents' Guide to Encouraging Your Child to Read



'Together We Learn and Grow'

"Children are made readers on the laps of their parents." — Emilie Buchwald



Research proves that children who enjoy reading do better at school in all subjects.

Reading improves all of a child's literacy skills and can offer them a lifetime of enjoyment and learning. At GSP we aim to promote a love of reading and feel that children discovering books and learning how to use and enjoy them is crucial to their development.

Through daily phonic and guided reading sessions; one to one reading; group reading; and whole class text work in English lessons, we aim to give children high quality reading experiences that support and challenge them to delve further into the books they are encountering and develop confidence in being able to discuss them.

Reading with your child at home is a crucially important way to support their learning. Reading books together, reading to your child, hearing them read, discussing reading technique, stories, poems and non-fiction texts are all key ways to help your child develop into an able and accomplished reader and writer.

We hope that this booklet will give you some useful background information and ideas about reading at home with your child. Please do not hesitate to come and see us if you need any further help or advice.

First things first...

Helping your child with reading doesn't just mean listening to him / her reading a school reading book, although this is of course vitally important! Here are some other ways of developing reading skills in your child:

- Talk to and listen to your child
- Make time for discussion – of a TV programme, a news item, a film, during a walk, over a meal, in the car, at bath-time
- Read stories, poems and other texts aloud to your child – and don't deny yourself the pleasure of reading more challenging texts to older children
- Let your child see you reading for purpose and pleasure
- Visit the library / bookshops
- Listen to stories on CDs, the radio, the internet
- Give your child access to a wide variety of suitable written material: books, magazines, websites, recipes, instructions, TV guides, catalogues, games

General Strategies for Reading at Home

Find a really good time for reading practice – five minutes of quality time, when you can give your full attention to your child, is better than longer periods when neither of you are fully concentrating

Talk about the book with your child before reading – you could introduce any words that you think your child will struggle with or any words he or she may not yet understand

If your child is finding a book difficult, don't ask him / her to sound out every word - focus on words you know that your child can decode

Sometimes read with your child (paired reading) or take it in turns to read a page

'Book Talk' is an essential part of the shared reading experience (see below for useful tips!)

Give plenty of praise and let your child know that you are enjoying listening to the text



- Ask other people in to listen to your child read – grandparents, friends, older siblings
- Keep reading sessions short and enjoyable – reading should never be a chore!

“You know you’ve read a good book when you turn the last page and feel a little as if you have lost a friend.”

- Paul Sweeney

Strategies for Helping with Decoding

One of the vital first steps of early reading is to be able to ‘sound out’ words and blend sounds together in order to read them. This is called ‘decoding’.

During the early stages of learning to read, children are given books which they are able to decode using phonic strategies that they have been taught at school as well as words containing their ‘key sight words’ which can be found in their Home School Reading Planners. As they become more confident readers, they will continue to use these strategies and develop many others. Some of these strategies are listed below:

- ‘Blending’ or ‘sounding out’ whole words, particularly in the early years: ‘ch – o – p’, ‘p – l – ay’, ‘t – r – ai – n’
- Recognising common endings (-ing, -ed, -er, -tion, -able) and prefixes (un-, de-, in-)
- Finding the root word within more complex words (discovery, subway, incoming, discontentment)
- Using syllables to break words down into more manageable chunks (mis-con-duct, en-count-er-ing, ex-tra-or-din-a-ry)
- Recognising words ‘at sight’ (fluent readers read most words like this)
- Using the context of the word or picture clues.

TOP TIP: It’s a really good idea to stop and re-read the sentence if you have paused to decode a word, so that you do not lose the sense of the text you are reading.

Reading for Meaning

Learning to decode words gives children access to our literate world, but we need to understand what we are reading in order to be able to make use of it. As your child grows in confidence as a reader, our teaching at school places less emphasis on simply decoding texts and more emphasis on understanding them. We call this reading comprehension.



Some of the key skills of reading comprehension are:

- 'Skim reading' a text to pick out important or useful information
- Understanding the writer's meaning behind what they have written
- Knowing what devices the writer uses to make the meaning clear (this could be sub-titles in a non-fiction text, short sentences to create atmosphere in a scary story or metaphors in a poem)
- Having a wide vocabulary and being interested in finding out the meanings of new words
- Being able to express an opinion about a text and backing it up with examples and quotations
- Using inference to give informed opinions about a text (using clues from the text to understand something that is implied by the author but not directly stated).

Helping your child choose a suitable book

- The reading books which children bring home from school are generally matched to your child's reading ability, however there are occasions when your child may wish to bring a book home which they have enjoyed listening to in class, a book which is written by their class' focus author or a book which they wish to share with you.
- Children in Years 5 and 6 have access to an online reading program called **Reading Plus**. They can access it at school or at home from a tablet or computer – their log in is in the cover of their planner. The choice of books on **See Read** and level of difficulty is matched to their reading ability. The aim is for them to complete 5 books per week and to access the assignments such as the vocabulary.
- Try the following suggestions:
"Why don't you read something...
...a bit harder?"

...with less pictures?

...by another author?

It can be frustrating if your child often chooses to read texts that seem too easy for him / her or texts that would not be considered of the highest literary quality!

Try 'drip feeding' your child a wider range of literature through:

- Reading more challenging books to him / her
- Watching the beginning of a TV or film adaptation to hook them in
- Providing accessible but informative non-fiction about a topic in which the child is currently interested (websites are useful for this)
- offering a wider range of books
- going to visit a bookshop and asking advice of current popular authors

“Once you learn to read, you will be forever free.”

— Frederick Douglass

