

Reading in the Early Years



Dear Parents/Guardians,

Reading is a skill we continue to develop throughout our lives, but starting this process as early as possible has significant benefits for our continued success as readers. This is why, as parents and carers, you play a vital role in supporting your child in becoming a fluent reader who is confidently able to apply their reading skills across all areas of their lives.

Research

Research shows that 'Poor vocabulary is the primary cause of academic failure.' [Becker 1977]. Aside from the direct teaching of vocabulary, which we undertake at school, reading is the most valuable way in which we can develop children's spoken and written vocabulary.

This vital vocabulary development starts at an early age, in the years before children even begin primary school. The following statistics demonstrate how important reading is to children's early development:

- By the age of two, children learn a new word every two hours. This means that by the time they start school, they should be familiar with over 10,000 words.
- Children who do well in primary school have over 7,000 root words, whereas those who are unable to meet age-related expectations have only about 3,000 root words.
- There is a difference in reading performance equivalent to just over a year's schooling, between young people who never read for enjoyment and those who read for up to 30 minutes per day.
- A child with weak language skills at age five is much less likely to be a strong reader at the age of 11 than a five year old with strong language skills.
- Children who often read books at age 10 and more than once a week at age 16 gain higher results in maths, vocabulary and spelling tests at age 16 than those who read less regularly.

Book Selection

At Wood End Park, we put a high importance on our children being good, fluent readers who also have a love of books. In order to ensure their success as readers, we ensure that children have access to **two books weekly**, from their first week in school.

The first book is one that matches their phonic reading level. This book allows your child to practice and rehearse phonemes they have been learning in school. Encourage your child to read at least a few pages every night. When they read this book, encourage them to apply their phonic knowledge and sound out unfamiliar words. We will be starting the majority of children on non-worded/

pre-reader books or books at Phase 2 level (if they have started reading). If your child has a 'pre-reader' book, encourage them to develop their language and storytelling skills by talking about what is happening on each page. Encourage them by asking questions about what they can see, or for example, how the characters might be feeling.

The second book will be a high quality storybook, which you will be expected to read to your child. The children will select this book themselves. Giving children a choice over what they read is an important factor in boosting their enthusiasm for reading and children are more likely to be interested in books they have selected for themselves.

Tracking your child's reading

To help us track how much reading your child is doing at home, it is important that you sign their reading record every time you have listened to them read, or have read to them, along with a brief comment. Your comment can be about how they read the book, their reading attitude, anything they were good at or struggled with.

Your support with reading at home is essential and only by working together can we ensure your child achieves their potential as a reader.

Please note workshops and learning sessions we will hold throughout the academic year to share more information and tips with you. These will be announced shortly.

If you require any further guidance in the meanwhile, please ask your child's class teacher.

Regards,

Mrs Allen

Director of Inclusion

