



Are you interested in helping your child to learn?

Dear Parents/ Carers,

At Durham Lane Primary School, we believe that reading is fundamental to learning as it permeates everything that your child needs to learn at school. Indeed, in the recent government document entitled, 'The Reading Framework: Teaching the Foundations of Literacy', it states that pupils who find it difficult to learn to read are likely to struggle across the curriculum.

Because of this, and because we believe that reading for pleasure has a huge influence on a child's cognitive development (in that reading hugely improves a child's vocabulary), we have always worked hard to teach reading through a systematic approach to phonics and by helping to foster a real love of reading in our pupils.

As educators, we know that engaging children with reading from the beginning is one of the most important ways to make a difference to their life chances and, for this to happen, they need to learn to read as fluently as possible, as early as possible, and be motivated to continue reading throughout their time in Durham Lane Primary and beyond!

So, how important is it that you, as parents/carers, play your part at home?

Before answering that, here is some research which looked at the impact of parents reading with their children from birth to age five. This quote comes from Science Daily (2019) which makes interesting reading:

"Here's how many words kids would have heard by the time they were 5 years old: Never read to, 4,662 words; 1-2 times per week, 63,570 words; 3-5 times per week, 169,520 words; daily, 296,660 words; and five books a day, 1,483,300 words."

The impact of your involvement at home doesn't stop once your child reaches age five though; in fact, we would like to encourage you to continue to listen to, read with and read to your child right up to Year Six as it is so important that you help us to engage your child in books in order to prepare them to become committed and enthusiastic readers.

How can you help your child with reading and, consequently, help them with all aspects of their learning?

This government link has some great tips about helping your child to read: [10 top tips for parents to support children to read - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/10-top-tips-for-parents-to-support-children-to-read)

How you can help your child with reading will clearly be different as your child moves through the school from Early Years to Year Six, but here are some ideas which would help support your child's reading:

Early Years/Lower Key Stage One:

- Your child will bring home a reading book or e-book which is closely matched to their phonic understanding and they should, therefore, be able to read it with little or no difficulty. Please listen to them read it and encourage them to segment and blend any words that they don't immediately recognise, offering lots of praise when they do so. Please write in your child's reading record and let your teacher know well they have read.
- Your child will also bring home books which you can share with them. They may want to try and read some of it, but these books are primarily being sent home so that your child hears stories being read to them and learns to love books. So why not snuggle up on the couch and enjoy sharing those books?

Upper Key Stage One:

As your child moves into Year Two, their phonic knowledge will be mainly secure and there will be few words that they cannot segment and blend. This is when reading becomes automatic and your child may need more support with their comprehension. At this stage, to help them you could:

- Listen to your child read their home-school reading book, encouraging them to segment and blend words that they don't immediately recognise, offering lots of praise when they do so.
- Ask questions about what they are reading e.g. what do you think will happen next? What is the name of the main character and what are they like? Which was your favourite part of the book and why? What is your favourite fact in the book? (For non-fiction books).
- Read stories and books to your child which they might not be able to read for themselves. Using different voices for different characters will help your child to develop their own expression and it can be a fun experience for you too!
- Allow your child to see the importance of reading in real life situations e.g. recipe books, instructions for playing games or making something.

Key Stage Two:

Most children in years 3-6 will be able to decode words effectively and with some speed. However, they need to continue to develop their love for reading and see reading as key to them gaining knowledge; as parents, you are pivotal in helping your child to do this. Here are some things you could do with your child to help them understand the content and context of the books they are reading:

- Continue to read with and to your child as well as listening to them. Why not read a page to your child and then let them read a page? Children love it when adults use 'voices' in stories and this helps them to develop their expression.
- Ask them to retell what they have just read with some support or even unaided.
- Ask your child to work things out from the text and see if they have literal/inferential comprehension skills. Here is an example. Your child might read this sentence in a book: "The little girl put on her blue coat slowly. Tears welled up in her eyes and she held back a sob."
A literal question might be, "What colour was the girl's coat?" An inferential question might be, "How was the girl feeling and how do you know?"
- Ask them to make predictions about what might happen next/at the end?
- As they progress through Key Stage Two, can they skim read a book and gain an overall impression of what it is about?
- Can they make predictions because they have read similar books or books by the same author?
- Do they know about different text types and how they are different? E.g. poems, non-fiction, reports etc.
- Discuss the vocabulary the author has used and ask them to comment on why they think these words have been used/ what the effect of these words is on the reader. Can they think of synonyms? (using a dictionary/thesaurus can be really useful).
- Get your child to ask you questions and, when you have answered them, see if they agree with you! This is a great way to check that they have actually understood the content of their book.
- Please sign your child's reading record and let the teacher know how well they have read.

Hopefully, this will have given you some ideas about helping to support your child's reading, but if you require any further support or information, please contact me or your child's teacher and we will be happy to help.

Yours Sincerely,

Miss EMP Barrett (Deputy Headteacher)

