

West Green Primary School

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Dear Parents and Carers,

Re: Helping your child with reading

Why Hear Children Read?

Reading really is the most important skill we learn at school. It allows us to do all sorts of things in our lives. To name just a few examples it helps us to go shopping in the supermarket, read novels, learn from Wikipedia, fill in an application form, and follow road signs, as they all require us to read.

Many of you spend a lot of time hearing your children read, and we are enormously grateful for this. The task of hearing all children read regularly is simply too big for us to achieve without your help. In the early stages of reading, reading to your child is just as important as hearing them read. Helping sound out and discussing unfamiliar words is the most common way that they need help.

How often should I hear my child read?

Reading with them every day is the best way to ensure that your child gets the most out of school. So many other things we do in school require children to be able to read well. Maths, science, geography, history and all sorts of other learning activities rely on being able to read. Children who read regularly will also become better writers.

Some books are more suitable to be read to your child. This is fine, in fact we recommend it. Through being read to, your child will develop a love of books and stories that will stay with them for their whole life. Don't be worried about reading books over and over either. Younger children get a lot from this and enjoy it. Through hearing something read out loud repeatedly, or reading the same book to you several times, children grow in confidence and fluency.

Asking Questions

Children of all ages also really benefit from discussing and answering questions about what they have read, and this becomes important once children are able to read all the words in a book by themselves. If we do not understand what we have read, we might as well not bother reading it! So it is really helpful to ask children questions about what they have read.

In order to help parents and carers with this, you will find overleaf a set of example questions under different headings. Take the time to look through and familiarise yourself with the types of questions. Think about what questions might be appropriate to ask your child, and what ones fit the book they are reading. Try a few out and talk about the answers. As you become more familiar with them, you will find that these ideas naturally guide the conversations you are having with your child.

We hope you find this information useful. If you have any questions about supporting your child with reading, please ask your child's class teacher.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'A. Hodgson'.

Mr A Hodgson

Headteacher

Retrieval Questions

Ask children to find information in a text. These are the simplest types of questions, and children of any age can do this activity.

- What colour is the ...?
- How old is the...?
- Where does the story happen?
- Where do the children go in the story?
- What happens after... (event)?
- How many children are at the party?
- How does the girl defeat the giant?
- Where is the story set?

Analytical Questions

Ask children to demonstrate understanding of significant themes, ideas, events and characters and refer to the text when explaining views. They ask children to analyse mood, setting and characters, style, structure and other significant aspects. They require children to make inference and deduction and become aware of the author's intentions.

- What makes you think that? What words give you that impression?
- Can you explain why?
- Do you agree with ...'s opinion?
- I wonder what the writer intended?
- Explain why the writer has decided to ...?
- What do you think these words mean and why do you think the writer chose them?
- Why do you think the author chose this setting?
- What evidence is there to support your view?
- Why did the boy slam the door when he left the room?

Evaluation questions

These questions require children to make judgements about what they have read and explain the reasons for those judgements. They encourage children to compare and contrast.

- What makes this a successful text? What evidence do you have to justify your opinion?
- Does it work?
- Could it be better? Is it as good as ...?
- Which is better and why?
- Which text do you think is more/most effective?
- Which text is giving the writer's own opinion? How do you know?