



Reading Guidance

This guidance details how we approach the teaching of reading at Jordans School.

Learning to read involves the setting up of processes by which the words on a page can be recognised (de-coded) and understood, and then to develop the language comprehension process. Word recognition and comprehension go hand in hand with each other, being able to decode many challenging words does not mean that a child is a strong reader if they do not understand what the words and text actually mean. Children need to acquire and practise certain skills in the early stages of reading in order to develop fluent automatic word reading, whereas the abilities to understand and appreciate written texts continue to develop throughout life.

Word reading

Development of fluent and automatic word reading skills is based on acquisition and use of phonic knowledge. Therefore our primary approach to the teaching of early reading is through our teaching of phonics. However, other strategies are also taught and we suggest encouraged at home. These strategies are explained below:

Phonics

We begin by teaching children the individual sounds in words (phonemes). This is a fairly quick experience as once the children know their sounds they can start to be blended together to make words. Children are taught that some letters make a cluster phoneme that is read as one sound i.e. /ch/, /th/, /sh/. We then teach children to 'chunk out' words rather than sounding out individual phonemes i.e Sunday is 'chunked out' as Sun-day. When children encounter a challenging word they are taught to sound it out by reading each phoneme in turn then blending them in turn to make the word.

Look and Say

As children develop their phonics skills they are taught to recognise whole words or sentences rather than individual sounds. Children will often make a guess at a word from reading the first few letters, this is to be encouraged but if the guess is incorrect children are taught to think 'does that make sense?' If you watch your child's eyes when they come to a word they don't know you will see them looking quickly all around the page particularly at the picture.

They are looking for a clue to help them, i.e. they see the word umbrella, they know it starts with the sound /u/ and then /m/ so will be looking for something that starts with /u/. They see a picture of an umbrella and so read the word as umbrella. This is a taught strategy and also to be encouraged at home. Pictures should never be covered up and time is given to look at the pictures before reading a page.

The 'look and say' approach is also taught for words known as 'tricky words' (Common Exception Words), these are words that cannot be sounded out correctly i.e. said. Therefore we teach the children to look at the word, draw a bubble round the letters to note the shape of the word. We tell the children what the word says and then practise it over and over so that the children learn to know what it says by sight. When they see that tricky word they should just say it. This is a long process and relies on the children committing words to their memories. Sometimes children may be asked to practise tricky words at home. It is a bit like learning our times tables in maths by rote learning. These words are often presented on flashcards. If children see them frequently they will learn them. All the time this is happening your child is building up a store of words in their mind.

Contextual and grammatical clues

Whilst looking at a sentence the children are taught to look for other clues that might help them. If we don't know a word we leave it and continue with the rest of the sentence, asking the children; can we guess what that word might be from the rest of the sentence?

Children are encouraged to use their knowledge of the text genre to make a guess i.e. if they are reading Little Red Riding Hood's first sentence, children are encouraged to draw on their fairy tales knowledge to know that the first words would be 'once upon a time'.

Children are often exposed to rhyming, patterned stories and so can use their rhyming knowledge to guess a word. Julia Donaldson books are fantastic for practising this strategy at home.

Moving from 'learning to read' to 'reading to learn'.

As children's reading skills develop and they become fluent readers we focus on the teaching of reading comprehension. The balance of word recognition and language comprehension changes. The comprehension processes children use to understand written texts are the same as those they already use to understand spoken messages. The difference lies in the fact that children access written texts through their eyes rather than via their ears.

Reading comprehension is taught orally, children are able to read a word and sentence and then asked simply what it means. A discussion can then take

place around what the writer is trying to say about an event/character/place. Children are taught using the main questions words – who, why, where, when, what, how.

If children are able to read a challenging sentence it is important they know what the individual words mean and then build up a picture in their minds of what is actually happening. For example, the sentence might say “the postman delivered a package to the assistant in the shop. She opened it tentatively.” A teacher would ask; what does that mean? What is happening? We first teach the children to pick out the words they understand which would be postman, therefore the word deliver must be what a postman does. A discussion would then take place about the word tentatively. Other words could take the place of tentatively to help the children i.e slowly. From there a discussion takes place about why we think she is opening it tentatively, what could be inside? Is she worried about something? This is taking us into the realms of inference.

Inference is the next taught stage of language comprehension, children are taught to think ‘around the sentence’ and think about what the writer might be wanting us to think or imagine. As adults, this is what we are doing automatically, we are deducing information which adds to our enjoyment of a text. We often ask the children how they think the characters may be feeling, they usually say happy or sad. We encourage children to develop their thinking, what other words are there for sad? Angry, confused, cross, mad, furious. This also helps to develop the children’s vocabulary.

How can you support your child at home?

- Read, read, read and read!! Read stories to your child, read signs, read comics, read text on the TV, show the children your love of reading!
- Reading a story to your child at night can be just as beneficial as them reading their own reading book. If your child really does not want to read on a particular night please don’t make them. Read to them instead.
- Keep reading book practise to a maximum of 15 minutes.
- Know your phonics – please do read our Phonics Guidance.
- Follow words with a book mark or finger.
- Talk about the picture on a page before reading the words.
- Re-read a page to help with fluency, your child knows what the individual words say. Now practise reading the sentence fluently i.e. not stopping and starting like a robot speaking!
- Ask comprehension questions as detailed above at the end of a page and then book.