



Guide to reading and phonics

EYFS and KSI Phonics

Our primary aim is to teach the children the phonetic skills they require to be able to blend words fluently with the expectation that they will develop as fluent readers as they progress through our school.

Our teaching of phonics is led by Bug Club from Pearson which we use for our daily sessions and for phonic readers. We offer phonic readers physically and online through our e-books. We follow our whole school progressive planning for phonics and spellings.

Every day we teach a 20/30 minute phonics session and the children are supported as needed to access and join in with these sessions. We endeavor to make the sessions fun and interactive for the children.

Phonic knowledge and skills are regularly monitored and assessed to ensure rapid and sustained progress.

Reading

All our reading books are graded in difficulty by reading levels known as Book Bands. Each Book Band has its own colour. The chart below gives an indication of the range of Book Band levels at which most children will be reading as they progress through our school. Please note that the rate at which children progress through these book band colours is personal to them and is a steady process which is supported through reading sessions in school and regular assessments. These book bands are the basis for the e-book selections that the children have access to via Pearson. On our school website there is a document explaining the characteristics of each book band and expectations.

Book Band Colour
Lilac
Pink
Red
Yellow
Blue
Green
Orange
Turquoise
Purple
Gold
White
Lime
Brown
Grey
Blue (KS2)
Red (KS2)



Tips for parents

Bestselling author Jeremy Strong on reading with your children

My first tip is to keep helping your child learn to read quite separate from reading for pleasure. Eventually the two will become one of their own accord as your child becomes a more confident reader and the great thing about this is that the vast majority of children can learn a lot about reading without even realising that that is what is happening.

This is how it's done, and it's so utterly simple and pleasurable you may well find yourself looking forward to it. All you have to do is -

1. Read to Your Child.

The more you can read to your child, the better, but the evening bedtime story is often the most appropriate, easiest and most enjoyable moment. Ten minutes is enough with a young child but if you can manage fifteen that would be even better. This is the time to settle on the bed with the child, cuddle up and enjoy whatever book has been chosen. The downside to this, if it is a downside, is that your child will soon pick up favourite books and demand that they are read over and over and over again until you are utterly bored - but your child will love it. Every time you read your child will be hearing new words in the context of a story that makes their meaning clear. They will see the print on the page. I am well aware that you and your partner may have been working all day but is ten to fifteen minutes really too much to ask? You will be giving your child an essential life-long skill - and pleasure.

2. Do not mix learning to read with bedtime reading or reading for pleasure.

Bedtime reading is a time for complete relaxation and preparation for sleep. Imagine for a moment that you are a child still struggling with reading. Your parent is reading a lovely story to you and all of a sudden hands the book over and says: 'Now you read the next page'. Excuse me? Is that a bedtime story? No, it's bedtime torture. Not only does it instantly put the child under pressure, it also destroys the comfy atmosphere you have built up and worst of all it encourages the child to associate pressure and failure with reading books. So many children are put off reading in this way.

3. The right book.

Bedtime reading. Let your child choose the book and don't worry about reading the same one again and again. You can always make an agreement that you should take it in turns to choose a book. If a new book is being introduced and it is quite apparent that the child is not really responding to it, put it aside for another time. It may be too old for them. For example Treasure Island is a great, classic story but hard going for most children under seven, not to mention some older ones too.

4. Don't worry.

Don't worry if your child keeps choosing what you think are very simple books. You are building up their confidence all the time. Children feel safe with much loved books. Reading for pleasure is

NOT about pushing your child on to the next reading rung at school. It's about what it says on the tin - that word 'pleasure'.

5. What books to choose.

Staff in good bookshops are usually pretty helpful. You can ask them for advice. If you already have some idea about what kind of stories your child likes then that helps.

6. Letting your child choose a book.

When I go into a school to speak about reading and writing there is often a book sale at the end of the day. On several occasions I have seen a child eagerly pick up a book that excites them only for the parent to say: 'Put it back, it's too hard/easy for you'. It makes me want to yell and shout! I don't of course. Sometimes, if the parent has told the child it's too hard I say: 'It would be great for bedtime reading. You can read it to your child. It's not difficult for them to understand.'

And then again, if the parents says it's too easy I sometimes ask the parents if they ever read easy books or magazines. Do they always try to choose something that they think will be good for them or stretch them in some way? What do they read on the beach?

There are only a few times when a parent should prevent a book being read: when it is obviously way too old for them or when the content is inappropriate. (Quite often these two go hand in hand.) No book is too silly or too young. Lots of pictures? No problem. Our country publishes the best children's books in the world and our picture books are wonderful. If you find your child engrossed in one don't take it away because you think it's too young. Talk to them about why they like it so much. Feed their enthusiasm, don't stamp on it!

Sometimes it's good to discuss the book with your child. Talk about the pictures and what's happening? What's your favourite part? Why do you think so-and-so felt like that/did that/said that? Just don't let things get too heavy!

7. The Pleasure Principle.

I can't say this often enough. Reading for pleasure should be exactly that. Show how much you enjoy books. Make sure your child sees you and your partner if you have one, reading. Dads have a particularly important role to play here with boys. If you want your boy to enjoy reading, enjoy it yourself. What do you do to get your boy interested in your favourite football team? Maybe you take him to matches. So you want your boy to read. Read to him. It's the same principle.

8. What's the point?

The point is very simple. I hope you can see that reading with your child can be such a lovely, easy and positive experience, especially at bedtime. Your child will feel safe with reading and gradually the educational side of reading will fade away as your child becomes a strong, competent reader.

Finally, you can be proud of what *you've* done. You have given your child a wonderful foundation to build on and a love of books that will last for the rest of their lives; a love that will open doors, broaden their horizons, help them make friends and inform every minute of their lives from there on.

An afterword for parents with dyslexic children.

Most of the above advice also applies to dyslexic children. After all, you are reading to your child. However, there are books available specifically for dyslexic children, written by excellent authors who produce stories that are not the least bit patronising. Barrington Stoke are a publisher that specialise in this and have been hugely successful. They have a good website.

How we promote reading

- All pupils are encouraged to read at home 3 or more times a week.
- All classes are involved in regular buddy reading and visits to our own library.
- A group of Y4s are our appointed school librarians and do a terrific job of keeping our space organised and accessible.
- We have special events through the school year with a focus on reading such as World Book Day
- KSI and EYFS classes have dedicated story time and explore quality picture books and short stories
- All KS2 classes have a class focus text every term which is linked to our whole school reading spine,
- All classes have a dedicated reading area
- Promote the Library Services Reading challenges and visit Kington library. We also have termly loans from the Herefordshire library service which helps to support our wider curriculum.

Please read below for news from Herefordshire libraries.

Squirrel Club

Have fun with reading

The Squirrel Club encourages under-fives to share stories and rhymes and enjoy time at the library.

Pick up a free collector card from your [local library](#) and join Squirrel on his reading journey. Collect a sticker every time you visit or borrow a book. Designed by local illustrator Iain Welch, our special woodland stickers create a magical picture of Squirrel and his woodland friends.



Reading at home is one of the most important ways you can help your child. Reading together helps children learn the skills they need to decode words and gain confidence with practice. Children who have the opportunity to read with those close to them can develop a love of reading that can last a lifetime.

Collect all four stickers to complete your card and get a storybook to keep, personalised with a Squirrel Club bookplate featuring your child's name.

What we have for children in libraries

All our libraries have a special section for children where you can relax and enjoy looking for new books, DVDs and audio books. We have books for all ages and there are no charges for returning books late for children under 18. Look for your favourite author or find exciting facts in the information books. Why not take a closer look at what we have to offer?

All our libraries hold activities in the school holidays. Look out for the Summer Reading Challenge for 4-12 year olds every summer holiday.

Library holdings for children include:

- Picture books
- Easy stories for children beginning to read by themselves
- Stories for all ages
- Information books to help with your hobbies, projects and homework
- Reference books, for example, encyclopaedias and dictionaries which can only be used in the library
- Holiday activities and competitions
- [Computers for internet access, email and homework](#)
- Staff to help you



