

Reading letter- in case you haven't read:

Dear Parents/ carers

As you will have noticed we have made a choice, when it comes to home learning, to prioritise reading. I doubt I need to expand on the reasons for this choice. You have had me pontificating about reading on more than one occasion and, anyway, I'm sure I was preaching to the converted in the first place.

We have spent an enormous amount of time, energy and money promoting a love of reading over time and particularly in the last year. The one missing link for some children remains whether they have enough of a reading habit to get into reading; to get into a book. If they don't, our constant enthusing will inevitably come to nothing.

Our solution is to expect regularity from the children—a daily habit. From now on class teachers will guarantee that pupils have at least 10 minutes in school engaging in independent reading. This will look different in different parts of the school but it will always be a form of reading that contributes to a strong personal habit.

In return we would like to insist that pupils engage with reading, with you or independently, for at least 10 minutes a day outside of school. We will expect this recorded in their reading records. In KS1 we will need parents ensuring a record is made in the reading record. In KS2 we will expect pupils to keep a record and parents to sign for their child at the end of each week. We intend to be as insistent as possible that this happens.

We recognise that there are very many ways into reading and therefore from now on, when pupils are 'learning to read independently,' we will accept any form of engagement in reading including:-

- a child reading to their parent from a reading scheme book,
- a child reading a non-scheme book from home or school,
- a parent reading a book to their child.

There are many ways in which, within these parameters, you can help your child enjoy reading first and foremost, and secondly learn to read. All we would ask is that you record this in the reading record and aim to find a productive balance between real books and scheme books; reading to them and having them read to you; reading pictures and reading text; talking about books and reading books. We will expect them to start a new page of the record for every week and to have filled this single page by the end of each week.

Once pupils have become independent readers, we need them to maintain and grow the habit of reading and to broaden their experience of reading.

Pupils will set out their aims for the coming week at the top of the page of their reading record or home school book. We accept that they might read different texts through the week but are keen that, once they have a book that they enjoy, that they do work through it rapidly enough that they engage and maintain their interest in it.

We will expect them to keep a record when they read for 10 minutes in school also so Year 3/4 pupils should fill a double page spread of their reading record in one week and Year 5/6 pupils should fill a whole page of their home:school book.

All children will have had the chance to build up, in manageable chunks of reading time, to a total of 100 minutes of reading a week. Some pupils may read a great deal more than this but, as I said at the outset of this letter, the important aspect is that all pupils develop a regular habit.

Given that for most year groups home learning opportunities have taken the place of homework, there should be more time for pupils to enjoy reading. Given 10 minutes of reading engagement is not much to ask and teachers are making the same commitment in school. Given we are now encouraging a more flexible definition of what constitutes 'engaging in reading' this will hopefully make daily reading a more manageable and enjoyable aim for many parents and children. Given the above and given the indisputable importance of reading to any child's learning and life chances, we will be unrelenting in our expectation that the reading happens. Pupils who do not manage to read in the hours left over after school will have to catch up their reading in school which in turn will take away from other aspects of their time in school.

There may be very real concerns for some parents concerning this new policy and whether they can hold to these expectations. We will do everything we can to support you. I will be sending out further advice about strategies for engaging with reading and I am very happy to sit down and try to find a way forward with individual families. Foundation Stage staff are inviting parents of Foundation Stage pupils in, who would like to read with their children in the library or classroom, at 2.45pm on a Thursday. Parents of Year 1 pupils will be welcome from 3.15 onwards. Miss Tonner and I also will be running a reading club after school on a Friday for pupils in Year 2 up. This will be to support any pupils who are struggling to engage in reading. There is also a community group of parents to support parents reading with their children running in the foyer on Tuesday afternoons from 2.30-3. This will initially be for parents of Foundation Stage children. Teas and coffees will be available. We will of course also continue with our commitment to the Summer Reading challenge over the holidays. This year many staff came into the library on Tuesday mornings: over 130 children took part in the challenge and over 100 completed it.

Please note our commitment to children's reading has very little to do with narrow educational aims such as SATS and everything to do with your children getting into learning and into life generally. We see reading as a critical ingredient.

Please come with us on this journey and let's get all of our children reading regularly and enjoying it. Do not hesitate to get in touch if you wish to talk any of this over.

Kind regards

N Moss
Head teacher

