

## Reading at home: helping your child to be a fluent reader

When your child is learning to read, the first step is learning the individual sounds (phonemes). At the same time, they learn that these sounds can be represented in a written form – letters or combinations of letters known as graphemes. Once a child has learned the sounds and their written form, they can then start to blend them together to form words e.g. c-a-t blended together is cat. To start with, this is a slow process, but with practice the ability to decode (read) words becomes easier and quicker.

When a child is able to accurately and automatically decode words, they are said to be fluent. A child who is fluent, will read at an appropriate speed, volume and tone, and with the correct expression. At school, we have a strong focus on teaching reading fluency in our phonics and reading sessions. A child can only start to comprehend a text, if they can read it fluently. You can help your child at home by supporting them in becoming a fluent reader by doing the following:

- Reading aloud to your child – modelling how an expert reads.
- Echo reading – you read a bit and then your child echoes it back.
- Coral reading – you and your child read together at the same time.
- Get your child to read aloud to you – encourage them to be loud and clear. Can they stand at the top of the stairs and be heard at the bottom?
- Remind your child to take notice of the punctuation – pause at the full stops and between phrases.

If your child makes a mistake, stop them and point it out – “I’m not sure that was quite right, can you try that word again?” Encourage them to try the following strategies:

- Can you say the sounds in the word?
- Can you blend the sounds together?
- Have you seen this word before?
- Can you break the word up into chunks?
- You are misreading this sound. What is it?
- The word you missed is XXXX now you say XXXX.

You can help your child by making deliberate mistakes when you read. Ask them to see if they can spot your mistakes. Also try making a deliberate mistake and then model how you correct yourself.

Vocabulary check – discuss the meaning of words as you read.

The more you read with your child at home, the quicker they will become fluent readers. All children will have a school reading book. For children learning phonics, these books will only contain sounds that they have learned at school and therefore they should not struggle when reading them. This does not mean that the book is ‘too easy’, it means that they can practise reading them fluently at the correct rate and with expression.

In addition to reading their school book, you can encourage a love of reading by sharing a wide variety of books and reading material with your child. You reading to your child and exposing them to rich language is really valuable in helping them learn to read and write.