

Hawthorn Community Primary School

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Dear Parents / Carers

As you know reading is one of the most important skills we can learn and as a school we invest a lot of time in support children to learn to read. This starts from the very first day they start in Reception. Please see the format of how we develop reading at Hawthorn and how you can support at home.

At our school we use the Read Write Inc phonics programme which helps children develop the skills and confidence to make good progress.

The reading journey – all children will progress through this journey, some at a fast pace, some at a slower pace but all will get to the end goal with support, encouragement and guidance from everyone. Each step in the process is crucial to allow children to be confident and successful readers.

The first stages – listening to and learning the sounds

- Children are introduced to the picture cards that are associated with each sound and listen carefully to the sounds they make.
- They listen to an adult blending sound together to makes words, this is called oral blending or Fred talk.
- They listen to lots of stories read by adults so they can hear what a reader sounds like.
- They talk about lots of stories and spend a lot of time talking to each other to build their vocabulary and understand of the world around them.
- They are introduced to the set 1 letters one a day – we use sounds not letter names at this point and use pure sounds to make the sounds really clear, this helps with the next stage of reading. Please look at this video for the pure sounds. <https://www.oxfordowl.co.uk/for-home/reading-owl/find-a-book/read-write-inc-phonics--1/phonics-pure-sounds-video>
- We practise regularly throughout the day so we are able to recognise the letter instantly.
- The children will be sent home with library books and sounds cards at this stage. It is really important that they practise their sounds cards every day until they know instantly what the sound is. They also need to hear lots and lots of stories read to them and have the opportunity to ask and answer lots of questions about the library books they choose. The library books may be a book they are very familiar with and in time they will be reading along with you, especially any repeated phrases from a familiar book.



Learning to blend

- Once the children know their sounds they learn to blend.
- We start by putting two sounds together to make a word **a-t** to make **at** then move onto three letter words using the sounds they have been taught.
- We use our sounds cards to help us with this stage by saying the sounds (Fred talk) then physically pushing the sounds together to make the word.
- We practise this skill lots and lots as it can be very tricky to grasp to begin with.
- Once children know how to blend they can use this skill with trickier words and we will send home a sound blending book.
- Children need to become very fluent with reading the words in the book so we encourage them to read each book at least 3 times before we change it to the next book.
- Children will continue to bring home sound cards pot with all the new sounds they are learning. It important to continue to practise reading each sound every day and learn to blend new words using the new sounds.
- It is important to continue to read to your child as much as possible as they will be more interested in how the sounds work together at this point, they may even start to point out the sounds they are learning as you look at the books together or even when they are out and about.

Applying the set 1 sounds

- Once children are able to blend sounds together in single words we start to put words together into sentences.
- We move onto our ditty sheet; these are sheets that have three small phrases on them which get increasingly harder as the page progresses. We read them in school with the children then the children will bring them home to practise together.
- At home it is important to continue with all the early stage reading skills as well as working on the ditty sheets as there will be more sounds to blend and build into harder words.
- It is important that children continue to share the love of books and hear lots of other stories.
- They will have the chance to chance their reading book each week to share at home.

Red books

- Once children have mastered the ditty sheets they will move onto red reading books
- At this stage you will have two reading books sent home.
- One book will be a photocopy of the book the children have been working on in their phonics lessons, they do not keep these books and please can we ask that names are not written on them as other children will be using them. They should be able to read this book with increasing fluency and pace as it is familiar to them and there should be no tricky sounds to work with. It is important that children are using the sounds they know confidently to build their enthusiasm for reading.
- The other book they will be given will be 'Book bag book' this will be a glossy book and will be unfamiliar to them, they will not have read it at school, however it is matched to the book that they have read in school and all sounds will be familiar to the children and therefore they will be able to blend the sounds together to read the new words. It is important that each book is read three times to build fluency, pace and confidence.
- Reading shouldn't be a chore and staff will work hard to ensure that the books are pitched correctly for your child.



Moving through the colours

- The next book colours are green, purple, pink and orange.
- During the daily phonics lessons, the children read books at this level and work on blending, comprehension and writing skills that are all linked to the books.
- Each book is worked with for three days before sending home to read at home.
- These books work in the same way as the red books. Each book should be read three times but by this stage new set 2 sounds will be introduced to your child. The set 2 sounds are a little trickier to grasp as these are our long vowel sounds and therefore words become more complex.
- Lots of reading for pleasure is still encouraged, by this stage children will be starting to pick up unfamiliar books and enjoy sharing them with others.

More complex phonics books

- The last three colours of Read Write Inc books are the yellow, blue and grey books. These books are a lot longer and will include alternative spellings of words, our set 3 sounds.
- For children to progress through these levels we focus on the pace of reading, children who read with a good pace find comprehension easier as they can remember what has happened more readily.
- The phonics sessions in school last for 5 days with books at this level so children will not be given a new book as quickly.
- They should read both the black and white book and the 'book bag book' 3 times with in the week.
- More focus on comprehension happens at this level and children should be encouraged to answer and ask lots of questions.
- For children to progress off the phonics programme they will need to be reading with a good pace, good comprehension and a good grasp of all phonic sounds.

When will my child move to a new colour?

- In school we assess children's acquisition of reading skills every 6 weeks. As part of this assessment we look to see which sounds children can recognise instantly, which words they can read using those sounds, which words that can read that may be alien words (this allows us to see if they are truly blending or remembering the shape of the word) we will also assess to see if children can read words using 'Fred in the head' and 'Speedy read' this means can they read them straight away without having to blend sounds together.
- Once a child is able to read the words confidently at a given level they will be able to move to the next band.
- Sometimes a child will find a colour band a little tricky and will need to repeat the level to build confidence and fluency before moving on.
- As there are only a certain number of books at each level it may mean that children will receive a book that they have had before. If this is the case this will help to build their reading skills so that they are ready to move on at the next assessment point.

What happens after phonics?

- Once the children have reached the grey band in the read Write Inc programme they are confident and fluent readers.
- This is the time for the children to build their knowledge of different types of books and move to the book band books which many of the older children access.



- Children continue to read from the reading scheme as well as accessing books from the school library.
- Children take part in Whole Class Reading sessions which helps develop their fluency and other key reading skills: retrieval, inference, understanding author's use language and visualisation.
- All classrooms have their own classroom library in which teachers recommend books as well children recommending books to one another.

How do I record what my child is reading?

In light of the pandemic that we are living through at the moment we will not be using reading record book in the traditional way.

We will ask families to record how the child is reading on the record sheet that is posted on class Dojo. Each week there will be a new record sheet that is posted. Please do not submit the sheet until the end of the week, we can see what you have written each day when it is in draft form. As reading for pleasure is such an important part of the reading process we have included a section at the bottom of the sheet for you to tell us all the other important things that the children have read such as recipes, library books, online books etc.

For children who have progressed off the phonics programme, we ask that parents or children use Class Dojo to let their teacher know what books they have read at home. It is nice to upload a short video / audio of your child reading – this enables the class teacher to hear your child read and give feedback.

Another way to add to Class Dojo is simply posting how many pages your child has read. Some children might like to delve into their book in more detail and post a character profile, description of a scene, a book review or a general write up of the gist of the current section of their book.

We encourage children to read a range of texts including fiction, non-fiction and poetry. Your child's class teacher will be able to recommend age-appropriate books for your child.

Thank you for all your ongoing support with reading.

Catherine Billingham
Phonics lead

Liz Blakeley
Reading lead

