

## Literacy Meeting for Reception Parents October 2019

### PHONICS

The children in Reception have started learning phonics, starting with single sounds like 'm' as mouse, moon, 'a' as in apple etc. When the children have learnt all the single sounds (see handout of the simple sounds) they can start BLENDING them to make words for example **c – a – t makes cat**.

When we sound out the words (one sound at a time), we point to our fingers so the children can count how many sounds there are in the word. This then helps with their writing of the word – they know they can hear 3 sounds so they need to write 3 letters.

The pronunciation of the sounds is very important. For example, don't say "muh" say "mmmm". Keep practising! If you forget how to say the sound, for example "e", look at the alphabet chart, say the word "elephant" and the first sound you say is the sound you need.

But of course learning to read and write in English is not as easy as this! The phonics with the single sounds only provide the easiest part of learning to read English! It can teach only the main sounds of English letters with regular spellings like "cat", "sat", "spot", "hop" etc. The main and much harder part of learning to read English is learning to pronounce words with alternative sounds for them, such as the <o> in '*on, only, once, other, woman, women, who*'. Also difficult, are words that have the same sound but a different way of spelling it eg my, tie, high, time (4 different ways to spell the same sound!) (See the back of the handout with the complex sounds.) We'll do an advanced class next year!!

### SIGHT WORDS

In addition to the phonics, children learn "sight" words. These are words which they just need to read and learn for example "the", "said", "what" etc. There are 45 words that the children begin learning to read and write during Reception. Some of these words are sight words and some can be sounded out phonetically.

### HELPFUL HINTS FOR PARENTS WHEN HEARING YOUR CHILD READ

There are lots of ways to help your child improve as a reader. We want them to have the skills to read fluently, with expression, understand what they are reading and ENJOY reading!

#### General Comments

Try to make the time you read with your child as positive a one as possible. When your child is bringing home colour banded books (later in Reception or Year 1), remember that your child chose the book that they have brought home so there must be some level of interest there. If your child brings home a book that they have read before your response should be,

"Oh good, you've brought that book home again. You like that one don't you? I'll look forward to reading that with you."

AND NOT...

"Oh not that book again. You've already read that. What are you bringing it home again for?"

When your child corrects their own mistake or works out a word after you have given them a prompt, give them lots of praise. Also, ask them how they worked it out,

"What did you do to work that out? That was clever, that might be useful next time you come to a tricky word."

If your child has lost concentration then DO NOT READ ANY MORE!! It will not be helpful to your child to continue insisting that they read. They read a lot at school and work very hard during the day so may well be tired. It is far more beneficial to read a few pages often (i.e. every night).

Please feel free to write comments in the Reading Record Book to inform the teacher and your child how pleased you are with their reading.

#### Getting stuck on a word

If your child gets stuck on a word;

Count to 10 without saying anything – this gives them time to think and try and work it out for themselves. If you jump in straight away and tell them the word, you are not helping your child to become independent and improve as a reader. They will quickly realise that they needn't bother 'having a go' because if they are quiet someone will just tell them the word!!

If they do not read the word correctly after counting to 10 then you could ask one or two of the following questions (please don't ask any more questions than that!);

- What sound does the word begin with?
- What word would make sense here?
- What might fit there?
- What would sound OK here?
- Go back to the start of the sentence and try again.
- Read to the end of the sentence and go back to see if you can work it out.
- Can you see anything in the picture that might help you?
- What will help you to read that word?

If they can't work it out then just tell them and move on so that the flow of reading is not slowed down.

### **Misreading Words**

If a child reads a word incorrectly, it may look similar but make no sense (e.g. 'what' for 'that') or makes sense but does not look right (e.g. 'dog' for 'puppy'). If they misread a word but don't stop and carry on reading regardless OR

insert a word/s that is not there, stop them and ask them to check what they have just read. You could say, "This is what you just read." Read the words your child said and point to each word too to emphasise your point.

If they can't recognise their mistake then tell them what it is (e.g. "If it said dog it would start with 'd' but it starts with 'p' so what might it be instead?") OR "You added a 'the' here/missed out the 'the' here – remember it's important to look carefully at each word")

If they are struggling with one word in particular, use one of the prompts as listed above.

### **Improving Expression**

If your child reads in a monotone (!) model how you could read it instead. Practise with words in speech marks/speech bubbles first, getting them to use funny or silly voices, depending on the character.

Get them to pay attention to punctuation such as ! and ?

Say, "Did you notice the question mark/exclamation mark? Could you read that again making your voice sound like a question/an exclamation/shout it?"

### **Improving Comprehension**

After reading a few pages (or one page depending on the amount of text read) ask questions about what they read, e.g.

Why did he/she do that?

How do you think he/she is feeling? What makes you think that?

What happened after the boy went home? (Obviously relate it to the story)

If it is a non-fiction book – discuss the purpose of the contents page, Index, Glossary and any unusual or technical vocabulary.

Lots of children can read you a page fluently but then not be able to tell you anything about it! If this sounds like your child, then ask a question after a much shorter amount has been read. If they are still not sure then tell them the answer. **Spend just as long talking about what has happened in the book as you do actually reading the book.**

A lot of children can answer your questions by lifting the information directly from the text. Try asking them things that are not stated clearly but are inferred or hinted at (e.g. the book says "Mum spoke to Jenny and she felt much better." You could ask, "What do you think that mum might have said?" This is a much more complex skill for children than you might imagine!

### **WRITING**

Children learn to write each letter in a cursive style. You always start on the line and don't take your pencil off the page (except to cross a t or dot an i). If your child struggles to hold a pencil, so lots of fine motor activities like doing up buttons, threading beads, small lego building. Do lots of physical activities like monkey bars to build strength in their shoulders and arms.