

## **READING TOGETHER**

### **A message to parents**

Long before children come to school you have been helping them to develop the language skills of both speaking and listening. Time spent talking, listening and reading with your child will not only improve their reading ability, but also help them express themselves in their writing.

There are lots of opportunities outside school to encourage reading, for example: signs, letters which come through the post at home, holiday brochures, catalogues, packaging, advertisements, recipes and instructions.

## **INTRODUCTION**

We know that most parents are only too willing to be involved with their child's education but, perhaps, have not always been sure how to go about it.

What we hope to achieve at Ashbrook School is a close partnership in which parents and teachers work closely together. In this way parents become familiar with methods used in school, and teachers will be aware of any difficulties that may arise, particularly with reading at home. Most importantly, the children will benefit enormously from knowing that their parents and teachers are working in partnership.

Teachers will continue to spend a great deal of time in school teaching reading skills, but parents do play a very important part. The more opportunities children get to share books, the more they enjoy them and the more likely it is that they will become good readers. It is noticeable that children whose parents support and encourage reading in a positive way, become the best readers.

## **ASHBROOK SCHOOLS APPROACH**

During the first term all children will be learning phonic sounds to aid their reading and writing and will bring home a sound book containing the sounds covered in school. From the first day at school your child will be given a reading record and encouraged to choose a book to share.

During the year your child will be learning key words whilst at the same time he/she will be experiencing books in school and continuing to bring them home to share. Children will be moved on at individual rates appropriate to their ability. Some of the books your child will encounter during the early stages include:

- Picture/discussion books
- Story Chest - repetition type books
- Oxford Reading Tree stages 1,2,3
- A wide range of individual books (colour coded to denote a specific level)

### **GENERAL**

#### **Be enthusiastic**

Your child will only be keen if you are. Your encouragement and interest will help your child enjoy reading and show him/her that you think it's important.

#### **Give lots of praise**

Children like to feel that their efforts are appreciated. It gives them confidence and makes them feel good. Praise and success - don't criticise their mistakes.

#### **Get close together**

Both of you will need to see the book clearly so that you can give instant praise when your child does well. Make it cosy, enjoyable.

### **Find a quiet place**

Children are easily distracted. They will not be able to read well if the television is on in the same room.

### **Little and often**

Frequent short sessions are better than one long one. Ten minutes is probably about right but there is no reason why you should not continue if your child volunteers and you are feeling enthusiastic.

### **Special time**

The best time to share a book is when your child wants to read to you. Remember they may have had a busy day in school and might not be ready to concentrate when they first come home. Try to avoid interrupting a favourite television programme or an exciting game with a friend. After tea might be a good time, or perhaps just before bed.

### **Keep calm**

This is not always easy. Some children read slowly and may get stuck on words they could read easily the day before. They may struggle with short words, which we think are easy – even good readers make careless mistakes. Do not pressure them by saying things like “ Come on, you should know that word.”

There will be times when they do not read well. Despite this it is very important that you do not get angry with them. If you show them that you are displeased they might become anxious and reluctant readers, afraid of making mistakes and attempting difficult words. Try to be relaxed. If you feel you are getting irritable it might be best to stop the session and try again later.

## **READING BOOKS**

### **Finding the right book**

#### **Let them choose**

Your child is far more likely to be interested in a book if he/she has chosen it by him/herself. The teacher will be able to help choose a book at school for reading at home, but you could also use books from the library, magazines, instructions for games, etc.

#### **Too easy or too hard**

Usually, the choice will be about right, but as a rough guide, you can check by using the five-finger test i.e.: if your child makes more than five mistakes on a page, it is too difficult. Be aware that occasionally teachers may decide to push your child forward with a book that doesn't meet this criterion.

#### **What to do if a book is too difficult**

If your child chose the book he/she is probably interested in it so don't just send the book straight back to school. You might try the following:

- Talk about the pictures
- Read the book aloud
- Talk about what has happened in the story
- Comment in the reading record

#### **What to do if a book is too easy**

Just carry on as normal – sometimes it is a good idea to read easy things because nothing is more encouraging than success. At the end of the book praise your child for reading well.

## Some do's

Do let your child handle the book, turn the pages

Do spend time talking about the pictures and content of the story.

Do predict what might happen next.

Do talk about the meaning of new or difficult words.

Do encourage your child to have a go at unknown words by: looking at the picture, context, first letter of the word.

Do praise your child for his/her efforts.

Do encourage the more able reader to read with fluency and expression.

## and don'ts

Don't make a fuss about mistakes. If your child gets stuck it is much better to simply give him/her the word than to make him/her feel bad for not knowing.

Don't make the child think he is in competition with anyone else.