



ST LAWRENCE C of E
PRIMARY SCHOOL



Reading at Home

A booklet for Parents



'We are a family school that nurtures and inspires; allowing all to grow in grace:
enjoying freedom, through knowledge and aspiration.'

Reading at St Lawrences

Here at St Lawrences, it is our belief that there can be few better ways to improve pupils chances in school, or beyond in the wider world, than to enable them to become truly independent readers. Much of our success in reading can be attributed to our strong home/school partnerships with children's parents and families. We believe that strong home/school partnerships are highly beneficial to reading development throughout a child's time at primary school. This document offers ideas and suggestions to help you and your child gain the most from your reading experiences.

School Experiences

At school, children are given access to a wide range of reading material and books are regularly taken home. In Reception and KS1, children will read a mixture of 'real' books and those from our reading schemes, all of which are banded. The reading scheme books are used as a 'marker' of where children are regarding phonics, knowledge of sight words and comprehension (understanding). These are a useful tool for our teachers to ensure children are able to practise these skills at home but should not be considered the most important of children's reading experiences outside of school. Here at St Lawrence's, our priority is that children become life-long readers who love books.

Children may sometimes choose a book themselves from class libraries, they may have read these before or, you may consider too easy for them, but it is important that they are given these opportunities to build confidence and allow them to show off what they can do! There is nothing like the comfort of a familiar and well-loved story.

It is also important to remember that reading opportunities are all around us, everywhere. Children should be encouraged to engage in these as fully as possible in everyday life. These include choosing from a menu, choosing and checking times from a TV or cinema guide, reading advertisements, looking at sign posts and directions, reading emails and letters, sport reports, reading instructions from a recipe, making a model or rules for a game ... the list is endless!



Supporting Your Child at Home - Early Years and KS1

Here are some suggestions on how you can support your child's reading at home.

Sharing...

Read together

There is something very magical about sharing a book with a child. Just 5-10 minutes at bedtime, bath time or quiet time really does help to hook them in. And even your 11 year old will still enjoy the sharing if it's on offer... **Children who are read to regularly by their parents, learn to associate books with love and affection, these children are more likely to become successful readers. Never substitute this time with school reading books!**

Talk together

Talking about words and pictures is really important for building up a store of vocabulary and confidence - and its fun too. The words may be in the street, in a book, on-screen or on your ketchup bottle; it really doesn't matter so long as you talk about them together.

Remember when...

Compare events in stories or information books with things you've done together, so your child starts to make connections between these things and their own experiences: 'That's just like when we went to.... Do you remember? I felt...'

Sing together

Even if it's not your forte, just sing. Nursery rhymes and songs for your youngest and chart-topping songs you hear on the radio for your 6-7 year old all count, this really supports children's understanding of the patterns and rhythms of the English language.

New books but old favourites too

You'll notice that your child will want to revisit an old favourite over and over again and that's great (although may be not after the 64th time). But it's also important to build confidence by reading lots of different books at the same reading level too, and continue to re-read earlier books so that you aren't pushing up the difficulty of the read too quickly and causing frustration (to be avoided at all cost as your child won't make progress if anxious).

Skills...

Use phonics first...

Help your child to learn phonic sounds as pure sounds - 'sss' not 'suh'. Play with sounds, Eye Spy, or making up silly rhymes, make 'alien' words and make up meanings for them.

Play with Tricky words

Tricky words are those words that cannot be worked out by sounding out - like 'said', 'go', 'to', 'the' etc. Stick them on toy cars and have races, use foam letters in the bath and try to make words float, play hide and seek with the words...be as inventive as you can! Find more ideas here:

<https://www.oxfordowl.co.uk/for-home/reading-owl/fun-ideas>

Listen to your child practise reading

It's really important that your child reads aloud to you. Reading from a levelled reading scheme book, usually one that has come home from school, means there is built-in progression so your child can steadily get more confident as they move through the reading scheme. Most children will start with picture books to talk about, moving on to fully phonic books. Remember it's not a test! All reading is important and if your child does not want to read their school books, allow them to choose an old favourite or a new library book instead. They can still access tricky words and phonics at their own level in any book.

Use book talk

Talking about stories and using story language helps to tune your child into reading. Talk about the author, illustrator, cover, the beginning, the end, words, sentences, features on the page, for example speech bubbles and pictures.

Check understanding

Use the pictures to help understanding, but also show your child how you might be able to predict what might happen next in a story from the words and pictures. Try to guess the ending! What clues were there?

Love reading

- Be a good role model, allows your child to see you reading for pleasure. Make sure books are visible and considered important in your home.
- Visit the library.
- Be as excited about a book as your child.
- Put on silly voices when you're reading to your child.
- If your child is not keen on reading school books, put them aside and choose a book they love. All reading is valuable.



Supporting Your Child at Home - KS2

Sharing ...

Read together

There is never an age when this is not an enjoyable and useful way to spend 10 minutes a day - even your 11 year old will still enjoy the sharing opportunity if it's on offer. It's a great idea to get your older children to read with younger brothers and sisters too. **Remember...** children who are read to regularly by their parents, learn to associate books with love and affection, these children are more likely to become successful readers. Never substitute this time with school reading books!

Talk together

Older children continue to need opportunities to talk with you about what they are reading or their reading interests. They may also be interested in what you are reading. Talking gives you both a chance to share and recommend.

Revisiting favourites

It's important for children to know that it's OK to revisit old favourites and memories - even if this may seem like 'easy reading' - there's no mad rush to keep moving on, and we all like the comfort of a favourite book sometimes. Comparing and sharing memories of real life and books will help your child to develop empathy.

Sing together

Why not? Rhythm, rhyme, raps, advertising jingles or the latest top-rated downloadable track can all help the older reader to appreciate and use the patterns of language they hear in both their speech and writing.

Making choices

It's important to still visit book shops, libraries and places where your child can browse and chat with you about their interests. They'll start to prefer certain authors or series, or types of reading such as comics, magazines or websites, and with your encouragement, they can learn to make choices for themselves too.

Skills...

Phonics and spelling

Children will still need to use their phonic skills to tackle new or unknown words but they will also be learning about spelling patterns and rules, too, so that they have a wider range of tools to use when they get stuck.

Play Games

Many games are really useful for developing the skills that children need as developing readers. You probably already have a host of really useful games in the cupboard, so dig out the *Scrabble*, *Bananagrams*, *Boggle* or a crossword, to name just a few.

Listen to your child reading

It's still really important that your child continues to read aloud to you and this may or may not be from levelled books now, depending on how well their reading is coming along. The emphasis will be on reading fluently and with expression, understanding more complex plots and broadening their vocabulary as well as building an understanding of how punctuation and grammar are used. Ensure that time is given solely to this, make sure your child has your undivided attention, don't do the washing up at the same time!

Use book talk

Continue to talk about reading in its widest sense (stories, favourite authors and illustrators, series, different types of books including poetry, plays, non-fiction and reference materials, comics and magazines). Join book clubs and online forums to discover the wider reading community.

Check understanding

Whatever your child is reading it's good to check that they are grasping the deeper levels of meaning (why things happen or how things work). Ask them to tell you about what they are reading, retell parts of the story, explain a specific section or make connections. Don't forget to explore words and vocabulary with your child too, using dictionaries in print or online.

Love Reading...

Most importantly, continue to enjoy what you do together, give lots of encouragement and expand the reading experience to keep your child switched on.

- Don't forget - if they are reading something they are not enjoying, it's OK to read something else. Reading has really got to be a pleasant experience if you want your child to keep reading.
- Encourage independent reading, but remember children will still love being read to! (Who doesn't?)
- Encourage your child to try different authors and types of books (see lists below for recommended authors and like for like authors).

The following questions will provide ideas that you can extend to suit your child's needs.

Questions to ask...

- What is the title of the book?
- What kind of book is it? (fiction, non-fiction, poetry, short story etc.)
- Who is the author/illustrator?
- Have you read any other books by the same author?
- What made you choose this book? (author, cover, illustration, recommendation etc.)
- Did you read the blurb before selecting the book?
- Could you tell anything about the book before you started reading it? What were the clues?
- Have you read this book before? Why have you chosen it again?

Questions to ask before your child begins or resumes their book...

- What has happened so far?
- What do you think will happen next?
- What are the clues that make you think this?
- How would you like the story to end?
- Are you involved in the story? Why?
- Where is the story set? Is there a description?
- When is the story set? (Past, present, future)
- Who are the characters in the story? Who do you like/dislike? Why?

Questions to ask when your child has finished their book...

- Was the book as you expected?
- Was there anything you disliked about the story?
- At what point did you decide you liked/disliked the story?
- If you have read this book before, did you enjoy it more this time?
- Did you notice anything special about the way language is used in this book? (dialect, descriptive writing etc.)
- If you had written this book, how would you have made it better?
- Has anything that happens in this book ever happened to you?
- Can you describe an exciting moment or favourite part of the story?
- Is the story straightforward? Is there more than one story happening at the same time?
- Who was telling the story?
- Was this the most important character in the story?
- Do we get to know the characters quickly or do they build up slowly through the book?
- Was the ending as you expected? Did you like the way the story ended?
- Do you like the illustrations? Do you have a favourite?
- Would you recommend this book to your friends? Tell me what you would say to a friend?



Suitable Authors for KS2

This list is by no means exhaustive, but well worth a try! Always check that you are happy with the content of books for your children.

Year 3/4	Year 5/6
Nigel Hinton	Berlie Doherty
Berlie Doherty	Michael Morpurgo
Francesca Simon	Shaun Tan
Roald Dahl	RJ Palacio
Gillian Cross	Philip Pullman
Clive King	Eva Ibbotson
Dick King Smith	Frank Cottrell Boyce
Jill Murphy	Louis Sacher
Philippa Pearce	CS Lewis
Cressida Cowell	David Almond
Ted Hughes	David Walliams
	Philip Ridley

Enjoy your reading journey with your child!

I Opened a Book

*“I opened a book and in I strode.
Now nobody can find me.
I've left my chair, my house, my road,
My town and my world behind me.
I'm wearing the cloak, I've slipped on the ring,
I've swallowed the magic potion.
I've fought with a dragon, dined with a king
And dived in a bottomless ocean.
I opened a book and made some friends.
I shared their tears and laughter
And followed their road with its bumps and bends
To the happily ever after.
I finished my book and out I came.
The cloak can no longer hide me.
My chair and my house are just the same,
But I have a book inside me.”*

— Julia Donaldson