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15th September 2023

Dear parents and carers,

At Horsford CofE VA Primary School we believe that every child is a reader. As soon as your child starts school they will begin their reading journey by linking letters and sounds and exploring our school library. We would like to share with you a reading book guide, including information on 'phonics focused' reading books and 'reading for pleasure' books.

A Guide to Book Bands Levels - Colours and Stages/Levels.

We have an array of 'phonics focused' reading books at each of our schools. Our books come from a range of reading schemes and have been carefully sorted into book band sets so that children have access to books that match the sounds and words they have been taught in line with the 2019 OFSTED expectations.

Each 'phonics focused' book has a sticker indicating which colour set it belongs to, you may notice that the publishers' colour and stage maybe different to the sticker we have placed upon the book. This has been done deliberately in order to ensure that the children receive books they can decode and read themselves.

Children will progress through the book banded system at different rates, and this will be for a variety of different reasons; your class teacher will think about the following when considering whether to move your child onto the next stage:

1. making sure that the phonics focused book matches the sounds your child has been taught.
2. whether you child has a secure grasp and application of the reading skills they are learning, e.g. spotting digraphs when reading and application of alternative pronunciations of sounds.
3. the development of their comprehension skills.

Support, motivation and challenge

Before your child can progress onto the next set of phonetically decodable books, we will also consider whether comprehension skills are progressing at the same pace as their word level reading. If you find that your child is feeling confident with their word level reading, consider asking them some comprehension style questions to check their level of understanding about what they have read. We have included some tips and tricks for each colour book band in the hope that you find these a useful tool to support and guide your child when reading at home.

You may find your child is on a mixed coloured band at times. This might be because they are still acquiring some necessary skills before they can be fully moved into the colour band.

Please find the colour book band tips and tricks below:

How to support your child reading **Pink** level books

Your child is beginning to learn to read.

As they read, please help them to:

- Read the words carefully. Ask your child to sound out and blend only the words they can't read yet, not every word.
- Eventually almost all words will become part of your child's 'sight memory', and they won't have to sound out at all.
- On second and third readings of the book, encourage them to read with more pace and with less focus on sounding out the letters in each word.
- Make a story out of a whole book, rather than focusing just on what is happening on each page.
- Tell you about something that happened in the book, or about something they found out in the book.

How to support your child reading **Red** level books

Your child is beginning to learn how to read.

As they read, please help them to:

- Read the words carefully. Most of the words can be recognised or sounded out. Ask your child to sound out and blend only the words they can't read yet, not every word. Eventually almost all words will become part of your child's 'sight memory', and they won't have to sound out at all.
- On second and third readings of the book, encourage them to read with more pace and with less focus on sounding out the letters in each word.
- Make a story out of a whole book, rather than focusing just on what is happening on each page.
- Tell you about something that happened in the book, or about something they found out in the book.

How to support children reading **Yellow** phonics focused books:

Your child is now beginning to read with more confidence.

As they read aloud, you can help them by:

- Giving them time to sound out words they don't know. If they still struggle, encourage them to try sounding out the whole word first, rather than guessing from the pictures or from the first letter.
- Giving them time to recognise and correct their own mistakes.
- Asking them to talk about what's happening in the book, encouraging them to make links to events on previous pages.

How to support your child reading **Blue** level books

Your child is now developing into a more confident reader. Encourage them to select from books at the library or bookshop as well as those from school.

As they read, you can help by encouraging them to:

- Sound out quickly – and silently – inside their heads, if they need to sound out words.
- Look at the punctuation marks. You may want to model how to read a page of writing, paying attention to punctuation, such as full-stops and question marks.
- Tell you about what the characters in the story are doing and why they are acting in that way.
- Show you how they can find particular things that interest them in non-fiction books.

How to support your child reading **Green** level books

Your child is now developing into a more confident reader. Encourage them to select from books at the library or bookshop as well as those from school.

As they read, you can help by encouraging them to:

- Sound out quickly – and silently – inside their heads, if they need to sound out words.
- Look at the punctuation marks. You may want to model how to read a page of writing, paying attention to punctuation, such as full stops and question marks.
- Tell you about what the characters in the story are doing and why they are acting in that way.
- Show you how they can find particular things that interest them in non-fiction books.

How to support your child reading **Orange** level books

Your child is now beginning to read with more independence. They should be feeling more confident and will rarely need to sound out words.

You can help them by:

- Listening to them when they read aloud. If they make mistakes, but they keep the sense of the text, don't interrupt. You can revisit that page at the end of the session to check certain words.
- Reminding them of useful strategies if they can't read a word, for example:
 1. Sounding the word out silently, under their breath
 2. Dividing a longer word into syllables, or looking at the word without an -ing or an -ed ending
- Don't allow them to worry about a word. Tell them what it says and revisit the word once you have completed the book.
- Encouraging some use of expression, especially for character-speech in fiction books. You may wish to model reading some pages aloud for your child to copy.
- Talking about how characters are feeling.

How to support your child reading **Turquoise** level books

Your child is now beginning to read with more independence and their books are getting longer.

You can help them by:

- Encouraging them to read some pages silently, inside their heads.
- Listening to some pages read aloud, encouraging the use of expression and paying attention to punctuation marks.
- Talking about how events in the book relate to each other and helping your child to understand how the story builds up in a longer book.
- Asking them to tell you about interesting things they found out and showing you where the information is in the book.

How to support your child reading **Purple** level books

Your child is now beginning to read with more independence and their books are getting longer.

You can help them by:

- Encouraging them to read some pages silently, inside their heads.
- Listening to some pages read aloud, encouraging the use of expression and paying attention to punctuation marks.
- Talking about how events in the book relate to each other and helping your child to understand how the story builds up in a longer book.
- Asking them to tell you about interesting things they found out and showing you where the information is in the book

How to support your child reading **Gold** and **White** level books

Your child is now reading longer books with fewer illustrations, so they continue to need your help to ensure they are getting the full meaning and enjoyment from the text. They may prefer to read one chapter or section at a time, rather than reading the whole book in one session.

You can support them by:

- Asking them to read some pages of the book aloud to you so that you can enjoy hearing them reading with expression and pace.
- Asking them to find parts of the text, which describe a character or place and talking about the words used in the description.

- Asking for regular updates as to what is happening in the book, so that you know how the different chapters or sections link.
- Talking about how much they enjoy a book, or a type of book. Encourage them to look for more books of the type they enjoy.

Reading for Pleasure - Library books

Reading for pleasure is exciting and supports emotional wellbeing in addition to supporting your child to succeed academically. At Horsford CofE VA Primary School we have some very well stocked school and class libraries. Each class has its very own book space where the children are encouraged to access a variety of texts including fiction, non-fiction, poetry and rhyme. The children can explore the book spaces throughout the school day and they will also enjoy daily story times with their class teacher and/or teaching assistant.

Your child will have opportunities to spend time in the school library. School staff will encourage the children to select books that will inspire, motivate and promote a love of reading. Library books will be changed regularly by the children with the support of class librarians and school staff.

We really hope you enjoy sharing the books that your child picks and please look out for our termly reading newsletter.

Further top tips for supporting reading at home:

- Try and hear your child read as often as you can - everyday if possible!
- Little and often is more beneficial than a long session once a week.
- Pick your timing carefully – it's best not to embark on a reading session when your child is tired. *You may wish to read with them in the morning.*
- Every child is an individual – children will pick up reading skills at different rates, and this is ok! Regular practice and promoting positive reading habitats will help your child to acquire important reading skills.
- Share a variety of different texts, fiction, non-fiction and poetry to help inspire a love of reading.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate in speaking with us or your class teacher.

Thank you for your continued support,

Miss McIntyre, Mrs Kirton and Mrs Connelly
English Subject leaders