

Teaching phonics and reading at Aston St. Mary's

As part of our continuing school improvement, we have adopted a new approach to the teaching of phonics and reading. The programme we are using is a DfE validated scheme called Little Wandle Letters and Sounds. To support this, we have invested heavily in sets of reading books for our early readers. These books will be used in groups in school and then sent home for further practice.

Although children are taught to read at school, home environments can have a huge impact on children's reading journey by continuing to practice at home. There are two types of reading books that children will take home:

A reading practice book. These will be at the correct phonic stage for each child. They should be able to read these fluently and independently.

A sharing book. Children will not be able to read these on their own. These books are for adults to share and read together for enjoyment.

Reading practice book

Practice reading books are carefully matched to the children's current reading levels. The children should be able to read these books with only a little help. These books are not too easy for the children, because they are learning to develop their fluency and confidence in reading. The children will have books that make them feel like they are readers.

We ask parents and carers to listen to their children reading these books and to give lots of encouragement. Parents and carers are asked to give their children lots of praise and to celebrate their children's successes! If the children can't read yet, we ask parents and carers to read the books to their children. After the book is finished, parents and carers will talk to the children about the book. This is to help the children understand the text they have read.

Sharing book

In order to encourage children to become a lifelong reader, it is important that they learn to read for pleasure. The sharing books are books they have chosen to enjoy with an adult and to read together.

We remind parents and carers to remember that they shouldn't expect their children to read these books independently, but to read it to or with them. Parents and carers are encouraged to discuss the pictures, enjoy the story, predict what might happen next, use different voices for the characters or to explore the facts in a non-fiction book. The main thing is that they have fun!

Having spent in excess of £3000 on these resources, it is essential that they are not lost or damaged and are the children's book bag every day. A missing or lost book will result in an incomplete set and prevent us from being able to use them for guided reading in school.

As a school, we are very excited about adopting the Little Wandle scheme, if you would like to find out more then please visit:

<https://www.littlewandlelettersandsounds.org.uk/resources/for-parents/>. On here parents and carers can find some useful videos about how to pronounce the sounds and how we teach tricky words, alien words and blending in school.

Learning to read really is the key to children's future success, both at school and beyond. We really do appreciate the support that parents and carers give at home; establishing a regular reading habit not only maximises progress but also promotes a life-long love of books.

'Reading is to the mind what exercise is to the body.' – Joseph Addison