



St Cuthbert's Catholic Primary School

1:1 Reading Guidance - Listening to children reading

These guidelines are to help you when you are hearing children reading. The most important thing is that reading should be a positive, enjoyable experience for both the child and adult. Children learn to read by reading. Having an experienced adult reader alongside for support and praise is good for building confidence and so at St Cuthbert's Catholic Primary School we try to give children this opportunity as often as possible.

Beginning the session

- Ask the child about the book to begin discussion, e.g.
- What is the book's title/blurb?
- What is the story about?
- Did you choose this book? Why?
- Do you like this book? Why?
- If the child has already started the book, ask about where they have got to and about the main events of the story so far.

During reading

- Encourage the child to 'sound out' unfamiliar words and to try to blend the letters.
- If this 'phonic' approach doesn't work, encourage them to use the context/meaning of the text to help (e.g. by reading to the end of the sentence).
- If the book contains pictures, encourage the child to look at them to get clues about unfamiliar words.
- If the child hesitates, wait. Given time, they will often show that they can work out words successfully.
- Provide the word if none of the above strategies works or if the child is getting anxious.
- Don't correct every mistake the child makes; as they read on they will often self-correct when they realise that something does not make sense.
- Ask questions to check that the child understands the text, both vocabulary and context.
- For the more fluent reader, encourage expression and point out aspects of punctuation, e.g. speech marks, question/exclamation marks or different voices for the characters.
- Finish the session positively with a note of praise and encouragement!

Please record for the benefit of home and school that the child has been listened to reading by writing your initials in the Home/School Reading Record. We usually record the book and the page number that our reading session has taken us up to and a comment about how well the child has read.

**Commenting on a child's reading:
Accuracy, Fluency and Expression**

- Please ensure that comments always accentuate the positive.
- Accuracy – children need to begin by reading a book accurately.
- They use phonic skills and knowledge of a wide vocabulary to read at least 95% of the book they are currently reading accurately.
- If they misread or cannot work out more than one in every twenty words, then they are probably trying to read something that is too difficult for them and should consider changing the book to something easier.
- Most children should have a book that they can read with at least 95% accuracy.
- They can be involved in their own self-assessment of this, sometimes known as the Five Finger Test. Ask the child to hold up (or lay down on the table) one finger for every word that they have difficulty reading or which they do not understand. Once they have used up all five fingers on one page of the book (or for each passage of 100 words), then they should consider changing the book to one where they can experience more success.
- Too many pauses, hesitations and struggles will mean that the child is not really able to follow the story. So accuracy, at least 95%, is our first priority and a good gauge of whether the child is being asked to read a book at the right level for their reading ability.
- A typical comment might be: “Anne read her book accurately” or “Anne’s reading was mostly accurate today but she just needed just a little bit of help” - This kind of comment indicates to the parent that the child has a book which is about the right level for their reading ability.
- Fluency – many children can read accurately but monosyllabically reading only one word at a time. The next stage is to develop fluency. This means being able to flow right through a sentence or phrase. Once children have learned to read accurately, they can then learn to observe punctuation. They can be encouraged to read a phrase right up to the next comma or full stop; to pause between sentences and to demonstrate an understanding of the underlying grammar of each phrase, clause, sentence or paragraph.
- A typical comment might be: “Anne read very well, accurately and fluently” or “Anne read very accurately today but needs to practice reading fluently through each sentence and observing punctuation.” This kind of comment indicates to the parent that the child has the right level of book and is beginning to move beyond simple, monosyllabic and hesitant reading word by word.
- Expression – once children have mastered accuracy and fluency, they can begin to learn to read out loud with expression. They can change their intonation and vocal inflexion in order to show that they understand exclamation marks and question marks. They can demonstrate their advanced comprehension of the writer’s meaning and techniques for effect, by using different voices for the characters, moods and atmospheres. They are beginning to read in a way that entertains an audience or captures a listener’s imagination; in the same way that a good teacher or enthusiastic parent would read to give pleasure to a child. They are beginning to create dramatic effects and acting out the story; or reading for public consumption, for example as they would if reading The Bible in church or lines in a school play.

- A typical comment might be: “Anne read excellently today with fluency and expression” or “Susan read brilliantly with expression and enthusiasm.” This kind of comment indicates to the teacher that the child has reached a stage where the accuracy and fluency support understanding, comprehension and reading with expression. Children need to consolidate their reading skills by reading books that are easy enough for them to experiment with expression and a sense of drama. The teachers and teaching assistants will assess professionally the right moment to move the child on to the next level and the next challenge.

Remember the three Ps

Pause. Prompt. Praise.

Pause – let the child have time to think and to work out the words

Prompt – give a little help such as: What letter or sound does the word begin with?

Praise – always praise success and effort

Talk about the book

- Sometimes, children read the book fluently, but they haven’t always fully understood what they have read.
- Therefore, it is important to talk to the child about what they have just read – ask them questions to make sure they know what has happened in book. Encourage them to predict what might happen next. Why do they think this?