

Dear Parents,

Here is some information to explain our reading programme in school. The children are reading a **colour banded book**. There are general guidelines about which book bands should be covered within each year. Please remember however that children learn in different ways and make progress at different times.

Lilac Pink Red Yellow Blue Green Orange Turquoise Purple Gold White Lime Brown

As a rough guide, children are expected to reach (Lime/black) at seven or eight years old. Children who read above Lime level are reading fairly fluently and although some books are still graded above this level, children are reading such a wide range of material that the banding becomes not so important.

Your child's reading book will vary in a number of ways, including layout, size, vocabulary and length, to give the children a rich diet of literature. The difference between each colour band is very gradual, so that children do not experience great difficulty moving up through the scheme. The book your child brings home is set at a level matched to their phonic ability (there ability to recognise and decode sounds to enable them to read).

We use guidance from 'Letters and Sounds' (DFE), to deliver our Sounds4Life Phonics teaching sequence, which gradually builds on a child's ability to recognise, read and blend increasingly difficult sounds in our language system known as the alphabetic code.

Progress through the bands is not automatic and it is important to ensure that children working in the early bands have a secure understanding of phonics so that they remain in control of the task and motivated as they move on to more challenging texts. This is particularly important for children at the early stages of learning English as an additional language.

There will be a wide range of reading abilities in any school year. Children should be able to read at least 90%-95% of the words on the page without any problem. If the book is too easy, they can become bored. If it is too difficult, they can become frustrated, and may have to concentrate so hard on reading the words that they lose the enjoyment of understanding the text.

### **A Word of Caution!**

You will be doing your child no favours if you rush them through books. It is not a race, it is a journey! Children learn at different rates just as they learn to walk, dress themselves etc, at different rates. They also need to develop their understanding of what is being read. Reading must not be treated as a competition. If children are rushed through the books, they will not achieve the enjoyment and understanding necessary. Books that they find too difficult will soon put them off reading! It is also important to understand that children need to understand the text they read and answer questions about it. Teachers have a secure knowledge of which reading band your child should be reading at in line with their understanding of sounds in words, their blending skills and key word recognition which are monitored regularly. Children who are still learning the art of reading, may not be able to cover all the skills the first time they read it. We therefore recommend reading it several times:

First Time Reading	Decoding (Blending and Segmenting unknown words)
Second Time Reading	Fluency (reading with pace)
Third Time Reading	Expression
Fourth Time Reading	Understanding (deduction) <i>the act of drawing logical conclusions based on the information given in a text</i>
Fifth Time Reading	Understanding (inference) <i>allows someone to reach a conclusion based on evidence or reasoning</i>

## Skills

As children progress through the bands, there are skills you can help with at home. Each time your child moves onto another colour band, they will be given a bookmark which outlines these skills.

## Things to Remember

### **Do you hear your child read three or more times per week?**

Little and often is more beneficial than a long session once a week. Think about how long you are reading for - the amount of reading time shouldn't exceed your child's span of attention. Pick your timing carefully - it's best not to embark on a reading session when your child is tired. Every child is an individual - try not to compare your child's progress with other children or with brothers and sisters. Parents can instil a love of reading long before a child goes to school and deepen that love of reading as the child grows up.

Enjoy reading with your child and help them become lifelong readers.

Below is an overview of all the book band colours and the support advice for each.

BOOK BAND COLOUR	TEACHER/PARENT SUPPORT ADVICE
<p>Lilac Lilac level books are wordless books that tell a story through pictures alone. They help children to develop speaking and listening skills through creating and telling stories.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beginning to discover the excitement of books. Although these books have no words, they are an important introduction to reading.</li> <li>• Look at the pages in order, and talk about what is happening on the left hand page before the right hand page.</li> <li>• Talk about what is happening on each page, rather than just talking about what they see in each picture.</li> <li>• Tell you who or what the book is about.</li> </ul>
<p>Pink Pink level is the very first level of reading books which has words Pink Pink level is the very first level of reading books which has words</p> <p>For children just starting to read. Children are getting used to reading from left to right and matching spoken words to written words. Usually no more than 10 pages with up to 5 words on a page.</p> <p>Aligned to Phase 2 Letters and Sounds- Single letters</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Locate title</li> <li>• Open front cover and turn pages appropriately.</li> <li>• Understand that left page comes before right.</li> <li>• Understand that we read print from left to right.</li> <li>• Match spoken word to phonemes – printed sounds.</li> <li>• Read the words carefully. Ask your child to sound out and blend only the words they can't read yet.</li> <li>• Predict the story line and some vocabulary.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Match sounds to phonemes on the page</li> <li>• Use meaning together with repeated language patterns (syntax) and some letters to read simple text</li> <li>• Match spoken word to written word (1:1 correspondence)</li> <li>• Use a few known words to check own reading</li> <li>• Read a simple CVC (Consonant Vowel Consonant) word in the text from left to right.</li> </ul>
<p>Red Red level books have a slightly increased number of words, an increase from eight to twelve pages and slightly more complex story lines.</p> <p>The growing complexity in the story lines is reinforced through the development of inference and prediction using visual literacy.</p> <p>Children gain a little more confidence and may know some words by sight. Usually no more than 15 pages with 1 sentence per page.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Locate and recall title.</li> <li>• Have secure control of one-to-one matching on a wide range of texts.</li> <li>• Use known words to check and confirm reading.</li> <li>• Solve simple CVC words by blending phonemes from left to right and check for meaning and correct syntax, i.e., does it make sense and sound right?</li> <li>• Start to read more rhythmically or use phrasing while maintaining track of text.</li> <li>• Repeat words, phrases or sentences to check, confirm or modify own reading.</li> </ul>

<p>Aligned approximately with Phase 3 Letters and Sounds</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Predict from meaning, syntax and print to solve new words.</li> <li>• Make a story out of a whole book, rather than focusing just on what is happening on each page.</li> <li>• On second or third reading of the book, read with more fluency</li> <li>• Tell you about something that happened in the book, or about something they found out in the book.</li> </ul>
<p>Yellow Non-fiction titles at this level build on children's interests and encourage discussion around the high-quality photographs. New learning in Yellow level books includes a slightly increased number of words and a move away from familiar experiences. Yellow books require some inferencing skills from the reader, e.g. for humour, and have more variation in sentence structure, including sentences with more than one clause. Children are beginning to read more varied sentence structures and taking some note of punctuation. Usually no more than 15 pages with 1 or 2 sentences per page.</p> <p>Aligned with Phases 3/ 4 of Letters and Sounds</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follow print with eyes only, finger pointing only at points of difficulty.</li> <li>• Take more note of punctuation to support the use of grammar and oral language rhyme.</li> <li>• Cross check all sources of information more quickly while reading.</li> <li>• Note familiar words and letter clusters and use these to get unknown words e.g. Look-took.</li> <li>• Search for information in print to predict, confirm or attempt new words while reading.</li> <li>• Notice relationships between one text and another.</li> <li>• Predict in more detail.</li> </ul>
<p>Blue Blue level books have a slightly increased number of words and some variation in sentence beginnings. They may use ellipses (...) and other punctuation. The story lines are more complex, including more than one event, and the stories are less dependent on picture cues.</p> <p>Children are becoming more confident at reading longer and more varied sentences. Usually no more than 15 pages with 2 or 3 sentences per page.</p> <p>Aligned with Phases 4/ 5 of Letters and Sounds</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moving through text attending to meaning, print and sentence flexibly.</li> <li>• Self-correct more rapidly.</li> <li>• Re-read to enhance phrasing and clarify precise meaning.</li> <li>• Solve new words using print information along with attention to meaning.</li> <li>• Identify constituent parts of unfamiliar words to read correctly.</li> <li>• Use analogy with known vocabulary to solve new words.</li> <li>• Manage a greater variety of text genre.</li> <li>• Discuss content of the text in a manner indicating precise understanding.</li> <li>• Model paying attention to punctuation marks and pause accordingly.</li> <li>• Discuss why characters behave the way they do</li> <li>• Model how to find things that interest them in non-fiction book – index / contents</li> </ul>
<p>Green The number of words increases slightly in Green level books. Stories have a wider variety of characters and events which develop over a number of pages. Sentences may include lists of things or actions, and adverbs are used frequently to begin sentences. The books begin to use capital letters to support reading with expression.</p> <p>The growing complexity in the story lines is reinforced through the development of inference and prediction using visual literacy.</p> <p>Children are starting to read quite fluently and take note of punctuation. Usually about 20 pages with 3 or 4 sentences per page.</p> <p>Aligned with Phase 5 of Letters and Sounds</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read fluently with attention to punctuation.</li> <li>• Solve new words using print detail while attending to meaning and syntax.</li> <li>• Track visually additional lines of print without difficulty</li> <li>• Manage effectively a growing variety of texts.</li> <li>• Discuss and interpret character and plot more fully.</li> <li>• Use contents page and glossary in non-fiction books and locate information</li> </ul>
<p>Orange</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Get started without relying on instructions.</li> </ul>

<p>At Orange level, the page count increases from 16 pages to 24 pages to challenge and encourage reading stamina. There is an increased use of dialogue to encourage reading with expression.</p> <p>Orange Level books introduce some complex sentences (use of 'if', 'so' and 'because') and include italics to show emphasis. Slightly more literary language is used. Children are increasingly encouraged to infer meaning from the text in order to gain full enjoyment from the story.</p> <p>Children are starting to read longer and more complex sentences and can understand a range of punctuation. Usually about 20 pages with 4 or 5 sentences per page.</p> <p>Aligned with Phases 5/ 6 of Letters and Sounds</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Examine non-fiction layout and use the contents page to select which sections of a book to read</li> <li>• Read longer phrases and more complex sentences.</li> <li>• Attend to a range of punctuation.</li> <li>• Cross-check information from meaning, syntax and print on the run.</li> <li>• Blend phonemes in unfamiliar words to read longer words</li> <li>• Search for and use familiar syllables within words to read longer words.</li> <li>• Infer meaning from text.</li> <li>• Begin to use appropriate terminology when discussing different types of texts e.g. instructions, story, reports, diaries.</li> </ul>
<p>Turquoise</p> <p>Turquoise level books include an increasing range of adjectives and more descriptive verbs to replace 'said'. There is an increased proportion of space allocated to print rather than pictures.</p> <p>Paragraphs begin to develop and more unusual and challenging vocabulary is included.</p> <p>Children can read complex sentences fairly fluently, taking note of punctuation. They use expression and do not rely on illustrations to help them. Usually about 20 pages with 4 or 5 sentences per page.</p> <p>Aligned with Phases 5/ 6 of Letters and Sounds</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extract meaning from the text while reading with less dependence on illustration.</li> <li>• Approach different genres with increasing flexibility.</li> <li>• Use punctuation and text layout to read with a greater range of expression.</li> <li>• Sustain reading through longer sentence structures and paragraphs.</li> <li>• Tackle a higher ratio of more complex words.</li> <li>• Find a way around alphabetically ordered texts such as indexes, glossaries and dictionaries</li> <li>• Discuss how events in the story are related and how one event impacts on another (cause and effect)</li> </ul>
<p>Purple</p> <p>Purple level books include an increased proportion of longer sentences, with more challenging vocabulary. Some Purple books have short chapters to challenge and encourage reading stamina.</p> <p>Purple level books include longer and more complex sentences with the inclusion of complex (i.e. 'when') and simple (i.e. 'and') connectives. Story features such as plot, character and setting are developed in more detail, and the text in the non-fiction books is presented in a variety of ways.</p> <p>Children might read silently or quietly at quite a rapid pace, taking note of punctuation. Usually about 25 pages with 5 to 10 sentences per page.</p> <p>Aligned with Phase 6 of Letters and Sounds</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Look through a variety of texts with growing independence to predict content, layout and story development.</li> <li>• Read silently or quietly at a more rapid pace, taking note of punctuation and using it to keep track of longer sentences.</li> <li>• Solve most unfamiliar words on the run by blending long vowel phonemes, recognising and using them in longer and more complex words</li> <li>• Adapt to fiction, non – fiction or poetic language with growing flexibility.</li> <li>• Take more conscious account of literacy effects used by writers.</li> <li>• Begin to make more conscious use of reading to extend speaking and writing vocabulary and syntax</li> </ul>
<p>Gold</p> <p>Gold level books include more sophisticated and challenging vocabulary, including word play and the introduction of figurative language. Some Gold books have longer chapters for more sustained reading.</p> <p>Children reading at this level are confident independent readers who can tackle increasingly complex language, story structures and text layout.</p> <p>Children might read silently or quietly at quite a rapid pace, taking note of punctuation. Usually about 25 pages with 5 to 10 sentences per page.</p> <p>Aligned with Phase 6 of Letters and Sounds</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Look through a variety of texts with growing independence to predict content, layout and story development.</li> <li>• Read silently or quietly at a more rapid pace, taking note of punctuation and using it to keep track of longer sentences.</li> <li>• Solve most unfamiliar words at a quicker pace.</li> <li>• Adapt to fiction, non-fiction or poetic language with growing flexibility.</li> <li>• Take more conscious account of literacy effects used by writers.</li> <li>• Make more conscious use of reading to extend speaking and writing vocabulary and syntax</li> <li>• Locate and interpret information in non-fiction</li> </ul>

<p><b>White</b>          In White level books there is a more sophisticated use of narrative voice. Clauses in longer sentences are separated by commas to encourage developing intonation. Some books have longer chapters for more sustained reading.          The stories included at White level encourage children to empathise with the characters and consider why they behave as they do, and how they change during the course of the story. The non-fiction books are divided into sections that require more sustained reading and there is increased challenge in the layout of the information.</p> <p>Aligned with Phase 6 of Letters and Sounds</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read silently as well as aloud.</li> <li>• Sustain interest in longer text, returning to it easily after break.</li> <li>• Use text more fully as a reference and as a model.</li> <li>• Search for and find information in texts.</li> <li>• Notice the spelling of unfamiliar words and relate to known words.</li> <li>• Show increased awareness of vocabulary and precise meaning.</li> <li>• Express reasoned opinions about what is read.</li> <li>• Offer and discuss interpretations of text.</li> <li>• Suggest alternatives or extensions to events and actions</li> <li>• Discuss feelings created by stories</li> <li>• Retelling of stories is balanced and clear</li> </ul>
<p><b>Lime</b>          Lime level books include a widening range of writing styles and an increased variation in sentence structure, including longer sentences with more than two clauses.          Children reading at Lime level are able to interpret more sophisticated word plays and puns. The narrator's voice in a fiction story may be distinguished from the characters' voice through figurative, idiomatic and literary language. The story is often told through dialogue and action to 'show' instead of 'tell' as the plot develops.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Begin to read reflectively and to perceive meanings beyond the literal</li> <li>• Refer to text to support own ideas</li> <li>• Distinguish main points from examples; fact from opinion</li> <li>• Devise key questions and words for searching and use several sources</li> <li>• Begin to read in different ways for different purposes, e.g. skimming for relevance, scanning for specific details, reflective and recursive reading for fuller comprehension</li> <li>• Compare/contrast work from more than one source</li> <li>• Read aloud with expression and intonation taking account of punctuation</li> <li>• Pupils can refer to text layout and organisation</li> <li>• Pupils show some awareness of the point of view of the author</li> <li>• Beginning to sustain narrative and investigative reading</li> <li>• Recognise text type and predict layout and general content.</li> <li>• Take notes and devise ways to remember meaning and spelling of words.</li> <li>• Rerun to make different interpretations of dialogue, more complex sentences, unfamiliar language etc.</li> <li>• Investigate and identify the styles and voice of a range of different text types including plays, poetry, narrative, procedural and explanatory texts.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Brown</b>          Children reading at Brown level should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• interpret more sophisticated word-play and puns</li> <li>• distinguish the narrator's voice in a fiction story from the characters' voices through figurative, idiomatic and literary language</li> <li>• understand a story that is told through dialogue and action to 'show' instead of 'tell' the plot</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishing an expectation of a conversation at the end of each reading session: can they tell you what's happening in their book?</li> <li>• Ask questions which make children go back to the book to find answers. Support children as they develop skills in skimming and scanning to find the information to answer your question.</li> <li>• Continuing to read aloud to the child. This shows them the importance you place on reading as well as developing their language, vocabulary and love of story.</li> <li>• Sustain confidence and perseverance when reading longer, demanding texts</li> <li>• Begin to use deduction and inference with more mature fiction and poetry</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Begin to perceive how an author develops: plot, characters, meanings beyond the literal, figurative language</li> <li>• Distinguish fact from opinion, point from example, relevant from irrelevant</li> <li>• Select key points of a text and summarise</li> <li>• Can refer to the impact of structure and organisation of texts</li> <li>• Can refer to text to explain their views</li> <li>• Identify themes</li> <li>• Identify impact of word choices</li> <li>• Secure the skills of skimming and scanning and recursive reading</li> <li>• Pupils can identify the purpose of a text</li> </ul>
<p>Grey / copper</p> <p>Children reading at Grey level are able to interpret more sophisticated word-play and puns. At this level, they should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• explain a character’s motivations</li> <li>• discuss the points of view of the character and the narrator</li> <li>• better understand a range of narration styles</li> </ul>	<p>Your child may well not want to read aloud to you anymore because they probably enjoy silent reading more. This is fine as long as your child continues to read actively and not just pass their eyes over the words. You can help them by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuing to make a time available for regular quiet reading sessions, and reading your book while your child reads.</li> <li>• Establishing an expectation of a conversation at the end of each reading session: can they tell you what’s happening in their book?</li> <li>• Ask questions which make your child go back to the book to find answers. Support your child as they develop skills in skimming and scanning to find the information to answer your question. Continuing to read aloud to your child at bedtime. This shows them the importance you place on reading as well as developing their language, vocabulary and love of story.</li> </ul>
<p>Dark Blue / topaz</p> <p>Children reading at Blue level will be able to gather information from more than one place in the text and use inference based on what is shown rather than being told. This allows for greater complexity in building character and setting.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuing to make a time available for regular quiet reading sessions, and reading your book while your child reads.</li> <li>• Suggest that your child invites friends who are also reading the book to a ‘Book Group’. If you skim-read the book first – or ask your child’s teacher – you can prepare some questions for the book group to discuss.</li> <li>• Before a reading session, ask your child to find and note down some particular information. It could relate to the plot or it could be something like: a really good descriptive passage; three words which are adventurous; two words you want to use in your next piece of writing; an example of something typical a character does or says; how one character’s reaction to another shows their relationship ... There are lots of questions you can ask which don’t mean you have to know the book yourself, but just serve to alert your child to its possibilities.</li> </ul>
<p>Dark Red / ruby</p> <p>Children reading at Red level will be able to synthesise information from different places in a text. They are beginning to recognise how layers of meaning allow for the build-up of humour or tension and are able to discuss how the author has achieved the effects.</p>	