

Learning to read in

F1

This leaflet aims to introduce how we encourage children to learn to read, at St. Oswald's Academy, and to give you some ideas as to how you can help your child to become a fluent reader.

Children are natural learners. They are constantly learning about their environment through interaction, exploration, trial and error and "having a go". Children watch what adults do and then act out what they have seen. As a parent or carer, you are an important role model. If your child sees you reading, especially for pleasure or information, s/he will understand that reading is a worthwhile activity. The six-month old child who turns the pages of a board book is beginning to behave like a reader.

Here is an excerpt from the booklet 'What to Expect When' about what you might expect your child to be able to do at this stage in their development...

I like singing nursery rhymes and songs.

- I can join in with rhymes and I recognise when words start the same, like 'big boat' and 'tall tower'.
- I can clap my hands to match the sounds in words, like 2 claps for "he-llo".
- I can listen and join in when we read books and sing rhymes.
- I can join in with my favourite stories and guess what will happen next.
- I know that stories have beginnings and endings and sometimes I guess how the story will end.
- I can listen to longer stories and talk about them.
- I can talk about the places and people in stories and the important things that are happening.
- I like to look at the pictures and words in books. I can show you words when we are outdoors.
- I can recognise my own name and words that are special to me, like "mummy" and my favourite shops and foods.
- I hold the book the right way up and turn the pages carefully when I look at it on my own.
- I know that books can tell me things like the names of cars I am interested in.
- I know that the words in the book tell me things and where the words start on the page.

The adult can build upon this by giving support and encouragement. By sharing books, enjoying the illustrations and relating them to the print, the adult is showing the child the meaning and purposes for reading. Children also learn from their environment and their interaction with others. In our literate society, everyday print in the environment demonstrates the many purposes for reading and encourages children to develop an understanding to the written word. To a degree, children become literate in the same way as they learn to speak their home language. For example, most children can read



By experimenting, taking risks and interacting with more skilled language users, children are reading for real purposes in a meaningful context.

In Nursery the children participate in activities which encourage good listening skills and help children to distinguish between different sounds. Games are played which promote rhyming skills or the recognition of similar sounds. We follow a programme called 'Letters and Sounds', focussing on 'Phase One'.

Phase 1 provides opportunities for children to develop many of the important speaking and listening skills required for children to develop into confident readers.

In Reception, we build on these skills, by teaching the children to blend the sounds that they have learnt in order to read. We follow a programme called 'Read Write Inc.'. Children take part in a short, daily session where they are encouraged to 'sound out' or blend groups of letters and words.

Oral blending & segmenting!

The most difficult skill for children to learn in F1 is usually the last aspect - oral blending and segmenting. This is also the skill that is the most important for children to be confident in **before** they are ready to learn to read and write.

Oral Blending

Hearing a series of spoken sounds and merging them together to make a spoken word. No text is used. For example, when you say aloud b-u-s, children who can confidently blend will know that these sounds make the word 'bus'. Children need to be confident in oral blending before being introduced to the written format of sound - the letter.

Oral Segmenting

This is the inverse of oral blending. Children who can confidently orally segment can pick out the individual sounds in words upon hearing the whole word in the spoken form. Again, no text is used. For example, when you say aloud 'bus' and ask "what sounds can you hear in bus?" children who can orally segment would be able to sound out b-u-s.

It is crucial that children are confident in oral blending and segmenting before they begin to focus on what letters look like or on writing letters down.

Ways to help at home

Reading

- Read signs to me when we are out and about.
- Let me read and share my books with you.
- Let me choose my own books when we go to the library.
- Set up a pretend shop where I can read the labels on the packets and boxes.
- Read a recipe to me as we're making dough.

Ways to help at home

Writing

- Tell me what you're writing as you write a shopping list.
 - Make a name card for my bedroom door or a placemat with my name on.
- Let me use these to help me try to write my name by myself.
- Play games such as 'I spy...' to encourage listening for beginning sounds.