MILL HILL PRIMARY ACADEMY

Work Hard Never Give Up Dream Big

Helping Your Child Learn to Read

Encouraging your child to read and enjoy books is the best way of helping them learn and achieve at school. Children who are encouraged to read regularly, preferably daily, with an adult tend to make the most progress. By cuddling up with a book together your child feels safe and learns that reading is fun. Sessions should be short and frequent. Give lots of praise and encouragement.

- Read from the school's structured reading scheme which has a controlled vocabulary and regular repetition of key words.

- Continue to develop a range of strategies which will enable your child to deal with written words which are new to him / her. These include:
    - sounding out and blending 2-3 phonemes (sounds) together into syllables and words
    - breaking words into syllables (sound chunks)
    - becoming familiar with prefixes and suffixes (be-, de-, re-, pre-, -ing, -ed, -s)
    - using pictures as visual cues to the meaning of what is written
    - making use of meaning and sentence structure to guess what the word might be
    - guessing from meaning plus first syllable clue.

  Model the correct pronunciation of new words.

- Encourage reading for meaning through activities such as retelling, prediction, deduction, answering questions:
    - ask your child to identify characters in a story
    - ask him / her to isolate 2 key facts from the text
    - stop the story at a given point and ask him / her to predict what will happen next - start with obvious examples and progress to more difficult
    - ask your child to predict an outcome before a page is turned, using picture/contextual clues

- Shared reading, reading to your child or using audio books can help improve and extend language skills as they enable him / her to access the ideas and language in books that they are not yet able to read for themselves.

- Some children enjoy recording themselves reading a book. They can play this back, listening to the story as they track the text in the book.

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Shared reading

Shared reading is useful when your child wants to read one of their own books. The reading material should be at the correct level of difficulty as too many complex / unfamiliar words can lead to guessing.

- Find a comfortable, quiet place to read together.
- Look through the book together. Discuss what you think the book might be about, using the language of the text. Encourage the child to predict the ending.
- It's OK to re-read a favourite story. It can help a less confident reader. Build on this interest by finding books in the same series or by the same author.
- Decide on a way to read the book together. You might share the reading, each reading alternate sentences, paragraphs or pages. Your child might want to read by themselves, aloud or silently and only need to tell them unknown words.
- Try not to interrupt the reading by correcting every mistake. Always encourage your child to read for meaning. If a mistake is made which clearly does not make sense, ask your child to try again. Give them time, but if they continue to struggle, just give them the word.
- Remember that little words (is, on , was….) can be harder than longer words such as elephant or aeroplane, which can be visualised.
- If your child makes a lot of mistakes the book is too hard. Change it or offer to read it aloud to him / her. Too many difficult or unfamiliar words are likely to lead to high levels of guessing and can be demoralising.
- Discuss the book together when you have finished it. Talk about the characters and what happened in the story. This will help the child to understand what has been read

Independent learning of basic words for reading

Have a colourful book mark (old birthday cards are great for this) and jot down any words your child 'stumbles' over onto the back. These can become target words to learn. Each day, before reading ask your child to read the words written on the card. If correct, put a tick. After three ticks have been achieved, cross the word out. If your child struggles to learn a word:

- Write the word on a small card.
- Write a sentence using the target word, made up by your child, on the reverse of the card so that he / she can self-correct.
- Read through the words daily; trying to get quicker.
- Choose one target word at a time and find it in a text.

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Encouraging a love of books

Children become proficient readers by reading. They will read more frequently if they develop a love of books.

- Have books in your home. Books make wonderful birthday presents and need not be too expensive. Second hand books can be picked up very cheaply or swap with other families.

- Visiting the library together is valuable in encouraging your child to take an interest in books. It is free, has large selections of books, audio books and CDs. There will usually be something which will be of interest.

- Try to use your judgement and steer your child away from reading materials which are clearly going to be too hard for him / her to read as this may cause frustration. Maybe a CD of the book (if available) would be a better alternative if your child is very determined. Otherwise you could always read the book to your child.

- For ideas try visiting www.lovereading4kids.co.uk which has recommendations from toddlers to teens and are divided into age groups.

- BookTrust www.booktrust.org.uk is the UK's largest children's reading charity and has a Bookfinder section, information about new books and book reviews.

If your child is a reluctant reader

Not all children love to read.

- Start with short stories, poetry, jokes and riddles and then build up to increase reading stamina
- Magazines and comics
- Tempt pupils with high profile T.V. and film tie-ins
- Connect reading with other interests; gaming, sports or magazines
- Humour is often a strong draw
- Be enthusiastic about books; read an exciting episode to him / her and encourage him / her to continue reading
- Some reluctant readers respond well to digital reading. More frequent reading of digital texts leads to better reading proficiency and increased enjoyment.