

Dear Parents and Carers,

Following our successful Parent Forum last term, myself, Emma McCormick (Parent Governor) and staff have met to carefully consider the findings and **to amend our homework expectations**. Our main learning was that parents want **greater consistency** across at least all classes in a year group. I hope you will find the clarification below helpful.

We (most teachers are parents too) **all want the same thing**; for our children to be happy, healthy and achieve their full potential at school for them to forge the future they want.. Home and school need to **work together** to help them get there.

I speak as a parent whose children were not natural readers and I used to hate having to 'do the reading' when I got home from work. Consequently, I was one of those parents who falsely signed the Reading Record. I realise now that **I did not know enough about why teachers** were so insistent on Reading practice and I did not know enough on how to 'do the reading'.

The Why

There has been an enormous amount of research to demonstrate the harsh truth about the importance of early reading:

- If we (teachers) don't get it right by the age of 6, all future academic milestones are at risk in all curriculum areas – that is SAT's in Year 2 and Year 6 and GCSE's at secondary school.
- 85% of the secondary curriculum requires children to be able to read at age-appropriate levels.
- Poor readers can struggle with low self-esteem and feelings of inadequacy.

Of course, not every child who learns to read later is doomed! Mine are going strong! But this is why **reading is our top school improvement priority**. In recent years, too many children have not passed the Phonics tests in Year 1 and Year 2 and too many leave Templars having not met the age-related expectation and we need to put that right. We must have ambition for every child because learning to read really does affect life chances.

The How

Firstly, **you are not expected to teach your children how to read** – that's our job – but your high expectations, your positive reinforcement and your dedication as parents and carers, doubles our effectiveness. Learning to read happens in stages:

Phonics

Mainly taught in Reception and Year 1

44 sounds to learn

The process of recognising sounds, 'blending' them and 'decoding' a word

Decoding must become a habit

Quick progress is important- this keeps it interesting for the children!

Will bring home short books that match their phonics knowledge

Fluency

Usually taught in Years 2, 3 and 4

Children can 'decode' unfamiliar words

They can read more fluently, quicker and more easily

They are practising reading so that it is easier

Will bring home longer books, including Chapter Books

Comprehension

Taught throughout Years 3, 4, 5 and 6

Children can read texts fluently and with expression

Focuses on understanding a text- what it tells us and the deeper meaning of a text

Children will bring home Chapter Books from school to read

Reading aloud is still important at this stage

Phonics

- **'Stories to share'**- Read stories to your child and get excited by stories. This will help them become more interested in reading because you find it exciting.
- **'Books to Read'**- Usually limited at this stage. Make sure your child reads the books they bring home. Try not to do it for them, even though it's tempting!
- **Phonics practice**- Use the videos sent through Seesaw to help your child make progress as quickly as possible.

Fluency

- **'Books to share'**- This can be any book. Share books at home that your child finds interesting. Continue to build that 'love of reading' at home and at school. Read to them. Discuss the books with your child- which characters do they like? Why?
- **'Books to read'** - This should be your child's book from school. Listen to your child read regularly. Help them to decode unfamiliar words, correct mispronunciation and remind your child to add expression. Ask your child to re-read sentences to improve their fluency and speed.

Comprehension

- **'Books to share'**- Encourage your child to read everywhere- read menus, gaming instructions, annuals, shopping lists- including books and online. Discuss them with your child and continue to share a love of reading.
- **'Books to Read'**- It's tempting to leave your older children to read alone, but continuing to read aloud is still important. Question your child and check they have understood what they have read.

There is a lot to take in here and lots more to share so please look out for and attend the regular parent events that are offered and look for more information on Seesaw and the Templars Website <https://www.templars.coventry.sch.uk/>
Of course, please ask your class teacher for ideas/help if you need it.

The What:

You Said	So...
<p>You would like one platform for communication with school</p>	<p>All homework, messages of praise and letters/info. will be posted on Seesaw.</p> <p>We will no longer be using Marvellous Me.</p> <p>We will continue to use Twitter to showcase our curriculum offer and send information via the Newsletter.</p>
<p>Seesaw family logins (if you have more than one child) are not working</p>	<p>We have been in contact with Seesaw and are assured family logins are now working. If you need a reminder of your family login details, please ask your class teacher.</p> <p>If you need any support with Seesaw please book an appointment through your class teacher who will direct you.</p>
<p>Communication with teachers to be improved</p>	<p>Teachers will communicate through Seesaw but in respect of workload, teachers are not expected to respond outside of working hours of Mon -Fri 8am until 5pm and during the day, when they are mostly teaching.</p> <p>Reading Records will also continue to be used for communication.</p>
<p>Reading</p> <p>You like Reading Records</p> <p>You like Reading Folders</p> <p>You want more info. on the Why and How of Learning to Read especially Phonics</p> <p>You want clarification on what counts as Reading for the purpose of home learning and recording in Reading Records</p> <p>You asked for what to write in the Reading Journal</p>	<p>We will continue to provide 1 per term funded by the school. Lost books must be replaced at cost of £1</p> <p>We will continue to provide 1 per year. Lost folders can be replaced at cost of £1</p> <p>Please attend Parent events in Summer 2 and Autumn 1 and fantastic new phonics practice linked to your child's current group on Seesaw.</p> <p>Please see the How section of the guide attached and focus on the practice suggested for each reading developmental stage.</p> <p>Don't worry about this – we mainly want to show the children that home and school are in this together. We want and expect the same thing - that pupils read. So brief comments are fine: <i>'X read 2 pages- struggled to decode lots of words'</i></p>

<p>You want clarification and consistency on how often and how much your child should be reading and recording in their Reading Record.</p>	<p><i>'X read 3 pages We talked about the exclamation mark and how you use it for expression'</i> <i>'X picked out the sounds she knew in the menu at Nando's last night!'</i> <i>'We shared a book last night – Winnie the Pooh - and I checked understanding – good!'</i> <i>'Didn't have a chance to read tonight – will catch up tomorrow.'</i> <i>'Read well but not sure on some words – 'potential', 'granulated', 'baptism''</i></p> <p>Ideally every day – especially at the phonics stage. After this, at least 4 nights in 7 for at least 15 minutes.</p> <p>A selection of Reading Records are checked by teachers every day during Early Morning Learning. It must be in school every day.</p>
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<p>Spellings</p> <p>You want to know who does what!</p> <p>You want homework posted on time.</p> <p>You want spellings to be tested and informed of scores.</p>	<p>Whilst completing Phonics: Whilst children are mastering the 44 alphabetic sound code through Phonics lessons, they will not be expected to learn spellings. They will receive a ½ termly list of activities linked to the phonics group that they are in. These groups change following half-termly assessments.</p> <p>After Phonics: Spellings are sent out weekly on Seesaw on a Friday. The age-related expectation for spellings will also be stuck into their Reading Records. In addition, at the beginning of each term, spellings will be sent out with the Topic Web for the term</p> <p>Some KS2 children: Children on SNIP spelling interventions will be given a paper copy of weekly spellings by their intervention teacher, following their individual spelling tests.</p> <p>Spelling Tests for KS2 will take place on a Friday. Children will record their scores in their Reading Record.</p>
<p>You like Times Tables Rockstars and Numbots</p>	<p>So do we! We pay for this so it's free for you. Please ask your class teacher if you need help to access including hardware which we may be able to help with.</p>

	<p>Half termly the Heat Maps will be sent home to show progress.</p>
<p>Some parents would like Additional/Optional homework</p>	<p>Your child's Topic Web and termly spellings will continue to be sent on a physical sheet, added to the website and sent via Seesaw at the end of each Learning to Learn week, at the beginning of each term.</p> <p>Links to the relevant Knowledge Organisers for each term are also on the website</p> <p>Picture News discussion work will be posted weekly on Seesaw.</p> <p>Sometimes, staff hold competitions where children can do additional work.</p>
<p>Rewards for going above and beyond</p> <p>and Sanctions for less than expected</p>	<p>Special attention, certificates, phone calls, post cards, messages on Seesaw, Templars Token, Reading Champion badge</p> <p>If a Reading Record is noted as missing and not found within 2 days, a replacement will be expected to be purchased at £1.</p> <p>If a Reading Record is checked and a pupil has not read at least 4 times in the previous 7 days, they will read with an adult at breaktime for 5 mins. This time can be arranged at 3.15pm if parents prefer.</p> <p>When a pupil persistently misses the minimum expectations, we will work together to understand the barriers and overcome them. Parents can expect a series of phone calls from teachers and SLT but please speak to your teacher at the earliest opportunity.</p>