



Reading and Phonics

At Cassop Primary School we aim to produce:

- Children who want to read;
- Enthusiastic, independent readers;
- Efficient readers able to adopt a variety of strategies flexibly;
- Children who have developed an established reading habit;
- Children who are aware of the need to be critical and reflective about the material they read;
- Children who are able to access information efficiently from a range of sources including ICT.

This begins on day one of their education with us. Furthermore, we believe that this love of reading is best established via strong partnerships between parents, grandparents and school.

At Cassop Primary School, we pride ourselves on our approach to reading and the importance we place on 1:1 reading from Reception all the way through to Y6. Teachers listen to children read 1:1 as often as possible, as well as during guided sessions where they read as part of a group. We take time to talk to them about what they are reading to help them explore characters, develop empathy and comprehend texts at a deeper level.

We hope that this guide will help you to support your child at home with their reading and give you an insight into how these vital skills are taught in school.

Phonics

At Cassop School we aim to provide children with a range of strategies in order to read and spell both familiar and new vocabulary. The teaching of phonics is an integral part of the curriculum in both the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 classrooms. We use a “Keep up rather than catch up” approach using Essential Letters and Sounds.

At Cassop we ensure every phonics lesson is taught to the highest standard. Essential Letters and Sounds (ELS) is a DfE validated systematic synthetic programme where only the essential elements are included. This reflects the key principles: simplicity and consistency. The teaching of phonics is a high priority to all teachers as it enables pupils to decode for reading and encode for spelling. We ensure that our teaching of phonics is rigorous, structured and enjoyable. Children have discrete, daily phonics sessions where they are introduced to new phonemes, can practise and revise previous learning and have plenty of opportunities to apply the knowledge they have. Children work with pace and are encouraged to apply their knowledge across the curriculum with any reading or writing activities. The children also learn a variety of other key words by sight.

Phonemes and Graphemes

There are 26 letters in the English alphabet but approximately 44 sounds. These sounds are called ‘phonemes’. A single letter can make a sound. However, some sounds are represented by 2 letters (digraphs), 3 letters (trigraphs) and in some cases 4 letters. For example, the long ‘a’ sound can be represented as ‘ai’ as in train, a_e as in made, ay as in play, ey as in they, a as in apron and even igh as in sleigh. Understanding and recognising the grapheme that corresponds to a phoneme is the basis of phonics.

Blending

Blending is the process of saying the individual phonemes/sounds in a word and then 'pushing' the sounds together to make a word. For example, sounding out (saying the sound the letter makes and not its name) c-a-t makes cat; sh-ee-p makes sheep. To learn to read well, children must be able to blend sounds together smoothly. Showing your child how to blend is important. Model how to 'push' sounds together without stopping at each individual sound.

Segmenting

Segmenting is a skill used in spelling. In order to spell the word car, it is necessary to segment the word into its constituent phonemes or sounds: c-a-r. In school, children are encouraged to use sounds to build words. Children need time to think about a word before writing it, say the word several times, sound out the word and then write it.

Tricky Words

In the English language there are 'tricky' words that cannot be sounded out but need to be learnt. They do not fit into the usual spelling patterns. These tricky words are taught alongside the sounds using flashcards and games.

Children should finish the ELS programme by the end of KS1, although we continue to use it well into KS2 to support each child's individual needs.

During the Summer Term of Year 1, children undertake the compulsory phonics screening test. This comprises a variety of real and made up words designed to test their knowledge of the phonemes and graphemes taught throughout ELS.

Reading at Home

Children are more likely to become fluent readers who choose to read for pleasure if they are exposed to books and words and are given the space to do so at home as well as at school. As such, we ask parents to aim to hear their children read every day where possible.

Other ways to encourage reading at home include:

- Share stories with your child. Pick a book and read it together every night, discussing the story as you go. Studies have suggested that children need to be read to every day until the age of 11 if they are to become avid readers!
- Visit the library and choose books, including non-fiction;
- Share comics with your child – everyone loves The Beano!
- Make the whole experience as enjoyable as possible. Use funny voices, expression, silly faces and noises to bring stories to life;
- Tell stories. Make up stories whilst out walking or in the car. Encourage your child to be as imaginative as possible, giving detail to hook the listener in;
- Give your child access to a variety of reading materials e.g. newspapers, comics, magazines, recipe books, web pages.
- Read in front of your child. If they see you reading and enjoying it, they are more likely to pick up a book and copy you.

Each child has a home/school reading diary where you can record your child's reading and send messages to their teacher. Please do feel free to include any books read at home for pleasure. We love to see what you have been enjoying at home!

We appreciate that it is not always possible to get your child to read at home. Make sure that you choose a time where you can sit down for 10 minutes, uninterrupted, when they are not tired, hungry or distracted. If you are unsure of how to help support your child, please pop into school to talk to their class teacher as we are always available to offer guidance.