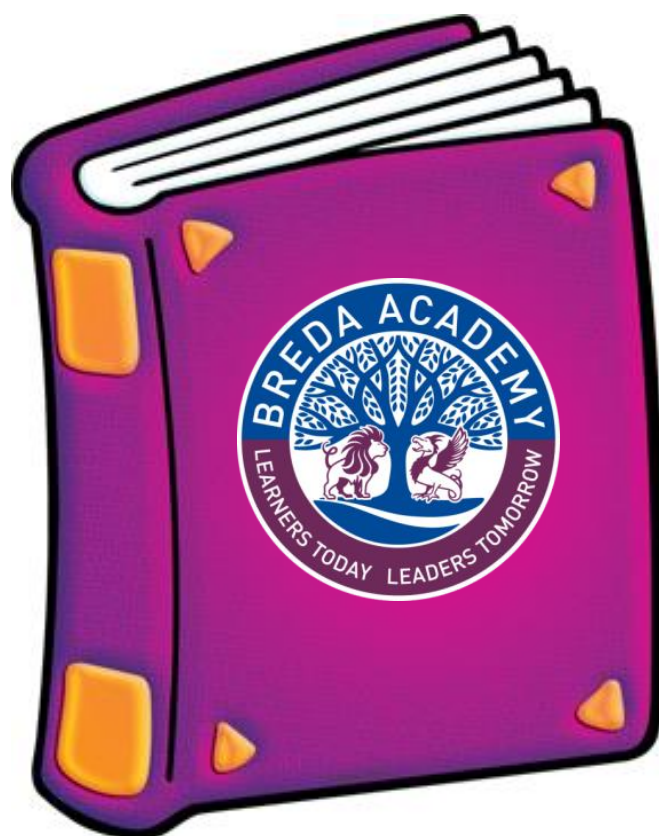


BREDA ACADEMY

LITERACY SUPPORT



PARENT GUIDE

TO READING

WHY IS READING SO IMPORTANT?

At Breda Academy we want our students to enjoy reading, to be able to use their reading skills to help them learn and to develop, increasing their confidence and competence in reading so that they are able to:

- ✓ Read fluently, accurately and with understanding;
- ✓ Become independent and critical readers, and make informed and appropriate choices;
- ✓ Select information from a wide range of texts and sources, including print, media, and ICT, and to evaluate those sources;
- ✓ Apply techniques such as skimming, scanning, and text-marking effectively in order to research and appraise texts.

Research suggests that children who read for enjoyment every day, not only perform better in reading tests than those who don't, but also develop a broader vocabulary, increased general knowledge and a better understanding of the world. By working with the school to create passionate readers, you are, in effect, gifting your child the ability to learn more easily.

Parent involvement in your child's education is crucial. Children with involved parents, irrespective of income or background, are more likely to have higher academic achievement, better social skills and behaviour, greater confidence, and self-esteem.

We all want the best for our children. We all know that it is important to make sure that they are confident, fluent readers who enjoy reading, but often it is hard to know where to start. The purpose of this guide therefore is to provide you with information on how to engage and support your child within the reading process, in the hope that they will go on to become lifelong readers.



READING FLUENCY

Reading fluency is the ability to read with speed, accuracy and expression. In order to become a confident reader, who reads for meaning and enjoyment, children and teenagers need to be able to read fluently, both silently and out loud.

By reading fluently, written words and sentences make more sense and this in turn increases comprehension or 'understanding'. *If sentences* make more sense, the child will understand more and therefore, they will become more confident in their reading.

• WHY IS READING FLUENTLY SO IMPORTANT?

1. It expands their vocabulary.

Your child might come across words they have never heard – prompting them to find out what they mean. As a result, they add it to their vocabulary.

2. It helps build independence and self-confidence.

As they learn that they no longer have to rely on their parents to read things to them, children develop a sense of independence and begin to understand the world on their own.

3. It helps them make sense of the world around them.

Reading helps children understand signs, forms, stickers and labels etc. Being able to read helps them understand what is what, and the purpose it serves.

4. It leads to their future success.

A child must be able to read in order to even progress through school. Reading is essential to following the instructions on a test and being able to even understand or answer questions.

5. It enhances their imagination.

As a child reads, they can begin to imagine what the characters and setting looks like. Firing-up their imagination will help them understand more subjects and also help with writing skills, grammar and comprehension.

6. It entertains them.

Reading can be a completely free hobby and once a child gets used to reading regularly, they become even more confident and happy to tackle more complicated stories as they mature.

Reading is essential to just about everything in life – from cooking to driving to just getting through school. It is important to start at a young age and teach your child the value of reading so they will grow to practice it often and value their ability to do so.

• HOW TO HELP IMPROVE READING FLUENCY

Sometimes, children say they hate reading. This could be because the words and sentences don't make sense, they can't remember what they have just read or they don't understand what it means. A lack of fluency can make stories disjointed and lead to a great deal of frustration, which often discourages the reader from reading altogether.

Parents may also notice that their children read with no expression in their voice, take a long time to read a paragraph or that they may stumble over words and lose their place. These signs show that help is needed with reading fluency.

Here are a few tips to help you work with your child to help improve their reading fluency.

- KNOW THE SIGNS

Be aware of signs that your child is having problems with fluency. Common signs include reading without expression, stumbling while reading aloud, reading aloud very slowly or at a mixed rate, ignoring punctuation, and moving the mouth while reading silently.

- USE BUDDY READING

The easiest and most effective way to help your child improve their fluency is by sitting down together and reading. Read together every day, even if it's only for a short time (at least 15mins is recommended) so that your child can hear how you read and start to copy that fluency. Take it in turns for a few pages and their confidence will grow much quicker than if they are tackling it on their own.

- SHOW YOUR OWN FLUENT READING

The more often your child hears fluent reading, the more likely they are to pick it up. Read a paragraph or a full page from a book, and then ask your child to read it back to you. If you provide a model to follow, then the child becomes familiar with the story, better understands the pacing, and can mimic you.

When reading aloud to your child, read with expression using different voices, or placing emphasis on words and phrases, and pause at the appropriate times (at commas, full stops, etc.) to demonstrate the cadence of our language.

- USE AUDIO BOOKS

Listening to what a fluent and expressive reader sounds like is important for building fluency. Audio books are a great tool for exposing your child to fluent reading as they allow your child to listen to how others read using expression, emphasis, pause, speed and rhythm.

Audio books are particularly helpful for reluctant readers, and they encourage independent reading as they can listen to the audio while following the text on the

page. Audio books work particularly well in the car or as ‘chill-out’ time in the evenings before bed.

- ECHO READING

While reading together, ask your child to play ‘copycat’. Read one passage at a time and have your child read it back to you, matching your voice and intonation. This provides them with a vocal model of fluent reading that they can emulate.

- TEACH YOUR CHILD TO TRACK WORDS

If you’ve ever learned a new language, you know how difficult it can be to decipher where one word ends and the next begins when listening to a conversation. Your child might feel the same way when they try to follow along during reading time. That’s where tracking — or running your finger under words as you read them — comes in handy. You can track while you’re reading to your child or ask them to track when they’re reading aloud.

When your child touches each word, it helps them see the correlation between spoken and written language. With practice they should be able to tackle larger phrases without reading word by word.

- RE-READ FAVOURITE BOOKS

Re-reading books that are familiar helps build confidence. It doesn't matter how often your child wants to read a certain book; re-reading the books they love is valuable practice for becoming a fluent reader. With each reading, your child will become faster, more confident, and more expressive.

It's also good to incorporate texts that are easy for your child to read. Parents are often concerned with getting their children ahead in reading, but when they're struggling, going back to easier texts can be really helpful as it builds confidence and consolidates their skills so they can expand upon them.

- LEARN TEXTS BY HEART

Learning and reciting short and fun texts, such as song lyrics, nursery rhymes and poems are great for building your child’s confidence and helps them to become familiar with the rhythm of fluent reading.

- FOCUS ON SIGHT WORDS/ HIGH FREQUENCY WORDS

You may notice that your child struggles with certain words like “walk” or “house,” also known as sight words. This is because they are words that are not decodable by sounding them out phonetically. They often overlap with high-frequency words, (words that appear very often in texts i.e. the, there, is, when etc.). When your child memorizes what these words look like and can instantly recognize them, they won’t have to spend valuable reading time (and brainpower!) trying to sound them out.

- TRY CHORAL READING TOGETHER

Choral reading simply means you read a story out loud, and ask your child to read along with you at the same pace. This helps them understand what fluent reading feels like and gives them the chance to practice it themselves at your pace. It's OK if you're a tiny bit ahead of them — just be sure to pick a book that they can already read themselves. That way, they're working on pacing and accuracy rather than decoding new words.

- HIT RECORD

Use a tape recorder or voice recording app to create audio books at home. Your child can read a book they love or read aloud an original story they've come up with. You can even take turns reading aloud certain passages. This is a great motivator for your child to perfect their pace, expression, volume, and accuracy.

- TAKE BREAKS

If after a while your child is stumbling a lot, let them rest. Forcing them to continue reading will only increase their frustration. Instead, close the book and acknowledge how hard they are trying. You can also turn back to a page they feel more confident about and invite them to read it again.

- PRACTICE FLUENCY LEVELS (* WPM = words per minute)

Typically, the quicker a child can read, the more accurate and fluent they are. This helps improve comprehension, the ability to infer meaning, and it determines how quickly information is accessed.

You can help your child improve their reading speed by practicing reading within a set time frame, and then work to improve the WPM spoken aloud by the child.

EXAMPLE:

Using the excerpt – ***A Trip to the Zoo*** – you will be able to calculate your child's fluency score. Use a timer to let your child read the text for exactly 60 seconds, then count how many words have been read.

Practice this every day until they reach their age appropriate target (or above), with understanding, per minute. Track their progress So that you can monitor improvements.

YEAR GROUP	WPM TARGET
Transition from P7 – Yr8	90 WPM
End of Key Stage 3 (Yr10)	90 – 120 WPM
End of Key Stage 4 (Yr12)	120-190 WPM
Average adult reading speed	250 WPM

Trip to the Zoo

During the weekend, my Dad offered to take me to the zoo so that I could observe	17
some of my favourite animals. I really do admire and adore elephants so I immediately	32
said, "yes!" and ran off to locate my camera. Camera safely packed, I then returned to	48
my room for some pocket money. If I saw a suitable book about elephants, then I would	65
purchase it to read later. My sister decided to stay at home, maybe I would buy her an	83
appropriate book too. I would probably have just enough money left to grab an ice-cream	99
or a bar of chocolate. I was so excited that I nearly tripped over.	113
"Come on!" shouted Dad. "Let's get a move on!" he grumbled as I tried to get my shoes	131
on. "It will be closing time if we don't get going soon!"	143
Eventually, we jumped into the car and made the journey to the zoo. When we arrived,	159
noticed a big sign ahead of us... "Zoo closed due to escaped elephant." Dad turned	174
around and sighed.	177

WPM Progress Tracker

	WEEK 1	WEEK 2	WEEK 3	WEEK 4	WEEK 5	WEEK 6	WEEK 7	WEEK 8
MON								
TUES								
WED								
THUR								
FRI								
WEEKLY AVERAGE								

TOP TIPS: SUPPORTING READING AT HOME

Sometimes it's difficult to know how to best support your child's reading at home, but there are lots of things you can do to help them on their reading journey!

• CHOOSING WHAT TO READ

It can be hard to know where to start when choosing a book for your child. Remember that as adults we like to re-read favourite books, relax with a magazine or tackle something challenging. Children are the same, so encouraging choices; maybe a familiar book for re-reading as well as something new. Don't show disapproval if your child returns to favourites.

Websites such as www.puffin.co.uk and <https://schoolreadinglist.co.uk/> offer advice on what books children of different ages might enjoy, and don't forget that you can always join your local library!

The Libraries NI App can be downloaded for free to your mobile phone or tablet, and it puts the library directly into your pocket. The app carries your membership barcode for easy access to scan and borrow books in person at the library, or you can use it to:

- Search Libraries NI's extensive catalogue of books and eBooks;
- Make requests for books and get them delivered to your library (there is a 50p charge);
- Renew your books with one touch;
- Scan the barcode of any book you see to check if they have it in stock;
- Make changes to requests wherever you are; control your account;
- Tap and download eBooks, audiobooks and eMagazines;

Don't worry if you don't have a variety of books to choose from at home, reading material comes in lots of different forms. Instructions, recipes, play scripts, song lyrics, road signs, comics, magazines, newspapers, song lyrics are all examples of other forms of reading material that can be shared.

When it comes to developing a love for reading, it doesn't matter what you read. The most important thing is that we all help to inspire our children to feel confident and comfortable reading.



- **HOW DO I KNOW IF A BOOK IS A SUITABLE READING LEVEL?**

One way of checking if a text is suitable for your child is to do the 'Five Finger' Test. Choose a book to read with your child. Open it in the middle and read down the page. Have your child raise one finger for each word on the page that they cannot read.

- ✓ **No fingers or one finger:**

This book is easy for you to read. Have fun!

- ✓ **Two Fingers:**

This book is just right for you enjoy your reading!

- ✓ **Three fingers:**

This book is challenging but you may still enjoy it. Try it!

- ✓ **Four fingers:**

This book will be very challenging. Read with a partner and /or keep a dictionary handy.

- ✓ **Five-fingers:**

This book is probably too hard to be fun. Save it for another day or read it with an adult or partner who can help with difficult words.



• WHAT YOU CAN DO TO SUPPORT YOUR CHILD'S READING

There are lots of things you can do at home to help encourage and support your child during the reading process.

BEFORE READING BEGINS:

- ❖ Set aside a special time and place for reading; no phone, no TV, no making tea. Give your child your full attention.
- ❖ Sit side by side and keep it happy and relaxed.
- ❖ To keep them interested provide a wide range of reading materials.
- ❖ Books should look attractive and interesting.
- ❖ Make sure the book is not too difficult, as this will only cause the child to become frustrated. Use the 'Five Finger Test'.
- ❖ Talk about the type of book/ reading material: is it fact or fiction, story or non-fiction etc?
- ❖ Before you read, ask your child to look down the page, get them to point out if there are any words they might not know, refer to them as 'tricky words'. Then rehearse them by telling them what they are.

DURING READING:

- ❖ Read aloud together as this encourages reluctant readers. You can:
 - *Take it in turn to read- you read a page, they read a page;*
 - *Read aloud together and when the child gives a sign, stop reading and allow the child to continue on their own;*
 - *Read alternate sentences;*
 - *Read alternate pages.*
- ❖ You do not always have to read the whole book every night. Focus on two pages and talk about the characters, setting and plot in a lot of detail.
- ❖ Point out unfamiliar words and discuss vocabulary.
- ❖ When listening to your child read for pleasure, just provide the unknown word(s).

- ❖ If you are reading to support your child progress and i.e. not reading simply for pleasure, and they do not know a word use the strategy – **PAUSE**, **PROMPT**, **PRAISE** (PPP)

PAUSE

If (or when) your child comes to a word they don't know, try not to jump in straight away and supply the correct word. Wait and give your child time to work out the word. In the first instance 'pausing' creates an opportunity for your child to try and self-correct or work out the word for themselves.

PROMPT

If your child successfully supplies the word they have stumbled over, it's a good idea to suggest that they go back to the beginning of the sentence and re-read the whole sentence again (to recap meaning) before reading on.

If your child has not independently worked out the problem word, at this point you may intervene and prompt them with some quick, low-key suggestions about what they could do. Say things like:

- Try reading on for a sentence or two, miss out the difficult word and see if that helps you to work it out what it is.
- Look at the sound the word begins with, use that clue and think about what might make sense here. Look at the pictures and see if they give you a clue to what the word might be.
- Box the parts of the word with your fingers to break it into recognisable chunks, e.g. find a smaller word or the base in a word, find the 'th' in that, now find the 'at'.
- Go back to the beginning of the sentence, re-read it and have another go at working it out.
- If prompts like these are not working, this is the point at which you simply tell your child the correct word.
- After a short time 'prompting' say: ***Would you like me to help you? or How about I tell you the word?***
- You may even briefly explain the meaning of the word but then quickly prompt your child to continue reading. Try not to spend too much time prompting as your child will find it difficult to maintain the overall meaning of what they are reading. In other words let them read the book.

PRAISE

This is the easiest part of the process for any parent because it's something that comes naturally. Praise your child's reading efforts and successes whenever you think it is appropriate during the reading process.

As well as praising their effort it is often good to tell them why and not dwell on the mistakes. For example you might say:

"Well done, I thought it was very clever the way that you went back, re-read the sentence from the beginning and worked out that word you were having trouble with."

"That was great reading tonight, I know I had to tell you a few words but you also worked out some pretty tricky ones for yourself. Well done."

- ❖ Encourage your child to sound out unfamiliar words using their phonics; this applies to older children as well.
- ❖ Write the words they do not know on a sticky pad and look at them later, breaking them down into syllables or looking for 'tricky' bits in them
- ❖ Tap out the syllables in longer words.
- ❖ Remind them that every syllable contains a vowel sound,
e.g. **hos pit al / gen er ous**
- ❖ Praise all good attempts at working out words
- ❖ Vocabulary* is important. Use a dictionary to find meanings.

**Try to use ambitious vocabulary yourself in day-to-day life so that your child will experience a wider range of words and will be less daunted when coming across new words.*

- ❖ Discuss punctuation on the page, for example, exclamation marks. Ask what are these for? What should you do when you see an exclamation mark?
- ❖ Intermittingly, talk about what is happening in the story, in the pictures, in the text.
- ❖ To help with prediction you can read the text and leave a gap that the child has to fill with a word that makes sense.
- ❖ When you are reading, tell your child that you are having difficulty with a word and cannot read it. Ask them 'what can you do to work out a word you don't know? The reply you want is;
 - Say the first sound
 - Try to sound across the word
 - Look at the picture (if applicable)
 - Chunk the syllables
 - Read on
 - Think, does this make sense?

- ❖ If they become tired or frustrated finish the reading yourself. Do not leave a book unread or a chapter unfinished. Use a pleasant tone and good intonation when reading

AFTER READING:

- ❖ Ask if they enjoyed the book. Why?
- ❖ Make predictions. What do you think will happen next?
- ❖ If your child is keen, create little tasks relating to the text. (e.g. draw what you think a character /setting may look like, write a few sentences about what happens next.
- ❖ Play 'find the word' when the reading is over. Call out a word and get the child to find the word in the text.
- ❖ If your child is interested in a book but is struggling, read it to them or let them listen to it on CD/audio app

THINGS TO REMEMBER:

- ❖ Be prepared for your child to be unresponsive sometimes. Reading can be challenging.
- ❖ Be patient. Avoid unhelpful negative comments and non-verbal body language.
- ❖ If your school would prefer you not to read further on than the designated reading pages, ask for supplementary material to read for pleasure. The more practice they get the better
- ❖ Encourage the use of reading everywhere: Comics, magazines, catalogues, birthday cards, car/bike manuals, e-bay, TV guide, sports pages, map reading, road signs, what is on at the cinema, timetables, shop signs and menus.
- ❖ Carefully consider when buying books as presents, as you would like an appropriate interest level and readability. (Remember the five-finger test)

• QUESTIONS YOU COULD ASK WHEN READING

DISCUSS THE BOOK BEFORE YOU READ IT	DISCUSS THE BOOK AFTER YOU HAVE READ IT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>I wonder what it is about?</i> ○ <i>Who do you think is in it?</i> ○ <i>Who wrote this book?</i> ○ <i>Who drew the pictures?</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Could you see pictures in your head when we read it?</i> ○ <i>What do you think of that story?</i> ○ <i>I wonder what will happen next....</i> ○ <i>I don't like this character, what did you think?</i>

STORY STRUCTURE QUESTIONS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Where and when does the story take place?</i> ○ <i>What clues in the story helped you decide this?</i> ○ <i>What happens at the beginning at the story?</i> ○ <i>Is this book fiction or non-fiction?</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>What is the genre of this story?</i> ○ <i>Who is telling the story?</i> ○ <i>How does the story end?</i> ○ <i>How can you tell?</i>

AUTHOR'S PURPOSE QUESTION	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Do you think the title is a good one for the story? Why do you think that?</i> ○ <i>What language did the author use to help you visualise _____?</i> ○ <i>Why do you think the author wrote this story?</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>How is this story like other stories the author has written?</i> ○ <i>Is the language used formal or informal? How can you tell?</i> ○ <i>How did the author use persuasive language?</i>

MAKING CONNECTIONS QUESTIONS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>What other story does this remind you of?</i> ○ <i>How are you alike or different from the main character in the story?</i> ○ <i>How does this story make you feel?</i> ○ <i>When have you felt like that before?</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>What lessons did you learn in the story that can help you in your life? Explain.</i> ○ <i>What other books have you read with similar characters or themes?</i> ○ <i>Do you think that helped you to understand the story better? How?</i>

INFERENCE QUESTIONS

- | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ What is the message or lesson of this story?○ Why do you think the character acted like he/she did?○ What do you think is going to happen in the next chapter? | <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ What can you figure out that the author didn't put into words?○ Maybe it was how someone was feeling or what they might have been thinking. |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

READING FOR PLEASURE

Your child needs to read for a minimum of 15 minutes every day in order to improve their proficiency and fluency with regards their reading. Regular reading is proven to:

- *Improve vocabulary, spelling, writing and speaking skills.*
- *Develop imagination, empathy and critical-thinking skills.*
- *Improve mental health and increase confidence.*
- *Improve your child's chances of getting better grades in all subjects and improve career prospects in later life.*
- *Improve brain connectivity.*
- *Be a relaxing way to spend time, particularly before going to sleep.*
- *Be fun and enjoyable!*

The single biggest predictor of high academic achievement is reading to children. Not flashcards, not workbooks, not fancy pre-schools, not technology or computers, but parents and caregivers taking the time every day or night (or both!) to sit and read them books.

• **TIPS TO HELP CHILDREN ENJOY READING**

At some point every parent will be met with a child who does not want to read. Obviously if a child is upset it will not lead to conducive reading, however if school and home, work together to develop a positive ethos surrounding reading we are hopeful that these times will be limited.

Things parents have tried with their children are tick charts on the fridge, writing comments together in a reading record or simply insisting on 10-15 minutes within the day to sit down together with a book. Here are a few other things you can try to encourage a positive experience with reading.

- Show your teenager that it is as much fun to read a book as it is to watch TV or play on the computer. Make books part of your family life- always have books & magazines around so that you and your children are ready to read whenever there's a chance.
- Match your child's interests - help them to find the right book- it doesn't matter if it is fiction, poetry, comic books or non-fiction. Encourage your teenager to read magazines, newspapers or the sports guide. Make sure that your home contains books or reading material that will interest your teenager. All reading is reading, and it is all good!
- Subscribe to a magazine that your teenager has an interest in. Share articles you've read from the newspaper or a magazine, especially if it's

something your teenager is interested in. Sunday supplements are particularly good.

- Recommend adult-themed books that would be appropriate for your teenager's maturity level. Ask teenagers to recommend books for younger readers in the family.
- Get comfortable- snuggle up somewhere warm and cosy with your child, either in bed, on a beanbag or on the sofa or make sure they have somewhere comfy when reading alone. Create a quiet, well-lit space in your home to encourage reading.
- Play audio books in the car. This will encourage reading for enjoyment.
- Ask questions- to keep them interested in the story, ask your child questions as you read such as, 'What do you think will happen next?' or 'Where did we get to last night?' 'Can you remember what has happened already?'
- Read whenever you get the chance – doctor's surgery, road signs, supermarkets, airports – it will all help.
- Read again and again- encourage your child to re-read favourite books and poems. Re-reading helps to build up fluency and confidence.
- Bedtime stories- regularly read with your child or children at bedtime. It is a great way to end the day and to spend valuable time with your child.
- Introduce books which are part of a series, or autobiographies/ biographies of their favourite celebrities/ heroes.
- Rhyme and repetition- books and poems, which include rhyme and repetition, are great for encouraging your younger child or children to join in and remember the words. Take the added opportunity to taking part in reading challenges from the school, or from the local library.
- Make use of e-books and e-book readers such as Kindles.
- Make most of your local library – it's free! Also, it's a lovely way of spending an hour or so together, especially on a cold or wet day. Alternatively join the NI Library service online for FREE! You can borrow books, magazines, newspapers and audiobooks using their handy phone app.

REMEMBER: *It doesn't really matter what your child reads as long as they read!*

• WHAT IF MY CHILD/CHILDREN JUST DOESN'T ENJOY READING?

Reading can be a flashpoint for some children and parents are left feeling guilty that they are not fulfilling the requirements of hearing their child read on a regular basis. Here are a few ideas that may help:

- Make sure your child isn't hungry, tired or desperate to watch their favourite TV programme when you read to/with them. Sit with them for a short time every day and read a book with them on a subject that interests them, whether that's cars, animals, sports, even reading instructions for games etc. Don't expect them to read it for themselves. Just show them how interesting it is to be able to read so that they want to do it for themselves.
- For many children (especially boys) as they get older, non-fiction books are more interesting than fiction, so it may be as simple as changing the type of book you are reading together, or buying magazines or children's newspapers (e.g. The Week Junior & First News.)
- Give plenty of praise. Let your child know how pleased you are when he or she looks at a book. Show interest in what they have chosen. Children really do develop at their own rates when it comes to reading.

• WHAT IF YOUR CHILD IS READING BELOW EXPECTATIONS?

If you are worried about your child's reading, the best thing to do is talk with your child's Form Tutor/ English teacher. The teacher will set your mind at rest if they think your child is making good progress, or they will talk you through plans to help if they agree that your child needs more support. Tell the teacher if there is any history of reading or spelling problems in the family, as this will help them decide whether your child needs any extra help.

Teachers and parents need to have high but realistic expectations. You and your school should monitor your child's progress carefully. Remember that most children do not improve their reading steadily but sometimes worsen first before improving even more. Ensure that you ask your child what they think of the books they read at school and look at them yourself. Make sure that your child is not getting bored by finding their books too easy, but do make sure that they choose the books they want to read as often as possible. It is very off-putting to be told what to read. You can ask a teacher, bookseller, or librarians for help with book choices. Remember that a longer book is not always more difficult and that even confident new readers may not be ready to read long books.

All schools will have a range of different strategies to help struggling readers catch up. There might be catch-up lessons for extra phonics teaching or extra reading practice, either one-to-one or perhaps in a small group, with a teacher or teaching assistant. If your child gets the right help, they will be able to catch up and keep up.

Parents often worry about their child feeling "singled out" if they go out of class for extra help. Please do not be unduly worried here, as it is very common for children to have extra help at some time or another, not just for reading. Most children will see it as a normal part of the school day and may enjoy the extra attention.

- **WHAT IF MY CHILD HAS DYSLEXIA?**

If your child has an Educational Psychology diagnosis of dyslexia, please ensure that the EP report has been passed on to the school SENCO. This will ensure that any adjustments that have been recommended can be implemented.

If you feel that your child is experiencing significant difficulties with regards reading, you should make an appointment to speak to the school Special Needs Coordinator (SENCO). Arrange a meeting with the SENCO and your child's teacher to discuss your child's needs and, if appropriate, arrange to get them tested for dyslexia. The British Dyslexia Association can provide you with advice and support. Barrington Stoke is a publisher that specialises in dyslexia and may be a valuable resource to consider.

- **FINALLY, REMEMBER:**

GOOD READERS BECOME GOOD WRITERS

Good writing follows on from good reading. When children realise that writing is a way of telling people something, like talking, they usually want to have a go themselves. Older children's writing improves the more they read. This is often known as a 'virtuous circle' (the opposite of a vicious circle) where the more you read, the better you get at reading, and the better you get at reading, the better you get at writing! Parents can help this happen by encouraging children to follow their reading interests at home and by encouraging writing for pleasure.