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Reading Books

Dear Parents and Carers,

Reading is a partnership between home and school and our ultimate aim at Green Ridge is to develop confident fluent readers who have a breadth of literature knowledge in readiness for secondary school. We thought it may be helpful to clarify expectations about how our reading system works.

What system do we have in Key Stage 1 and 2?

We follow a level/banded book system.

Who decides what book/band my child is on?

Staff at school assess the children to determine which level/band of reading book a child should be reading.

When does my child move up a level?

The children may naturally move up a level should they finish all the books within one stage or may be assessed to be working at a higher level and therefore need a greater challenge. Should this be the case then they may move up to a higher level following an assessment. If you think your child may be ready to move up then please speak to your child's teacher.

How do we assess your child to determine their book band/level?

Your child is carefully assessed to two areas:

- To ensure that they have between 90%-95% accuracy rate (how many errors they make) when reading a passage of text from that band. If a child has less than 90% accuracy this can lead to your child not being able to read as fluently as they would like, as they are having to decode (break-down) too many of the words they read, which limits the quality of the reading they do, often meaning they miss the meaning as they have to worry about how to say each word. Generally, if a child is reading a book with accuracy over 90% then this may mean there is not enough challenge for the child to learn new vocabulary and use their reading skills and so 90%-95% is the optimum level of accuracy we strive to for your child.
- To ensure that they have an appropriate comprehension of the text they are reading. This involves adults at school posing a range of comprehension questions to the child based on the book they are reading to determine how successfully they have understood the text. These questions will be based around the following areas:

Type of questions	Example questions
Retrieval/basic recall	What happened to the boy when he went to the park?
Inference	Why do you think the boy took his coat to the park?

Type of questions	Example questions
Deduction	How do you think the girl felt about her best friend after their argument? How do you know? Give me examples from the text which support this.
Authors use of language	Why has the writer chosen to use the word 'disgusted' when they describe the look on his sister's face? What impact does this have on the reader?
Identify and comment on the structure and organisation of texts, including grammatical and presentational features at text level	Why is the text written in bullet points? Why does the writer choose to begin each section with a question? How does the writer build-up to an unexpected ending?
Identify and comment on writers' purposes and viewpoints, and the overall effect of the text on the reader	Does the writer approve of young children having pets? How do you know? Is the writer trying to persuade us to give up sweets or chocolate? How do you know? How does their language support this?
Relate texts to their social, cultural and historical traditions	Can you give me some other texts which are similar in style to this one? Do you know when in time this text is set? How do you know? Give me examples from the text.

If your child is unable to demonstrate a clear understanding of the text they read independently, in all of the types of question listed above, then we will not move a child up a book band/level, even if they are able to fully decode the text. If a child does not understand the information they are reading, this must be addressed and your child supported so that they are able to do so, before moving on to move difficult texts. It is not our intention to accelerate the children through the book band system, only for them to complete the series not being able to comprehend a text given to them.

What happens when my child finishes Level 20?

When your child finishes the banded book system (towards the end of Key Stage 2), they should have sufficient proficiency and independence to be able to select their own reading books and be a 'free reader'. However, class teachers do guide the children on the types of text they could read in order to develop their literature diet. Children may choose to read books from the school library or the class reading area also.

How often do we assess your child in reading?

We assess your child at school on an on-going basis through their teaching and reading lessons, in addition to making more formal assessments of their reading accuracy and comprehension each half-term. We move children to the next book band/level when it is appropriate for the child – this may be after a few weeks, or it could be after a half-term, depending on the progress they are making in reading.

How many banded books will my child receive each week and when can they be changed?

Your child will receive two books, one phonetic and one which has some non-phonetic words in. These are changed twice a week.

Does my child have to change their books twice a week?

As the children progress throughout the juniors, the texts become lengthier, and it would be unrealistic to think a child may complete a book within three days. Therefore, children and parents may of course keep the books longer until their child has fully read the text and had an opportunity to ask their child comprehension questions based on what they have read.

My child has finished their books on the first night. What should I do as the book is not changed for three days?

If your child reads their books completely on the first night, on the second night we recommend that there is a partial or complete re-reading of the text to practice fluency. This is because any words they would have read yesterday should now be familiar, and not need decoding. On the second night, we also recommend that you begin a discussion with your child about the text, focussing on the types of question listed above to ensure that they have fully understood and comprehended all parts of the text. On the third/fourth day, we recommend that comprehension questions are completed for the text, and where possible, children read another text which is separate from their book-banded book.

Why can't my child change their book as soon as they finish it?

We need to ensure that your child has had sufficient opportunity to read the text and fully comprehend it. This often takes more than one or two reading sessions at home. If your child has finished their book, and parents are satisfied that their child is able to read the text fluently, with expression and have mastered all aspects of the comprehension questions, then they can read other texts which they may have at home.

What other books can my child read or use to support their reading?

Your child will have a library book from school which they can bring home. Each class has a library session each fortnight where your child can select a book if they wish. There is no requirement to change each week, and so your child may have this for a number of weeks if they really enjoy it. It may be that during one night of your child's reading that you jointly read their library book. We appreciate that the library book may not be at their particular level/band, but your child has chosen it for interest and enjoyment. We therefore recommend that the book is shared with your child, perhaps reading with and to them, where appropriate, again giving opportunities to support their comprehension of what is being read.

Your child can also read other texts which they may have at home as part of their reading collection or from their local library.

Why is my child allowed to read other books at home and from the library if they are not always able to be read at the same level as my child's banded book?

It is important that we give the children a broad exposure to a range of literacy genres, both fiction and non-fiction. We want the children to have a love of reading, and so to limit them just to their banded book is unhelpful. Therefore, we want them to pick up newspapers, books they have at home, magazines and anything else they can find! They may need more adult support with these such as paired reading or being read to, but adults can still use these texts as a basis for supporting the children with their comprehension and unpicking new vocabulary.

What should I write in my child's reading record?

We encourage the children as much as possible to take ownership of putting their own comment and date in their reading record as a marker of how many pages they have read and when. Often in the Early Years and Key Stage One, this is done by an adult to whom the child is reading as part of the child's daily home learning. In Key Stage Two, children may take more responsibility for writing in their reading record themselves, particularly if they are reading independently and not to an adult. Where adults do write comments in the reading record, it would be helpful if parents could note any particular words which were tricky (so that they can come back to these on a following read) and any types of question they asked, as well as commenting on your child's fluency.

How does the class teacher track what is in the reading record?

Class teachers monitor reading records each week to ensure that children have completed a sufficient amount of reading over the week (a minimum of five times).

How many times does my child read to an adult in school?

Within Reception the children are normally heard read by either the class teacher or support staff once a week. They may be exceptions to this if there are other events going on throughout the week.

Once the children are in Key Stage One and Two the children will read to an adult within daily reading skills sessions. These reading skills sessions will use books or extracts of texts both from our reading books but also other sources. These reading sessions will not be recorded in the children's reading records but form part of our on-going assessment and planning procedures. Over the course of a three-week period we aim to listen to your child to read 1:1 with a member of staff which will be recorded in the reading record. To further promote reading skills we have also enlisted a team of parent volunteers who will also be hearing children read. This is under the support of the class teacher to develop reading fluency and stamina but will not be recorded in the reading record.

We hope this information is helpful and gives you further ideas of how you can support reading at home. If you do have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact myself or your child's class teacher.

Yours faithfully,

Mrs. Nikki Mackie
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Reading Leader