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Dear Parents and Carers,

Reading books and schemes in Year 2

Reading is a key skill for children in KS1 to develop and so makes up a significant part of the weekly homework expectation. In year 2 the focus moves gradually away from phonic knowledge and the ability to decode (simply read) the words and towards comprehension, developing a deeper understanding of what they are reading. Children may therefore either continue on the Oxford Reading Tree scheme or, throughout the course of the year, move onto the Accelerated Reader Scheme.

The AR reader scheme is not necessarily about being a "better reader" than those on the Oxford Reading Tree scheme, it is a matter of developing different reading skills. Whatever scheme your child may be put on, they will still need regular support with reading as part of the homework. Books will be swapped once a week only. This is because many experts recommend reading a text at least 3 times; once to decode the words, the second to gain confidence with the fluency and to follow the given punctuation, thirdly to add more expression to the reading and to gain better comprehension. Children begin to enjoy reading much more when they are fully confident and not overly challenged - if books are too tricky then they lose interest as reading becomes too much of a chore. We also only have the capacity to exchange books once a week so if you have read the school book several times please enjoy other stories of your own choosing.

The AR scheme is based upon this optimum level of reading; where children are challenged in small increments but are largely enjoying the book and are familiar with the words. To start they complete a computer based assessment that takes about 30 minutes. They are then given a band scoring, for example 0.2 - 1.2 and can read books within this scope. We start children at the bottom of the band and work upward. This is also because a key part of the AR scheme is completing quizzes after reading the book. These include 5 to 10 questions testing their word knowledge, ability to order events, comprehension of what they have read and ability to make simple inferences. Only when the children are consistently scoring 80 to 100% on their quizzes will they move onto trickier books. This means that we also select children to transfer onto the AR scheme if they have the independence needed to complete the online quizzes.

It may therefore seem that your child is reading books that are "too easy" but please bear with us, by starting the children off slowly and building up in small steps we will see greater success. From past experience we have discovered that setting too high a challenge, for example of only reading chapter books, does not always result in better reading comprehension.

By all means enjoy reading a range of different stories at the library or at home but the books from school are specifically chosen to improve your child's reading skills. We want them to achieve the best they can as much as you do!

Enclosed is a list of recommended reads for this age group. If you have any questions please let us know.

Regards

Kind regards

Year 1 / 2 Team

