

Dear Parents,

As you will have noticed, having been without their 'little books' for a couple weeks, the children should have their books back in their bags. We have extended the scheme all the way up to fifth class so all children can benefit from a progressive, standardised, age appropriate scheme of reading. For those of you who are unfamiliar with how the scheme operates I will explain.....!

In St. Paul's we use a few different methods of encouraging your child to read.

From the day the children start in Junior Infants they begin their Jolly Phonics. It is an excellent scheme which encourages the children to read very quickly.

With the little letters and word boxes they begin to read; encourage this, and encourage them to use reading functionally. From the beginning they read their news. In Senior Infants they write their own sentences and news and read what they have written. Functional, meaningful reading. Signs on the road, letters to /from Mammy/ Granny make them want to read! In the same way letters to Mammy / Granny/ Santa will make Senior Infants want to write. The more work you do with your child in Junior and Senior Infants, the better they will read. Studies also show that children whose parents read to them have a greater chance of success with reading.

Little readers - Success is the most important. Use the bookworm card. Fill in the name of the book, a comment and sign it. The teacher really wants to know if the book is too difficult. The books are designed to be at a level where the children can read them. There are never TOO easy. If you feel your child is well able to read the books, encourage your child to read them more fluently and to put in expression. Reading frequently and fluently is more beneficial than struggling on higher levels. Fluency and frequency also leads to better comprehension and it very important that children develop the skill of reading for understanding.

Discuss the pictures, develop vocabulary, encourage them to use the words in talking about the book that they will actually be reading. As they read, ask them questions...I wonder why? What do you think...? There are suggestions on their bookworm card, have a look at them.

Ask them to predict what they think will happen next. Have them visualise the scene - what do they see in their mind? Make connections; why did that happen? What would happen if?

If the words are phonetic they can sound out the words but without struggling or taking from the enjoyment of the book. They should be able to read or sound out almost all the words in

these readers. If they are stuck on a word, just give it to them and allow them to continue reading.

The whole purpose of this scheme is to have the children reading. This is not a reading scheme as was traditionally taught. The children do not have 'readers' which they must learn to read....they get the little readers to read. If they can read them easily, so much the better, they should be reading with fluency and expression. With a typical reading scheme, the children may read four books in a year - with ours they can read up to a hundred!

They will have access to as many books as they will need and at whatever level they need. They will learn to read by reading.

We continue to develop their skill and interest in reading as they move up through the school. When they move on in First Class to the reading of novels, they look in more detail at whole books, stories and comprehension. They will probably not be reading this level on their own, but that is fine.

From Second Class up we do peer tutoring. One child reads to another, they look up words, they learn words and the second child reads the same passage again. In this way they are sharing their learning and they are involved in their own learning.

By Third Class they are probably reading much more difficult books at home than they are in the shared readers at school. Again that is how it should be. They are reading for different reasons. At home they are also, usually, reading to themselves. Reading aloud, as they do with the shared readers, is much more difficult and is a skill which must be learned.

By the time they leave our school, the children should be very competent independent readers. They should be able to read and understand different genres of print. They should be able to read for information and for pleasure.

If you have any questions about your child's reading, please don't hesitate to talk to your child's teacher.

Happy reading!