

Holland Haven Primary  
School



Helping  
your child  
with Reading  
and Writing

## Developing a Reading Community

At Holland Haven we aim to develop a reading community where children become confident and enthusiastic readers. For us to achieve this we need to take reading beyond the classroom. We want to create a rich reading environment where reading is encouraged by everyone and everywhere.



Everywhere we go there are things to look at and read. This can be done at anytime; while you are shopping, visiting the dentist or the doctors, travelling in the car or on a bus, visiting places such as a museum. There are lots of fun and interesting ways we can help children to read without them even realising they are learning. In this booklet we will provide lots of ideas that you can use with your children at home.

## How children learn to read

Children often learn stories and rhymes off by heart. When reading children rely a lot on memory, they appear to be reading when really they have remembered the pattern of the story. This is not cheating! It shows us that your children are on their way to becoming a reader as they are making the connection between print and a story.

Children will often want to read the same book over and over again. This shows they are enjoying the story and getting pleasure from reading. If this does become too much for you! offer to read their favourite books and one of your favourite's too.



Listening to story tapes or CD's, is also a nice way to share stories and rhymes. These can also be borrowed from libraries.



## Instant ideas for improving reading at any age.

- Spend 10 minutes a day reading together. Make it fun - choose books, magazines, brochures, catalogues, menus, recipes, posters, newspapers that you both enjoy.



- Encourage the children to make up their own characters and stories.
- Buy books as presents.
- Make a special place to keep reading books.
- Join the library, they have lots of fun and free events and have free internet access.



- When reading point out unusual words and talk about what they mean.
- Let your child see you reading, talk about what you like and don't like to read.



## Ideas for children who are learning to read

Some of these are instant ideas, others will take longer to do and will be built up over a period of time. A good mix of both will be beneficial to your child.

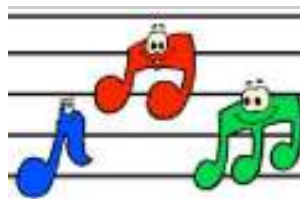
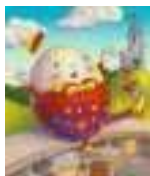
- Encourage your children to spot letters that they recognise on posters, signs etc.
- Point out various signs that are all around us. Children from a very early age recognise (and read) McDonalds, Tesco, Asda etc.
- Read words together on food packets and tins when shopping, can they find the baked beans? tomato sauce? etc.



- Read a book to the children that they know well, miss out words and encourage the children to fill in the blanks.
- Spend time reading together talk about the pictures or make up their own stories. Bed time is the perfect time for doing this.



- Create your own book, include photographs of the family, trips out, children taking part in clubs out of school lessons, favourite pages from magazines, children's drawings etc.
- Encourage children to make up plays and put on 'A Show'.
- Sing nursery rhymes and songs.



- Let the children choose their own books or magazines, these can be about hobbies, sports or TV programmes.
- Read pop up or lift the flap books.



- Make cakes and biscuits together, read the recipe together. You could try to make biscuits in the shape of letters.



## Ideas for a more able reader

- Read books about topics that you know your child will like such as dinosaurs, football, rugby, TV programmes etc.



- Take books, magazine, comics, when going shopping or on a journey.
- Read match reports or articles about their favourite team or sport.
- Research on the internet together. You could look at team websites, or find their favourite author or TV programme and find out more about them.



- Talk to the children about books that you enjoy reading now and books you enjoyed as a child.

- Make a scrap book of their favourite magazine articles, recipes, pop stars, menus, team match reports.



- Encourage the children to choose their own books, magazines, comics, newspapers, non-fiction books.
- Share tape and audio versions of books that may be too difficult to read alone such as the Harry Potter Series.



- If they are confident readers they can read to younger members of the family.



## Reading Strategies

The next couple of pages have some handy prompts that the children can use to help them to read.

### Definitions

**Phoneme** The smallest unit of sound in a word, for example c..a..t.

There are 43 phonemes in the English language, all letter sounds of the alphabet (c and k, count as one) plus: ch, sh, th, ng, ai, ee, igh, oa, oo, ear, air, ure, er, ar, or, ur, ow, oi

**Blend** Putting the separate sounds (phonemes) together

**Syllables** Chunks of words for example there are two in donkey, don - key and three in elephant, el-e-phant

# Questions



Questioning children about the book they are reading / read, provides us with the opportunity to discover what they have understood about it. Here is a range of questions you can ask your child. Use your judgement about which questions to ask and keep it enjoyable, not asking too many questions at one time.

## Fiction Books

Where does the story take place?

When did the story take place?

What did he / she / it look like?

Who was he / she / it?

Where did he / she / it live?

Would you like to have a friend like this, Why / Why not?

How did you feel during different parts of the story, what made you feel like this?

Through whose eyes was the story told?

What part of the story did you like / dislike the most, why?

Have you read any other stories which were similar?

Do you know any other authors who deal with the same issues as this?

What do you think these words mean?

Do you think this book was as good as...?

What part of the book was the saddest, funniest, most interesting?

Did the pictures help you to understand more about the story?

What questions would you like to ask the author?

Do you think all children would like this book?

### Non-fiction Books

What have you learnt from this book?

Who do you think would find this book the most interesting?

How would you use the index page to find something out?

(Look at the contents page) What page would you find out about ...?

Do you think this book could be better, why?

Did you find the diagrams, photographs helpful?

## Poetry

Who wrote this poem?

What is the poem about?

What do you think the poet is trying to say?

What did you like / dislike about the poem?

What poetic features can you identify (rhyme, rhythm, alliteration)?

Did the poem remind you of anything?

Does the shape the poem makes or the sounds it makes when you read it add to the message?

# Writing

At Holland Haven we teach a cursive handwriting style, with the correct joining strokes, from Reception year. Joined writing is the natural progression from emergent writing.

To help your child with handwriting, encourage them to use the correct style when writing at home. Do a little extra handwriting practise, maybe with time challenges: you'll be amazed at how quickly their handwriting can improve!

## **Making writing purposeful and valuable:**

Children need to see that there is a reason for them to write.

Both at school and at home, we need to be providing purposes for 'real writing'. Writing is a 'life skill', and whether this is composing on a computer or on paper, children need to see the value of putting the effort into producing the writing in the first place.

## **How can I help my child?**

Think about situations at home that require something to be written:

- ◇ **Shopping lists**
- ◇ **Invitations**
- ◇ **Thank You Cards / Letters**
- ◇ **Letters to relations /pen-friends**
- ◇ **Letters of complaint**

These are a few ideas. Another way to help children see the value behind writing is to let them 'catch you writing' and explain why you are doing it. (Remember writing can be done for pleasure too!)

How else can you help?

If your child has been asked to produce a piece of writing, discuss the task and ideas before preparing to write.

When sharing homework, ask your child to think about their writing target. What is it and have they achieved it in this piece? (If they are unsure of it please ask their Literacy teacher)

Stress the importance of rereading during composition to check for flow of ideas. Proof-reading their work aloud will enable them to hear whether the writing flows well and whether any words have been left out, for example. Coming back to a piece of writing the following day can also help a child to freshly identify ways in which to improve their work. Then celebrate the writing and give lots of praise!

**We hope that you have found this booklet useful. As always, please do not hesitate to contact us if you would like further guidance.**

