



Reading at Home

11.9.17

Dear Parents / Carers,

I must start by thanking those families who completed my reading at home survey in July at the end of our yearlong push to encourage families to read regularly with their children at home. (To our new families ... I will try and explain what you need to know as I write this letter.)

The responses were overwhelmingly positive both from the families who started reading more and the families who had already been reading regularly. The majority of responses indicated that they were reading more than they had been at the start of last school year and this is what we wanted to happen.

The most positive comments came from families who described how they had seen their children's love of reading grow and their children's confidence, fluency and vocabulary improve. Positive feedback also included comments about different family members now reading with the children, an increased number of books in the home, and how spending time reading with their child was a 'great bonding experience'.

There were at least twenty comments about how disappointed and saddened parents felt that we still have so many families that are not reading at all or not meeting the target of three reads a week. As a school we too are worried about this and are very aware that these children are constantly having it pointed out to them that they are not reading enough. I am always saddened to hear the phrase ... 'You don't need to look in my book because I haven't read this week.'

Over the coming year we will continue to target these families and want to communicate with them in a way that helps us find out what needs to happen to increase the reading they do at home.

This is a good point to recap on what we did last year:-

- We started the year by setting a target of children reading at least three times with an adult at home.
- We soon discovered that many families were not recording the reading in the Reading Record Books and reinforced the fact that we need it recorded to be able to count the sessions. (Many families commented in their feedback that they now do this and hadn't at the start of the year.)
- We celebrated and rewarded children who had met the target with a Regular Reader Playtime on Friday afternoons and with certificates and badges in a reading assembly. (The badges arose as a way of recognising those children who had always been reading regularly but had increased their number of reads. Reading five times a week (badge winners) then became a new target for many families.)
- I wrote termly updates with the percentage of how many children were reading three times a week in each class. (Several parents commented about how interested they were in this.)

Moving forward I have taken on board the feedback from parents and this year we will:

- Continue to set the target of three reads at home a week. We will collect data from Friday to Friday and I will reinforce to all teachers that any reading after school on Friday and at the weekend will be included in the totals for the following week.

- We will continue with the Friday Regular Reader Playtimes. All but one response from parents agreed that this was a motivating factor for their children and many responses commented on how much their children look forward to them.
- We will continue having an assembly at the start of each term to celebrate and reward the children meeting the target in the previous term. I have decided (following an idea from a parent) to have two different certificates one for the children meeting the target of at least three reads a week and another for those exceeding this and reading at least five times.
- The response to badges was mixed with 50% of parents really liking the idea and the other half thinking it is too excessive. I have decided that moving forward we will only be rewarding badges to children and families who have changed their reading routine for the better. We had at least two children in each of our assemblies last year who had gone from not reading regularly to meeting the target and I feel (thanks to another parent's suggestion) that badges would be a perfect reward for these children.

We did not collect any data last week and every child in the school was given the opportunity of going out for the playtime on Friday afternoon.

We will be collecting data starting last Friday and will return to last year's system this week. Can I please remind all families to record their reading sessions in the Reading Record Book.

At this early stage for our FS2 children please feel that you can also record sessions where you have read to / talked about a book with your child. We will not include the FS2 children in the playtime on Fridays (it may terrify them at this point) but Mrs Powell and Miss Sadler will choose their own way of rewarding the FS2 children.

I will continue writing updates and letting you know about the data we have collected. In the meantime do speak to me or drop me a note if you have any more feedback, thoughts or ideas.

One suggestion from a parent about asking parents to come in one afternoon a week to read stories to children in small groups is an agenda item in this week's staff meeting along with the idea of having a raffle type system where regular readers can win a book token.

And ... Please remember that the school is doing this for the children. We know what an advantage it is to children's overall performance at school if they are read to and are reading **with** an adult at home. A few parents fed back that they don't need constant reminders or dislike being told what to do. I apologise if my letters upset some parents but we want to build on the success of last year and increase the overall percentage of regular readers and if my ramblings help that I will continue to remind everyone and send home letters.

I look forward to our first reading playtime this Friday.

Mr J Smith
English Leader and Acting Head