

St. Mary Magdalene Catholic Primary School

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‘Growing Together in Faith and Love’

St Mary Magdalene School Reading Scheme A Guide for Parents

Dear Parents/Carers

This information is designed to help you understand the structure of our school reading scheme. Children will progress through the coloured book bands. All children are different and progress at different rates so please do not be competitive about your child’s progress. It is not a race, it is a journey. There will be a wide range of reading abilities in any school year. As a rough guide children should be able to read at least 95% of the words on the page without any problem. If the book is too easy, they become bored. If it is too difficult, they become frustrated and may have to concentrate so hard on reading the words that they lose the enjoyment of understanding the story. You will be doing your child no favours to rush through books, reading must not be treated as a competition. Books they find too difficult will soon put them off reading!

Things to remember:

- Hear your child read every day – little and often is better than a long session once a week
- Pick your timing carefully
- Don’t compare your child with older siblings and other children
- Question your child about their reading. This helps understanding and develops comprehension skills. On the school website you will find “Reading Vipers”. These are ideas of the kinds of questions you can ask your child when reading with your children

During school there are many opportunities for your child to read other materials not just their reading book. They may have a class text group reading, worksheets and comprehension activities. You can do the same at home, encourage them to read magazines, newspapers, their own books and visit the library.



What is Book Banding?

Book banding is a national scheme that grades children's reading books according to the difficulty of the text. Each level of book is given a colour. You will find the Book Band colours and reading ages on the school website.

Why Book Band?

When a child is learning to read, it is important that they have access to lots of different kinds of books and a wide vocabulary. Most reading schemes have their own core vocabulary and teachers have found that children struggle when they are asked to read something different. Book banding is designed to help schools grade children's reading book across schemes. Children have access to the variety of stories they need whilst still being supported at the correct reading level.

How are the books levelled?

All publishers grade their scheme to their specifications but the Book Band system is far broader in its levelling. It is based on careful research into the kind of words used in each book, the length of the sentences, punctuation, story style or non-fiction format and text size. It also supports a progression of reading strategies.

What can I expect?

Your child will initially be assessed for the correct Book Band colour using Star Reader assessment. This is an online reading assessment that we started using in September 2018. It gives us a reading age for each child and next steps in reading development. The assessment tells us who is exceeding expectations, on track to meet end of year expectations and who is on "watch" below expectations. Some children may also be yellow which is intervention – daily readers/homework pack. Children will bring home books from various schemes within that colour. It may be, because of the broader nature of Book Band levelling, there are books from different levels of the same reading scheme in one colour band. As long as the book is in your child's book band colour, the level is right for them.

When will my child move to the next colour band?

For a child to be an effective reader, they need not only to read the words on the page but also to understand what they have read. For this to happen, they need to read with 90% accuracy.

Yours sincerely

ROSEMARIE JONES
HEADTEACHER

