

## Learning to Read at St Stephen's

At St Stephen's we use Read, Write Inc to teach the children synthetic phonics. Beginning from Reception, the children are taught both in whole class and smaller groups to ensure that they are making the best possible progress and feeling confident at each stage of their learning journey. When they are ready, they begin taking home books to read that are phonetically decodable and then that include exception (red) words once they have been taught.

Reading books are split into different levels of difficulty and the children progress through these levels as they become more confident with their segmenting, blending and comprehension. It is very important to remember that it is not a race to get through these levels as each child needs to experience a breadth of reading material within a level in order to practise their phonic work and comprehension sufficiently. If a child reaches fluency in decoding and in comprehension before they have read all the books within a level, they can be moved up to the next. Equally, if they have read all the books in a level but have not yet reached the level of understanding required, they will not automatically move up until they do so.

When they have reached a certain standard in reading, children will be given 'free reader' status, which refers to the fact that the children are able to freely choose what they wish to read from the selection of appropriate books in the classroom, those recommended by our librarian and those they bring in from home. Children who are free readers are still heard read over the course of the school day, albeit not as regularly as children that require more support in this area. Records of the books they read are kept and reviewed to ensure that children are not limited their reading to a specific author, genre or style and that they are reading books that are of an appropriate level. Children share and discuss books they have read and enjoyed with the rest of the class in book sharing sessions held once a half term.

There are a number of ways in which you can help develop your children's reading at home but the most important is to make time to read to and with them. Reading a story together is the perfect excuse for a cuddle! Older children also love to be read to, you can take turns to read a page or paragraph each to help them practise or just read them a book slightly higher than their reading age. Perhaps on a rainy day you could snuggle on the sofa and both read your own books but do so together? If children have positive associations with reading from an early age, it makes them far more likely to find pleasure in reading later on and to persevere when they come across aspects they find more difficult.

As previously mentioned, comprehension is often the side of reading that children find more difficult, especially as they move up through the school. The understanding of implied and literal meanings, as well as the evaluation of authorial and editorial decisions is essential to the creation of successful readers in Year 6 and beyond. The next page goes into more detail about ways you can support comprehension at home.



## Comprehension is the key to teaching children to be successful readers.

Children cannot progress if they do not understand what they're reading.

Children who understand what they read and are involved in the text, develop into productive, successful and enthusiastic readers.

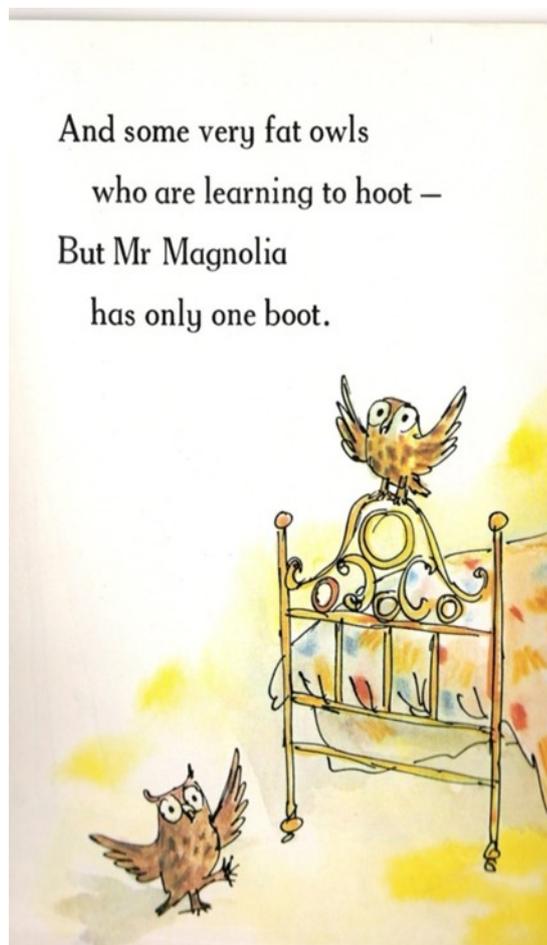
Retrieval	Inference	Authorial / Editorial Intent
Questions that can be answered (picked up) simply by reading back over the text or looking at the pictures. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What are Mr Magnolia's owls learning to do?</li><li>• What adjective is used to describe the owls?</li></ul>	Questions that require interpretation of the text and its meaning without an obvious answer. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How do we know Mr Magnolia's owls can't hoot very well?</li></ul>	Questions that deal with why the author or editor has made certain decision. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Why has the author chosen the words 'toot' and 'hoot'?</li></ul>

Some examples of generic comprehension questions...

- What do you think will happen next? Why?
- Why do you think they (the character) said / did that?
- How do you think (character) is feeling? Why?
- How do we know (key plot point from the story)?
- What do you think (character) should do/say now?
- What was your favourite bit of the story? Why?
  
- What might have happened if ... (change a key thing from the story)?
- What did you feel like when...?
- What did (character) feel when...? Why?
- Why do you think the writer used the word/s .....?
- What is the effect of .... punctuation mark here? Would it change the meaning if it wasn't there, how?

**Just an idea...**

It can be really effective to get the children to ask you questions about the text after they've read it to you or as you're going along. This way they are generating the questions and thinking about the answer without any pressure to get it 'right'.



And some very fat owls  
who are learning to hoot –  
But Mr Magnolia  
has only one boot.