 Dear Parents and Carers,

Today (Friday 25th September) we will start sending home reading books for you to share with your child. To begin with, the books may have little or no words in; this is to encourage the children to build on their language and communication skills as well as developing comprehension by discussing what is happening in each picture. This is a hugely important stage as reading consists of two dimensions: language comprehension and word reading. Language comprehension (necessary for both reading and writing) starts from birth. It only develops when adults talk with children about the world around them and the books (stories and non-fiction) they read with them and enjoy rhymes, poems and songs together. Skilled word reading, taught later, involves both the working out of the pronunciation of unfamiliar printed words (decoding) and the recognition of familiar printed words.

The ‘Letters and Sounds’ document advises that reading books with words and sentences are to be sent home once a child has a good understanding of the initial sounds and what sounds the letters make and is able to blend and segment sounds, as well as having a good understanding of what they have read (comprehension). When we reach this stage at school, we assess each individual child and will then be sending home a reading book that is suitable for them.

Please comment in the green Reading Records each time you have shared the book with your child. When looking at the book with them, you could discuss the front and back cover and ask them to explain what is happening on each page using a variety of questions. Once you have finished looking at the book together perhaps you could talk about the structure of the book (beginning/middle/end) and the main characters and events. This will build up their understanding of stories as a basis for future reading. Enjoying and sharing books leads to children seeing them as a source of pleasure and interest, motivates them to value reading and is crucial for them to develop a life-long love of reading. It is therefore really important that you make time to look at reading books together at home; just ten minutes a day makes such a difference!

We will change reading books every Monday, Wednesday and Friday (if you have written in the green Reading Record and indicated that it has been read) as we would like the children to have each book for a couple of days so as to really have time to develop the aforementioned skills.

We appreciate your cooperation with this and hope you really enjoy reading with your child! Hopefully we have explained the process clearly, but if there are any further questions then please speak to a member of staff in Class 1.

Kind Regards and Happy Reading!

Mrs Miles & Mrs Patterson