

Supporting your child's learning at home.

Ideas and tips to reinforce learning that has taken place at school. Please try some of the ideas and give us any feedback you think may be useful. Have fun! Thank you.

THE SIX 'R s' OF LEARNING

Underpinning all we do in school is the ongoing development of each child's 'learning power' – 'learning to learn'. We believe that this development is as important as the knowledge and content of the curriculum. Parents can help to support it at home.

- **Resilient** – Keep going when the going gets tough.
- **Reciprocal** – Being a 'team player' – able to listen, negotiate and compromise.
- **Resourceful** – Knowing where to go, what to use or who to ask for help.
- **Reflective** – Thinking about what has been learnt and how it links to other things. What needs to come next?
- **Responsible** – Taking control of your learning for yourself.
- **Respectful** – Acknowledging your own strengths and weaknesses and those of others.

Reading

General questions to prompt discussion when reading with your child at home. Talking about the book is just as important as listening to your child read.

(Based on questions often asked in the end of Key Stage reading tasks and tests.)

What is the title of the book?

Name the author(s)

Name the illustrator(s)

What type of book is this? Fiction or Non-fiction? How do we know?

Does this book remind you of others that you have read? Why is that?

What does the back of the book tell us? Often a short description of what is inside the book to attract readers. (We call this the blurb)

QUESTIONS ABOUT FICTION BOOKS.

Do the first few pages of the book make you want to carry on reading it?

Where is the story set?

Who are the main characters? What are they like? (Focus on words used to describe the characters) Find 2 words that describe the main character.

How do you think the story will end? Can you predict what might happen next?

How are the characters feeling? Happy/sad/cross? Why is that? How do we know that they are feeling like this? (Find the words that tell us they were happy/sad etc.)

Why are some of the words written in capital letters? (These are loud words!)

Why are some of the words written in bold letters?

Why do you think that the author repeats phrases in the story?

Can you think of other stories that have repetition?

How do you think the characters feelings changed in the story? What words give us clues?

AFTER READING THE WHOLE BOOK.

Why do you think this book is called ...(title).....?

Can you think of another title that would be suitable for this book?

Which part of the story is the funniest/ saddest/ most interesting? Why do you think that?

Did the book make you think of something that happened to you?

Do the pictures/layout of the book help you understand the book better?

What did you learn from reading this book? Is there a lesson to be learned from this story?

Discuss the vocabulary used in the book. Which words didn't you understand?

QUESTIONS ABOUT NON-FICTION BOOKS

Is this book like a storybook? Why is it different?

Look at the cover. What is this book about?

Where would you find contents/glossary/index pages in the book?

Which of the above would be at the beginning of the book?

What do these pages tell us?

Using contents page - What will I find out about on page...?

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

What do you notice about the index and glossary? - will be in alphabetical order!

Practice finding words in the index or glossary.

Discuss the layout of the book. (Look at headings, text in boxes)

How do the pictures/photographs help us understand the book?

Why are some words in bold? (Are they words we might find in the glossary?)

What did you find out that you did not know before you read this book?

Why do you think that some of the information is in Fact File boxes?

Look at labeled pictures/diagrams– discuss information that is being given.

Spellings

How Do I Help My Child Learn Spellings?

Some children learn spellings very easily and for others it is a difficult task. The ability to spell is often not linked to general attainment and some of the brightest academics find spelling hard! At Key Stage 1 all children will need support from parents when attempting to learn new spellings. Words and lists benefit from constant practice and revisiting – ‘use it or lose it’!

At Key Stage 2, children should be encouraged to become increasingly independent about learning spellings. If they have had the support of parents in earlier years, they will be familiar with all of the different methods they can use, and will hopefully have chosen those that they find personally useful.

- **Look, write/say, cover, write, check.** After having learnt the single word, can you write the word in a sentence?
- **Write the word and Highlight the tricky bit.**
- **Rhyme and rhythm.** Make a rhyme or set the letters to a rhythm. E.g. Mrs. D, Mrs. I, Mrs. FFI, Mrs. CULTY.
- **Fix and Stretch.** It will help sometimes if you look up the word in a dictionary. Can you make it interesting or funny to help you remember?
- **Words within words.** Break up words into smaller chunks and look for compound words or smaller words within words to help you E.g. under – stand, e – merge – ncy.
- **Fronts and backs (prefixes and suffices).** Some words can be put into families by their beginnings or endings. Try and think of lists to help you! E.g. unwell, unlucky, undo. Painful, wonderful, helpful.

- **Make a picture.** Make a funny picture in your mind to help you remember certain words.
 - **Shrink and grow.** Think of a rhyme or sentence (mnemonic) to help you remember all or a part of a tricky word. E.g. Sally Ann Is Dancing (said).
 - **Spelling rules OK!** Think about spelling rules you have learnt in class.
 - **Look and learn.** Have your spelling list written up where you can see it everyday.
- **Rainbow Write your spellings.**
- **3 in a Row.** Play noughts and crosses with two tricky words.
- **Speed spell.** How many times can you write your tricky words correctly in a minute?
- **Spell in the air. Take a 'photo'.** Use your finger to write a word in the air. Take an imaginary photo and put it in your own spelling album!
- **Play Boggle/Scrabble/Hangman (more PC version is Beetle).**
- **Letter Arc.** Put letters of the alphabet in an arc shape. Pull letters down to make a word. Can you exchange letters to make a new word?
- **Change the letter!** A game for the whole family! Write a 'start word', each person takes it in turn to change one letter to make a new word.

Numeracy

Why helping at home is important.

(Source: www.bbc.co.uk)

Mathematics is one of the most important subjects that your child studies at school. Numbers are all around us and even if you don't feel yourself to be a mathematics genius, there is plenty that you can do. In fact, your child should enjoy most of the suggested activities so much that she/he won't even realise that it's educational! Current teaching methods for maths and even the way that sums are recorded appear very different from those used twenty years ago. As a result, parents are sometimes reluctant to help their children with maths homework for fear of doing things in the wrong way. However, children do really benefit when parents take a keen interest in their mathematical learning. You can help your child to gain confidence and develop a positive attitude towards mathematics by talking about what has been taught at school and helping her/him to notice and use mathematics in an everyday context.

Ideas and tips.

- A key part of every numeracy session in school is mental maths, so practise at home. Children must get used to solving problems in their heads, rather than resorting to a calculator. Play games with your child: Throw two dice and multiply the numbers, then move on to multiplying the sum of two throws by the sum of another two throws. Try to get some pace into the game!
- Play snakes and ladders, cribbage, darts, dominoes and other games that depend on numbers, counting, calculation and scoring. 'Battleships' is a fun way to use graphs. Invest in a range of maths puzzle books.
- Talk about pocket money with your child. Help her/him to add it up week-by-week, and work out whether she can afford a particular toy or treat. Shop using money and calculate change.
- Capitalise on hobbies. If your child is car - mad, talk about relative engine sizes, fuel economy, speed and performance. If she/he has a favourite pop group, get her/him to compile a list of statistics such as the number of weeks each single is in the charts. Watch and play sports that involve scoring, timing, counting and measuring.
- Add number apparatus to your child's toy collection - counters, a purse full of change, dice, dominoes, a tape measure, ruler, pack of cards, timer, different shapes - and use them to make mathematics come alive.

- Be creative! Ask your child to look out for patterns and shapes on floors, wallpaper, plants, and animals buildings – anything from the arrangement of tiles in the kitchen to the markings on the cat. Draw objects made entirely of triangles, rectangles or squares: make 'butterfly' pictures by painting on one half to the paper and folding it over so that the image is mirrored. Make mobiles by suspending objects from coat hangers and ensuring they balance.
- Think about time. Look at clocks, both digital and analogue. Estimate how long a certain activity will take to do and see if you are right! Work out how long it is until the next mealtime. Play games: how long is a minute, starting from now?
- Think about calendars and dates too. Make a timeline that includes the birthdays of each member of the family and work out how far apart each one is. Use different units: months, weeks and days, even hours, minutes and seconds. Add other important events, such as a family holiday, and encourage your child to count down to the big day.
- Cooking is great for helping your child get to know simple weights and measures. An old-fashioned set of balance scales is ideal. Count out spoonfuls of ingredients. Let your child help you set the timer and count down to teatime! Later on, this is a good way to introduce the idea of ratios and proportions, too. Bear in mind that your child will be learning the metric system at school, so try to measure amounts in grams and kilograms.

For more ideas to support your child in maths, go to the Hugh Sexey Middle School [Maths website 'For Parents'](#). There are some excellent booklets to download. Let us know if you find any other useful websites.

Useful links:

www.bbc.co.uk/schools/parents/

www.coxhoe.durham.sch.uk