



Gull Coppice
Whiteley
Fareham
Hampshire
PO15 7LA

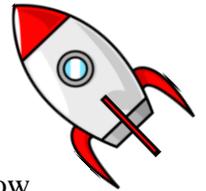
A place to
SMILE

Telephone: (01489) 881601
Facsimile: (01489) 881740

e-mail: adminoffice@whiteley.hants.sch.uk

Headteacher: Mrs. Lesley Pennington

Y1 – Y3 READING ROCKET CHALLENGE



Dear Parents/Carers,

Any of you who have come along to one of my reading information meetings will know how passionate I am about children reading. Reading really is the key to the rest of the curriculum, and research shows that children who read for pleasure are more likely to have academic success later in their schooling. In school, children are taught the skills for reading – for example, their phonic knowledge, how to blend and segment words, how to recognise tricky words, and how to read using the punctuation of a sentence - and as they progress, how to talk about a text and show understanding of what they are reading. However, like any skill, for children to become really proficient at reading, they need lots of practice at applying this skill. The best way for them to do this is by reading out loud regularly (preferably daily) to an adult, who can support them with tricky words, encourage them to apply their skills and help them develop their fluency and expression by hearing how sentences sound out loud.

This year, we are launching our Reading Rocket challenge for Y1-3 children to encourage them to regularly read **out loud** to an adult outside of school.

How the challenge will work

Each child in Y1-Y3 will bring home a reading challenge card. This will have space to record the date, what the child reads, and a signature each day when they **read aloud to an adult**. The aim is for pupils to be reading out loud daily for approximately 10 minutes – this could be from their reading book, a chapter of their library book, a book from home or include their keyword practice. Once they have read aloud 25 times, they will receive their **Bronze Reading Rocket Award** - this is a special bronze pin badge which can be worn on their uniform, if they wish. They can then work towards their Silver Reading Rocket Award (another 25 times) and their Gold Reading Rocket Award (a further 50 times). Children who achieve all three pin badges will then be encouraged to complete the Super Sonic Rocket Challenge (reading aloud a further 100 times). The prize for completing the Super Sonic Rocket challenge will be a book.

We hope that this challenge will help motivate your child to read out loud to you at home, and as a result, that you will see the benefits as your child's progress in reading will be faster and more sustained – many parents commented positively on the impact of the challenge last year. Thank you in advance for your support with this year's challenge. If you have any questions, please speak to your child's class teacher – overleaf are the answers to some possible questions which we hope will help answer your queries.



My child likes to read independently – does it count when they read to themselves?

No - the challenge is for reading aloud only – whilst we know that older children often prefer to read quietly in their head, it is really important for newly independent readers to continue to read out loud regularly to ensure that they are supported with new vocabulary and that they continue to apply their skills to decode unfamiliar words and read for meaning. It is not uncommon for progress to slow down if children solely read to themselves as they do not always realise that they are mispronouncing words, or will skip unfamiliar words to get the ‘gist’ of a text.

Do we need to write in the Y1/2 reading log as well as on the challenge card?

No – if you wish, you can just record on the challenge card when and what your child reads. However, we will be continuing to send home the reading logs for parents who wish to write more detail about their child’s reading for the teacher, and for the teacher to record any information such as your child’s reading targets.

My child has read out loud twice today – can we count both times on the challenge card?

No – we are obviously delighted if your child is keen to read more than once a day, but for the challenge, please only write up once a day as the idea is to sustain the regular reading over time.

My child struggles with reading and we often read together or take it in turns to read – does this still count?

Yes - providing your child is reading aloud to you at times, taking it in turns to read or reading alongside your child are really good strategies for building confidence and helping them to understand the text. Breaking up the reading session with some word recognition of keywords is also useful.

My child isn’t interested in the challenge and is reluctant to read out loud – what should I do?

*It is important to get your child into the habit of reading – to begin with, this could just be a regular time in the day when you read to them. Whilst this can’t be counted in the challenge, it will help your child develop an interest in books. Then aim for them reading short texts to you – try reading with them (paired reading) or taking it in turns to read a page. Keep reading sessions short and light-hearted – and don’t give up! Reading is the most important homework you can support your child with, and **we ask that it is given priority over any other tasks**. For more ideas, come along to the reading information meeting for parents later this term.*

Why can’t children just practise their reading at school?

As mentioned above, your child will be taught the skills for reading through their regular phonics lessons, shared and guided reading sessions, and will be assessed by the teacher individually to ensure that they are making progress. In addition, where possible we use parent volunteers to give children time to practice reading out loud at school, or we use older pupils as reading mentors. However, it is not feasible to for all the children in a class to be heard read every day at school. Just as a musician needs to practice their instrument outside of their weekly lesson, and a footballer needs to spend time playing and refining their skills, we know that your child is more likely to become a proficient reader if they have additional time out of school with you to practise – that’s why we have invested in the reading challenge. We hope that you and your child will enjoy taking part this year.

Yours sincerely,

Lesley Pennington – Headteacher