



Dear Parents & Carers

Just a little bit of information regarding 'Reading Book Bands.'

What are Book Bands?

Book Bands are a proven approach to developing successful readers. The Book Band system helps us to carefully grade our books by difficulty level. Most reading scheme books are given a Book Band colour by their publisher, which will be based on the book's level of difficulty.

A Book Band reading scheme provides a comprehensive structure which helps us to follow each child's reading development, whilst accommodating a whole-school reading programme.

Every Book Banded title has been assessed and graded from the simplest format of Lilac, to the most complex text features of Black. Our books have been specifically chosen to cover a wide range of reading abilities, including high-interest themes, a diversity of genres and imaginative characters to encourage all pupils to develop a love of reading.

Book Band Levels

The Book Band reading scheme helps to identify a child's reading ability, and provides texts that suit their needs, whilst developing new reading skills. This guide can help us to select the right band for our pupils.

Lilac

Lilac includes wordless picture books that encourage young children to tell their own stories. At this level, children are beginning to discover books and developing their core speaking and listening skills.

Pupil Targets:

- ✓ Hold a book correctly
- ✓ Look at the pages in the correct order
- ✓ Know the differences between words and pictures
- ✓ Understand that each letter is different
- ✓ Talk about the pictures and create their own stories

Pink

Pink is perfect for introducing fundamental reading concepts and skills to early readers. This band includes the first level of reading scheme books. These books are usually around 10 pages long, with up to 5 words per page.

Pupil Targets:

- ✓ Listen carefully to stories
- ✓ Read their own name
- ✓ Follow the words on a page in the right direction
- ✓ Tell a familiar story in their own words
- ✓ Know that letters have different sounds

- ✓ Recognise high frequency words

Red

Once a child can recognise 25-30 high frequency words, then they will be ready for Red. Red books will have an increased amount of words on a page and will be between 8 to 12 pages long. Recurring families and animal characters are also introduced at this stage.

Aligned approximately with Phase 3 Letters and Sounds

Pupil Targets:

- ✓ Find the title of the book
- ✓ Use illustrations to help them understand what is happening in a story
- ✓ If they are unfamiliar with a word, they will try to think of a word that would make sense in that sentence
- ✓ Know what a full stop is
- ✓ Sing the alphabet song
- ✓ Use phonemes to read words such as 'cat', 'if' and 'up'

Yellow

Books at this level present children with new vocabulary. The amount of words per page has slightly increased, with one new word for every twenty familiar words. Non-fiction titles at this level build on children's interests and encourage discussion around high-quality photographs. Yellow banded books are usually around 15 pages long, with either 1 or 2 sentences per page.

Aligned with Phases 3/ 4 of Letters and Sounds

Pupil Targets:

- ✓ Retell a story from memory
- ✓ Read a book without pointing at the words, unless they get stuck
- ✓ Blend phonemes together to understand a word, e.g. d-o-g
- ✓ Use punctuation, such as speech marks and question marks
- ✓ Notice and correct some of their mistakes
- ✓ Sometimes, they can work out what is going to happen next in a story.

Light Blue

Once children can recognise 100 high frequency words, then it's time for Blue. Books at this level will start to become more complex and children will rely less on illustrations. The books in this band also teach children how to read with insight and will encourage them to read with expression. Aligned with Phases 4/ 5 of Letters and Sounds

Pupil Targets:

- ✓ Choose books that they are interested in from the library
- ✓ Talk about a story in their own words
- ✓ Start to choose different books to read
- ✓ Don't always need pictures to help them understand a story
- ✓ Notice and correct some of their mistakes
- ✓ Answer questions about the story to show a level of understanding
- ✓ Read words such as 'some', 'little', 'when', and 'out'

Green

Books banded Green will have more characters and different forms of text, such as non-fiction, rhymes, diagrams and verse. They introduce more compound words, some longer sentences and more punctuation. These books are usually 20 pages long with either 3 or 4 sentences per page. Aligned with Phase 5 of Letters and Sounds

Pupil Targets:

- ✓ Talk about each of the characters
- ✓ Start to read fluently, and use full stops and commas
- ✓ Notice rhyming words, even if they are not familiar with them
- ✓ Read texts in unusual layouts, such as in speech bubbles and lists
- ✓ Use a contents page and glossary in non-fiction books
- ✓ Think about the overall plot of the book and talk about how they think it will end

Orange

Once children recognise 250 high frequency words they progress to Orange, which introduces new words and reinforces those already encountered. Orange books will have an increased amount of words on each page, they will also have more pages within the book varying between 16 to 24 pages with 4 or 5 sentences per page. Aligned with Phases 5/ 6 of Letters and Sounds

Pupil Targets:

- ✓ Read longer sentences that use 'because', 'if' and 'so'
- ✓ Read three syllable words out loud
- ✓ Use punctuation correctly when reading aloud
- ✓ Split a story up into sections and talk about the beginning, middle and end
- ✓ Don't rely on pictures to understand what is happening in a story
- ✓ Know what fact, fiction and non-fiction means

Turquoise

Turquoise books will include an increasing number of adjectives and more descriptive verbs. The number of pictures on each page will decrease, whereas the text amount will increase. High-interest themes such as danger, courage and anger are introduced, and children will be confident with around 450 high frequency words. Aligned with Phases 5/ 6 of Letters and Sounds

Pupil Targets:

- ✓ Read silently in their head
- ✓ Read a sentence aloud with the correct expression
- ✓ Know why certain types of punctuation are used and how it affects the sentence
- ✓ Fluently read long sentences and paragraphs
- ✓ Decode unusual words by using the sounds they already know
- ✓ Read both fiction and non-fiction books

Purple

Purple books will start to have more longer sentences and a wider range of challenging vocabulary. A lot of Purple books will start to have shorter chapters to encourage a child's reading ability. Children will have encountered more of the high frequency words by this level, and teachers will be promoting reading for pleasure. Aligned with Phase 6 of Letters and Sounds

Pupil Targets:

- ✓ Read silently in their head for longer periods of time
- ✓ Read longer books with short chapters
- ✓ Read fiction, non-fiction and poetry
- ✓ Sound out most unfamiliar words as they read
- ✓ Use a dictionary to find the meaning of a word
- ✓ Explain why they think a book is good or not

Gold

Gold books have a much more sophisticated style of language and will try to challenge the reader. Children at this reading level will now be able to understand unusual text layouts, complex language and notice the variation between different characters. These books will usually have about 25 pages with 5 to 10 sentences per page. Aligned with Phase 6 of Letters and Sounds

Pupil Targets:

- ✓ Read silently and read aloud with confidence
- ✓ Know how to use a contents page, glossary and index
- ✓ Use punctuation to help them to read clearly
- ✓ Read books that have longer chapters
- ✓ Learn new information from reading non-fiction books
- ✓ Find information about authors which will help them to select certain books
- ✓ Talk about the way a story has been written

White

Sentences with two or three clauses and several verbs become more common in White and the length of texts extends to around 1,000 words to help build reading stamina. Real-life problems are also introduced to encourage empathy.

Pupil Targets:

- ✓ Find it easy to read silently
- ✓ Read for longer periods of time without stopping
- ✓ Use a dictionary and thesaurus
- ✓ Find certain pieces of information in texts
- ✓ Express opinions and ideas about what they have read
- ✓ Read a book without any pictures or illustrations
- ✓ Understand page features, such as titles, headings and sub-headings

Lime

Lime provides a variety of chapter books and non-fiction titles. Lime readers should be encouraged to experience different texts, writing styles and genres to develop their own reading tastes. This colour band also includes a variety of topics and issues to provoke discussion.

Pupil Targets:

- ✓ Notice the smaller details within the book
- ✓ Read silently most of the time
- ✓ Re-read texts, unfamiliar language and complex sentences
- ✓ Use different voices for different characters in a story and performance pieces
- ✓ Tell the difference between the narrator's voice and character dialogue
- ✓ Understand hidden messages within a text and understand how a character might be feeling
- ✓ Read for a longer period without losing concentration
- ✓ Use glossary and indexes to locate information quickly
- ✓ Read a variety of fiction, non-fiction, poetry and plays

Brown

Brown books will continue to give children a variety of texts they need to become confident and successful readers. A range of characters, topics and text styles help to keep children engaged and encourage discussion.

Pupil Targets:

- ✓ Read fluently and pause reading in a suitable place
- ✓ Develop their own opinion about a book and discuss it with other people
- ✓ Filter through text and highlight key sections of important information
- ✓ Revisit a text and find answers by skimming and scanning each paragraph
- ✓ Fully understand each text when reading a variety of fiction, poetry, plays and non-fiction
- ✓ Activity enjoy reading for pleasure

Grey

Children reading Grey banded books will be able to interpret more sophisticated word-play and understand a range of narration styles. Children should now be able to discuss the characters and narrator in much more detail. Children at this level may enjoy silent reading more, so allow time for regular quiet reading sessions.

Pupil Targets:

- ✓ Develop own opinions of characters in a story
- ✓ Explain a character's motivations
- ✓ Understand the use of word-plays and puns
- ✓ Understand the use of figurative and literal language
- ✓ Make notes and highlight the key events in a story
- ✓ Talk in different voices to represent each character and narration
- ✓ Have a wider knowledge of narration style

Navy

Navy books provide a selection of stories and non-fiction books, including a range of content, narrative styles and points of view. This level encourages readers to form opinions and discuss their own reading tastes. These books will have more complex text features, such as an overarching plot, deeper structures of character relationships and themes.

Pupil Targets:

- ✓ Understand how the use of chapters and paragraphs are used to build up ideas
- ✓ Compare and discuss the work of an author whilst discussing the positives and negatives of a book
- ✓ Read more elaborate descriptive vocabulary
- ✓ Challenge themselves when reading and learn new things from texts

- ✓ Observe and explain the purpose, audience and viewpoints of different texts

Burgundy

Burgundy books encourage children to synthesise information from different places in a text. Children are beginning to recognise how layers of meaning allow for the build-up of humour or tension and can discuss how the author has achieved the effects. Books at this level are written in a much subtler way, meaning that the reader will need to fully engage with a book in order to understand it.

Pupil Targets:

- ✓ Explain and discuss the key features of a text
- ✓ Describe how and why the author has written their book and discuss the impact it has on the reader
- ✓ Identify how the author conveys messages, moods and attitudes
- ✓ Challenge themselves when reading and learn new things whilst reading longer books
- ✓ Make own decisions about the types of books they are interested in and want to read

Black

Black banded books are the final level of the Book Band grading system. Children reading at this level are strong, confident readers who tend to be at the high-ability end of Year 6. They can select a book by personal choice and often read for pleasure. Black books will have very little or no illustrations and have complex text features found in 'real' or non-scheme books.

Pupil Targets:

- ✓ Demonstrate a good level of competence in both decoding and comprehension
- ✓ Regularly read long chapter books for pleasure
- ✓ Read a variety of texts and genres, including a wide range of poetry, plays and textbooks
- ✓ Select their own reading books by using skills, such as reading the blurb and reading a small section of text
- ✓ Recommend books to their peers
- ✓ Read poems and plays aloud to show understanding through intonation, tone and volume
- ✓ Distinguish between statements of fact and opinion

The books will vary in several ways, including layout, size, vocabulary and length, to give the children a rich diet of literature. The difference between each colour band/number stage is very gradual, so that children do not experience great difficulty moving up through the scheme.

A Word of Caution!

You will be doing your child no favours if you rush them through books. It is not a race, it is a journey! Children learn at different rates just as they learn to walk, dress themselves etc. at different rates. Reading must not be treated as a competition. If children are rushed through the books, they will not achieve the enjoyment and understanding necessary. Books that they find too difficult will soon put them off reading!

Things to Remember

- ✓ Do hear your child read every day.
- ✓ Little and often is more beneficial than a long session once a week.
- ✓ Think about how long you are reading for - the amount of reading time shouldn't exceed your child's span of attention.
- ✓ Pick your timing carefully - it's best not to embark on a reading session when your child is tired.
- ✓ Every child is an individual - try not to compare your child's progress with other children or with brothers and sisters.

"Parents can instil a love of reading long before a child goes to school and deepen that love of reading as the child grows up."

Enjoy reading with your child and help them become lifelong readers.

