

Reading with your child and a guide to our reading systems at St. Chad's in KS2

This guide is designed to answer your questions about helping your child learn to read and Accelerated Reader. If you have additional questions, please feel free to contact your child's teacher.

What happens when my child moves from Key Stage 1 to Key stage 2?

In Year 3, children will move to using the Accelerated Reader programme.

What is Accelerated Reader (AR)?

AR is a reading scheme that helps teachers manage and monitor children's independent reading practice. Your child picks a book at his/her own level (assessed by the teacher) and reads it at his/her own pace. When finished, your child takes a short quiz on the internet - passing the quiz is an indication that your child has understood what has been read. AR gives both children and teachers feedback based on the quiz results which the teacher then uses to help the child set targets and ongoing reading practice.

Children using AR have a free choice of the books they read, within a range of appropriate levels rather than having one assigned to them. This makes reading a much more enjoyable experience as they feel in control and can choose books that are interesting to them. Staff will be on hand to support them in their choices. If your child does not do well on the quiz, the teacher may assist him/her by:

- Helping choose another book that is more appropriate
- Asking more probing questions as your child reads and before they take a quiz

Is this how reading is assessed in school?

No. A 'book level' or 'reading age' does not enable an accurate assessment of reading to be made. Through reading tasks in guided reading, the teacher will assess children's ability:

- **to decode print** (to know what a words say) e.g. to sound out, to use the context of the writing to tackle unknown words
- **to understand what they have read** to make predictions about a story, to ask and answer questions about what has been read

How can I help my child become a better reader?

As with anything, performance improves with practice. Encourage your child to read at home. Create a culture of reading in your household by reading with your child, visiting your local library or bookshop on a regular basis and by letting your child see you reading. When reading with your child, stop and ask questions to be sure your child understands what they have read and make a habit of discussing books that you have read.

How does the school determine my child's reading level?

Teachers in school use a range of methods to determine your child's reading level. Accelerated reader also uses a computer based reading assessment to ensure that the level given to your child is appropriate. We also use our professional judgement and knowledge in order to help guide your child to books that will improve their reading skills as well as books they will enjoy.

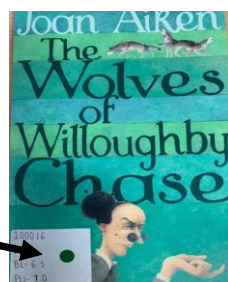
What is a Book Level?

From Year 3 and above, every child will undertake an initial 'Star Reading' assessment which has provided them with a reading age, reading level and a Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) range, which informs us of the range of books the children will be able to read independently.

This ZPD range will allow the children to select appropriate reading books that will be best suited to develop their reading ability and comprehension.

To enable children to easily find accessible books, every book in school has been labelled on the inside cover with a Book Level (BL) which refers to the ZPD range. These have been colour coded on the book spine, inside or on the front cover as follows:

Blue = 3.0-3.9
 Yellow = 4.0-4.9
 Red = 5.0-5.9
 Green = 6.0 – 6.9
 Blue and yellow = 7.0 – 7.9
 Red and blue – 8.0 +

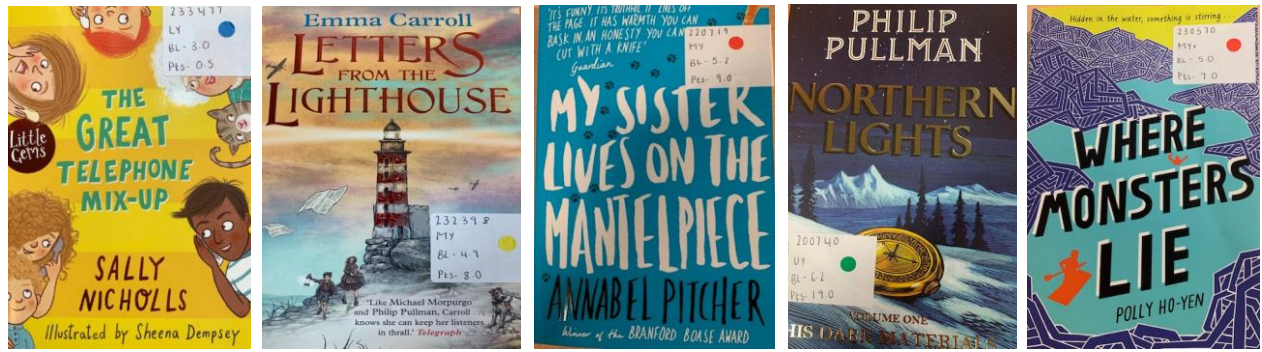


All children will be provided with a ZPD range that will span across two colours. A child's ZPD range should change during the year depending on their 'Star Reading' assessment which will be undertaken every half-term.

Is it OK for my child to read outside of their reading level?

Yes – this is fine. However, just because a child can read the words in a book does not mean the content is appropriate. The interest level of the material must be considered. Interest level is based on content - a book's themes and ideas - and indicates for which age group a book is appropriate. The chart below shows which years fall into each Interest Level. All our books tell you what the interest level is so you can monitor what your child is reading.

Interest Level	Year Level
LY (Lower Years)	Key Stage 1
MY (Middle Years)	Key Stage 2
MY + (Middle Years)	Transition from Primary to Secondary school
UY (Upper Years)	Key Stage 3 +



However, if there is a book that is not on the Accelerated Reader system or there is a book that sits outside their ZPD range and they would really like to read it, we will not discourage them in doing so and our class libraries allow them to read a book for pleasure as well as a book within their ZPD range.

What are points?

Another feature of the Accelerated Reader program is the quizzes that it provides. When your child has finished a book, they can take a quiz to test their knowledge of it and develop their comprehension skills. These quizzes can be accessed and undertaken within school during reading sessions or at break times and lunch times using the internet.

Incentives and Rewards

Children receive rewards based on:

1. The point value on the book. There are lots of prizes to motivate children to read and reward children's participation in the scheme.
2. The number of words read as a class. The total number of words read is recorded on a display to show the performance of each class in Key Stage 2 over the half term. We will celebrate this achievement in assembly, on our website and Twitter.

Every book that has an AR Reading Practice Quiz is given a points value. AR points are based on the difficulty of the book (ATOS readability level: text complexity - average word and sentence length and word difficulty) and the length of the book (number of words).

Frequently Asked Questions

How often will my child's books be changed?

Generally speaking, we will aim to change reading books in KS2 once they have finished their book and completed the assigned quiz to check their comprehension. Parents must sign the reading record to say they have listened to their child read. Your child will be able to take a new reading book when we have the results of the quiz as this will help establish the book level they need next. Please be reassured that all books returned will be quarantined before going back in the reading scheme.

How do I listen to my child read?

Please take time to read with your child at home. This should be a fun activity and choose time when your child is most responsive.

This will involve taking time out of often busy schedules. Make sure there are no distractions and that the TV is off. Children should read with an adult, as this teaches children that it is a valuable and important activity. Don't worry about trying to read the whole book. As your child increasingly accesses longer texts, it would be appropriate to read a few pages well rather than try to race through the whole text.

If my child reads the scheme quickly, will they be a better reader?

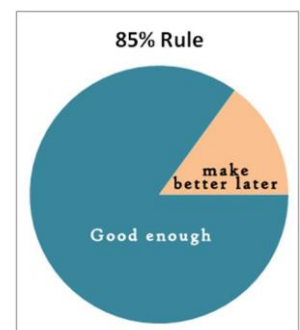
No. Children who 'race' through the scheme are not better readers. Children who do, often have little understanding of the text.

What if I think my child's ZPD is too low?

STAR Reading is a computerised reading assessment that uses computer-adaptive technology. Questions continually adjust to your child's response. If their response is correct, the difficulty level is increased. If the child misses a question, the difficulty level is reduced. The test uses multiple-choice questions and takes approximately 20 minutes. No reading test is 100% accurate 100% of the time, but these tests give a good indication to the school of your child's reading and understanding level. From this test the children will be assigned a ZPD (which sets them a range in which they can choose a book level, for example 4.2 to 6.6) and they will be able to choose a book level attached to each book to represent the difficulty of the text. Students will be given a ZPD.

After they have finished their books, they take the designated quiz for the book within 24 hours. The aim is to achieve 85% accuracy:

We track the outcomes of the test, if they score less than 85% they are not able to go to a higher book level. If they continually achieve above 85%, we are able to retest them to see if the ZPD changes.



My child is not a strong reader, can he/she still use Accelerated Reader?

Accelerated Reader helps all children become better readers regardless of their reading ability. When children read books at their appropriate level, they experience success. Furthermore, teachers work with children to set appropriate targets based on each child's reading level.

What if my child loses their book or their book gets damaged?

We have spent a significant amount of money on books so if a book is lost or damaged, we have to pass the cost of the book to you as parents. A letter will be sent home explaining the process but the standard charge for a lost or damaged book is £5. We do understand that you may wish to replace the book yourself, this is ok but we expect the book to be in the same condition as the book that was originally sent home.

How do the books reflect the community the children live in? How have we ensured that there is a wide range of books?

We have invested a lot of money in buying books that will interest children and these have been selected by staff to ensure that they reflect the diversity of our community and society, in terms of: content, characters and range of new and established authors.



How can the school encourage reading for pleasure?

Recently, we have continued our next phase of spending to focus on class libraries. Where possible we have tried to link these to the reading scheme so that the level of difficulty is monitored. However, we won't be encouraging the children to pick a particular book linked to their ZPD as this is about reading for pleasure. Therefore, when your child brings a book home from the class library, you may need to support them by reading it together but this could provide lots of valuable opportunities for you to talk about the book and whether they enjoyed it.

How can I help my child find books that they find interesting?

Visit www.arbookfinder.co.uk and click on Advanced Search. By conducting an advanced search, you will be able to generate book lists that contain titles based on the criteria you enter such as book level, topic, interest level and fiction/non-fiction etc.