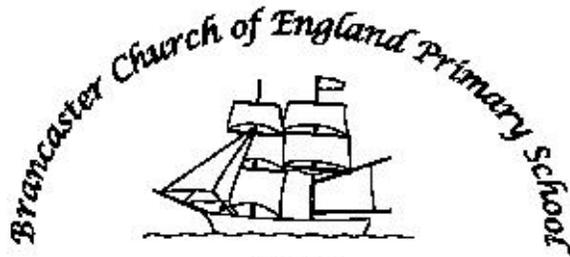


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WE PROMOTE STAFF WELL-BEING



## ReadWrite

Brancaster CE VAP School is committed to teaching phonics as a tool for equipping children to effectively read and write.

The popular, fun and effective programme, ReadWrite Inc is used to enthuse and motivate children and to promote accelerated progress as they move through the progressive stages of the Letters and Sounds.

### **ReadWrite – why are we doing it?**

ReadWrite is a programme designed to get all children reading and writing quickly and easily as early as possible. It teaches children to spell, to read, to comprehend and to compose.

Children need to recognise words and to understand in order to read successfully. Both of these skills are dependent upon being able to 'decode' rapidly (using sounds to read words).

To understand, we need to be able to decode without thinking so that all of our energy can go into getting the message rather than trying to work out the words.

Learning to read should only take 18 months to 2 years. After this, children should enter the 'read to learn' phase – which will carry on for the rest of their lives. Sadly, historically, many children in England are still learning to read in Year 5 and 6.

I was horrified to learn that the majority of texts that the children will see as teenagers (both in school and at home) require a reading score of 12+ to understand them. The average teenager only has a score of 9. This means they can only access about half of what it is assumed they are reading and comprehending. Some teachers have tried to 'dumb' the texts down to help the children, but not only are most teachers unable to do this successfully, but it has been proven that this actually lowers the child's IQ – in other words, they actually lose intelligence!

The ReadWrite programme is designed to prevent this problem by ensuring that all children reach the highest standard that they can achieve in the shortest time possible.

### **How it works**

ReadWrite teaches all the letter sounds at a fast pace. Children start with individual letters (m/a/d etc) and then move on to digraphs (two letters making one sound eg sh/ch/ay/ee), working up to trigraphs (ear/air etc). They are taught to combine these letters to read words (breaking words down by sounding out the letters) and to spell (putting letters together to make words).

### **Reading Books and ReadWrite:**

ReadWrite is very firm in closely matching reading books to the ReadWrite level the child is working at. This way, comprehension can keep pace with 'decoding', rather than lagging behind. This may sometimes mean that your child will have what looks like an 'easy' book - but rest assured, we will be stretching your child in the way we use the book, even if they find it easy to read the words in it! If you would like to talk this over, discuss your child's level or find out how you can challenge your child, do please come in and ask.

As well as ReadWrite reading books, we also use Oxford Reading Tree and Words and Pictures in KS1. KS2 use a very wide variety of books, suitable for all ages and abilities.

### **Picture Books:**

When children start on ReadWrite, they will begin with wordless picture books as these are extremely useful tools for helping early readers to develop literacy skills.

Children enjoy looking at pictures in a book. They can do so independently or with adult help, and learn about being a reader in the process.

Because wordless books only make sense when the pictures are viewed in order, adult readers must make sure they help children to look at the left page before the right. This helps practice the left to right pattern of reading.

The telling of the story should start simply and grow more complex. Each time the story is told, more details – and specific parts of speech, such as adjectives (describing words) – can be added. The story can also be told in different manners, such as all in past tense or as speech, to help children learn literary language. The children can participate in the storytelling, giving them a chance to practice newly learned language and literary conventions.

Because the story is not written down, children and adults can take turns in making up and adding to the story. In order to decide what happens next, a child must pay close attention to what the adult has said, which strengthens listening as well as speaking skills. If you ask probing questions, you encourage the children to add details, such as how a character is feeling or where something is located; and ensure that children are active partners in the reading process.

Children learn to follow a logical sequence of events, pay attention to details, understand cause and effect, and make inferences. With no words to guide them, children have to study the pictures to understand the story – and can also learn about tone, character, and theme. Children discover that a book is not random series of pictures and words but contains a beginning, middle, and end thoughtfully presented through a sequence of events.

### **How You can Help:**

Obviously, as well as looking at books with your child, it will help if you practise the letters and words that they are working on in their groups (you will be sent information about this). Research has shown that children learn at least twice as quickly and reach significantly higher levels if parents are involved.

However, the biggest thing you can do, is to **TALK** to your child. It has been found that compared to anything else you do with your child, talking to them has the biggest impact on a child's academic success. And talk is easy! We may not all be brilliant at spelling or maths – but all of us can talk! And it's easy to find time – over breakfast, in the car etc.

### **Talking With Your Child**

When a child starts reading, they will soon learn to sound out words but if the child has never heard those words, things will still not make sense to them. And if it doesn't make sense, the child will soon lose interest and when that happens they will fail to make progress – and soon see themselves as failures.

Our early reading books use words made only from the first letters the children learn – including pin, tip, tap, gap pat, pad, pot. These words look simple but it is surprising how many children don't have a clue what these words mean. The more you talk with your child, the more words they will understand and the easier reading will be.

### **What should we talk about?**

We need to build on the children's own talk to extend it. For example, a toddler could start with 'dog'. We would turn this into "yes, it's a **big** dog" and later to "What a **huge shaggy Alsatian**". If a child says "bus" we could extend it to a "red bus" and talk about experiences of going on buses. As they grow older, we could even discuss the advantages of our coast hopper bus, for example (small for bendy roads, right size for the number of passengers etc) and compare to other buses. This will encourage children to use elaborate and extended sentences.

Very few of our children achieve as well in the writing SATS as they do in the reading SATs and the reason is always that their language and sentence composition is not mature enough. Reading books usually keep sentences simple so the children can successfully read them, so the only way the children will become confident with the age expected language is through talk.

We need to think – are we giving the children the chance to hear and use language – because if we are not, they will never reach the required level!

### **And finally...**

If you have any worries, concerns, or would like to know more, do please contact us at school