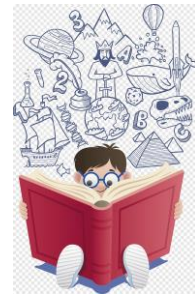


How can I develop the skills of my child who is already a fluent reader?

The best way is to continue to share books with your child, regularly listening to them read, sometimes reading to or with them, but also discussing books read in increasing depth. To become good readers children need to develop skills in seven key areas and it can be useful to think about these when reading with your child.



Decoding: this is the skill that deals with the varying strategies used by children to make sense of the words on the page. At Down Ampney we use the strategies of ‘say the sounds and read the word’, ‘say the sounds and read the syllables’ or ‘say the syllables and read the word’ – depending on the difficulty of the word.

Retrieval and recall: early readers need to develop this skill, in order to locate important information and to retell stories and describe events.

Inference: reading between the lines. Encouraging children to make inferences based on clues in the text and their understanding of the context of the book will help them to develop this important skill.

Structure and organisation: as children read a wider range of text types, they need to be able to comment on the features of each and how they are organised. Discussing the presentation of the text, e.g. the use of subtitles to assist reading of a non-fiction text, and the author’s reason for organising the text in this way, will support children’s development in this area. Making links between the purpose of the text and its organisation is a useful place to start.

Language: specifically, thinking about the language choices made by writers, their possible reasons for making those choices and the effect the choices have on the reader. Discussing alternative choices and their effects can be a good way to begin discussion about the author’s language and an opportunity to develop vocabulary generally.

Purpose and viewpoint: Who is the narrator of this story? What does the writer of this biography feel about his/her subject? Children need to understand that writers write for a purpose, and to be able to recognise that this will have an impact on the way a text is written. Newspapers and advertisements are perfect examples of this and can lead to lots of lively discussions.

Making links: as adults, we are constantly making links between ideas and experiences. Good readers connect the book they are reading with real life experiences; with other books read and stories heard; with films; and with the context in which they were written.