

# How can I support my child with Literacy?

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INFORMATION FOR PARENTS AND CARERS



cmagee

BROADGREEN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL | LITERACY

# Introduction

We would like all students to have the enjoyment and satisfaction that comes from reading and writing. This booklet gives practical suggestions on how you, as parents/carers, can assist in your child's learning. We hope you find it useful.

## How to help your child...

You can have a big influence on your child's attitude towards reading and writing. Remind them that everybody is good at something and even though they may find reading and writing difficult, they have other strengths.

- Your child's success will be greatly increased if they feel confident.
- Believe in them and show how proud you are of them.
- Praise them when they make an effort. Praise lets children know when they are doing the right things in learning to read, write or spell. Praise motivates them to keep on trying.

When you praise children it is important to tell them why you are pleased with them, and then they can see for themselves what they are doing is right.

# Reading

Children do not enjoy the experience of learning to read if they are not successful or making progress.

- Set aside a special time and place for reading. Do not let the TV or mobile phone distract you or your child.
- When you listen to your child read, give them plenty of praise.
- Don't rush - let your child turn the pages.
- Help keep them interested and enthusiastic about reading by giving them a wide range of reading materials, including comics and magazines.
- Make sure the book is not too difficult. Most of the words should be easy for the child. No one enjoys something if it is too hard. Reading aloud for 10 -15 minutes is long enough.
- Everyone enjoys being read to. If your child is interested in a book but can't read it, read it to them.
- Discuss the pictures and guess together what might happen in the story.
- Share the story with your child, reading as little or as much as they feel comfortable with.

- Let them re-read favourite stories if they want to – practice makes perfect!
- Correct your child only if the meaning is lost or changed.
- If your child is stuck on a word, leave it out and read on to the end of the sentence. Then have a go at the unknown word using the first letter/picture/rest of the sentence to help. If this doesn't help – tell them the word.
- Recorded stories encourage a love of books. The local library often has some for loan.



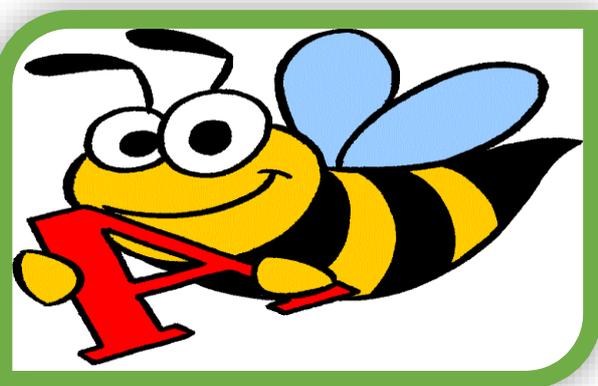
## And for the older child...

- Be prepared that as your child gets older, they will see reading as a lower priority than finishing off homework/coursework. Even so, reading can make accessing GCSE/IB texts much easier and improve fluency.
- Help in the learning of key words for the unit of work being covered.
- Encourage the reading of a variety of materials – comics, magazines, newspapers, car manuals, recipes, instructions.

# Spelling

You can practise and work together to improve your child's spelling. Here are some things you can get your child to try:

- Decorate or illustrate the words.
- Type or write out the words.
- Say the words slowly as you write it.
- Get them to text the spellings to you (remember to remove predictive text!)
- Look at the word. Concentrate on the part that might be tricky. Shut your eyes and think about the word. Then try and write it.
- Colour and trace over the word 5 times in different colours.
- Take one of the words and make as many other words as you can by adding to it, e.g. at, sat, cat, bat hat etc.
- Write the words on paper. Cut out each letter. Jumble them up and see if you can rebuild the word.



• Write out the spellings leaving out some letters. Get your child to fill in the missing letters the next day.

- Make the word using foam/magnetic/wooden letters. Write the words in sand/flour/salt etc.

## and for the older child...

- Encourage the use of a simple dictionary (make sure they know the alphabet)
- Encourage the use of a Spell Checker if they have access to one.
- Encourage the use of a key word list – place it in the plastic wallet at the back of their homework diary.
- Encourage them to look through their work and try to identify words that are spelt incorrectly or they are not sure about.
- Test your child on difficult words if they will accept this. Remember they must always write the words down. Use the sheet on how to learn your spellings.

## How to learn your spellings!

**Read** - Read the word. If you are not sure ask someone to read it for you.

**Read again slowly** - Clap it and say it in 'bits' (syllables), if it is a long word.

**Study** - Look for smaller words or groups of letters that you know. Make up silly sentences to help you remember, e.g. cut 'Alf' in 'half'.

**Highlight** - Underline or highlight the part of the word that you find hard.

**Cover** - Ask yourself if you can still see it in your mind's eye, if not, look again.

**Write** - Say the word slowly and remember the cues.

**Check** - If you are not sure, go back and study it again.

# Mnemonics

Mnemonics is a fun way of remembering those tricky words. For example:

because = **b**ig **e**lephants **c**an **a**dd **u**p **s**ums **e**asily

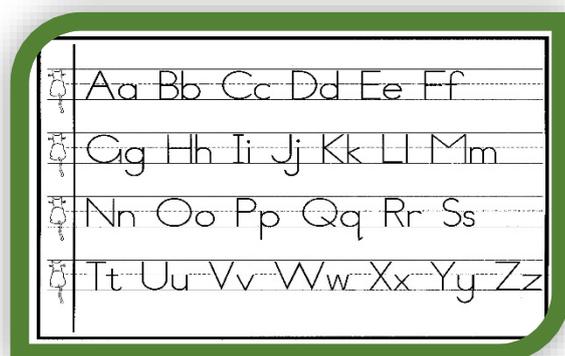
said = **S**ally **A**nn **i**s **d**ancing

You can make up your own for those tricky words that your child has trouble spelling.

# Handwriting

Make sure your child:

- Is sitting at the table on a chair at the correct height
- Has enough light.
- Keeps the book or paper in the correct position - 45° to the left for right handed pupils and to the right for left handed pupils. Ensure that the non writing hand steadies the page.
- Holds the sharpen pencil or pen between the thumb and first finger, resting on the middle finger (tripod grip).
- Does not hold the pencil or pen too firmly or press too hard. If the writing is too faint use a 'B' lead pencil. If too dark change to an 'F' or 'H' pencil. There is also a wide variety of mechanical pencils available now with comfortable grips and wider barrels. Some children find it easier to write on a sloping surface. The outside of a ring binder file is a DIY way of doing this.



## How to help your child improve their handwriting....

- Encourage correctly formed letters and practise by tracing them in sand/flour or in the air.
- Assist with regular spacing of words. Give the words 'air to breathe'.
- Encourage joined up writing whenever possible.

## And for the older child...

- Encourage your child to have a well-stocked pencil case – sharp pencils, rubber, pencil sharpener, highlighters, ruler, etc. Your child's handwriting may look better by using a **fibre tipped pen** with black ink.
- Encourage your child to continue with the good writing habits formed at primary school – joined writing, correct writing position.
- Handwriting sheets are available on the VLE/Broadgreen website.

## Useful websites

<http://www.handwritingworksheets.com/>

<http://www.activityvillage.co.uk/handwriting-worksheets>

<http://www.morrellshandwriting.co.uk/index.shtml>

# Organisation and Study Skills

It is important to understand the difficulties some children have in the classroom. In addition to the problems they have with reading, writing and spelling, they may not be able to remember instructions or organise themselves or their ideas in a piece of written work. This often means that they begin to doubt their ability when it comes to school work.

## Getting ideas and planning written work

All children have individual ways of learning. None of these suggestions will suit everyone. The important thing is to try them and see which is successful for your child.

### Brainstorming and mind mapping

Brainstorming means thinking of as many ideas as you can about the subject and writing them down as single words or phrases.

Once a mind map has been done you can then link these ideas together with lines or arrows.

Highlighter pens can be used to colour code the ideas into meaningful paragraphs.

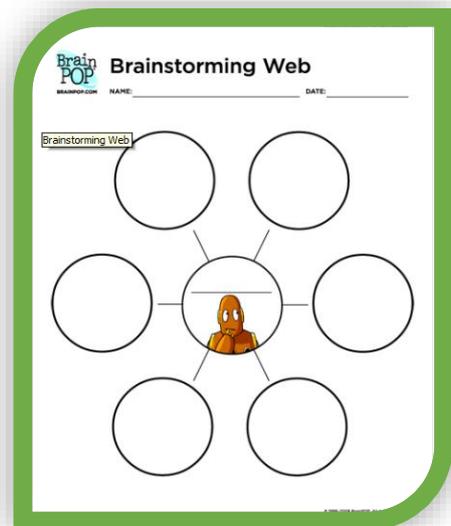
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### Useful website

<http://www.brainpop.com/educators/community/printable/brainstorming-web-2/>

**You could help your child learn more effectively in the classroom by:**

- Charts you have made together to help them to remember;
- Timetables can help with organisation at home and at school (put these in places where they can't be missed!)



- Good use of their homework diary can make sure that homework is recorded and things to be taken to school (e.g. PE kit) are listed;
- Good communication between home-school is very important to help your child meet deadlines and understand/remember what needs to be done, e.g. regularly checking homework diaries;
- Making sure that your child has packed their bag properly and always has a pen, pencil or ruler to hand.

## Homework

### Why is homework set?

Understanding the purpose of homework can help your child to plan the best way to do it. Here are the main purposes:-

- **Practising** a new skill.
- **Finishing** a piece of work started in class.
- **Learning** for a test.
- Working on **coursework**.
- **Researching** a new topic

When researching a new topic your child will need access to **reference books** at home or from a library, or access to the internet. Most pupils in 7,8 and 9 will receive a Liverpool City Council Library card. If your child hasn't received one. Please see Miss Magee in E5.

# Homework

## Warm Up

Before starting, **make sure everything is to hand**; books, pencil case, scrap paper, highlighter pens, calculator, spellchecker, word processor, computer.

Before starting homework your child should:

- Check the details in the homework diary
- **Read** through the instructions carefully. **Underline** the key words, e.g. **describe, compare, explain, just section B, calculate**, etc.
- Think about the purpose of the homework.

## If they get stuck

- Encourage them not to panic.
- Tell them to read the instructions again or help with the reading.
- Ask them to explain the task to you. See if you agree.
- Get them to **proof read** the work. Sometimes it helps to read it aloud. When looking for spelling mistakes start at the **right** hand side of the page so you are thinking about the spelling and not the meaning.
- If they have been revising, test them on the work.

- **Resist the temptation to do the homework for your child if he/she gets frustrated.**

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## The 3 biggest problems are:

1. Getting started
  2. Knowing what to do
  3. Keeping up to date- drawing up a timetable can help with this.
- If these are problems for your child, talk to them and see if you can help. Encourage them to talk to their teacher.

# Computers and Literacy

Word processing is really helpful for the dyslexic child for many reasons:

- It is easier and quicker to press a key than form a letter.
- Typing looks good through the text and the child will end up with a piece of work they can be proud of.
- Print on the screen or on paper looks more like the printed form in which we usually see words so mistakes are more easily recognised.
- It is easier to edit mistakes.
- Random thoughts, words or paragraphs can easily be moved and put in order.
- Word processed work is easier to read for the pupil and the teacher.
- You can make several copies of the work.

**Spell checkers** can be a great help but children need to be able to read the words offered. Spell checkers, however, won't spot 'there' where a 'their' is required. Also, at some point your child has to be able to recognise which word they want to use. Spell checkers were not designed for dyslexics and a 'near miss' or typing error is more easily corrected than a word with many wrong letters. Generally speaking, spell checkers are useful if your child's reading is quite a lot better than his/her spelling.

## Keyboard Skills

Children need to be able to find their way around the keyboard quickly. Touch-typing may be of help but takes a lot of time to practice. If you have a computer at home word processing skills can be developed, even if your computer is different from the one at school.

We hope that you have found this booklet useful and that you feel more confident in working to support your child.

If you would like any further information please don't hesitate to contact the school:

**Miss Cheryl Magee**  
**Whole School Literacy Coordinator**  
**cmg@bgis.co.uk**

## **Useful Websites**

The following websites contain games, activities and resources to help your child with their literacy.

[www.bbc.co.uk/schools](http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools)

[www.crickweb.co.uk](http://www.crickweb.co.uk)

[www.crossboweducation.co.uk](http://www.crossboweducation.co.uk) (this is an educational catalogue)

[www.ictgames.com](http://www.ictgames.com)

[www.senteacher.org](http://www.senteacher.org)

[www.topmarks.co.uk](http://www.topmarks.co.uk)