

Dear all,

**Re: Parent Zoom questions and answers:**

Thank you for taking the time to join the reading conversation and post a question. I have captured the common, useful and unanswered questions below and give the school’s understanding and approach.

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| Question - reading specific | Answer |
| Do you have any further author 'visits' planned this year? | I certainly hope so! We have a fantastic relationship with Chorleywood Bookshop which results in us being offered author visits on regular occasions. We have been lucky enough to have been visited over the past few years by Pete Johnson, Sita Brahmachari and Lissa Evans, as well as the wonderful event with Chris Riddell earlier this year too. These events can only continue to take place if we generate good book sales as they happen, and luckily our community (including teachers!) have shown brilliant support at all previous events by purchasing the text. |
| How do we encourage our year 6 child to read with a parent? I have found that as they get older they prefer to have their own space and read alone. | If you can, try to read **to** them every day – for as long as they’ll let you (as well as being read to). Choose quality books (we can help you!) that can be enjoyed together and discuss them as you go. **Do the voices!**  When your child is reading, ask them to read an interesting section aloud to you and discuss it. If they are reluctant to read, you can share the reading, perhaps a page at a time.  Visit the library together and look at the books. ([CLICK here for Croxley Green Library opening information](https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/libraries-and-archives/library-opening-hours/croxley-green-library.aspxLibrary%20opening%20information))Allow your Year 6 child to browse and make a choice giving them ownership of the text.  Try audio books which can be followed with the text. Listen together and address vocabulary as it arises.  Ask your class teacher for some book recommendations based on your child’s interests.  I love the idea of a visit to a bookshop (if you’re lucky enough to be able to) that can become a big event. Lots of book browsing, lots of discussion about why the book is being chosen. Make the visit to the bookshop the sole purpose of your trip to give it status. |
| It’s not clear how the reading passport is used, and when the passport is stamped. My child’s passport has still not been stamped even when they have completed two spine books. | As reading lead, the Covid-19 lockdown could not have come at a worse time. We launched our reading spine in some year groups in the week or two before lockdown commenced meaning systems for teachers, pupils and parents were not established in the way we would have liked; as a result our shiny new reading passport system is one of a number of new ways of working that we are all managing. We’re sorry if the guidance does not feel clear. The way in which the reading passports are being used in Year 3 has been explained on the ‘New to Year 3’ website for parents. Children in Year 3 are gradually being introduced to the reading spine after being assessed by class teachers. Some children in Year 3 will be placed on colour spots before being moved to the reading spine. Once your child starts the reading spine, they will be issued with a passport.  At the moment, teachers are signing reading passports when books from the spine have been read (and discussed with the teacher). It might be that we develop a special stamp, or sticker, in the near future. |
| Can you explain the reading passport quickly please? Is the aim for each child to read EVERY book in the passport during the school year? PS, thank you for posting the passports onto the school website - again, I do feel that this helps us to support our children at home and gives us inspiration for new books. | If you haven’t already, please read the parent section of our reading newsletter linked here:  <http://www.littlegreen.herts.sch.uk/2020/09/22/little-green-reading-newsletter-issue-8/>  This gives an overview of how the reading passport system works. There are far more books on the reading spine than we would expect most children to read in a year, but it is better to have more choice than not. The spine will be constantly updated with new books as they are released (...and we have read them!). |
| How do they get the "bronze" stickers, badges etc? How many 'reads' do they have to do? | Bronze, Silver and Gold badges are currently being voted upon - we will announce and share the winner after half term! |
| When do they receive their passports? | Children in Year 3 are being gradually introduced to the reading spine after being assessed by class teachers. As explained on the ‘New to Year 3’ information, some children will be on colour spots before being moved to the reading spine. Once your child starts the reading spine, they will be issued with a passport. However, the passports are available to see on the school website if you wish to look for a list of recommended texts.  <http://www.littlegreen.herts.sch.uk/2020/09/29/year-3-reading-passport/> |
| My son struggles with reading due to being dyslexic. What extra support can the school give to help with this? | We have a selection of books in each year group for children with barriers to reading and we have retained some colour spot books too. It is important to have a dialogue with your child’s class teacher about their books and book choices. We are always happy to help. We can direct you to audio books and other resources too. We have some Barrington Stoke Books which are dyslexia friendly and we are looking to expand this selection using PPG money as appropriate. |
| Should we have received a specific reading book as yet as year 3 parents? We have been sent home with only a library book up until now | Alll Year 3 pupils are coming home with a reading book - however due to the situation with Covid-19 and the quarantining of books there may be a small gap between books coming home - this is the perfect time to read a library book. If this is not the case, please talk to your child’s class teacher. |
| Could you ask children at the end of the day to ensure they bring all books home? I know many children that come home without books that they need e.g reading books, reading records and spelling books. | This is generally part of our practice here at Little Green but we will encourage teachers to issue reminders about remembering these key pieces of equipment. We would, however, add that as children move nearer to secondary transition, they should be starting to develop an independence with this. |
| How do we encourage the love of fiction books? My son prefers factual books and struggles to engage in fiction. | We are firm believers that there is a book out there for every child. Talk to them about their interests generally and have a discussion with your child’s class teacher too and we can help to direct you to the right place. The website [www.lovereading4kids.co.uk](http://www.lovereading4kids.org.uk) is a great resource for finding books and reading the opening extracts of them - perhaps you could spend a reading session at home looking through some extracts together.  In school we have our reading newsletter which contains lots of book recommendations and tips - we have eight ‘issues’ now. These can be found on our school website, but the link to the most recent one is here:  <http://www.littlegreen.herts.sch.uk/2020/09/22/little-green-reading-newsletter-issue-8/> |
| Are children allowed to choose the book they want to read by themselves? | Where possible, absolutely. Book browsing and the ability to make a choice is a powerful tool for getting children reading and giving them ownership of the books they have chosen. The role of the teacher **and** the parent is in directing them towards high quality literature to choose from and we’re hopeful that our reading spine goes some way to doing this. We are incredibly lucky to have an extensive school library and it is frustrating that we cannot take our classes there in the current climate, however teachers are selecting a wide range of books from the library to bring to their classes to choose from. |
| When the child reads with their teacher will this provide an assessment of the child's ability eg are they are at age appropriate level - which feeds into school report? | The assessment of reading involves a number of facets but certainly one of these is the ability to read aloud fluently. Crucially, the decoding of words is a different skill to comprehension. There are children who can read beautifully aloud with little understanding of the text, and children who struggle to decode words who have very high-level comprehension skills. As a result, there are many tasks and activities which feed into our reading assessments and an assessment on ‘age related ability’ is reported on in the annual school report. |
| Could you please explain the difference between colour band and spine . | The colour spot books were designed with decoding and simple comprehension in mind. Given the circumstances with Covid-19 and the fact that a chunk of Year 2 was spent home learning, it may be the case that some children are not quite ready for the reading spine. The reading spine is a selection of age-appropriate books which cover a range of abilities for a child within for an age-related child. |
| How often do teachers read 1:1 with each child? | This is an interesting question which will have a different answer depending on your child’s year group and also, crucially, Covid-19 has changed a lot of our ‘normal practice’.  In Year 3, where the teaching of reading is more weighted towards decoding and early vocabulary, the children would typically be heard read, more than a Year 6 child, where comprehension is a more prominent skill. This is likely to be even more apparent given the situation involving lockdown and missing a chunk of Year 2. |
| Also regarding the passports again, can you let us know the 'reward' if any, for completing the passport? | At the moment, there is no ‘reward’ for completing the reading passport. When our school parliament is formed in the new half term, we will be asking the year 6 pupils to talk to their constituents in other year groups to see what they think would be a good reward. #powertothepupils |
| Regarding the reading passport, do they have had to read the book to you, or can they have read it independently? | Either is fine, but in Year 3 the home learning expectation is for 5 adult reads a week. It is likely that the reading spine book will make up a large proportion of these reads. Independent reading and the building of reading stamina is also absolutely important to develop. |
| Can the parents have access to the reading spine? I have no idea what books are included there. My daughter is reading Wed Rabbit, which I’m assuming is not part of it. Is that OK? | The reading spines are all available on the school website.  <http://www.littlegreen.herts.sch.uk/?s=reading+passport>  Wed Wabbit is an excellent text and we had the author, Lissa Evans, visit last year. This text is suitable for Year 3 and 4 with adult support, and Year 5 and 6 for independent reading. As an adult, it’s an incredibly funny book to read. |
| Can we use our own copy of the reading spine book instead of the schools if there isn't enough of that to pick? | Absolutely - in fact, it would be helpful for us as it means there is more choice on the spine for other children. Think of the spine as a canon of texts for each year. |
| Did you say the teacher will advise when they can advance to passports | The way in which the reading passports are being used in Year 3 has been explained on the ‘New to Year 3’ website for parents. Children in Year 3 are being gradually introduced to the reading spine after being assessed by class teachers. Some children in Year 3 will be placed on colour spots before being moved to the reading spine. Once your child starts the reading spine, they will be issued with a passport. |
| Do you have any particular preference between children reading a physical book vs a kindle (for example)? Are there any arguments AGAINST a kindle? My son prefers a physical book, but I wonder if a variety of reading formats would help encourage children and engage their interest? | I think you’re absolutely right in suggesting that a varied diet of literature is the best. I read from both a Kindle and from books and don’t find that either hinders my enthusiasm for reading as an adult (although you can’t beat the smell of a new book). Children may be motivated by seeing the % of a book they have read on Kindle and the fact that they cannot see the thickness of the book may encourage them too. Some children also just love to have a device in their hands. Additionally, Kindle purchases are cheaper, so it might be a cost effective way of putting the books they want to read in front of them. Consider audiobooks too as an option. |
| **Question - general** | |
| How do you deal with disruptions in class(Year 3) E.g. Students talking | We are a school that understands ***behaviour communicates***. With this in mind, all of the consequences children receive will be supportive consequences.  (See behaviour policy: <http://www.littlegreen.herts.sch.uk/behaviour-policy/>)  This means the consequence will be, almost always, aimed at supporting the child to ***understand*** why their behaviour was not OK and what to do next time they are in a similar situation. We avoid the ‘behaviourist’ approach as research shows that ‘punishments’ only support extrinsic motivation (doing something because someone is watching) not intrinsic motivation (doing something because I understand it is the right way to behave.) A favourite cartoon models the, sometimes, absurdity of behaviourist forms of consequence and, more importantly, the missed opportunity to help a child understand themselves and how to avoid making poor choices. |
| Hi, we’ve noticed that it’s been a slow start to school learning for yr3 students due to obvious reasons (emerging from ‘lockdown’/ ‘homeschool’)...Just wondered if there’s a noticeable gap between yr3 students? If so, what are your plans to address this? When do you think learning will be back up to speed for yr3? | We are just finishing our Pupil Progress Meetings where teachers discuss the strengths and areas for development across the cohort and individually and we then consider the best provision we can put in place to offer extra support. Unsurprisingly, many children were not able to practice their writing and develop their vocabulary exposure in the same way they would have done in school. This explains the Zoom meet focus on Inferential reading, developing vocabulary and also some of the interventions we will be starting after half-term. Do see the newsletter for the information and link to the HfL Back on Track materials we will also be making use of to support learning. I look forward to supporting this whole community learning experience with you.  The biggest surprise for me has been the, generally, positive attitude all the children have shown to being back in school. We are all working hard to make sure they can be the best they can be, reaching their potential, supported by the whole learning community (that means you too!)  These individualised approaches and support, together with the focused HfL Back on Track materials targeting the teaching of the ***essential*** learning elements children need to learn in order to access the higher levels of learning (see constructivism <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constructionism_(learning_theory)>) and, with regards to the whole communities’ responsibilities, co-construction <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Co-construction_(learning)> |
| Follow up question to ‘gaps’...are you at the same point in the curriculum that you would be without ‘lockdown’. If not, when do you think you’ll be caught up? What can we do at home to help i.e. seeing the curriculum and start to introduce learning elements to fill the gaps, so they hit the ground running? Thanks... | Our aim this year is to make use of Googlemeet and other resources to really engage and support the incredible Croxley Green community to be a MASSIVE part of your child’s learning. This is both in supporting your child directly and through modelling a can do, have a go, try your best, we can do it, Growth Mindset.  The evidence in regards to this is absolutely clear and quite obvious when you think about it. Children spend 80% of their waking life outside of school. The more positive experiences of learning they have during these times, the better they will develop as learners.  We will be doing everything we can to make our learning purposeful, challenging and engaging and, if we can get you supporting that process too, we can make the biggest difference to the children we all care about.  ***It takes a community to raise a child!*** |
| Thank you for all your support and advice for future meetings. We are keen to make use of our Google infrastructure -let’s see if any teachers can make it work at parents’ evening! We believe that Google is very keen to increase the functionality of Googlemeet to have breakout rooms etc. When they do, watch this space for some even more engaging, purposeful and challenging parent workshops!  Yours sincerely,  Mr Hyde, Mr Roberts and the Little Green Team! | |
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