CARRANT BROOK
Junior School

A PARENTS' GUIDE TO BOOK BANDS

What are Book Bands?

The Book Band system helps us to grade our books by difficulty level. Each level has its own colour and includes a selection of different reading scheme books and 'real' books. The difference between each band is gradual so that children will not experience difficulty when moving from one to the next.

This chart gives an indication of the range of Book Band levels at which most children will be reading as they progress through the school.

BOOK BAND COLOUR	EYFS	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
PINK							
RED							
YELLOW							
LIGHT BLUE							
GREEN							
ORANGE							
TURQUOISE							
PURPLE							
GOLD							
WHITE			x	x			
LIME							
BROWN							
GREY							
DARK BLUE							
MAROON							

The chart shows the Book Bands for an 'average' group of children but children are all individuals who learn and make progress at different rates, so the chart is only a guide. As well as periods of rapid progress, your child will probably have periods of consolidation when progress is not as obvious. Although this may seem worrying, this is the time when they have the chance to develop confidence in using and applying their newly acquired skills.

It is really important that children develop their comprehension skills alongside their ability to read the words on the page, so you may find that your child is able to read the words fluently but continues on the same Book Band colour for a while to enable them to focus on developing their understanding. Class teachers assess the children's reading on a regular basis and will change their Book Band colour only when they are confident that **both** the comprehension and word reading targets have been fully met.

Please discourage your child from seeing the Book Bands as a race through the colours, but help them to understand that each band will offer a range of books which will help them in developing different reading skills.

Thank you for reading with your child at home. It really is an essential part of their development and you play a vital role in nurturing their love of reading.

A GUIDE TO THE DIFFERENT COLOURED BOOK BANDS

PINK

Pink is perfect for introducing fundamental reading concepts and skills to early readers. This band includes the first level of reading scheme books.

Pupil Targets:

- Listen carefully to stories
- Read their own name
- Follow the words on a page in the right direction
- Tell a familiar story in their own words
- Know that letters have different sounds
- Recognise high frequency words
- Guess what might happen in a book

How to support your child:

Your child is beginning to learn how to read. As they read, please help them to:

- Read the words carefully. Ask your child to sound out and blend only the words they can't read yet, not every word. Eventually almost all words will become part of your child's 'sight memory' and they won't have to sound out at all.
- On second and third readings of the book, encourage them to read with more pace and with less focus on sounding out the letters in each word.
- Make a story out of a whole book, rather than focusing just on what is happening on each page.
- Ask about something that happened in the book, or about something they found out in the book.

RED

Once a child can recognise 25 - 30 high frequency words, then they will be ready for Red. Red books will have an increased number of words on a page. Recurring families and animal characters are also introduced at this stage.

Pupil Targets:

- Find the title of the book, turn the pages, start reading on the left
- Use illustrations to help them understand what is happening in a story
- If they are unfamiliar with a word, try to think of a word that would make sense in that sentence
- Know what a full stop is
- Sing the alphabet song
- Use phonemes to read words such as 'cat', 'if' and 'up'
- Make the reading sound like talking – not like a robot
- Re-tell the story including all the main parts

How to support your child:

Your child is beginning to learn to read. As they read, please help them to:

- Read the words carefully. Most of the words can be recognised or sounded out. Ask your child to sound out and blend only the words they can't read yet, not every word. Eventually almost all words will become part of your child's 'sight memory' and they won't have to sound out at all.
- On second and third readings of the book, encourage them to read with more pace and with less focus on sounding out the letters in each word.
- Make a story out of a whole book, rather than focusing just on what is happening on each page.
- Ask your child to re-tell the story.

YELLOW

Books at this level present children with new vocabulary. The amount of words per page has slightly increased, with one new word for every twenty familiar words. Non-fiction titles at this level build on children's interests and encourage discussion.

Pupil Targets:

- Re-tell a story from memory, including detail
- Read a book without pointing at the words, unless they get stuck
- Blend phonemes together to understand a word, e.g. d-o-g
- Make the reading sound interesting using punctuation, such as speech marks and question marks
- Notice and correct some of their mistakes
- Sometimes, they can work out what is going to happen next in a story

How to support your child:

Your child is now beginning to read with more confidence. As they read aloud, you can help them by:

- giving them time to sound out words they don't know. If they still struggle, encourage them to try sounding out the whole word, rather than guessing from the pictures or from the first letter
- giving them time to recognise and correct their own mistakes
- asking them to talk about what's happening in the book, encouraging them to make links to events on previous pages and to say what they think will happen next

LIGHT BLUE

Once children can recognise 100 high frequency words, then it's time for Blue. Books at this level will start to become more complex and children will rely less on illustrations. The books in this band also teach children how to read with insight and will encourage them to read with expression.

Pupil Targets:

- Choose books that they are interested in from the library
- Read longer and more complicated books
- Say why they like or don't like the book
- Start to choose different books to read
- Talk about a story in their own words
- Don't always need pictures to help them understand a story
- Notice and correct some of their mistakes fairly quickly
- Answer questions about the story to show a level of understanding
- Read words such as 'some', 'little', 'when', and 'out'

How to support your child:

Your child is now developing into a more confident reader. As they read, you can help by encouraging them to:

- Sound out quickly under their breath or inside their head, if they need to sound out words.
- Recognise and correct their own mistakes.
- Look at the punctuation marks. You may want to model how to read a page of writing, paying attention to punctuation, such as full-stops and question marks.
- Tell you about what the characters in the story are doing and why they are acting in that way.

GREEN

Books banded Green will have more characters and different forms of text, such as non-fiction, rhymes, diagrams and verse. They introduce more compound words, some longer sentences and more punctuation.

Pupil Targets:

- Talk about each of the characters
- Start to read fluently at good speed and use full stops and commas, adding expression
- Notice rhyming words, even if they are not familiar with them
- Read texts in unusual layouts, such as in speech bubbles and lists
- Use a contents page and glossary in non-fiction books; talk about new words and what they mean
- Think about the overall plot of the book and talk about how they think it will end

How to support your child:

Your child is now developing into a more confident reader. As they read, you can help by encouraging them to:

- Sound out quickly under their breath or inside their head, if they need to sound out words.
- Look at the punctuation marks. You may want to model how to read a page of writing, paying attention to punctuation, such as full stops and question marks.
- They can tell you about what the characters in the story are doing and why they are acting in that way.
- They can show you how they can find particular things that interest them in non-fiction books.

ORANGE

Once children can recognise 250 high frequency words, they progress to Orange, which introduces new words and reinforces those already encountered. Orange books will have an increased number of words on each page.

Pupil Targets:

- Read longer sentences that use ‘because’, ‘if’ and ‘so’
- Read three syllable words out loud
- Use punctuation correctly when reading aloud
- Split a story up into sections and talk about the beginning, middle and end
- Don’t rely on pictures to understand what is happening in a story
- Know what fact, fiction and non-fiction means

How to support your child:

Your child is now beginning to read with more independence. They should be feeling more confident and will rarely need to sound out words. You can help them by:

- Listening to them when they read aloud. If they make mistakes, but they keep the sense of the text, don’t interrupt. You can revisit that page at the end of the session to check certain words.
- Reminding them of useful strategies if they can’t read a word, for example sounding the word out under their breath, dividing a longer word into syllables, or looking at the word without an –ing or an –ed ending.
- Not allowing them to spend too long trying to work out a word because they may lose the meaning of what they are reading. Tell them what it says and revisit the word once you have completed the book.
- Encouraging some use of expression, especially for character-speech in fiction books. You may wish to model reading some pages aloud for your child to copy.
- Talking about how characters are feeling.

TURQUOISE

Turquoise books will include an increasing number of adjectives and more descriptive verbs. The number of pictures on each page will decrease, whereas the text amount will increase. High-interest themes such as danger, courage and anger are introduced, and children will be confident with around 450 high frequency words.

Pupil Targets:

- Read silently in their head
- Read a sentence aloud with the correct expression
- Know why certain types of punctuation are used and how it affects the sentence
- Fluently read long sentences and paragraphs
- Decode unusual words by using the sounds they already know
- Read both fiction and non-fiction books

How to support your child:

Your child is now beginning to read with more independence and their books are getting longer. You can help them by:

- Encouraging them to read some pages silently, inside their heads.
- Listening to some pages read aloud, encouraging the use of expression and paying attention to punctuation marks.
- Talking about how events in the book relate to each other and helping your child to understand how the story builds up in a longer book.
- Asking them to tell you about interesting things they found out and to show you where the information is in the book.

PURPLE

Purple books will start to have more longer sentences and a wider range of challenging vocabulary. A lot of purple books will start to have shorter chapters to encourage a child's reading ability. Children will have encountered more of the high frequency words by this level, and teachers will be promoting reading for pleasure.

Pupil Targets:

- Read silently in their head for longer periods of time
- Read longer books with short chapters
- Read fiction, non-fiction and poetry
- Sound out most unfamiliar words as they read
- Use a dictionary to find the meaning of a word
- Explain why they think a book is good or not

How to support your child:

Your child is now beginning to read with more independence and their books are getting longer. You can help them by:

- Encouraging them to read some pages silently, inside their heads.
- Listening to them read some pages aloud, encouraging the use of expression and paying attention to punctuation marks.
- Talking about how events in the book relate to each other and helping your child to understand how the story builds up in a longer book.
- Asking them to tell you about interesting things they found out and to show you where the information is in the book.

GOLD

Gold books have a much more sophisticated style of language and will try to challenge the reader. Children at this reading level will now be able to understand unusual text layouts, complex language and notice the variation between different characters.

Pupil Targets:

- Read silently and read aloud with confidence
- Know how to use a contents page, glossary and index
- Use punctuation to help them read clearly
- Read books that have longer chapters
- Learn new information from reading non-fiction books
- Find information about authors which will help them to select certain books
- Talk about the way a story has been written

How to support your child:

Your child is now reading longer books with fewer illustrations, so they continue to need your help to ensure they are getting the full meaning and enjoyment from the text. They may prefer to read one chapter or section at a time, rather than reading the whole book in one session. You can support them by:

- Listening to them reading some pages of the book aloud to you so that you can enjoy hearing them read with expression and pace.
- Asking them to find parts of the text which describe a character or place and talking about the words used in the description.
- Asking for regular updates about what is happening in the book, so that they and you know how the different chapters or sections link.
- Talking about how much they enjoy a book, or a type of book, and encouraging them to look for more books of the type they enjoy.

WHITE

Sentences with two or three clauses and several verbs become more common in White and the length of texts extends to help build reading stamina. Real-life problems are also introduced to encourage empathy.

Pupil Targets:

- Find it easy to read silently
- Read for longer periods of time without stopping
- Use a dictionary and thesaurus
- Find certain pieces of information in texts
- Express opinions and ideas about what they have read
- Read a book without any pictures or illustrations
- Understand page features, such as titles, headings and sub-headings

How to support your child:

Your child is now reading longer books with fewer illustrations, so they continue to need your help to ensure they are getting the full meaning and enjoyment from the text. They may prefer to read one chapter or section at a time, rather than reading the whole book in one session. You can support them by:

- Listening to them reading some pages of the book aloud to you so that you can enjoy hearing them read with expression and pace.
- Asking them to find parts of the text which describe a character or place and talking about the words used in the description.
- Asking for regular updates about what is happening in the book, so that they and you know how the different chapters or sections link.
- Talking about how much they enjoy a book, or a type of book, and encouraging them to look for more books of the type they enjoy.

LIME

Lime provides a variety of chapter books and non-fiction titles. Lime readers should be encouraged to experience different texts, writing styles and genres to develop their own reading tastes. This colour band also includes a variety of topics and issues to provoke discussion.

Pupil Targets:

- Notice the smaller details within the book
- Read silently most of the time
- Re-read texts, unfamiliar language and complex sentences
- Use different voices for different characters in a story and performance pieces
- Tell the difference between the narrator's voice and character dialogue
- Understand hidden messages within a text and understand how a character might be feeling
- Read for a longer period without losing concentration
- Use glossary and indexes to locate information quickly
- Read a variety of fiction, non-fiction, poetry and plays

How to support your child:

Although your child is now taking off as a reader, it is still important that you read with them and talk to them about their reading. This reassures them that their reading is still important to you, as well as giving you an opportunity to share an enjoyment of books. You can still help them by:

- Listening to them reading aloud some parts of the text which they particularly enjoy. This may include action or description. Talk about how the writer made those parts so enjoyable.
- Talking about how characters develop or how they react to different people, places or events.
- Reading the book yourself so that you can talk together about the smaller details of the book.

BROWN

Brown books will continue to give children a variety of texts they need to become confident and successful readers. A range of characters, topics and text styles help to keep children engaged and encourage discussion.

Pupil Targets:

- Read fluently and pause reading in a suitable place
- Develop their own opinion about a book and discuss it with other people
- Filter through text and highlight key sections of important information
- Revisit a text and find answers by skimming and scanning each paragraph
- Fully understand each text when reading a variety of fiction, poetry, plays and non-fiction
- Actively enjoy reading for pleasure

How to support your child:

Your child may not want to read aloud to you so often now because they probably enjoy silent reading more. This is fine as long as your child continues to read actively when they are not reading aloud and does not just skim over the words. You can help them by:

- Continuing to make a time available for regular quiet reading sessions, and reading your book while your child reads.
- Asking them to choose a part of the text to read aloud, using expression and pausing in suitable places.
- Having a conversation at the end of each reading session: can they tell you what's happening in their book?
- Asking questions which make your child go back to the book to find answers - support them as they develop skills in skimming and scanning to find the information to answer your question.
- Continuing to read aloud to your child at bedtime. This shows them the importance you place on reading as well as developing their language, vocabulary and love of story.

GREY

Children reading Grey banded books will be able to interpret more sophisticated word-play and understand a range of narration styles. Children should now be able to discuss the characters and narrator in much more detail. Children at this level may enjoy silent reading more, so allow time for regular quiet reading sessions.

CARRANT BROOK
Junior School

Pupil Targets:

- Develop own opinions of characters in a story
- Explain a character's motivations
- Understand the use of word-plays and puns
- Understand the use of figurative and literal language
- Make notes and highlight the key events in a story
- Talk in different voices to represent each character and narration
- Have a wider knowledge of narration styles

How to support your child:

Your child may not want to read aloud to you so often now because they probably enjoy silent reading more. This is fine as long as your child continues to read actively when they are not reading aloud and does not just skim over the words. You can help them by:

- Continuing to make a time available for regular quiet reading sessions, and reading your book while your child reads.
- Asking them to choose a part of the text to read aloud, using different voices to show their understanding of different characters.
- Having a conversation at the end of each reading session: can they tell you what's happening in their book?
- Asking questions which make your child go back to the book to find answers - support them as they develop skills in skimming and scanning to find the information to answer your question.
- Continuing to read aloud to your child at bedtime. This shows them the importance you place on reading as well as developing their language, vocabulary and love of story.

DARK BLUE

Dark Blue books provide a selection of stories and non-fiction books, including a range of content, narrative styles and points of view. This level encourages readers to form opinions and discuss their own reading tastes. These books will have more complex text features, such as an overarching plot and deeper structures of character relationships and themes.

Pupil Targets:

- Understand how the use of chapters and paragraphs are used to build up ideas
- Compare and discuss the work of an author whilst discussing the positives and negatives of a book
- Read more elaborate descriptive vocabulary
- Challenge themselves when reading and learn new things from texts
- Observe and explain the purpose, audience and viewpoints of different texts

How to support your child:

Books at Dark Blue level are more complex which means that it is important that the reader is conscious of the structure, language and vocabulary the writer is using. Although your child should enjoy them, the books will provide a challenge and need the reader to be alert and willing to learn. You can support them by:

- Continuing to make a time available for regular quiet reading sessions, and reading your book while your child reads.
- Sometimes asking them to choose a part of the text to read aloud, showing their understanding by using expression, tone and pace.
- Before a reading session, asking your child to find and note down some particular information. It could relate to the plot or it could be something like: a really good descriptive passage; three words which are adventurous; two words you want to use in your next piece of writing; an example of something typical a character does or says; how one character's reaction to another shows their relationship … These types of questions don't mean you have to read the book yourself, but they help to alert your child to its possibilities. Don't forget to discuss what they found!

MAROON

Maroon books encourage children to synthesise information from different places in a text. Children are beginning to recognise how layers of meaning allow for the build-up of humour or tension, and can discuss how the author has achieved these effects. Books at this level are written in a much subtler way, meaning that the reader will need to fully engage with a book in order to understand it.

Pupil Targets:

- Explain and discuss the key features of a text
- Describe how and why the author has written their book and discuss the impact it has on the reader
- Identify how the author conveys messages, moods and attitudes
- Challenge themselves when reading and learn new things whilst reading longer books
- Make own decisions about the types of books they are interested in and want to read
- Demonstrate a good level of competence in both decoding and comprehension
- Regularly read long chapter books for pleasure

How to support your child:

The books at this level will provide a level of challenge which means that it is important that your child is fully engaged with the process of reading and conscious of the structure, language and vocabulary the writer is using and the impact that this has on the reader. Their understanding will be deepened through opportunities to discuss what they have read. You can help them by:

- Continuing to make a time available for regular quiet reading sessions, and reading your book while your child reads.
- Before a reading session, asking your child to find and note down some particular information. It could relate to the plot or it could be something like: a really good descriptive passage; three words which are adventurous; two words you want to use in your next piece of writing; an example of something typical a character does or says; how one character's reaction to another shows their relationship … There are lots of questions you can ask which don't mean you have to read the book yourself, but help to alert your child to its possibilities. Don't forget to discuss what they found!
- Suggesting that your child invites friends to a 'Book Group'. If they are all reading the same book, you could skim-read the book first and prepare some questions for the book group to discuss. Or perhaps the Book Group could be an opportunity for them to recommend and share new books with each other.