Children Who Struggle with Reading

As you will know, however good the class teaching of reading in a school, there will be some children who struggle to make progress. Children who are beginning to fall behind their peers will need additional support through a focused intervention that strengthens children’s phonic skills and application as well as developing their understanding of what they are reading.

Supporting struggling readers

1. Early identification is key to prevent the development of entrenched feelings of failure and loss of self-esteem.
2. Provide additional intervention with phonics as the primary approach and use a motivating, structured programme that builds confidence and independence.
3. Remember that struggling readers will need lots of opportunities for overlearning, by repeatedly revisiting key knowledge and skills until they become familiar.

Teaching phonics

1. Help to strengthen children’s rapid recall of letter-sound, or grapheme-phoneme, correspondences so that recognition becomes automatic.
2. Ensure children can blend the phonemes all through the word.
3. Practise reading the high frequency tricky words that are so critical for improving pace and fluency.

Teaching comprehension

1. Remember that talking together about books is a vital element of extending comprehension and building engagement.
2. Use a range of comprehension activities that teach specific aspects of comprehension. Use them frequently so that they become familiar to the children and they can eventually use them independently.
3. Know whether you are teaching comprehension or assessing comprehension – they are two different things. Many question and answer comprehension activities are more about testing what children know than supporting them in developing and extending comprehension skills.