

Dear Parent/Carers,

As we start our new school year, we are excited to tell you further details regarding our approach to teaching reading in school. Over the past few weeks and months, all teaching staff have undertaken some new training on the way we teach reading, phonics and spellings in school. At the end of the summer term we sent a letter providing information on our new phonics programme, which is called Unlocking Letters and Sounds.

As we have begun this new approach to teaching reading, our reading books have changed. As mentioned in the previous reading letter, we will operate a two-book system – one decodable book and one sharing book (reading for pleasure book).

All children will have an opportunity to choose a new ‘reading for pleasure’ book once a week (the day will vary from year group to year group) from our class reading corners or school library. This week your child will have brought this book home, along with their reading record book. The children are NOT expected to read this at home on their own, but to share with an adult. Please read this book to your child asking them questions about what you have read to check their understanding, discuss new vocabulary and help them to develop their comprehension skills.

This week we have been assessing the children’s reading ability so that we can provide them with an appropriate home reading book, which they can read independently. Next week your child will bring home this reading book.

In KS1 children will bring home a fully phonetically decodable reading book (these books will match your child’s current secure knowledge and understanding of letters and their corresponding sounds). Please encourage your child to re-read this book at least three times - for decoding, fluency, comprehension and prosody (reading aloud with expression without sounding out the words). Children will change their decodable home book during their guided reading session; for instance, if they read with an adult during their guided reading session on a Monday, they will be allocated a book at this time. Your child’s teacher will make you aware, via their reading record, which day they will be changing their home reading book. Please make sure that your child’s book is returned on their specified day so it can be changed for a new one.

Once a child no longer requires a fully decodable book, they move to choose between a selection of year-group suggested book band books. Although these books may not be fully decodable, they will be a very close match to your child’s reading attainment and will continue to provide children with a pathway of progression in reading. Children will be encouraged to change these books independently on a regular basis.

Your role in the teaching of reading remains paramount to your child’s progress and this is highly valued by the school. Your child should engage with reading, with you, for at least 10

minutes a day outside of school. We will expect this recorded in their reading records. In Reception and KS1 we will need parents to make a record of their child's reading in their individual reading record. This just needs to be a simple comment e.g. lovely reading... which is then signed. In KS2 we will expect pupils to keep a record and parents to sign for their child at the end of each week. We intend to be as insistent as possible that this happens. Please can you ensure that reading books and records are brought into school every day.

We recognise that there are very many ways into reading and therefore from now on, when children are 'learning to read' we will accept any form of engagement in reading, including a child reading to an adult from a decodable reading scheme book, a child reading a non-scheme book from home or school or an adult reading a book to their child. There are many ways in which, within these parameters, you can help your child enjoy reading first and foremost, and secondly learn to read. All we would ask is that you aim to find a productive balance between real books and scheme books; reading to them and having them read to you; reading pictures and reading text; talking about books and reading books. Now that we are encouraging a more flexible definition of what constitutes 'engaging in reading' this will hopefully make daily reading a more manageable and enjoyable aim for many parents and children.

To further encourage and celebrate reading at home, we are continuing to refresh our whole school reading reward scheme. This year, to keep the incentive alive and maintain excitement around reading, we are launching a new and exciting reward scheme for regular reading, which we will share with you at our base information evenings.

We thank you for your continued support with your child's reading.

Lauren Palmer

(Curriculum Lead/ Phonics Lead)