



Changes to the Teaching of Phonics and Reading

Dear Parents,

We are very excited to share with you a new venture that we are about to embark on as a school. Following a recent change in government guidance we have decided to invest in a brand new scheme for teaching early reading in our school. This will impact the way that both phonics and reading are taught, particularly in Dormice and Hedgehogs Class. Some children in Badgers who, through the pandemic, missed out on many aspects of phonics teaching, will also be following this new scheme.

Phonics will continue to be taught daily to all children but will be taught following a newly released phonics scheme called 'Little Wandle-Letters and Sounds revised'. This is a very thorough and very rigorous programme which teaches the children the skills they need to read. All children will be working alongside peers with a similar secure phonic knowledge.

Children who have a full knowledge of phonics and are fluent readers, mainly children in Squirrels and some children in Badgers classes, will have either daily spelling lessons or SPAG (spelling, punctuation and grammar) lessons for our most able children.

Across the whole school, alongside our daily phonics lessons, each child will take part in three reading practice sessions. We have been lucky enough to buy sets of 120 new early reading books which are fully decodable for the children and entirely matched to the phonics scheme. Children will be reading in small groups and will read the same book three times with adults in school before bringing it home to read with you. Each read in school will have a different focus:

- Decoding
- Prosody- reading with rhythm, stress and intonation
- Comprehension

When the children read the book with you at home it will be to 'show off' the skills they have learnt so you can see the wonderful progress they are making.

We will be sending these books home as 'e-books' as we are keen to protect our sets of books so will be keeping these in school.

Those children in Badgers class who are working beyond our new reading scheme, but are not quite at the level of being a free reader, will continue to bring home a high level Oxford Reading Tree books to read with you. The children who are free readers in both Badgers and Squirrels class will bring home a book to read that is at their level of ability. These 'free readers' will be challenged to start reading some classic books as well as books of their own choosing.

Supporting your child with reading

Although your child will be taught to read at school, you can have a huge impact on their reading journey by continuing their practice at home.

ALL children will be bringing home two different books each week:

A reading practice book (e-book). This will be at the correct phonic stage for your child. They should be able to read this fluently and independently.

This book has been carefully matched to your child's current reading level. If your child is reading it with little help, please don't worry that it's too easy – your child needs to develop fluency and confidence in reading.

Listen to them read the book. Remember to give them lots of praise – celebrate their success! If they can't read a word, read it to them. After they have finished, talk about the book together.

For those children reading the higher level Oxford Reading Tree books and those children on free readers need to read at least four times a week and this needs to be evidenced in their reading record books.

A sharing book. Your child will not necessarily be able to read this on their own, particularly children from Year R to Year 3. This book is for you both to read and enjoy together.

In order to encourage your child to become a lifelong reader, it is important that they learn to read for pleasure. The sharing book is a book they have chosen from either their class or school library for you to enjoy together.

Please remember that you shouldn't expect your child to read this alone. Read it to or with them. Discuss the pictures, enjoy the story, predict what might happen next, use different voices for the characters; explore the facts in a non-fiction book. The main thing is that you have fun! REMEMBER children are never too old to be read to!

Interesting facts:-

Here's how many words children would have heard by the time they were 5 years old:

Never read to: 4,662 words;

1–2 times per week: 63,570 words;

3–5 times per week: 169,520 words;

Daily: 296,660 words;

and five books a day: 1,483,300 words

This demonstrates how powerful what you do at home impacts on your child's speaking into reading into writing!

Our new reading scheme will be replacing all other reading books used in Dormice and Hedgehogs classes.

Details of how to access your child's allocated ebooks, for those children following the Little Wandle scheme, will follow shortly as will details of further phonics workshops should you wish to attend them to find out more about how you can support your child at home.

We hope you are as excited as we are to embark on this new journey in to Little Wandle Letters and Sounds. Our new resources have arrived and we started using them yesterday!

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to talk to one of us!

Kind Regards

Miss Payne

English Subject Leader