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Headteacher: Andy Bowman

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Dear Parents/ Carers,

We are writing to inform you about our new phonics and early reading program and how you can support it at home. We are very excited about this change for our school to ensure our children's reading becomes even better than it currently is. In order to maximise the opportunities for all our EYFS and Year 1 children we have purchased beautiful new resources for teaching phonics, received training for the whole school staff, purchased over 2000 brand new books and a full online library to match!

Phonics Programme

Our school has chosen Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised as our systematic synthetic phonics (SSP) programme to teach early reading and spelling. It is based on the original Letters and Sounds which like many other schools across the country, we have been championing for many years. Little Wandle has extensively revised 'Letters and Sounds' to provide a complete teaching programme, which is fully resourced and sets expectations of progression that are aspirational yet achievable.

We will work through the entire Little Wandle Programme until your child can successfully utilise their phonic knowledge and blending skills to read fluently. Children need to learn to read as quickly as reasonably possible, so they can move from learning to read, to reading to learn, giving them access to the treasure house of reading.

What's happening in school?

Phonics in Nursery

If your child attends our Nursery provision we will be preparing them by teaching them the foundations of phonics. We use engaging games to teach oral blending and phonemic awareness. We support language development and a love of books through: sharing high-quality stories and poems, learning a range of nursery rhymes and action rhymes, activities that develop focused listening and attention and pay attention to high-quality language with children.

Phonics in Reception and Year 1

As usual, children in Reception and Year 1 will continue to have daily phonics lessons. They will be taught 4 new grapheme phoneme correspondences (GPCs) per week, plus a review lesson on a Friday. Knowing a GPC means being able to match a phoneme (sound) to a grapheme (written representation) and vice versa. The children will also learn a series of 'tricky words'. Tricky words are those words which cannot be sounded out using their phonemes. We will build into the timetable some weeks for the children to consolidate what has been taught so far. We assess your child every six weeks to check progress. Any child who needs extra support will have keep-up sessions planned for them.

Reading

Children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 will also take part in Reading Practice Sessions. We will be using our gorgeous brand new books published by HarperCollins for Little Wandle. The children will gain access to an online library, where a copy of the same book they are reading in school will become available for them to access at home.

Reading Teaching Sessions are:

- Timetabled 3 times a week
- Taught by a trained teacher / Learning support assistant
- Taught in small groups

The children read the same book three times a week. The first time we work on decoding (sounding out) the words, the second time we work on prosody, which is reading with expression - making the book sound more interesting with our storyteller voice or David Attenborough voice - and the third time we look at comprehension. We read the book three times in school because we want to develop fluency. The more children see words, the more they begin to read them automatically without having to sound them out.

Supporting your child with reading at home

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.

There will be three types of reading book that your child will now bring home:

- **A reading practice book.** As usual, we will continue to change an actual, physical book every week.
- **A sharing book**
- **An online reading practice book.** This book will be an electronic copy of the same book shared in the classroom sessions.

Reading practice books (the eBook and the physical book)

These decodable books have been carefully matched to your child's current reading level.

When listening to them read the book please remember to give them lots of praise – celebrate their success and where necessary their perseverance!

Tips:

- If they can't read a word, allow them time to use their sounds to build it up, where necessary help them to build the word or read it to them.
- Re-read sentences with the children to develop rhythm and intonation.
- After they have finished, talk about the book together.

Sharing book

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 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 nonfiction book. The main thing is that you have fun!

Accessing the online library

Every Wednesday, your child will be signposted to a copy of the book they are reading in school. The title of the book will be communicated with you in the Reading Record and you will be able to access the book in the Collins Big Cat eBook library. We would like you to only read the assigned book, even if there are more titles available in the library to explore. The reason for this is because we would like the children to be excited about exploring a new book each week in school. A letter will soon go home with your child detailing their unique login details so please do keep a look out for this letter in book bags.

Reading Records

We will continue to use the Reading Records to note your child's assigned books. It is important to us that the record is easy for families to complete so please leave a short comment in the record to let us know your child has read the books. We are always interested to hear how they got on.

We look forward to catching up with you about your child's reading progress in our parent's evenings. Please do not hesitate to talk to the teachers if you have any questions about your child's reading in the meantime.

Supporting phonics at home

For further information on how to support your child with phonics, please visit the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds website:

<https://www.littlewandlelettersandsounds.org.uk/resources/for-parents/>

You will find a grapheme information sheet to help you with formation and pronunciation. It is really important that you pronounce the sounds correctly at home if you are supporting your child. The videos are on the website for you to refer to and if you are unsure, please ask your child's teacher.

We hope you and your child enjoy reading together at home. Thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely,

Voirrey Armstrong

Reception Class Teacher
Early Reading and Phonics Lead