



Dear Families,

We are very excited to be starting a new phonics scheme this year. Staff have worked hard to prepare resources, complete training and increase our book stock (thank you to FONS for help with this too). As with anything new, it will take time to get used to the new programme but we would really like to involve our families and keep you up to date with what is happening in school.

Here are some frequently asked questions, which we think you'll find useful.

Why are we starting a new phonic scheme?

In July, the Government produced the new 'reading framework' centred around early reading research. It states that by ensuring high-quality phonics teaching, the government wants to improve literacy levels to:

- give all children a solid base upon which to build as they progress through school
- help children to develop the habit of reading widely and often, for both pleasure and information

A validated systematic synthetic phonics (SSP) teaching programme should be used in all schools.

Which validated programme have we chosen?

We have chosen Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised, which is a complete systematic synthetic phonics programme (SSP) developed for schools by schools. Little Wandle is based on the original Letters and Sounds, but extensively revised to provide a complete teaching programme meeting all the expectations of the National Curriculum. It also matches the Big Cat range of books that we already have in school – ensuring the investment the school made in these books just months ago is not wasted.

How will phonics be taught in school?

Phonics will be taught every day, usually the first session of the day. The session will last for around 30mins and be led by the teacher. All the class will stay together and then there will be keep up and catch-up sessions for small groups and individuals during the day.

How will reading be taught in school?

Children will read in small, same ability groups **three** times each week. This will be with a teacher or teacher assistant. The same Big Cats scheme book will be read in the group each time but each session will focus on three specific skills of reading:

- Session 1: Decoding (sounding out and reading the words)
- Session 2: Prosody (expression and reading with meaning in our voices)
- Session 3: Comprehension (understanding what has been read)

Will my child take home a scheme book?

The book that has been used in the three reading sessions will be sent home via Collins Ebooks. This is to ensure all our new books stay in complete sets within school for all pupils to use. This **reading practice** book will be **fully decodable** and match your child's phonic ability. They should not struggle or find the book a challenge. Please avoid thinking that this is then too 'easy' for my child – you should listen to them read with confidence and enjoy their expression and knowledge of the book.

Will my child take home an actual book too?

Yes! If children are to become lifelong readers, it is essential that they are encouraged to read for pleasure. The desire of wanting to read will help with the skill of reading. To help foster a love of reading, children will take a book home that they can share and enjoy with you. This will be a book of their choice from the class library. This is known as **the sharing book**. **You should not expect your child to read this book independently** and certainly should not try to get your child to do so. This book is for you to read to or with your child and enjoy together. Children in Y2 who have completed the phonics programme will take home a range of reader books matched to their ability.

Will I need to write in their reading diary?

Yes please! This information gives all staff an insight into reading at home. Please ensure your child's reading diary is in their book bag every day. Comments could be as simple as:

Read the sharing book together and enjoyed.
[Name] predicted what would happen.
We had to read it twice it was so good!
I was impressed with [name] expression.
Fluent and confident.
Read well.

Will all children be taught using Little Wandle?

Yes! Reception children will start the programme from the beginning. Y1 children will be revising some of their sounds from last year and then teachers will be assessing where they need to start on the programme. As previously mentioned, many Year 2 pupils have completed a phonics programme last year and will be taking home a range of reading books but some are also revising some sounds using the Little Wandle session styles.

Can I get more information about Little Wandle?

Yes! There is a dedicated area on the Little Wandle website for parents:

www.littlewandlelettersandsounds.org.uk/resources/for-parents/

This site has videos demonstrating how to say the sounds, downloads of the sounds we are teaching and further support for reading at home. We shall also send more information home at times and are looking at organising a parent's reading workshop in the future.

We hope that this has been useful but if you think of any other questions, please do not hesitate to speak to your child's class teacher.

Mrs Barker
Headteacher

Mrs Bosley
Reading Lead