



Woodborough Church of England Primary School

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Headteacher: Mrs Sarah Brewis

4th September 2019

Dear Parents and Carers of Pupils in Oak, Sycamore and Maple Classes

Introducing our new phonics phase reading books and approach to reading at home with your child(ren).

We are delighted to begin the new school year with the news that we have a wonderful selection of brand new reading books for pupils in our Reception and Key Stage 1 classes. Although our pupils' reading attainment and outcomes are always really strong, we were very aware that the reading matter on offer to them in school was somewhat outdated. In the spring and summer terms of last year, Mrs Wren, our English subject leader, worked to compose a successful bid for both funding for reading books and also for staff training (the first session of which will take place on our Teacher Development Day on 2nd September).

Our new phonics phase reading books (replacing our previous colour banded reading books), arrived at the end of the summer term and have been stamped, sorted and assigned to classes. They are all based on the 'Letters and Sounds' systematic synthetic phonics programme that we use in school.

[**Synthetic phonics** is a method of teaching reading. Children are taught to read letters or groups of letters by saying the sound(s) they represent. Children start to read words by blending (synthesising) the sounds (phonemes) together to make a word. **Systematic synthetic phonics** is key to teaching children reading and writing. It provides them with strategies to decode words, which is especially important because English is such a difficult language to learn with the many different ways to make the same sound from different letters or combinations of letters.]

This means that as of the start of the new academic year, all of the reading scheme books that we use in school will be decodable and will follow the groups of phonemes being learned by the children.

Additionally, we have extended the selection of reading scheme books that will be available to the children beyond the 'gold band' where our last reading scheme had previously ended. At the beginning of the autumn term, all children in Oak Class will be assessed, and children in Sycamore and Maple Classes will be re-assessed according to their phonic ability. As a result, children who may previously have moved on to 'free reading' books may arrive home this academic year with phonics phase reading books. Please be assured that this is not a backwards step for your child(ren) – our new books offer more challenge than their predecessors and the additional reading scheme books will further strengthen pupils' progress and understanding.

Finally, children will bring home their new phonics phase reading books for at least one week at a time. These will be accompanied by an additional book of your child(ren)'s choosing. This book is intended to be shared and enjoyed with an adult (e.g. picture books will promote creation of shared stories and other books may need to be read to your child(ren) and discussed). As a whole school we are planning to raise the profile of pupils reading regularly at home - a little and often, and on at least five occasions each week. The inside covers of the new reading books in Oak, Sycamore and Maple Classes all contain suggested areas for adults to focus on throughout the week when helping the child(ren) learn to read their particular book. A new phonics phase reading book will be sent home once there are five signatures in your child(ren)'s reading record book and their class teacher is satisfied that they are ready to move on.



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We are very excited about our lovely new books and ask that they are looked after well on their journeys to and from school and whilst they are being enjoyed at home. We do appreciate that this new approach is quite different to our previous 'reading with an adult at home' method. To that end, we would like to extend an invitation to you to join us on **Thursday 5th September, at 2.30 pm** to view our new resources and also to have the opportunity to further discuss the approach that we will all be using to enable your child(ren) to become confident, fluent and passionate readers. Please save the date and return the slip/send us an email to let us know if you'd like to attend.

Yours sincerely

Sarah Brewis
Headteacher

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Thursday 5th September, 2.30 pm

I will / will not be attending the information and discussion session.

Parent / carer of _____ Class

Signature _____