



Thursday 20th May



Learning God's Way

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Dear Parents/Carers,

I am writing to inform you about our new reading scheme for infant children, give you a bit of background about how we teach reading here at St Margaret's and provide you with some video resources to enable you to support your child with reading at home.

After half term we will be implementing a brand new reading scheme using some of our existing books, as well as a lovely selection of new books. We will be re-organising our scheme so that your child will bring home a book that practises the phonics they are learning in school. This book should be seen as their 'learning to read' book. Ideally, children should try to read some of this book each day in short bursts and re-read it several times to gain confidence and fluency.

Please could all current scheme books be brought back in to school by Wednesday 26th May so we can sort out all the books ready to start the new scheme after half term. Unfortunately, this means your child will not be able to have a book over the half term break.

The new books will be decodable, meaning your child can use and practise their phonic skills (the phonic code) by sounding out words and blending the sounds back together to read the whole word. The books will also contain some common exception words/ tricky words. The children can still use their phonic knowledge to help them read these words but will not be able to fully sound them out and blend them e.g. in the word 'was' they can hear the 'w' and 's' but they have to learn and remember the tricky bit in the middle.

You can support your child with their reading book by helping them to sound out and blend words. In order to do this you will need to pronounce the sounds correctly yourself.

This is a vital part of helping your child learn to read. It is very important that you do not add /err/ to the end of sounds as this makes it impossible to blend the sounds back together to read. Please watch these Oxford Owls (link below) film clips as they will empower you with the knowledge and skills to support your child with reading at home.

This video shows you how pronounce the phonic sounds correctly:

<https://youtu.be/UCI2mu7URBc>

This short video shows you how to support your child with blending sounds to read:

<https://youtu.be/vqvgMtSNswo>

Background on how we teach phonics

Children are taught to read at St Margaret's through a progressive phonic approach. The sounds and skills taught are split into phases ranging from phase 1 to 6. The expectation is that children in Early Years work on phases 1-4, Year 1: phase 5 and Year 2: phase 6. However, children progress through reading at different rates and therefore your child may be working below or above these national expectations, depending on their own individual reading journey.

For this reason, children in each year group are split into smaller phonics groups that match the phase they're at. We assess children throughout the year, with a formal assessment at the end of each half term. Teachers then discuss each child and place them in the appropriate phonics group for the following half term. Children who are not progressing as we hope will be offered intervention activities outside of the daily phonic session in a group or on a 1-1 basis.

This video talks through what children will learn at each phase:

<https://youtu.be/j71e8D9v9Jo>

This video explains what phonics is and how we teach reading and writing through this approach:

<https://youtu.be/42jb6PopZCI>

How the new scheme will be organised

The books are currently organised in bands named as fruits or vegetables. These names will no longer be in use. We want all adults involved in helping a child read to know and understand which phase they are working on. Therefore, our new scheme will be explicitly referred to as Phase 1/2/3/4/5 or 6 books. Some phases will be split into sub phases using a/b/c etc. We have given the phases an overall 'child-friendly' name but children will also know which phase they are working on. This allows you to effectively support your child with their reading and access games etc online that match the correct phase they are working on.

These are the new names:

Phase 1 – Raindrops

Phase 2 – Rainbows

Phase 3 – Clouds

Phase 4 – Moon

Phase 5 – Planets

Phase 6 – Stars

All the books will have a label showing a picture of which phase the book practices and the phase number with sub phase where appropriate e.g.



Reading volunteers

We are delighted to finally be able to welcome parents/ relatives and friends back in to school to support children with their reading. We have been so very grateful to St Margaret's church for their army of 30+ volunteers currently working in Year 1 to hear readers. Thanks also to other parents/ volunteers who have started to come in to help. If you would like to volunteer some time to hear readers please get in contact with your class teacher.

'Choosing books'

Here at St Margaret's we aim to promote and develop a love of reading right from the Early Years. As a part of this, after half term, all infant children will bring home a 'choosing book' in addition to their reading scheme book. These books can be shared together and read by an adult/ sibling to your child. This will enable your child to access texts with a wider vocabulary and enjoy listening to a wide range of stories and information books. They can be changed as often as your child wishes.

And finally...

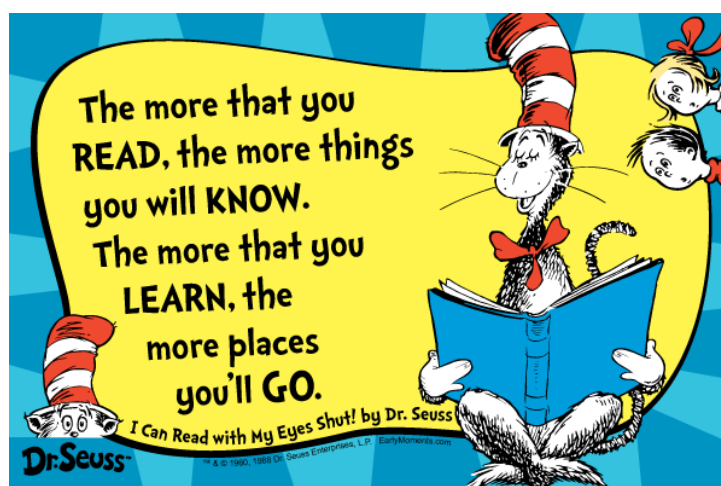
It is my vision here at St Margaret's that with a strong home-school partnership, we can foster a love of reading in your child and ensure they learn the phonic skills and knowledge to become confident, fluent readers by the time they leave the Infant department.

Please do get in touch if you have any questions (oak@stmargaretsprimary.org.uk) or contact your teacher directly if you have any specific concerns about your child's reading progress.

Many thanks for your continuing support.

Kind Regards

Clare Collins
Assistant Headteacher



To develop a life-long love of learning; to grow spiritually and reflect Jesus in our words and action; to foster self-respect and love for others; to provide opportunities for ALL to flourish; to serve our community; to prepare and equip for an ever-changing world.