



Dear Parents,

We are so excited to be able to share our new approach to the teaching of phonics and early reading with you. This has been implemented across early years and KS1. You may have heard snippets of information about 'Anima Phonics' from class teachers but it feels great that we are now fully engaged with the programme.

You will have noticed that reading books are now being sent home again. We are grateful for your patience whilst we got this up and running. As you can imagine this has taken a lot of time and dedication from all of our staff so please bear with us as there may be some teething issues.

Our key aim as a whole school is to develop a love of reading for all children. The Anima Phonics books (and all decodable books for that matter) have been designed so that children can read independently, using books that contain only the sounds that they know. If a child feels as though they can read anything that is put in front of them, rather than requiring an adult to constantly support, then you are setting them up for success. We always talk about developing a child's love of reading and this is exactly how to go about it.

*"Decodable books make children feel successful from the very beginning. They do not encounter words that include letters and sounds they have not been taught. If an adult is not present, they are not forced to guess from pictures, the context, the first letters of a word or its shape. Decodable books and texts that children read should run alongside or a little behind the teaching of the letters and sounds, so that they always feel a sense of achievement when they are asked to read such books."* Department for Education, 2021, The Reading Framework.

As a school we have always prided ourselves on fantastic phonics teaching. This has been demonstrated through our phonics screening scores which are consistently above national average. So you may ask why change what we were doing? There has been a change in the Ofsted framework which means that every school will be inspected on their phonics. Inspectors will assess how early reading skills are developed and how closely the books match the children's phonic knowledge. This is what the expert evidence shows is the best and fastest way of developing children's reading skills.

You will have noticed changes already, for example, the reading book may not be challenging your child but as previously explained this encourages a love of reading, independence and consolidates what we have taught at school. We want our children to feel a sense of success after reading.

We hope this provides you with the information as to why we have aligned our phonics programme with updated government expectations.

If you have any other queries, please have a chat with your child's class teacher.

Kind regards

Lisa Stephenson & Louise Swindlehurst