Dear Parent/Carer,

In line with government guidance, we are making changes to the way in which we teach phonics. We wanted to let you know how our delivery of Phonics teaching will now be different. If your child is in Early Years, there will be no differences for them. However, siblings may have taught so this overview will be useful!

We have already started teaching the children, using the new Phonics scheme ‘Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised’. There is a ‘For parents’ section on their website if you would like more detail: [www.littlewandlelettersandsounds.org.uk/resources/for-parents/](http://www.littlewandlelettersandsounds.org.uk/resources/for-parents/)

A lot of aspects remain the same. The children are still having daily phonics sessions. However, each phoneme (sound) has a picture mnemonic which matches a formation phrase, e.g. the phoneme ‘s’ is, “Under the snake’s chin, slide down and round its tail.” There is also a pronunciation phrase to support the children in saying the phonemes.

As the children move onto learning digraphs and trigraphs (sounds with 2 or 3 letters), they will learn a catchphrase to match the sounds. These become even more important when we start learning alternative spellings for the same grapheme, e.g. ‘ur’ is “curl the fur,” and ‘er’ is “a bigger digger.” As they learn different spellings, they ‘grow the code’ and learn to use grapheme charts to help them choose the right spelling.

The biggest change for our teaching is the way we teach tricky words. The new scheme teaches the children to apply their phonic knowledge to tricky words, and explains why the word is tricky, e.g. the word ‘is.’ The ‘i’ is phonetic, but the ‘s’ makes a ‘z’ sound. This is what makes it tricky.  The children are taught which bits of the words are phonetic and which bits are tricky.

The biggest and most exciting change is the reading practise sessions.  We will no longer do individual reading in class. The children will have 3 reading sessions a week with a teacher or TA. Each reading session will focus on different strategies.

* Session 1 - Decoding. The children will look through the tricky words and any new vocabulary. Then have an opportunity to read the book to decode the words.
* Session 2 - Prosody. In this session, they read the book again, but the focus is on building expression and intonation.
* Session 3 - Comprehension. In this final session, the children will learn to answer questions about the text. They will be asked to prove it, and explain it, using examples from the text to help back up their answers, e.g. “I know this because it says…. here.”

In each session, all children will read the book aloud, and the adult will circulate, and listen to all of them. This means they get lots of opportunities to practise and build fluency. The book will then come home to you for a week. By the time the book gets home to you, the children should be fluent, and you get the fun task of hearing them read and sharing their success! The way we cover the books in class, and match the groups to assessments, means that the book will be an enjoyable experience for you and your child to read. Sharing high quality picture books, building your child’s knowledge of stories and developing their vocabulary is vital to your child’s progress and reading success. **Please make sure that your child’s reading materials are in school every day.**

The scheme also has built in ‘keep up sessions’ to help children that have found something difficult. As we are now focussing on group reading, we can dedicate our TA time to interventions and keep up work. In EYFS and Y1, Phonics sessions are whole class, but in Y2 onwards, your child will be following the Reception Phonics curriculum if they are working at a level below Phase 5, and a Y1 Phonics curriculum if they are working at Phase 5.

We are very excited about the new scheme, the beautiful new books and resources. Please bear with us, as we are learning and adapting as we implement these. I know this is a lot of information, so if you have any questions, feel free to speak to your class teacher at any time.