

## **Dear Parents and Carers,**

Learning to read is the most important thing your child will learn at our school. Since last September, we have been reviewing how we teach reading. Everything else depends on it, so we put as much energy as we possibly can into making sure that every single child learns to read as quickly as possible. To support this aim we have developed a 'Reading Pathway'.

We don't want children to simply learn to read, however, we want your child to love reading, enjoy a variety of books and to want to read for themselves. This is why we put our efforts into making sure they develop a love of books.

### **How we teach reading.**

#### **How will my child be taught to read?**

We start by teaching phonics to the children in the Reception class. They learn to read using a synthetic phonics programme called Read, Write, Inc. This means that they learn how to 'read' the sounds in words and how those sounds can be written down. This is essential for reading but it also helps children learn to spell too. We teach the children simple ways of remembering these sounds and letters. Ask them to show you what these are.

The children practise reading (and spelling) what we call 'tricky words', such as 'once,' 'have', 'said' and 'where'. They read with books that match the phonics and the 'tricky words' they know. They start thinking that they can read and this does wonders for their confidence.

The teachers read to the children too so the children get to know all sorts of stories, poetry and information books. They learn many more words this way and it also helps their writing.

#### **How will I know how well my child is doing?**

We will always let you know how well your child is doing.

We use various ways to find out how the children are getting on in reading. We use the information to decide what reading group they should be in. Your child will work with children who are at the same reading level as him or her. Children will move to a different group, usually a different colour, if they are making faster progress than the others. Your child will have one-to-one support if we think he or she needs some extra help to keep up.

We also use a reading test so that we can make sure that all our children are at the level that they should be for their age compared to all the children across the country.

In the summer term, the government asks us to do a phonics check of all the Year 1 children. That gives us extra information about their progress. We will talk to you about how well your child has done, and especially if we have any worries at all. If they are still struggling with phonics, they will continue to work on this in Year 2.

#### **What happens next?**

Once children have completed the Read, Write, Inc. programme, they move onto the second phase of our Reading Pathway. This is the transition stage after Read, Write, Inc. before they move to independent reading.

The children read book banded books, also in colours, regularly in groups at school to further develop their fluency and stamina. The book banded books become more challenging as the colour changes.

In Year 2, those children who have completed Read, Write, Inc. also have whole class reading sessions. Therefore, by the end of Year 2, your child should be able to read aloud books that are at the right level for their age.

Once they have completed the book banded books, the children move onto independent reading which is monitored by the teachers through a programme called Accelerated Reader for their personal reading.

They also have whole class reading sessions lead by the teacher to continue to develop their fluency, expression and to help them to understand what they are reading although this work also begins very early on. This happens when the teacher reads to and with the children.

Throughout their time at school, your child will also bring home another book. This is their library book which is their 'reading for pleasure' book. This book is to be shared or read to them, or they can read it independently if they feel they can. This book is NOT matched to their reading level. We hope this will give them a variety of books to read and help develop their love of reading.

### **How do I know the teaching will be good?**

All the staff have been trained to teach reading in the way we do it in this school. We believe that it is very important that all the teachers and teaching assistants work in the same way. Senior teachers watch other teachers teaching to make sure that the children are learning in the way we want them to learn.

If you are worried about the teaching or you have any questions, please come to school and talk to us.

### **What can I do to help? Is there anything that I shouldn't do?**

We have posted online on 'Evidence Me' a short video to explain how we teach reading for Reception and Year 1 parents as we would very much like you to know how to help.

Your child will bring different sorts of books home from school. It helps if you know whether this is a book that your child can read on their own or whether this is a book that you should read to them. The teacher will have explained which is which. Please trust your child's teacher to choose the book(s) that will help your child the most.

Help your child to sound out the letters in words and then to 'push' the sounds together to make a whole word. Try not to refer to the letters by their names. Help your child to focus on the sounds. You can hear how to say the sounds correctly at this link: <https://ruthmiskin.com/en/find-out-more/parents/#lg=1&slide=2> .

Sometimes your child might bring home a picture book that they know well. Please don't say, 'This is too easy.' Instead, encourage your child to tell you the story out loud; ask them questions about things that happen or what they think about some of the characters in the story.

We know parents and carers are very busy people. But if you can find time to read to your child as much as possible, it helps him or her to learn about books and stories. They also learn new words and what they mean. Please show that you are interested in reading yourself and talk about reading

as a family. You can find out about good stories to read to your child from the lists we give out at parents evenings and here <https://www.facebook.com/miskin.education>.

### **Does it matter if my child misses a lesson or two?**

It matters a lot if your child misses school. The way we teach children to read is very well organised, so even one missed lesson means that your child has not learnt something that they need to know to be a good reader.

### **What if my child finds it difficult to learn to read?**

We want children to learn to read, however long it takes us to teach them. We will find out very quickly if your child is finding reading difficult. First, we move children to a different group, so that we can make sure that they have learnt what they need to know. If they still struggle, we give them extra time with an adult, on their own. These adults are specially trained to support these children. Your child will still be in the same group with the other children and won't miss out on any of the class lessons.

If we have any serious worries about your child's reading, we will talk to you about this.

Some children take a bit longer to learn to put sounds together to read a word, e.g. c-a-t to make the word 'cat'.

### **What if my child turns out to be dyslexic?**

The way we teach reading is especially helpful for children who might be dyslexic. This is because we use a very well-organised programme that has a strong focus on phonics. This is very important for children who find learning to read difficult. If you are worried about your child, please come and talk to us.

### **My child has difficulty pronouncing some sounds. Will this stop them learning to read through phonics?**

This isn't a problem for learning to read as long as we know what sound the child is trying to say. This is not something to worry about. Many children have a few sounds that they can hear clearly but find it difficult to say, particularly the l-sound, r-sound, w-sound, th-sound, s-sound, sh-sound and j-sound. Often they say a t-sound for the c-sound; "tttssh" for the s-sound; "w" for the r-sound and "r" for the l-sound. You can help your child by encouraging them to look at your mouth when you say the sound. Whatever you do, do not make your child feel a failure. They can easily learn to read, even if they find one or two sounds difficult to say.

We hope this explains how we teach reading in school. Don't hesitate to contact us if you have any concerns. We are here to help.

Best wishes,

Anne Hawkins

Headteacher