



Birches First School

Believe, Grow, Succeed ...

...to be the best 'me' I can be.

19th November 2021

Dear Parents

We are now well into our new phonic scheme of learning at Birches. What a difference it has made! Children (and teachers!) are really enjoying their phonics sessions and the love of learning is really evident across all areas of school.

As you are aware, in September, we made changes as to how we issue reading books at Birches. Children have only been issued with a phonics book online which carefully matches their phonic learning in class. They have also been taking home a library book to enjoy of their own choice, promoting reading for pleasure.

This is a decision that as a school we did not take lightly. We explored all avenues and made the decision that to be in line with our phonic scheme and government guidance, we would follow the strong recommendation that all children should be reading a phonic book to decode words to develop fluency before they move onto a book to concentrate on comprehension skills.

Each week, children are issued a phonics book online, it is important to read the book as often as possible with your child so that they can fully embed their phonic knowledge. Please record this in their reading diary, letting us know that they have read and what they have enjoyed or need further help with. We can then ensure that we are supporting your child as best as we can. The sounds are identified at the front of the book for you to see which sounds your child is focussing on that week.

If you are not accessing the books online, your child is at a disadvantage of not applying and embedding their newly acquired phonic sounds which are taught at school. As we do not have the physical books which contain the specific phonics they need to practise and be exposed to.

If your child has been given a physical copy of a book, it is because they need to consolidate a particular sound that has been identified by teachers during phonic sessions. It is very important to note that although they are receiving a physical phonics book, your child will also always be issued a phonics book online to "keep up" with the phonics learning happening in class and in case you do have the opportunity to access it on line.

As your child becomes secure with phonics at phase 5, a reading book will be issued. We fully encourage you to continue to read a range of books (non-fiction, comics, fiction, poetry) every day with your child at home and discuss what you have shared together. Please use the information at the back of your reading diary to help you discuss books with your child.

We fully appreciate that this is a big change to how reading books have been issued in the past. However, this is not something we would have implemented if we did not feel that this is the best way to approach and give your child the best support in their reading.

If you have any additional questions regarding how you can support your child further with their phonics please do get in touch.

Many thanks for your continued support.

Kind regards,

Mrs. Kandola

English Lead