

St. John's Catholic Primary School

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SHROPSHIRE COUNCIL
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DIOCESE OF SHREWSBURY



"I AM THE VINE: YOU ARE THE BRANCHES" (JOHN, 15)

Dear Parents/Carers,

This letter details an important update with reading in school and how phonics and spelling is taught throughout the key stages.

In May 2021, the DFE advised that schools must implement a validated systematic synthetic phonics programme. As a school, we have implemented the Jolly Phonics programme.

I wanted to share with you the reasons why we made this decision and what impact this has for your child. At the forefront of all school decisions are our St John's pupils. With this in mind, the Jolly Phonics programme caters for all types of learners, it's particularly focused on practical actions or movements that correspond with a letter sound or phoneme.

We have diligently worked to reorganise our reading books to fit with how Jolly Phonics is taught. This is where you as parents may see the change. As we are following Jolly Phonics Programme, the order and sequence of letter sounds, phonemes or spelling patterns are taught differently to our previous programme. This is worth bearing in mind when your child comes home with their reading books. We will only provide your child with a reading book once the phoneme or spelling pattern has been explicitly taught in school. Your child will also bring home a range of fiction and non-fiction books, the amount will be decided by your class teacher. This ensures breadth of reading but also encourages a love of reading.

Decisions are made based upon not only your child's reading ability but also their comprehension skills. Often a child's reading ability is strong but may not have more complicated texts due to their comprehension skills. Please consider this when your child comes home with a book they can access, teachers are available to have a conversation about how comprehension can be strengthened at home through reading.

When sharing a school reading book with your child, you may notice that some of the words are highlighted in yellow. This is a word that your child can attempt, but may need your intervention, please tell your child the word to maintain pace of the reading. Encouraging pace enables your child to 'hear' the text as they read, this supports comprehension. If they struggle with pace, please use some of the examples below about different ways to share books:

- Adults reading a book to the child
- Reading together. This can be completed with all the text or sections of the text
- Encourage your child to read familiar books, repetition, and books that children can easily access encourages the love of reading
- Read books just for fun
- Act out or put actions to the books that are being read

- Go to the library and allow your child to choose their own books.
- Ask questions about sections of the book your child has read, for example, How do you think the character is feeling? Why do you think the character behaved in that way?

Our aim is for all our pupils to be proficient readers. Without reading children cannot access the Curriculum or further their learning, therefore it is vitally important to have a strong partnership between home and school. We are still recording reading through the 'Go Read' app that is now called 'Boom Reader' in year 1-4, all communication about reading should be recorded here.

Jolly Phonics is used in Key stage two also, however this forms our spelling programme. As reading and writing are intrinsically linked, this allows us as a school to use the programme in key stage one and two at a differentiated level. Books will still be chosen with the sequence and order of taught lessons kept in mind.

Once your child is a fluent reader, they will be provided 'Mastery of Reading' books (Previously known as 'Free Readers'), there is still progression within this. Key stage two pupils are most likely to be accessing these books.

Thank you for your continued support, happy reading!

Kind regards,

Miss V. Lowe
English Lead