

## **Our Approach to Teaching Reading**

We teach synthetic phonics as our first approach to enabling children to read. We follow the 'Letters and Sounds' programme for teaching phonics using a variety of different resources to engage and interest the children. Assessment of children's progress in learning phonics is important and ongoing; this allows children to make rapid progress when they are ready to do so and also informs us about children who may require additional support. The children are grouped according to what phonic stage they are working at and receive a daily focussed phonics lesson. The composition of groups is reviewed frequently. Our aim is for every child to have completed stage 6 by the end of year 2.

We use the Government phonic screening check at the end of year 1 to support our assessments and planning. We know that children who do not achieve secure phonic knowledge during the first stages of reading may find literacy skills difficult to master later on in school and so we support phonic learning beyond Key Stage 1 whenever necessary, usually using the 'Sound Discovery' programme as a basis for this work.

We recognise that some children benefit from approaches other than synthetic phonics in order to achieve fluency and understanding when reading a text. Children may build a basic sight vocabulary using simple flashcards or matching games or they may be encouraged to make plausible attempts at words, matching initial phonic evidence with contextual clues; a range of approaches are used as appropriate.

Our reading books are colour banded and children work their way through the colours starting in reception until they are ready to be a 'free reader'. Children are encouraged to change their books within a colour band and teachers decide when a child is ready to progress to the next band, based on their level of decoding, fluency and comprehension. Our banded books contain a mixture of 'real' books and books from a range of reading schemes. Children are heard to read individually whenever possible and all are heard at least once a week in a small group guided reading session. Once children are able to read a range of extended texts with confidence, accuracy and understanding, they are deemed to be 'free readers', able to choose from a variety of books outside of reading schemes.