

Dear Parents,

As you will no doubt be aware, school budgets are under increasing pressure; not only in managing reduced funding but also in justifying the spending decisions we make. Consequently, we continually review our practice to ensure we are operating at a peak of efficiency!

One of the strengths of our school is the quality and dedication of our Teaching Assistants (TAs) who do so much to support children in their learning and free up teacher-time so they can focus and target support when and where it is needed. However, we've noticed that a considerable chunk of TA time can be absorbed in tasks that if organised differently, might leave TAs more time to work with children; something we all, teachers, children and parents, appreciate.

An example of this is changing home reading books, which, while crucial, can be enormously time-consuming. While home readers need to be monitored and changed, we've consulted internally and with colleague schools and concluded there are opportunities afforded by a change of plan.

From September, we intend to adopt a school-wide system as follows. When they come into school in the morning, children will put their reading records, books tucked inside, into one of two trays; books to be changed and books not needing changing. Children will be trained, initially with adult support, to return their old reader and choose a new book from within the band they are currently reading. We will make sure that children are given the support they need with this, but the aim is that by Y1/2, *most* children will be largely independent.

Each child will also bring home a small record of the titles for their book band. Parents are asked to mark the titles their child(ren) have completed, alongside the existing 'reading record'. In school, we will keep lists of book changes, so we will notice if children aren't changing books regularly and prompt them accordingly. As now, TAs and teachers will be consulting on this and matching children's home reading against the reading they do in lessons, eg: Guided Reading.

We have piloted aspects of this internally and the results are encouraging. We see the benefits of this approach to be: more TA time spent working with children; increased independence in children; books changed at need – no need to wait for the next 'change day'; easier integration of supplementary reading material into the system.

In September, each class teacher will lead a short meeting to go through this and other class-specific systems such as spelling. Details to come.

As ever, thank you for your support with this.

Best Wishes,

C Jarvis,

Reading Lead.