

# Oaklands Junior School

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Dear Parents/Carers,

As you may be aware, the school is currently focussing on raising standards and achievement in reading. As per my email on Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> October, this has included us having a number of virtual author visits and investing a large amount of money in updating the books in both the school and class libraries.

Furthermore, we are also in the process of extending our reading scheme so that grey will no longer be the final stage before being a free reader: there will now be a 'Dark Blue' ('Early free reader') stage too. Over the coming years, we are planning to invest a significant amount of money in extending the reading scheme to include books for children with a reading age of up to 11 years old to assist them in becoming more well-rounded readers. In the past, we have noticed that when children become 'free readers' they often subsequently choose a narrower range of genres than a reading scheme would otherwise have got them to read; I am sure that you agree that it is vitally important to encourage children to reap the benefits from reading a wide range of books.

Academic research shows that being on the reading scheme for longer helps children to broaden their vocabulary and improve their ability to fully understand texts - something which I am sure you would agree is essential rather than rushing them to being a free reader. This is a strategy that we have discussed with the Infants and, going forward, they will be keeping all children on the reading scheme.

I would also like to make you aware that we have bought a new reading assessment system which enables us to analyse a child's strengths and areas for development and ascertain whether they are ready to move up to the next colour. When your child is given one of these assessments, you will receive a short written note in their homework diary from the Teaching Assistant, explaining what the assessment has shown and how you can support your child further.

In the near future, I will be running a virtual 'How to help your child progress in reading' workshop in which I will give you some ideas and tips about helping your children to develop both their reading and comprehension skills.

In the meantime, I would encourage you to spend as much time as you can manage reading with and to your child and then discussing what you have read. Reading is the foundation upon which all education is based. Thank you for your ongoing support.

Kind regards,

Mr. S. Lee  
English Subject Leader