



20th January 2017

Dear Parents,

The last two years have seen incredible change in our school; the biggest of which has been a new curriculum and a 'raising of the bar' in terms of the standards our children are expected to reach by end of Year 2 and Year 6 when statutory assessments take place. This has been particularly significant in reading, where the shift in expectation has meant that children must sit a complex and challenging comprehension test; featuring three different text extracts, to be completed in one hour. There is considerable emphasis now on vocabulary and ensuring that children have a good understanding of a wide variety of words and a knowledge of words with similar or opposite definitions. Furthermore, written answers are expected to be much more in-depth. This has meant that as a school, which is always seeking to do the best for our pupils and improve, we have reviewed our guided reading sessions and have implemented new teaching activities which address these increased expectations. The children work incredibly hard across the day on these and a variety of other skills covering a very wide and varied curriculum. One of the key ways for children to improve in their reading is practise, practise, practise. We spend lots of time teaching reading but practise at home is vital too, if we are to get children to the reading levels now expected. Opportunities to read aloud to an adult are essential right up to Y6, so that they can then be questioned about what they have read, check they are reading accurately and explore and discuss new vocabulary. However we recognise that reading has to be about enjoyment and we want our children to be 'hooked into' books to experience the feeling of not being able to put a book down! We have purchased some additional books from stage 10 onwards to supplement our scheme which will hopefully enthuse the children and give them a change from the reading scheme as well as helping to extend their experience.

We have shared with the children this week that the 500 words competition has opened again and are encouraging children to enter. There are lots of examples of past winners' stories for the children to read and hopefully inspire them. Please do have a look! We will also be celebrating World Book Day and just generally creating excitement about reading. This includes getting the children to share books that they are enjoying and recommending them to each other. If any parents are struggling to find/choose books then please contact us at school or drop in to see me and I would be happy to help/make suggestions.

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Finally a big thank you to our parent volunteers who do come in and hear readers each week, as we really do struggle to hear children practise their reading; there are simply not enough hours in the day and we want to focus on teaching reading skills. If there is anyone else interested in volunteering, or if you know of anybody who may be willing, please do contact us. The biggest support however is to hear your child read at least 3 times a week and to ensure that they are understanding what they are reading by asking a couple of questions about the text. I fully understand that this can sometimes be challenging to fit into a busy day, but even 10/15 minutes can make all the difference to help with your child's reading progress and consequently their writing progress too.

Thank you for your continuing support.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "P Gallant". The letter "P" is large and stylized, followed by the name "Gallant" in a cursive script.

Mrs P Gallant
Headteacher