

Dear Parents,

As you know, the teaching of reading has changed throughout the years. This has also had an impact on the reading schemes used in schools. At Simonstone St. Peter's we have reorganised the books that the children bring home as part of their home reading. This process of classification is one recommended by the Local Authority. As a result of this, many of the books have moved stages and have been "re-banded". By colour banding our books we have been able to put a bigger variety of different scheme books in one level, providing children with greater choice of text and genre.

### What is Book Banding?

Book Banding is a national scheme that grades children's reading books according to the difficulty of the text. Each level of books are given a colour. There is a sticker indicating the Book Band colour on the spine of each book.



### Why Book Band?

When a child is learning to read, it is important that they have access to lots of different kinds of books and a wide vocabulary. Most reading schemes have their own core vocabulary and many teachers have found that children struggle when they are asked to read something different. Book Banding is designed to help schools grade their reading books across schemes. Children have access to the variety they need, whilst still being supported at the correct reading level.

### How are the books levelled?

All publishers grade their scheme to their own specifications but the Book Band system is far broader in its levelling. It is based on careful research into the kind of words used in each book, the length of sentences, punctuation, story style or non-fiction format and text size. It also supports a progression of reading strategies.

### What can I expect?

Your child will be initially assessed for the correct Book Band colour and will bring home books from various schemes within that colour. It may be, because

of the broader nature of Book Band levelling, that there are books from different stages of the same reading scheme in one colour band. As long as the book is in your child's Book Band colour, the level is right for them.

When will my child move to the next colour band?

For a child to be an effective reader, they need to not only read the words on the page, but also understand what they have read. The school will carefully monitor your child's reading and move them to the next colour band when they are ready.

Reading with your child at home is an essential part of their development as a reader; however, the most effective reading sessions result from more than just listening to your child read. There are some ideas and tips attached, for you to consider using during reading sessions with your child. You do not need to use all of these in each session but including at least some, each time, will be beneficial.

If you require any further advice please come and speak to me.

Yours Sincerely,

Mrs J. S. Booth

## How to carry out an effective home reading session

- Find a quiet place to read.
- Revisit what the child has read previously.
- If the child has a new book, introduce the title and look through the book discussing the pictures (where appropriate).
- When the child comes to a word they cannot read, the following strategies may be useful:
  1. Use the pictures for clues
  2. Use initial letter sounds
  3. Sound out the word, then say it
  4. Reading on the sentence to give a clue to the word
- During reading give specific praise e.g. I liked the way you . . .
- After reading use open ended questions to check their understanding of the story. E.g. what happened when the cat caught the mouse? How did Jo feel when his teacher rewarded him (and why)?
- Discuss and predict what may happen next.