

November 2021

Dear Parent/Carer,

At Loose Primary School, we welcome a parent partnership within which we foster enriching continuous provision for our children and their learning journey. As you will know, due to COVID, our Year 3 children have had a disrupted introduction to the fundamental skills, knowledge and concepts underpinning early reading and writing. Phonics is an integral part of the way we teach this essential knowledge to our children and for this reason, we are placing significant emphasis on phonics within our Year 3 curriculum this year.

Please continue reading for an insight into how phonics is taught at Loose including a detailed breakdown of the Sounds Write programme, use of decodable reading texts and how you can support your child's learning at home.

Sounds Write

In Year 3 our children will begin to receive bespoke phonics provision three times a week following "Sounds Write," a government recognised Systematic Synthetic Phonics (SSP) programme, to teach early reading, spelling and writing. It is a highly structured, incremental and code-oriented approach that teaches in simple steps how the sounds of our language are represented by the writing system. The code is broken down into three developmentally appropriate stages;

- Initial Code
- Extended Code
- Polysyllabic Words (Key Stage 2)

At each stage, children are taught the three essential skills of segmenting, blending and phoneme manipulation, which they progressively apply with the ultimate aim of becoming fluent and successful readers.

In Year 3, all children are introduced to and consolidate all the vowel and consonant spellings that make up the 45 sounds in our language code. These sounds are comprised mostly of digraphs (two letters making one sound) and trigraphs (three letters making one sound). When appropriate, your child will also become familiar with more complex word structures in preparation for Polysyllabic Words as they move through the school.

To ensure we provide the most tailored provision that enables all children to make as rapid progress as possible, we will group the children depending on their phonological understanding for these sessions in Year 3.

Decodable Texts

The code knowledge that children are taught in their phonics lessons is supported at every stage through the use of “decodable” texts. Decodables are reading books specifically designed to match and include the target sounds that are taught at each stage of the code. Children are, therefore, able to practice segmenting and blending target sounds in the context of whole-word reading from the very beginning of their learning journey and beyond. This provides all children with ample opportunities to rehearse and retrieve the knowledge they have learnt in the classroom.

Reading books will be changed a minimum of once a week to ensure that your child’s decodable text contains relevant code knowledge linked to their current phonics learning. Within this period, children should read and re-read their allocated book to ensure they are given multiple opportunities to practice recognising target sounds alongside rehearsing the skills of segmenting and blending to decode. This process of re-reading texts is invaluable and highly effective in supporting reader’s development and should not be underestimated!

In addition to decodable texts, your children will also be reading a text from their book corner or our wider school libraries, which will be matched closely to their reading age and fluency. These texts will serve the purpose of helping your child to build their reading stamina whilst also exposing them to a broad and rich vocabulary.

Should you feel obliged, we do of course support you in supplementing your child’s reading diet with age-appropriate texts from your home libraries at any stage of their learning journey. We are very happy to provide recommendations of high quality additional literature to support your child’s reading experience.

Bug Club

Our school has recently expanded access to our online reading programme, Bug Club, for Year 3 pupils. Bug Club is a finely-levelled reading scheme, which ensures that all children can find books at exactly the right level for them. These books are made available to our children as online versions, which learners can access through their own personalised website. These texts can be used to supplement your child’s reading diet of decodables. For further information, please read through the Bug Club Parent Letter attached.

Spellings

It is imperative that at each stage of the Sounds Write code our children have the opportunity to rehearse spelling words using the new phonetic knowledge that they have been taught. For this reason, Year 3 spellings will be specifically matched to the knowledge your children are being taught in class which will constitute a slight change from our current practice. Your child's weekly spellings will be available for them to practice on Spelling Shed and will be continuously updated every Friday. Please be advised that our new spelling system will be implemented from WC Monday 28th November 2022. In the interim, please do feel free to practise words from the Year 3 and 4 Spelling List (see attached).

We sincerely hope that the information included above is useful in providing you with an overview of what your child's phonics learning at Loose Primary School will look like. In the meantime, should you have any questions about your child's phonics learning please do feel free to contact us.

Kind Regards,

The Year Three Team and English Team