**ST. PETER’S CE PRIMARY SCHOOL, HESWALL**

Dear Parents,

**Reading books in Year 5/6**

At the end of last academic year we spent some time reorganising our individual reading scheme and, thanks to a generous contribution from the Friends of St Peter’s, have also bought additional reading materials. This was to allow more depth and breadth to our children’s reading experiences and provide them with the opportunity to read, at their level, from a range of published reading schemes. This new structure is called Book Banding.

*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 is given a colour.

*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 different reading schemes.

At St Peter’s, we have begun to purchase books from different reading schemes within each band so our children will have access to the variety they need whilst still being supported at the right reading level.

*How are the books levelled?*

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

*When will children move onto 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. For this to happen, they need to read with 98% accuracy (that is only 2 errors in every 100 words) and be able to answer questions about what they have read to demonstrate their understanding. The school will carefully monitor your child’s reading and move them onto the next colour band when they are ready.

*What is a’ free reader’?*

When your child has been assessed as a fluent and confident reader and they have an excellent understanding of the texts within the full range of the Book Band scheme, their class teacher will inform them that they are ready to become a free reader. A free reader means that your child can now choose any book from the range identified for their year group. We have a wide selection of books for Key Stage 2 pupils. At this stage some children prefer to choose a book from home or a book from the library rather than a school book, this is fine as long as they remember to bring their book with them to school every day.

*What can I expect in Year 5 and 6?*

In Year 5 and 6, children will usually be classed as ‘free readers’. This means they will have access to any of the red & blue banded books available in upper KS2 as well as any of the age-appropriate books at Heswall Library, which they will visit with their class every three weeks. Children are encouraged to read a wide range of authors and genres. If your child requires additional support with reading or is not yet ready to be a free reader, your child’s teacher will provide them with books that will support them in making progress at the right reading level.

As you will appreciate, the new system will take a little while to get up and running, however we will ensure that all children have a school book by Monday 18th September.

If you require any further information on Book Banding, please speak to your child’s class teacher.

Kind Regards,

Emma Birmingham

Reading Subject Leader