

# Newsletter



Newsletter 10

24<sup>th</sup> January 2020

Assembly themes: Next week: Promises

Week after: Love & Endurance

Dear Parents and Carers,

We have had a great couple of weeks in school with the children (and staff!) all working hard! We are all looking forward to Art Day on Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> February – if you would like to help, please let the Office or Miss Grainger know, or just turn up on the day!



## Booking for Parent Teacher Appointments

The feedback for online booking for Parent Teacher Consultations was extremely positive, so we will use the same method for the evenings on 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> February, and the morning of the 13<sup>th</sup> February. The system will go live at 6 p.m. on Friday 31<sup>st</sup> January. Please go online at: <https://codicoteparenteveningsystem.co.uk> to book your appointment. Should you have any issues, please do not hesitate to contact the school office.



## Quiz team

Well done to our Quiz Team who represented the school in a Hertfordshire General Knowledge Quiz. We were very impressed with the children's behaviour and positive attitude, despite some very tricky questions! Well done to Harriet, Suki, Jacob and Meghan! Thank you to Mrs Abrahams for organising and taking the team.

Congratulations to Mimram who won the Inter-house Quiz this year – it was a close contest!



## Keeping children safe

This week, the NSPCC held two assemblies, one for Nursery to Year 2, and one for Year 3 to Year 6. In an age appropriate, and child friendly way, children were taught about keeping themselves safe from different types of abuse. They were helped to identify a trusted adult they can talk to if they're ever worried about themselves or a friend, so they can get help if or when they need it. They also learnt about Childline, and how it can support them. Their teachers were present throughout, so that they can discuss any issues arising from this. Next week, there will be NSPCC workshops for children in Years 5 and 6.

On February 12<sup>th</sup>, we will be holding e-safety day, where each class will focus on a different area of internet safety, appropriate to the age of the children.

If you have any queries or concerns regarding any of these issues, in relation to your own or other children, please do not hesitate to contact me.



### **Delay in potential Breakfast Club**

As you may be aware, the school has been considering setting up a breakfast club, to meet any need in the community which is beyond the current capacity of our local childminders for some time. However, this relies on us having a room to use. The 326 room is used as a classroom in the mornings, and the hall is set up for assembly and PE and so neither is available. The dining room is unsuitable because the number of entry and exit points makes it unsuitable for young children to be dropped off and there is no space to store resources.

At the moment, we are awaiting the adoption of the North Herts Plan to be finalised. If, as a result of this, the plans to expand the school go forward, we have already identified an area which will be used for wrap around care, with a dedicated entry/exit door. We will then consult with our local childminders to identify the shortfall they predict in before school care, so that we can work with them to provide enough places. As soon as I have any update on this, I will let you know what the position is. In the meantime, we are always happy to put parents and carers in touch with the childminders we work with.



### **NSPCC Cake Sale**

Thank you so much for your kind donations of cakes and for buying them back! I am delighted to inform you that we raised £181.02 at the sale. Thank you to the School Council and parents for helping to run this event.



### **PTFA**



### **Big Breakfast**

Thank you very much for supporting our Big Breakfast! We hope you enjoyed it!



### **Bingo Night!**

We hope you can come along to our Family Bingo night on Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> February, from 5.00 – 7.00 p.m. Tickets now available at £4 for adults and £2.00 for children. Come along for a fun family evening!



### **Homework Policy**

We have reviewed our Homework Policy to ensure that we are focussing on the things which make the biggest difference to the children's learning. We know the benefit of time spent practising the skills and applying the concepts learnt in school and appreciate the support we have from you at home. We are aware that there are a number of differing views, with some people wanting more homework, and some less, so we have tried to find a middle line, which reinforces learning and gradually prepares children for each new stage in their education. Before we finalise the policy, we would love to have your feedback. Any views will be carefully considered. The policy is attached with this newsletter – we would be pleased to provide a paper copy on request.



### **Reading through the Book Bands**

We value the impact you make by listening to your child read regularly – it makes a significant difference to their progress. We are aware that we have not sent out any information regarding book bands for some time, so thought you may find it helpful to know how these work. I have included this at the foot of the newsletter and have added it to the Policies Section on the website. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you need any further information or clarification, or would like a paper copy.



### **Community news**

Codicote Tennis Club are relaunching their junior tennis sessions. The sessions will start after February half term and will run on Wednesdays from 5pm until 6:30pm. They are open to children from Year 1 up. The sessions are free but we would ask that if your child becomes a regular attendee they become a member of the club (£15 per annum). If you are interested and/or require any info please contact Edel on [07939507721](tel:07939507721)

Please remember that I am always happy to discuss any issues with you. Thank you for reading this newsletter.

Yours sincerely,

Liz Pollard  
HEADTEACHER



## **Reading with Book Bands at Codicote School**

### **The system and how it works**

#### **What are Book Bands?**

When children are learning to read, it is essential that they are given books to read that are appropriate to their reading level. The books need to be sufficiently challenging, but not too challenging. Then as the children make progress and develop their literacy skills further, they can be given more demanding books to read. Children need to be fluent on a level before they move up to the next one, so that they develop confidence, speed and accuracy before the next challenge is given.

Book banding is a system which was developed by academic researchers, and is now used by most publishers and schools. Books are graded into appropriate levels, or 'Bands', in order to provide children with appropriate books to read. Many schools have added in an extra level to develop the consolidation of skills before a child becomes a 'free reader' able to choose whichever book they like.

#### **What criteria are used to determine which Band a book fits into?**

A wide range of factors is taken account of in deciding the appropriate level of a book. The 'difficulty', or complexity, of the text itself (i.e. the words on the page) is only one of a number of factors.

The main criteria that help determine which band a particular book should be put in to are:

Complexity of content and language structure

- Complexity of book structure - the number of sentences per page, the number and type of variations in sentence structure(s), the occurrence of repeated events in the narrative.
- Complexity of use of alphabetic code - the complexity of the words used, opportunities to use decoding skills, occurrence of more complex words.
- Complexity of format - is it a simple storyline, or are there complex sequences of events? How is print placed on the page - font, font size, uses of captions, footnotes, diagrams, etc.
- Changing role of illustrations - do the illustrations give high support for meaning (i.e. directly illustrating the text), or is there only minor support (illustrations as embellishments) - right through to text only, with no illustrations at all.

In very simple terms, books at each Band will have the following characteristics:

- **Pink:** Very short, highly predictable, simple texts. One simple sentence per page, highly repetitive sentence and vocabulary structure. Natural language. Simple text variation on the last page. Illustrations directly support the text. Large print, suitable font, good spacing.
- **Red:** Similar to Pink but with very limited variation(s) within the text.
- **Yellow:** More variation in sentence structures, introduction of some literary conventions. Storylines likely to include more episodes.

- Blue: Longer texts, up to 6-8 lines per page. Higher level of variation within text. Literary language mixed with natural language. Pictures support storyline – less support for precise meaning.
- Green: Longer, more varied sentences. Little repetition in text, but unfamiliar words repeated. Print may be in captions, fact boxes, etc. Events sustained over several pages.
- Orange: Stories up to 250-300 words, with more space for print than illustrations. More complex sentence structures, more literary language. Broader range of texts (plays, poetry, etc.).
- Turquoise: More extended descriptions, more use of literary phrasing. Non-fiction texts use more challenging vocabulary. Lower dependence on illustrations.
- Purple: Longer, more complex sentence structures. Some books with short chapters. Wider variety of genres. Characters becoming more rounded and distinctive. Non-fiction texts cover an increasing curriculum range. May include glossaries, indexes, etc.
- Gold: More challenging again. Storylines may reflect the feelings of the writer. Widening vocabulary, but still a controlled proportion of unknown words.
- White: Another step up. More subordinate phrases or clauses. More than one point of view may be expressed in the text and action might be implied rather than spelled out.
- Lime: The highest level in the original bands, requiring reading skills to be applied consistently to develop unsupported reading.
- Cream: preparing children for free reading. More complex language, story line, vocabulary, sentence construction and length.
- Black: books selected for children who are at the free reading stage, but need books that are age appropriate to younger children, and are an appropriate length for developing reading stamina – i.e. not extremely long.

**Are all books in a Band at the same level of ‘difficulty’?**

No. The band includes progression with range of levels of difficulty, so a child can start on the easier books and then progress through to the harder ones. Thus children are always being challenged, but are never faced with anything that is too difficult for them.

**Do children spend the same length of time on each band?**

No. All children are individuals – there is no set time or number of books for a child to read through at each level. Some children move through some levels particularly quickly whilst others need more practice. As the books become longer and more challenging, in the higher colour bands, the children usually move through the levels more slowly.

**When do children move up a band?**

The decision to move up a band is purely based on whether a child has the skills needed to read fluently, confidently and accurately at that level. Reading is taught and assessed in a range of ways:

- Children’s phonic knowledge developed systematically through class and group teaching, and is carefully assessed and tracked.

- Children are heard to read regularly by teachers and teaching assistants. This is on an individual basis, in group reading activities and in class lessons. The frequency of this changes according to the age and reading levels of the children.
- A range of comprehension skills are taught in each class and children have the opportunity to practice these in different contexts.
- Reading assessments are carried out regularly throughout the year.

Teachers use all of the information gained from this to decide when a child is ready to move onto a more challenging level.

### **How can parents help?**

Just like with learning any skill, practice makes perfect! The more opportunities children have to read, the faster they learn. Listening to stories also helps them significantly, not only with their own reading, but also with their vocabulary, writing and listening skills.