



Highcliffe St. Mark Primary School & Fledglings Pre-School

A Church of England Foundation School

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Dear parents & carers,

At Highcliffe St Mark Primary School, we are committed to helping every child become a confident, enthusiastic and lifelong reader. To support this, we use the nationally recognised **Book Band system** throughout the school.

What is the Book Band system?

The Book Band system is a structured way of organising reading books by level of difficulty. Each colour band builds on the one before, supporting children as they develop fluency, accuracy, and understanding.

Light Pink
Dark Pink
Red
Yellow
Light Blue
Green
Orange
Turquoise
Purple
Gold
White
Lime
Brown

Reception children usually begin with the earliest bands, focusing on recognising sounds, blending words, and developing confidence.

As children move through **Key Stage 1 (Years 1 and 2)**, they work through the bands as their decoding, fluency, and comprehension improve.

In **Lower Key Stage 2 (Years 3 and 4)**, children continue to progress through the higher bands, developing more advanced reading skills such as inference, understanding figurative language, and discussing themes and characters.



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2023 - 2024



Moving on to Free Readers

When a child is **secure and confident at Brown level**, they will become a **'Free Reader'**. This means they no longer need to work through the Book Band levels and can instead choose from a wider range of books.

Staff will always support children in choosing books that are **age-appropriate** to ensure texts remain accessible and engaging.

Alongside this, children are encouraged to select a **'love of reading' book**—something that excites or interests them, even if it is above their independent reading level, to share at home with an adult.

Things to keep in mind

It is important to remember that the Book Band system is **not an exact science**. Children may move between bands at different rates, and progress is not always linear. To help you understand your child's current standard, please refer to their **previous school reports**, which will give you an overview of their reading development.

Above all, our aim is to foster a **love of reading** while ensuring that every child is challenged and supported appropriately. We want reading at home to be an enjoyable and rewarding experience for adults and children. Whilst, particularly in reception and Key Stage 1, it is important for children to practise the sounds that have learnt in school, it is also just as important for children to be exposed to a wide range of books and have these read to them purely for enjoyment.

Thank you for supporting your child on their reading journey. If you have any questions about your child's reading, please do not hesitate to speak to their class teacher.

Best wishes,



and



Claire Barker

Nick Lee, Reading Lead