**Ysgol Maes-y-Llan**

Dear Parents / Carers,

We are very pleased to say that 7 members of staff have now undertaken 2 days of intensive Read Write Inc. training. Read Write Inc*.* (RWI) is a whole-school literacy programme for 4-11 year-olds designed to create fluent readers, confident speakers and willing writers.

Many of our children are now accessing RWI for 1 hour a day in the Foundation Phase, and ½ hour a day in Key Stage 2.

**Read Write Inc. – answers for parents / carers**

**The *Read Write Inc. Phonics* programme**

Learning to read is possibly the most important thing your child will learn. Everything else depends on it, so we put as much energy as we possibly can into making sure that every single child learns to read as quickly as possible.

We want your child to love reading – and to want to read for themselves. This is why we put our efforts into making sure they develop a love of books as well as simply learning to read.

**Home School Reading Diaries**

Children will spend part of every RWI session reading (roughly 5 x 15 minutes of reading per week), so this will in effect replace the previous once, or twice, weekly ‘guided reading’ sessions.

Because of this restructure, to how reading is being taught, you may notice some changes in your child’s home school reading diaries. If your child is in a RWI group their reading diary will not be signed, unless they have had an ‘extra’ read. There are over 100 children accessing the RWI programme at Maes-y-Llan, and therefore reading daily, so we do not see it as an effective use of staff time to write 500+ diary entries every week.

However, reading diaries still have an important part to play in accelerating your child’s progress in reading. They will be taught, daily, how to read in school and reading at home will give your child an extra opportunity to practise what they have learnt. Research shows that reading at home has a massive impact on reading progress. Your child will also gain a lot of self esteem from being able to show you how much better they are becoming at reading. Please listen to your child read as often as possible at home and keep a record of it in their reading diary.

When children have finished the RWI scheme they will once again access weekly guided reading sessions.

**How will my child be taught to read?**

We start by teaching phonics to the children in the Reception class. This means that they learn how to ‘read’ the sounds in words and how those sounds can be written down. This is essential for reading, but it also helps children learn to spell well. We teach the children simple ways of remembering these sounds and letters.

The children also practise reading (and spelling) what we call ‘tricky words’, such as ‘once,’ ‘have,’ ‘said’ and ‘where’.

The children practise their reading with books that match the phonics (sounds) and the ‘tricky words’ they have learnt, to help them embed these sounds and to build their self esteem.

The teachers read to the children, too, so the children get to know all sorts of stories, poetry and information books. They learn many more words this way and it also helps their writing.

**How is my child’s progress measured?**

We use various ways to find out how the children are getting on in reading. We use this information to decide what reading group they should be in. Your child will work with children who are at the same reading level as him or her. These groups change every 4-6 weeks to ensure children are always a ‘stage’ (not age) appropriate for them.

We also use reading tests, from Year 1 onwards, so that we can make sure that all our children are at the level that they should be for their age.

**What can I do to help? Is there anything that I shouldn't do?**

We know parents and carers are very busy people, but listening to your child read, and reading to them is the most important way you can help your child in their Primary education. If you can find time to listen to your child read, and read to your child as much as possible, it helps him or her to learn about books and stories. They also learn new words and what they mean.

Help your child to sound out the letters in words and then to ‘push’ the sounds together to make a whole word. Try not to refer to the letters by their names. Help your child to focus on the sounds. You can hear how to say the sounds correctly by searching on YouTube for ‘Read Write Inc. Phonemes Pronunciation Guide’

Sometimes your child might bring home a picture book that they know well. Please don’t say, ‘This is too easy.’ Instead, encourage your child to tell you the story out loud; ask them questions about things that happen or what they think about some of the characters in the story.

**Does it matter if my child misses a lesson or two?**

It matters a lot if your child misses school. The way we teach children to read is very well organised, so even one missed lesson means that your child has not learnt something that they need to know and build on to be a good reader.

**What if he or she finds it difficult to learn to read?**

We want children to learn to read, however long it takes us to teach them. We will find out very quickly if your child is finding reading difficult. First, we move children to a different group, so that we can make sure that they have learnt what they need to know.

If we have any serious worries about your child’s reading, we will talk to you about this.

**What if my child turns out to be dyslexic?**

The way we teach reading is especially helpful for children who might be dyslexic. This is because we use a very well-organised programme that has a strong focus on phonics. This is very important for children who find learning to read difficult. If you are worried about your child, please come and talk to us.

**My child has difficulty pronouncing some sounds. Will this stop him learning to read through phonics?**

This isn’t a problem for learning to read as long as we know what sound the child is trying to say. This is not something to worry about. Many children have a few sounds that they can hear clearly but find it difficult to say, particularly the l-sound, r-sound, w-sound, th-sound, s-sound, sh-sound and j-sound. Often they say a t-sound for the c-sound; "tttssh" for the s-sound; "w" for the r-sound and "r" for the l-sound. You can help your child by encouraging him or her to look at your mouth when you say the sound. Whatever you do, do not make your child feel a failure. They can easily learn to read, even if they find one or two sounds difficult to say.

Don’t hesitate to contact us if you have any concerns. We are here to help.