Ditchling Road*Brighton BN1 6JA
Tel: 01273 296868 *Fax: 01273 700504
annmitchell@downsinf.brighton-hove.sch.uk

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Dear Parents and Carers,

Re: Phonics Year 1 and Year 2

I am writing to let you know that, following a very successful pilot in Year 2 last year, and in line with the majority of schools in Brighton, we will be grouping children for daily phonics lessons so that they will be taught in phonics groups, rather than class groups, this year. The lessons are approximately 20 minutes long and from next week all children will be taught phonics at 11.20 every day. It is very important that your child does not miss this daily lesson, so just a reminder to please (as always) try and make any appointments outside of school hours.

This means that children will be with others who are working within the same phase as them in phonics. Teachers are then able to very precisely target the teaching to the needs of the children, ensuring that all children receive both the challenge and the support that they need to make progress. We will be clear to the children that this is what we are doing, and that the groups will change as the children's needs change. We found last year that being in a group of children working in the same phonics phase gave some of our children making slower progress a real boost, as they felt more confident about the work they were doing and could see their progress. Their self-esteem and love of phonics was really enhanced, and they made some exceptional progress. Phonics became the most loved lesson of the day, and we saw their learning applied in their independent work with great confidence!

Staff are mindful of the need to ensure this is a positive experience for the children, and last year's Year 2 staff have shared what made it work. I am confident that this is a positive step forward for the children in Year 1 and Year 2.

Hildi Mitchell, Headteacher