



How We Teach Phonics and Reading



Phonic skills

As soon as your child starts in Reception s/he will start to learning Phonics - learning to understand the alphabetic code. This involves learning letter sounds and shapes, hearing and saying the **sounds** in words in the correct order as well as being well on the way to being able to read and write the 44 **phonemes** (or units of sound) in the English language. We use Bug Club (Phonics Bug) systematically, creatively and thoroughly to give children the best start possible. Actions from the Bug Club (Phonics Bug) program are used carefully and shared with parents to make Phonics teaching engaging and active from Phase 2 to 5. Our handwriting patter, based on the Phonics Bug patter for each grapheme ensures consistency.

Once your child has learnt some of the 44 phonemes in Reception (Phase 2 and 3) they will be taught how to blend and segment these to read and write simple words (Phase 4). The vocabulary of Phonics (phoneme, grapheme, digraph etc.) is taught from the beginning.

In Year One we practise the phonemes learnt in Reception and introduce the alternative spellings for many of the sounds (Phase 5) by playing fun games and including them in a nonsense or alien word, to check we can recognise the grapheme. For example - including the 'ay' sound in the alien/nonsense word 'tay'. This helps to prepare the children for the statutory Phonics Check at the end of Year One.



Tricky words

Words which are not easily blended are learned by sight. These are known as "tricky words" and are introduced gradually at each phase. We will send home these words to be learned on an attractive bookmark so that children can practise reading them with automaticity and looking for them in books. You could make it a game by putting the words on card and hiding them around the house!

Tricky words are the first common on frequency words for your child to learn to spell and these will be a focus in written work until they are all spelled correctly with consistency.



Phonically decodable reading books

Once your child has been introduced to enough of the Phase 2 sounds in the Autumn term of Reception, your child will come home from school with a 'reading' book alongside accessing a range of exciting decodable texts on Bug Club (Phonics Bug). The emphasis of these first books is on your child using the pictures to help them to understand the story. This is an important reading cue which they will use to help them in their reading until they become more confident readers. Initially, we use Phonics Bug and only fully decodable books (books with only words they can sound out) using their growing phonic knowledge for Phases 2 to 5.

As your child becomes more confident and accurate in their reading, colour banded reading books will continue to be sent home. It is important that they have the opportunity to read at home each day so that they continue to develop their skills and fluency. Even when your child has mastered their decoding skills, they should continue to read at home, both aloud and to themselves, so they can build on their increasing knowledge of the way texts are structured and read. Understanding the text and being able to discuss it are as important as being able to read the words. Children will have the opportunity to change their reading book several times per week once a parental comment is recorded in the Home/School Diary. As the levelled texts progress they become increasingly more mature in their content and there may come a point in Year 2 when your child begins to work on our Accelerated Reader scheme which consists of working through a wide range of texts of increasing difficulty followed with a short quiz to follow each text to assess their understanding.



Wider reading skills

In addition to Phonics, your child will also start learning comprehension skills, understanding story sequences, structure, language and characters. A wide range of new vocabulary is explored and developed. They will also look at different types of texts: story, information, poetry. Your child should become more familiar about how a book works; that the words carry meaning and that we read from left to right and from top to bottom.



The teaching and practice of reading

The teaching and practice of reading takes place in a variety of ways:

- Shared reading where the teacher uses an Ebook or other form of large text and models good reading to the whole class.
- Guided reading where a group of children work with the teacher who teaches them specific reading skills

- Independent reading; children are encouraged to do this as much as possible in a range of activities, with great importance placed on the enjoyment of reading.
- Individual reading practice might be with the teacher, teaching assistant or an older child as a "buddy".



Reading through structured play

Creative learning in EYFS and into Year 1 encourages good speaking, listening, reading and writing in a range of contexts. Storytelling discussion, outdoor play, puppet play and role play will all be activities that your child will be excited to tell you about and where reading can play a major part. If your child wants to read or write at home in any context, this should be encouraged and praised.



Reading linked to writing

Once children begin to blend letters to read words, they can begin to say the sounds needed to write simple words and are encouraged to "have a go" at this from early on. Your child will then start to write simple sentences, to form letters correctly and to begin to notice punctuation marks and to use them.

By the end of Reception, many children are able to produce a piece of readable independent writing with some basic punctuation, some words spelled correctly and spaces between words. By the end of Year 1, many children are able to produce several sentences with correctly formed letters, full stops and capital letters.

By the end of Year 2, many children are able to produce several punctuated sentences with joined handwriting, question marks, noun phrases adjectives and conjunctions.

As children progress through Years 1 & 2, they will encounter an increasing range of text types and learn more about how different forms of writing are structured and how punctuation affects how a piece of writing should be read. They will learn about the conventions of grammar, punctuation and spelling and will be encouraged to apply these in their writing. Your child will have many different things to try to include in their writing and should not be expected to perfect them all at once!



Books to share at home

We will send home books every night along with their "Home School Diary" for you to contribute to. Your child will not change his/her reading book every single day as it is important that children gain confidence by re- reading texts. Children will have the opportunity to change their reading book several times per week once a parental comment is recorded in the Home/School Diary. Please do not worry if your child cannot read all of the words, especially at the early stages- read the difficult words for him/her and encourage them the use of pictures to help. Sharing a book in this way helps develop story structure and language skills.

Children in Reception, Years 1 & 2 will also have the opportunity to select a school library once each week. This book may be easier or more challenging than their current 'reading book,' but is one selected through free choice for you to enjoy sharing in the comfort of your own home.



Contact and progress

We encourage you to use your child's "Home School Diary" to communicate in a positive way about your child's achievements. Teachers are always willing to answer any questions you may have about your child's reading or any aspect of his/her learning.



Useful information

Useful websites:

www.activelearnprimary.co.uk

www.purplemash.com

www.oxfordowl.co.uk

[Espresso - English - KS1 - lots of activities including phonics](#)

www.phonicsplay.co.uk