

Learning Phonics

Our practice in EYFS includes teaching children to read using guidance from 'Letters and Sounds' incorporating synthetic phonics. There are 6 stages to learning phonics which will be covered in Reception and beyond into Year 1 and 2.

Phase 1

Activities are divided into seven aspects, including environmental sounds, instrumental sounds, body sounds, rhythm and rhyme, alliteration, voice sounds and finally oral blending and segmenting.

Phase 2

Learning 19 letters of the alphabet and one sound for each. Blending sounds together to make words. Segmenting words into their separate sounds. Beginning to read simple captions.

Set 1 - s a t p

Set 2 - i n m d

Set 3 - g o c k

Set 4 - c k e u r

Phase 3

The remaining 7 letters of the alphabet, one sound for each. Graphemes such as ch, oo, th representing the remaining phonemes not covered by single letters. Reading captions, sentences and questions. On completion of this phase, children will have learnt the "simple code", i.e. one grapheme for each phoneme in the English language.

Set 6 - j v w x

Set 7 - y z z z qu

Phase 4

No new grapheme-phoneme correspondences are taught in this phase. Children learn to blend and segment longer words with adjacent consonants, e.g. swim, clap, and jump. The main challenge in this phase is to help children to blend and segment words.

Phonics also introduces children to 'nonsense' words. Nonsense words may have no definition or meaning, for example; zop, han, nooch, crat, but teaches children the complexity of the English language and secures phonic knowledge and awareness.

Phase 5 and 6 in Year 1 and 2

In the next years children move on to the "complex code". Children learn more graphemes for the phonemes which they already know, plus different ways of pronouncing the graphemes they already know.

Working on spelling, including prefixes and suffixes, doubling and dropping letters etc.

Parental Tips for Helping with Phonics

- Make it fun—Play hide and seek with objects or hunt for letters when out & about
- Write sounds while in the bath
- Make sounds from sticks, stone or paint them with water
- Spot letters in books and move forwards to identify words
- Make sure you pronounce them correctly!

Early Reading and Writing

Terms to Help you with Letters and Sounds

Phoneme - The smallest unit of sound. There are approximately 44 phonemes in English (it depends on different accents). Phonemes can be put together to make words.

Grapheme - A way of writing down a phoneme. Graphemes can be made up from 1 letter e.g. p, 2 letters e.g. sh, 3 letters e.g. tch or 4 letters e.g. ough.

Oral Blending - This involves hearing phonemes and being able to merge them together to make a word. Children need to develop this skill before they will be able to blend written words.

Blending - This involves looking at a written word, looking at each grapheme and trying to work out which phoneme each grapheme represents and then merging these phonemes together to make a word. This is the basis of reading.

Oral Segmenting - This is the act hearing a whole word and then splitting it up into the phonemes that make it. Children need to develop this skill before they will be able to segment words to spell them.

Segmenting - This involves hearing a word, splitting it up into the phonemes that make it and working out which graphemes represent those phonemes and then writing those graphemes down in the right order. This is the basis of spelling.

Remember...

We all make progress with reading and writing at different speeds. Some children will be ready to learn to read and write at the start of Reception and some children may need some more time to develop.

We are all here to work together, if you are worried about helping your child learn to read and write please speak with us.

Ideas for helping with Early Reading

- Create a love of books—enjoy reading make it a happy time
- Let your child use the pictures to tell you a story
- Enjoy it when children memorise the story and can 'tell' you the words on the page
- Spot words that your child knows in the book—Mum, Dad, dog or cat are often great words to start
- Find words that your child can segment and blend by themselves—set them up to impress you!
- Read everything—books, cereal packets, signs, number plates, posters—whatever takes their fancy!

Ideas for helping with Early Writing

- Start writing on a big scale—outdoors with a paint brush or chalk
- Check and encourage your child to grip the tool correctly, using a pincer grip
- Draw and copy patterns—these will develop the writing motions of up and down strokes or rounds and diagonals
- Think about writing with your 'wrong' hand while wearing a glove—this is like writing for a child—it's tricky!
- Let them free write—they can tell you 'what is says' - marks and then letters have meanings!
- Watch out for children writing the first sound of the word they are sounding out
- Encourage spelling by sounding out the letters
- 'Check' how the word would look like in a book if your child asks
- Again have fun, don't make it a chore, make them love it!