



## How we teach phonics and early reading

We are passionate about reading and therefore teaching children to read is our highest academic priority. We want our children to become fluent readers who can read in order to learn in all other areas of the curriculum but who also read for enjoyment and for the sheer love of it. Reading is the gateway to the rest of the curriculum and it is at the centre of everything we do. Our key priority is to develop fluent reading as early as possible. We consider our teaching of reading to have three distinct, but equally important, strands: phonics, comprehension and love of reading.

### **Daily Phonics Sessions**

All teachers and teaching assistants are fully trained to teach phonics following 'Letter and Sounds' which is a phonics framework published by the Department for Education and Skills. It aims to build children's speaking and listening skills in their own right as well as to prepare children for learning to read by developing their phonic knowledge and skills. It sets out a detailed and systematic programme for teaching phonic skills with the aim of children becoming fluent readers. There are 6 phases which children progress through. In Nursery, phonics begins at Phase 1 which concentrates on developing children's speaking and listening skills and lays the foundations for the phonic work which starts in **Phase 2**. Throughout Reception and Key Stage 1, children work in small phonics groups to progress through **Phases 2 - 6**.

Phase	Phonic Knowledge and Skills
<i>Phase One</i> (Nursery)	Activities are divided into seven aspects, including environmental sounds, instrumental sounds, body sounds, rhythm and rhyme, alliteration, voice sounds and oral blending and segmenting.
<i>Phase Two</i> (Nursery / Reception)	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.
<i>Phase Three</i>	The remaining 7 letters of the alphabet, one sound for each. Graphemes such as ch, oo, th representing the remaining phonemes

(Reception)	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.
<i>Phase Four</i> (Reception / Year 1)	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, jump.
<i>Phase Five</i> (Throughout Year 1)	Now we 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.
<i>Phase Six</i> (Throughout Year 2 and beyond)	Working on spelling, including prefixes and suffixes, doubling and dropping letters etc.

Children work daily in small groups with peers who are working at the same level. In addition, phonics skills are also taught in non-discrete sessions, and teachers take opportunities to incorporate phonics teaching into all areas of the curriculum and incidental moments of the school day. Phonics teachers carefully assess children using Phonics Tracker, which allows teachers and teaching assistants to personalise teaching for individual children. Spellings in Key Stage 1 directly follow what has been taught each week in discrete phonics sessions.

### **Reading scheme - reading for success and developing a love of reading**

Research shows us that children most benefit from having a reading book which is very closely matched to their phonic ability so that they are able to blend all of the words in the book. Therefore, at the beginning of a child's reading journey, the basis of our reading scheme is phonetically matched texts from a range of different publishers, such as Bug Club, Collins Big Cat and Dandelion Launchers. We ensure that the books that children take home to read are carefully matched to their phonic ability. These books are intended to be read independently by the child and should be fully decodable based on their previous phonics learning. Books are issued by the child's phonics teacher and are then carefully checked by the child's class teacher. These books are a celebration of each child's success in reading and to help them consolidate all that they have learned that week in phonics.

We are very clear that, although absolutely vital in teaching children to read, phonics is simply a means to an end and the end is, of course, fluent readers who have a love of reading and secure comprehension. Therefore, we also still give children the opportunity each week to choose a book themselves, from a range of fiction and non-fiction books from our book banded library, which captures their interest. This book is for the parent and child to share together; the child may read it to the adult or, if some of the words are beyond their stage of development in phonics, then we ask parents to read those words or the book to their child, using their own judgement on this on a book by book basis.

As the children become more confident readers and move away from phonics, we replace phonically matched books completely with book banded books, as well as a range of other types of texts such as e-Books. We also encourage children to read widely at home and children are rewarded not just for reading books issued at school, but also texts that have been chosen and selected by the child.

### **Reading Comprehension**

We teach reading comprehension through reciprocal reading, beginning in Nursery all the way through to Year 6. The principles of reciprocal reading (predict, clarify, summarise and question) are constantly revisited and developed throughout school, and teachers use these principles as a basis for their questioning. Teaching reading in this way allows us to have flexibility to choose engaging and powerful texts, without being limited to a certain scheme or genre. Furthermore, reciprocal reading allows us to teach reading across different areas of the curriculum and to use texts which are linked to our global curriculum, enriching children's experience of reading.

We also utilise the book choices made by Seven Stories by subscribing to a termly set of fully up to date books called Hooks into Books. We use these books in class when reading together for pleasure and we also draw on them when using the principles from reciprocal reading. These books are accessible to the children and we encourage them to select these books to read for their own enjoyment.

### **Reading Awards**

As a school we are passionate about developing a love of reading. Research has suggested that reading for pleasure can have a positive impact on children's future mental health and is crucial in building strong foundations for children's academic and economic future. We believe that while it is vital that children read their school reading books frequently and consistently at home, it is important that they read widely and so they are also encouraged to read texts they have selected themselves. To encourage every child to read regularly at

home we reward our children through our home diary reward scheme. Children are rewarded for 50, 100 and 200 reads. In the summer term, children are also rewarded each week for showing comprehension skills within class; teachers select a child who is the 'high flyer' and they receive a balloon to take home. Each week, the teacher will share their reasons for selecting a child and in doing this, reinforce the principles of reciprocal reading.