

## Phonics

### What is phonics?

Phonics is a method of teaching children to read and write our English language. It teaches children that the sounds of the English language are represented by letters, or groups of letters. Phonics is knowing that sounds and letters are related. It is the link between what we say and what we can read and write.

In our Reception class, we begin teaching phonics and Early Reading, using the Read Write Inc. scheme. The children learn each pure letter sound then move on to sounds represented by groups of letters. They learn to listen carefully to sounds and to write them too. Visual clues, phrases and actions help the children to remember specific sounds. Elements of other schemes may be used to consolidate learning where appropriate (E.g. *Letters and Sounds* games and activities or phonics songs).

### Pure Letter Sounds

The scheme begins by introducing three speed sound sets. This approach aims to get children to learn 44 sounds and the corresponding letters/letter groups by using simple picture prompts and captions to aid letter formation.

### Blending

Children are taught to be able to blend. This is when children say the sounds that make up a word and are able to merge or blend the sounds together until they can hear what the word is. To do this successfully it is vital that children use the pure letter sounds so 'c' 'a' 'p' is not 'cuh' 'a' 'puh'.

Miss Smith (our Reception class teacher) has created a dvd modelling saying the pure sounds and blending them, as well as giving other tips about how to support your child's phonics learning.

### Segmenting

Children are also taught to segment. This is the opposite of blending. Children are able to say a word and then break it up into the phonemes that make it up. This skill is vital in being able to spell words.

Phonics sessions are made up from games, use of ICT, speaking and listening, songs and actions and writing the letters and words. Daily sessions are planned, lasting about 20 minutes, across Reception and Key stage 1.

As children progress through Year 2, phonics sessions may use more activities from the Letters and Sounds scheme.

Although many words can be sounded out and blended there are also High Frequency and 'tricky' words that the children need to read and spell.

### Early Reading

Phonics-based teaching helps children decode words and recognise the letter combinations that help automatic word recognition. However reading is much more than simply decoding. Practice and experience of reading will help children learn how books 'work', help them become familiar with language and develop their comprehension as well as learning to read for pleasure.

## **Websites to support phonics learning**

<http://www.oxfordowl.co.uk/Question/Index/3>

<http://www.ictgames.com/literacy.html>

<http://www.phonicsplay.co.uk/freeIndex>

<http://www.letters-and-sounds.com>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/ks1bitesize>

<http://readingeggs.com>