



St Benet's RC Primary School

Early Reading & Phonics

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Children do not just 'become' readers and reading engagement is not possible if children struggle with the basic mechanics of reading. Fluency, comprehension and enjoyment are the result of careful teaching and frequent practice. We believe that ensuring children become fluent, comprehensive and engaged readers at the very earliest stages, and also helps avoid the vicious circle of reading difficulty and demotivation that makes later intervention more challenging.

Read Write Inc. (RWI) is a whole school approach to teaching phonics and ensures that all children learn to read fluently and at speed so they can focus on developing their skills in comprehension, vocabulary and spelling. Children begin their reading journey in Nursery, where they are introduced to Speed Sounds Set 1 and the development of pre-reading skills is supported with the children becoming familiar with a wide selection of literature and rhymes. RWI is introduced formally in Reception and continues into Year 1, where phonemes and graphemes are taught systematically and children begin to blend these sounds into words. The use of books which are closely matched to children's phonic knowledge and include common 'tricky' words aid children's fluency and provide opportunities for development of comprehension skills.

Learning to read is the most important thing your child will learn at our school. Everything else depends on it, so we put as much energy as we possibly can into making sure that every single child learns to read as quickly as possible.

We want your child to love reading – and to want to read for themselves. This is why we put our efforts into making sure they develop a love of books as well as simply learning to read.

NURSERY

Children begin their reading journey in Nursery, where they are introduced to Speed Sounds Set 1 and the development of pre-reading skills is supported with the children becoming familiar with a wide selection of literature and rhymes. This consists of short 5/10minute sessions.

Home Reading Pack:

Each week, children will bring home:

- 'Reading for Pleasure' book
- Talk Talk bag.
- In the spring term, if your child is ready, they will bring home sound flash cards.

RECEPTION

RWI is introduced formally in Reception and continues into Year 1, where phonemes and graphemes are taught systematically and children begin to blend these sounds into words. The use of books which are closely matched to children's phonic knowledge and include common 'tricky' words aid children's fluency and provide opportunities for development of comprehension skills.

- The children learn 44 sounds and the corresponding letters/letter groups using simple picture prompts.
- They learn to read words using FRED TALK and sound blending.
- They read from a range of storybooks and non-fiction books matched to their phonic knowledge.
- They develop comprehension skills.
- They children learn to write and form letters/letter groups which represent the 44 sounds using simple picture prompts and phrases.
- They learn to write words using FRED TALK.

Home Reading Packs:

Every week, children will bring home:

- 'Reading for Pleasure' book
- A reading pack which is tailored to their phonics needs. The packs may include sound cards, red/green words to learn and a book.
- Parents will be sent video links to support sounds learned in phonics sessions
- Online Read, Write Inc. storybook linked to lessons from the previous week

How will my child be taught to read?

We start by teaching phonics to the children in Nursery. This involves a lot of talk-a-lot and read-a-lot opportunities throughout the day. Specific sounds will be taught in the summer term before Reception.

The children in Reception will participate in daily phonics sessions. This means that they learn how to 'read' the sounds in words and how those sounds can be written down. This is essential for reading, but it also helps children learn to spell well. We teach the children simple ways of remembering these sounds and letters. Ask them to show you what these are.

Fred Talk

We use **pure sounds** ('m' not 'muh', 's' not 'suh', etc.) so that your child will be able to blend the sounds into words more easily.

At school we use a puppet called Fred who is an expert on sounding out words! we call it, 'Fred Talk'. E.g. m-o-p, c-a-t, m-a-n, sh-o-p, b-l-a-ck.

The children are taught the sounds in 3 sets.

Step 1:

Set 1 Sounds are taught in the following order together with rhymes to help children form the letters correctly and instantly recognise sounds ready for blending.

Set 1

Sound Rhyme

- m** Down Maisie then over the two mountains. Maisie, mountain, mountain.
- a** Round the apple, down the leaf.
- s** Slide around the snake
- d** Round the dinosaur's back, up his neck and down to his feet.
- t** Down the tower, across the tower,
- i** Down the insects body, dot for the head.
- n** Down Nobby and over the net.
- p** Down the plait, up and over the pirates face.
- g** Round the girls face, down her hair and give her a curl
- o** All around the orange
- c** Curl around the caterpillar
- k** Down the kangaroos body, tail and leg
- u** Down and under the umbrella, up to the top and down to the puddle
- b** Down the laces, over the toe and touch the heel
- f** Down the stem and draw the leaves
- e** Slice into the egg, go over the top, then under the egg
- l** Down the long leg
- h** Down the horse's head to the hooves and over his back
- sh** Slither down the snake, then down the horse's head to the hooves and over his back
- r** Down the robot's back, then up and curl
- j** Down his body, curl and dot
- v** Down a wing, up a wing
- y** Down a horn, up a horn and under the yak's head.
- w** Down, up, down, up the worm.
- th** Down the tower, across the tower, then down the horse's head to the hooves and over his back
- z** Zig-zag-zig, down the zip.

ch Curl around the caterpillar, , then down the horse's head to the hooves and over his back
qu Round the queen's head, up to her crown, down her hair and curl
x Cross down the arm and leg and cross the other way
ng A thing on a string
nk I think I stink

Please do not use letter names at this early stage.

Click here to watch a video on how to pronounce pure sounds:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TkXcabDUg7Q>

Set 2 Sounds:

The children are then taught **Set 2 Sounds** – the long vowels. When they are very confident with all of set 1 and 2 they are taught **Set 3 Sounds**.

Set 2 Speed Sound cards

Long vowel sound

Teach these first

ay	ay: may I play
ee	ee: what can you see
igh	igh: fly high
ow	ow: blow the snow
oo	oo: poo at the zoo
oo	oo: look at a book
ar	ar: start the car
or	or: shut the door
air	air: that's not fair
ir	ir: whirl and twirl
ou	ou: shout it out
oy	oy: toy for a boy

Set 3 Speed Sound cards

a-e: make a cake	ai: snail in the rain
ea: cup of tea	e: he me we she be
i-e: nice smile	
o-e: phone home	ao: goat in a boat
u-e: huge brute	ew: chew the stew
aw: yawn at dawn	
are: share and care	
ur: nurse for a purse	er: a better letter
ow: brown cow	
oi: spoil the boy	

ire
ear
ure

ire: fire fire!
ear: hear with your ear
ure: sure it's pure?

Children will be introduced to 'Ditty books' when they successfully begin to read single words. The short vowels should be kept short and sharp.

Children use sound-blending (Fred Talk) to read short ditties. They will bring these home once they have read and discussed the book in class. Children will then be challenged to use their developing phonic knowledge to write short sentences.

Within all the books children will have **red** and **green** words to learn to help them to become speedy readers. **Red** words are words that are not easily decodable and challenge words to extend children's vocabulary. **Green** words are linked to the sounds they have been learning and are easily decodable. Dots and dashes represent the sound each letter makes.

During the RWI session children will read the book three times and at each new reading they will have plenty of opportunities to practise using their developing comprehension skills. You may have heard your child talking about '**hold, edit or build a sentence**'.

Nonsense words (Alien words)

As well as learning to read and blend real words children will have plenty of opportunities to apply their sound recognition skills on reading 'Nonsense words'. These are made up of the sounds the children are learning e.g. d-u-t (dut), d-oi-n (doin), h-e-sh (hesh).

The teachers read to the children, too, so the children get to know all sorts of stories, poetry and information books. They learn many more words this way and it also helps their writing.

Spelling

Spelling will only start in Reception when children are ready to write and form their letters. Children will use first use 'Fred fingers' to first sound out a word before they write it down. Children learn how to spell rather than just get tested. Furthermore, this way of teaching spellings allows children to use Fred fingers whenever they get stuck with spelling a word. Children pinch each sound on fingers before writing the word.

How will I know how well my child is doing?

We will always let you know how well your child is doing.

We use various ways to find out how the children are getting on in reading. We use the information to decide what reading group they should be in. Your child will work with children who are at the same reading level as him or her. Children will move to a different group if they are making faster progress than the others. Your child will have one-to-one support if we think he or she needs some extra help to keep up.

We also use a reading test so that we can make sure that all our children are at the level that they should be for their age compared to all the children across the country.

In the summer term, the government asks us to do a phonics check of all the Year 1 children. That gives us extra information about their progress. We will talk to you about how well your child has done, and especially if we have any worries at all.

How long will it take to learn to read well?

By the end of Year 2, your child should be able to read aloud books that are at the right level for his or her age. In Year 3 we concentrate more on helping children to understand what they are reading, although this work begins very early on. This happens when the teacher reads to the children and also when the children read their own story book.

How do I know the teaching will be good?

All the staff have been trained to teach reading in the way we do it in this school. We believe that it is very important that all the teachers and teaching assistants work in the same way. Senior teachers watch other teachers teaching to make sure that the children are learning in the way we want them to learn.

What can I do to help? Is there anything that I shouldn't do?

You will be invited to a meeting in the autumn term so that we can explain how we teach reading. Please come and support your child. We would very much like you to know how to help.

Your child will bring different sorts of books home from school. It helps if you know whether this is a book that your child can read on their own or whether this is a book that you should read *to* them. The teacher will have explained which is which. *Please* trust your child's teacher to choose the book(s) that will help your child the most.

Help your child to sound out the letters in words and then to 'push' the sounds together to make a whole word. Try not to refer to the letters by their names. Help your child to focus on the sounds.

Sometimes your child might bring home a picture book that they know well. Please don't say, 'This is too easy.' Instead, encourage your child to tell you the story out loud; ask them questions about things that happen or what they think about some of the characters in the story.

We know parents and carers are very busy people. But if you can find time to read to your child as much as possible, it helps him or her to learn about books and stories. They also learn new words and what they mean. Show that you are interested in reading yourself and talk about reading as a family.

Does it matter if my child misses a lesson or two?

It matters a lot if your child misses school. The way we teach children to read is very well organised, so even one missed lesson means that your child has not learnt something that they need to know to be a good reader.

What if he or she finds it difficult to learn to read?

We want children to learn to read, however long it takes us to teach them. We will find out very quickly if your child is finding reading difficult. First, we move children to a different group, so that we can make sure that they have learnt what they need to know. If they still struggle, we give them extra time with an adult, on their own. These adults are specially trained to support these children. Your child will still be in the same group with the other children and won't miss out on any of the class lessons.

If we have any serious worries about your child's reading, we will talk to you about this.

Some children take a bit longer to learn to put sounds together to read a word, e.g. c-a-t to make the word 'cat'. At our meeting, we will explain how you can help your child to do this.

My child has difficulty pronouncing some sounds. Will this stop him learning to read through phonics?

This isn't a problem for learning to read as long as we know what sound the child is trying to say. This is not something to worry about. Many children have a few sounds that they can hear clearly but find it difficult to say, particularly the l-sound, r-sound, w-sound, th-sound, s-sound, sh-sound and j-sound. Often they say a t-sound for the c-sound; "tttssh" for the s-sound; "w" for the r-sound and "r" for the l-sound. You can help your child by encouraging him or her to look at your mouth when you say the sound. Whatever you do, do not make your child feel a failure. They can easily learn to read, even if they find one or two sounds difficult to say.

Don't hesitate to contact us if you have any concerns. We are here to help.