

Monday 13th October 2020

How We Teach Reading In Reception

Dear Parents,

This week we are starting to teach your child to read. We use a method called synthetic phonics.

Synthetic phonics is a method of teaching where words are broken up into the smallest units of sound (phonemes). Children learn to make connections between the letters of written texts (graphemes, or letter symbols) and the sounds of spoken language.

Your child will learn the sounds used in English in the following order:

- **Set 1:** s, a, t, p.
- **Set 2:** i, n, m, d.
- **Set 3:** g, o, c, k.
- **Set 4:** ck, e, u, r.
- **Set 5:** h, b, f, ff, l, ll, ss
- **Set 6:** j, v, w, x
- **Set 7:** y, z, zz, qu
- **Consonant digraphs:** ch, sh, th, ng
- **Vowel digraphs/trigraphs:** ai, ee, igh, oa, oo, ar, or, ur, ow, oi, ear, air, ure, er

We introduce a new sound to the children most days, using songs and games. They learn how to say each sound correctly and how to write the letter shape/s that represent the sound. Each day we review the sounds already taught, so that pupils are encouraged to remember previous sounds whilst learning new ones.

This clip shows how to pronounce each sound correctly:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BqhXUW_v-1s

Once the children have learned the first few sounds, we help them to begin to read simple words, e.g. sat, pin, mad, tap. We teach them to say each sound in order and then to blend the sounds together to read the word, for example, 'c-a-t' becomes 'cat'.

Watch this clip to see blending in action:

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

We teach the children the correct terminology:

Phoneme = the smallest unit of sound in a word You hear a phoneme



Grapheme = the letter/s used to represent a phoneme (sound) You see a grapheme



Blending = merging the sounds in the order in which they are written to pronounce a word

Segmenting = chopping up a word into each sound in order to write it (the opposite of blending), e.g. identifying the 'd' then 'o' then 'g' in the word 'dog' and writing down the graphemes (letter shapes) in that order

Digraph = 2 letters shapes that make 1 sound, e.g. ch, oo, ee, sh, th

Trigraph = 3 letter shapes that make 1 sound, e.g. igh, ear, ure

We realise that this is all very technical, but the children soak it up and are incredibly proud of themselves when they begin to read.

How You Can Help At Home

*Look at books with your child regularly (at least 3 times a week, although we would recommend sharing a book every day to help your child's reading develop most effectively). There is nothing better than a bedtime story!

*Encourage your child to say the sounds in order in a word and to blend them together. It might be that you model this and they repeat it.

*Look out for 'tricky words' that need to be read as whole words (see below).

*Take the pressure off your child by reading *to* them if they are tired or finding it difficult, or take it in turns to read a few pages. Little and often is best.

*Chat about what has been read.

*Read a book more than once. This will build your child's confidence with tackling the words, as they will be more familiar to them.

Tricky Words

Some words cannot be blended to read, e.g. the, no, to, me. We teach the children to read these words by sight, as whole words.

We will be sending home a red book containing some of these tricky words for your child to learn (there is an explanation of how to practise the words inside the front cover of the book).

Please do not hesitate to contact us (via email or phone call) if you would like to talk about reading in more detail. Thank you for your support in helping your child to read. We can guarantee that it will be a rewarding (if sometimes frustrating!) time.

The EYFS Team