

Hollymount Primary School



Helping your child
with
Phonics, Reading
and Handwriting



For the parents/carers of: _____

Teaching Phonics

Introduction

One of the most important skills that a child will learn in and out of school is how to read and write. We use the Letters and Sounds Programme (mainly games based) in line with Jolly Phonics (actions associated with letter sounds) to give children the tools to blend, segment and de-code words.

Phases of Letters and Sounds

In Reception we mainly focus on Phase 2, 3 and 4 phonics. The teaching sequence is as follows:

Phase 1:

Should have been covered in your child's Nursery where the focus is largely on rhyme, alliteration and hearing sounds in the environment. We re-cap a little on this phase but quickly move on to Phase 2 in Reception.

Phase 2:

Covers 19 initial letter sounds. Sounds are not taught in the sequence of the alphabet. The letter progression is as follows:

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: hb f,ff l,ll ss

We aim to teach 2 to 3 new letter sounds per week depending on the progress of the children.

By the end of Phase 2, children should be able to:

- Give the sound when shown any Phase 2 letter
- Be able to find a letter from a display when given the sound
- Read some VC (vowel consonant e.g. is/at) and some CVC (consonant, vowel, consonant e.g. cat, hat) words.
- They should have learnt some *High frequency* or *tricky words*. (e.g. the, to, go, no)
- Use their phonetic knowledge to *blend* and *segment* CVC words
- Be able to attempt to form letters correctly



Phase 3:

Teaches another 25 *graphemes*, most of which comprising of two letters e.g. oa. Children will continue building on their existing knowledge from Phase 2. Children will learn to read some more tricky words and will begin to learn to spell some of these words.

The letter progression is as follows:

Set 6: jv w x

Set 7: y z,zzqu

Graphemes taught at this phase:

Chsh th ng ai ee ighoa oo ar or ur owoi ear air ureer

By the end of Phase 3 children should:

- Give the sound when shown all or most Phase 2 and Phase 3 graphemes
- Be able to blend and read CVC words (some words may have graphemes in the middle)
- Read more tricky words
- Write each letter correctly using the correct formation

Phase 4:

No new letters will be introduced at Phase 4. It is largely based on consolidation. There is extension with blending cvcc words e.g. tent and ccvc words e.g. grip.

By the end of phase 4 children should:

- Know all phase 2 and phase 3 graphemes
- Be able to blend, read, segment and spell words containing adjacent consonants

Phonics in the Classroom:

Phonics sessions:

There will be a 20 minute phonic session every day either taught in small groups or as a whole class.

New sounds will appear in your child's phonic book when a new sound has been taught to the children. Phonics sessions are based on games that we play with the children. We incorporate ICT in some of these sessions and children learn from a wide range of resources.

Free Play:

Table top activities enable children to "play" with sounds that they have already learnt and may include activities such as:

- Play dough letters
- Magnetic letters and fishing rods
- Extended writing in home corners
- Letter sponges in the water

Adult Led Activities:

In Reception, amongst other adult led activities, we largely focus on News Writing. Each week your child will be able to have support by a member of staff to guide them when applying their phonetic knowledge to writing. Your child's progression in phonics will be clear as they gain more confidence with reading and writing.



Phonics at Home:

Phonic Books:

Your child will receive a phonics book. Every time a new sound is taught, it will appear in the book. Your child will need to do some “revision” of this sound with you at home. We would encourage children to:

- Attempt to write the sound a couple of times in their book (please encourage correct pencil grip and correct formation—see back of booklet)
- Draw or cut out some objects that start with that initial sound or have that sound in the word for example: when learning /s/, stick in pictures of: snail, snake, star etc
- Remind your child of the action that is associated with the sound
- Revise any previous sounds from the previous day or week.



Word Pots:

Word pots contain the High Frequency and Tricky Words in. They are words that children need to know by sight. It would be good if you could try and make the word pots fun and exciting by playing games with the words. Words will be added to your child’s word pot in line with the teaching sequence of the letters and sounds programme. Towards Phase 3 and 4 you will see a lot more words appearing as we gear up towards reading books. Word pots are important because as soon as children are confident with the words, they will be more fluent readers.

Teaching Handwriting

In order that children can eventually acquire a legible, fluent and fast style they need to develop skills including:

- Gross and fine motor control
- A recognition of pattern
- A language to talk about shapes and movements
- The main writing movements involved in the three basic letter shapes

Developing Gross Motor Skills:

Ways to develop gross motor skills include:

- Talk about the movements children make such as, jumping, springing, long slow movements and quick jumpy movements
- Encourage large movements and movements that use both sides of the body

Developing Letter Shapes using gross motor movements:

- Encourage sky writing
- Make patterns in the air
- Use the sand tray to make the letter shapes
- Talk about the movements as you make them
- Get the children to write the letters with their eyes closed
- Use paintbrushes and water on the ground
- Make letters out of play dough

Developing Fine Motor Control:

To help the children to strengthen their hands and fingers for writing:

- Sewing and weaving activities
- Involve the children with chopping and peeling activities
- Using a number of tools
- Use finger rhymes, counting fingers
- Use small construction toys such as lego
- Structure sand and water play to include sieving, pouring, picking up toys using tools etc
- Use tweezers to pick up things
- Let the children strengthen their fingers by using clay, play dough, plasticine etc for modelling
- Encourage scissors skills, cutting big letter shapes and patterns
- The children can use thick paintbrushes and water to paint patterns
- Encourage the children to use a variety of pens and pencils to draw patterns and pictures. The paper should be as big as possible.



Left-Handed Children:

At least 10% of the population are left-handed. There is no reason for left-handed children to be disadvantaged when writing if a few simple strategies are employed:

- Model sky writing with the left hand
- Make sure children sit on the left of right-handed children so that the writing arms don't clash with others
- Put a mark on the left side of the paper to indicate where to start writing
- Have the paper slightly left of centre of their body so that they can see what they have written.
- Make sure the height of the chair is right so that they can view their writing clearly.
- Make sure they have a good pencil grip so that they do not smudge their work.
- Provide left-handed equipment in the classroom e.g. left handed scissors.

Choice of Paper:

We encourage children in the Foundation Stage to have experience writing on a wide variety of paper types e.g. tracing paper, sugar paper, big sheets of plain paper, small pieces of paper etc. However, as the children begin to write letters, we acknowledge the importance of encouraging the children to write on lined paper (including lined phonics/news books). Lined paper is important because so much about handwriting is to do with the letters' orientation to the line.

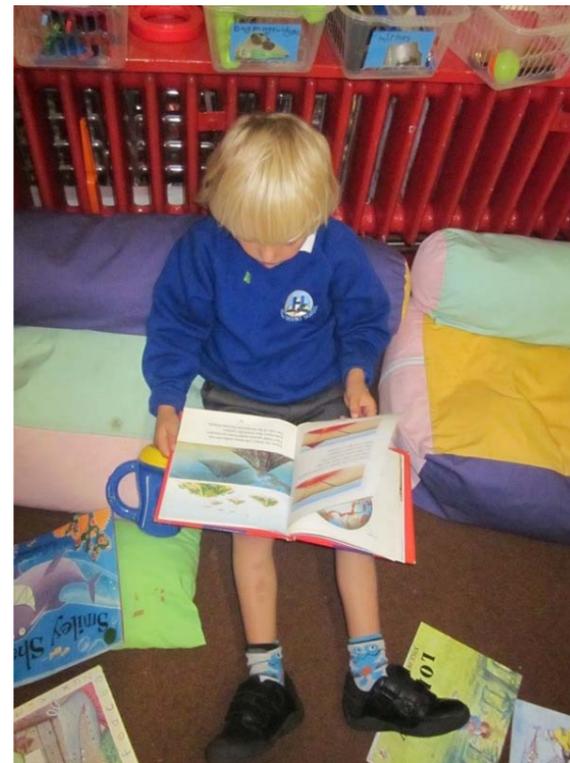
The letter formation we model and demonstrate to the children is found at the **back of this booklet**. Please use this letter formation at home when writing—most especially in their phonics books.

Teaching Reading

At Hollymount Primary School we value the pre-school experiences that the children have received and wish to encourage your continued support as we move towards independent reading in Reception.

Young children enjoy being read to, and sharing books with your child in this way gives them the message that reading is an enjoyable activity. They also become familiar with the language that books use and begin to understand how books work.

Memory plays an important role in learning to read. You will probably have already noticed your child “playing” at reading, either reciting a well-known book by heart or making up a story to fit the pictures. Children will begin to recognise the letters of their own name in well known books. Young children enjoy joining in with books that are being read to them and often want favourites re-read to them over and over again. These activities are important “mile-stones” in the reading process.



Early Reading:

You will notice that your child will begin to do the following as they become interested in books:

- Listens to story and watches the pictures
- Listens to story and observes text whilst adult points to words
- Offers to read pieces of texts/words
- Makes up story while turning the pages
- Tells the story accurately but does not read the text
- Tells the story and runs a finger along the text
- Tells the story with word/sound match and can recognise familiar words
- Reads most of the words, predicting unknown words by what has been said in the story and through phonic and picture clues
- Matches word on a card to the word in the book

Making the most of Reading Time:

- It is important that reading should be a pleasurable activity, so choose a time when you both want to read
- Only continue for as long as your child wants to—SHORT but regular sessions are the most valuable. Reading should not become an onerous task.
- Sit somewhere comfortable and quiet where you will not be disturbed.
- Talk about the book, the title and the cover before you start. Give your child some idea what the book is about. This is not cheating—reading should not be a test.
- If your child is too tired or not interested, you should either read the book to them or choose a favourite book to read to them.
- Allow your child to look at and discuss the illustrations. The first books that your child will bring home have only

minimal text and the story will be contained in the pictures.

- From time to time ask your child about what has been read so far and about what he or she thinks might happen next. This checks that the child has understood what has been read and encourages them to predict. Prediction is an important skill which encourages fluency and motivates the child to read on.
- Ask your child if they are able to change the ending of the story.

Remember, the most important thing is to praise and encourage your child in order to build confidence.



What to do if your child doesn't know a word:

- If your child comes to an unfamiliar word, wait a few seconds to allow them to work it out.
- If they are unable to work it out, either give them the word or allow them to carry on or help them to guess from the story/picture or the sound of the first letter.
- Ask your child if they recognise the first letter in the word. If so, ask them what it could be, referring to the pictures and storyline.
- As your child becomes a more fluent reader suggest that they read on to the end of the sentence and then come back to the word. Remember that as adults if we meet a word that we don't recognise, we skip over it (perhaps looking it up at a later date) and continue reading.

The introduction of Reading Books at Hollymount:

Once your child has had enough blending and segmenting experience and has gained confidence with their tricky words and letter sounds, we will begin to issue your child with a guided reading book. We anticipate the reading books to be issued in the Spring Term.

The book will be issued in line with the capabilities of your child. We operate on a "banding system" where coloured readers will be issued suitable to your child's reading ability. Your child will be issued with more challenging readers as they gain confidence and have had enough experience with one level.

Your child will be read with once a week and their guided reading book will be changed.

The Reading Record Book:

The reading record book is a diary of achievement. You may want to comment if your child has read well, if they have persevered, if they have tried to sound out words, if they have enjoyed the story etc. These are all valid comments. If you have concerns about your child's reading it is better to come and discuss these personally with the class teacher. If your child is too tired to read or not well, record this in the reading record and ask for the book again at the weekend.

A member of staff will have read with your child each week and will make a comment about your child's reading progress in the reading record book. The reading record book

Some Questions Answered:

What do I do if my child does not want to read?

Sometimes a child may struggle with a book either because it's too difficult, because they are tired or because they are just not in the mood! In cases like these ask them if they would like you to read it to them or take turns reading. Do not struggle on but give it another go tomorrow or choose something more appropriate.



Why do the children come home with books from different reading schemes?

Because the aim is not just to teach children to read—but to become enthusiastic readers. A wider range of books increases the likelihood that the child will enjoy what is being read, will have a wider reading vocabulary and will acquire the skill of choosing appropriate books. Some children may not like the characters in a scheme e.g. a dragon. The reading schemes must not be viewed as a ladder. The children need to read a broad range of books.

Are there other ways I can help my child become a reader?

Seeing adults reading for pleasure is always a good role model for children. If you read at home, why not talk about the books you read and the books you used to read. Look at headings at magazines or newspapers. Ask whether they recognise any of the words. Older siblings can read to younger siblings and vice versa. Let your child read to their favourite toy or hand puppet. Record the story on a tape/CD and listen to it. Use wands (or lollipop sticks) to point to the words they are reading. Show children that the television and the CD player are not the only good sources of entertainment in your house. Take your child to the library when you can and don't forget the magic of sharing a bedtime story together!



Extending Reading:

Good readers use different skills to read fluently. As they become competent readers they will begin to use their skills and areas of knowledge simultaneously in the act of reading. At different times they may rely on some more than others but it is not possible to read without making some use of them all.

As a competent reader be sure the child is given the opportunity to experience a wider range of books, not only fiction but non-fiction too. Not all children enjoy the same books so it is important to let them choose and encourage and praise their decisions. Also, like adults, they enjoy reading books again. This is also important when practising reading and as a way of building confidence.

GLOSSARY

Blending—to use sound knowledge to put known sounds together to make a word. E.g. c-a-t = cat

Segmenting—To break a word up using sound knowledge. E.g. cat = c-a-t

High Frequency words—A list of words that children need to know by the end of a year group.

Tricky words—words that are not phonetically spelt e.g. come, some, all, the

Grapheme—the smallest meaningful unit in a writing system e.g. /s/ /ss/ /oa/

List of High Frequency Words

A	back	this	just
An	and	then	help
As	get	them	
At	big	with	
If	him	see	
In	his	for	
Is	not	now	
It	got	down	
Of	up	look	
Off	mum	too	
On	but	went	
Can	put	it's	
Dad	will	from	
Had	that	children	

List of Tricky Words

The he you said come
To she they have were
I we all like there
No me are so little
go be my do one
Into was her some when
Out what

Additional Notes:

Letter Formation:



Hollymount Primary
Phonics Handbook
September 2010
Designed by: Miss K de Beer
FSU Leader