

How we teach reading - answers for parents

We have written this for parents. It explains how we teach reading using the *Read Write Inc.* programme.

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.

How will my child be taught to read?

We start by teaching phonics to the children in the Reception class. 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.

The children are taught the Set 1 Speed Sound cards in the following order: m a s d t i n p g o c k u b f e l h r j v y w z x sh th ch qu nk.

The children also practise reading (and spelling) what we call 'tricky words', such as 'once,' 'have,' 'said' and 'where'.

The children practise their reading with books that match the phonics and the 'tricky words' they know. They start thinking that they *can* read and this does wonders for their confidence.

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.

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 staff teaching to make sure that the children are learning in the way we want them to learn.

If you are worried about the teaching or you have any questions, please come to school and talk to us.

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

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. There will be a sticker on the back of the book to explain which is which.

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. You can hear how to say the sounds correctly at this link: <https://ruthmiskin.com/en/find-out-more/parents/#lq=1&slide=2>

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 are very busy people. But if you can find time to read to your child as much as possible, it helps your child 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.

How can I support my child at home using the Speed Sound flash cards?

Activity 1:

Speed Sound cards - picture side. Spread 5-10 cards out, picture side up. Say the name of each picture together. Ask your child to touch each card repeating the above. Increase the speed.

Activity 2:

Speed Sound cards - picture side. Spread the same 5-10 cards out, picture side up. Say the name of each picture together, but this time bounce or stretch the beginning sound. (Look on the card to check which to do.) Ask your child to touch each card repeating the above. Increase the speed.

Activity 3:

Speed Sound cards - letter side Spread out the same 5-10 cards, letter side up. Say a sound, either stretching or bouncing it. See how quickly your child can point to the corresponding card.

Activity 4:

Speed Sound cards - letter side. Spread out the same 5-10 cards, letter side up. Say a sound - no bouncing or stretching. See how quickly your child can point to the card. Now point to the card and ask your child to say the sound.

Activity 5:

Speed Sound pack. Ask your child to decide the cards he wants to put in a 'Speed Sound' pack (the sounds that are known really well). Encourage your child to read these at speed, getting quicker and quicker. Try to increase the number of cards in the 'Speed Sound' pack until your child can read all 31 sounds quickly (once these cards have been sent home).

Activity 6:

Word clue. Spread out the same 5-10 cards, letter side up. Say, for example, 'monster, mirror, mouth'. (Emphasise the first sound.) See how quickly your child can say the first sound and then find the card.

How can I help my child learn to read words by sound-blending?

Children learn to read words by blending the letter-sounds that are in the Speed Sound pack. Help children to say the pure sounds, as quickly as they can, and then to blend the sounds together to say the whole word. We call this Fred Talk e.g. l-e-g, b-a-ck, h-ea-d, p-e-n, c-u-p, g-r-ee-n. Make sure that children can read the Speed sound cards before you attempt to sound-blend a word.

Choose 3 cards from the Speed Sound pack that will make up a 3-sound. We are going to teach copy blending first. Muddle the cards and point to these sounds in and out of order to check these can be read at speed. Tell your child, 'Fred wants us to read a word. The word is m-a-t. I think he is saying mat!' Put the 'm' card, the 'a' card and the 't' card out on the table. Point to the cards and say m-a-t mat. Now ask your child to point and say m-a-t mat. Pick up the cards and ask your child to make and read the word.

Once they can do this, see if they can read a three-letter word without you telling them the word first. Put out, for example, 'p' card, 'i' card and 'n' card. Ask the child to point, say the sounds and say the word. If they can, they are now independently blending. If they cannot, go back to copy blending as above. This is difficult for many children so be lavish in your praise!