

Horspath C.E. Primary

Understanding Phonics

Supporting your child to Read, Write
and Spell.



Understanding Phonics

At Horspath, all children in Acorn and Beech take part in high-quality phonics sessions every day. These are fun sessions involving lots of speaking, listening and games, where the emphasis is on children's active participation. They learn to use this phonic knowledge for reading and writing activities; develop understanding that spoken words are made up of different sounds (**phonemes**) and match these phonemes to letters (**graphemes**). Phonics is about children knowing how letters link to sounds (graphemes to phonemes), for example, **c** as in 'cat', **ll** as in 'fell', **ee** as in 'sheep'.

Children use this phonic knowledge when they are reading and writing so if they are not confident with linking the graphemes to the phonemes then they will find it very difficult to progress and learn to read words on the page, fluently and accurately.

Your child's phonics development is based on a partnership between you, your child and Horspath School. We have produced this booklet in the hope that you find it both helpful and informative. Please see your class teacher if you require further support.

At Horspath Primary we use a systematic phonics programme called RWI phonics

At Horspath, we strive to teach children to read effectively and quickly using the Read Write Inc. Phonics programme (RWI) which includes teaching synthetic phonics, sight vocabulary, decoding and encoding words as well as spelling and accurate letter formation.

We passionately believe that teaching children to read and write independently, as quickly as possible, is one of the core purposes of a primary school. These fundamental skills not only hold the keys to the rest of the curriculum but also have a huge impact on children's self-esteem and future life chances. Using the RWI phonics program we teach children to:

- read easily, fluently and with good understanding
- develop the habit of reading widely and often, for both pleasure and information
- write clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting their language and style in and for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences

In practice, children learn the 44 common sounds in the English language and are taught how to blend these sounds to decode (read) words. We start by teaching children to read and blend the first thirty Set 1 sounds. Once they have conquered this skill, they start reading stories and texts that have words made up of the sounds they know. This means that they can embed and apply their phonic knowledge and start to build their reading fluency. Once secure, children learn Set 2 and Set 3 sounds and then read texts with increasingly more complex sounds and graphemes. Throughout this process there is a focus on comprehension, reading with expression and reading for enjoyment.

Children are taught in small groups which reflect their phonic knowledge and reading fluency. We regularly assess children so that they are taught in a RWI group which matches their phonic knowledge. We make sure that pupils read books that are closely matched to their increasing knowledge of phonics and ability to read 'tricky words'; so they experience early reading success and gain confidence that they are readers.

How you can help at home!

- Read to them and always discuss the story you are reading to try to build your child's comprehension skills, inference and understanding.
- Practice the sounds they know at home. These are the sounds in the Speed Sound Chart at the start of the storybooks.
- Listen to your child read, both their RWI storybook and other storybooks, every day. Make sure that your child brings their RWI Storybook into school every day!
- Talk to them! The most important thing you can do is to talk to your child and listen to them when they are talking to you. Try to extend their vocabulary range and their skill at talking in increasingly more complex sentences. For example, try to teach them alternative words for ideas, or nouns they already know.
- Look out for our RWI Workshops, where you can find out about how we teach phonics at Horspath so that you are best placed to support your child's reading journey
- Make sure that they attend school every day, and that they are on time, as this will help your child to make the most progress.
- Visit the Parents section of the RWI website for more tips, techniques and helpful hints <https://www.ruthmiskin.com/en/find-out-more/parents/>
- Visit the Oxford Owl Reading at home pages for great free e-books you can read you're your child. <https://www.oxfordowl.co.uk/for-home/find-a-book/library-page/>

If you need further advice or help with how best to help, please contact your child's teacher who will be happy to meet with you.

How will RWI be taught?

All children are assessed regularly by our RWI lead teacher, so they work with children at the same level. This allows complete participation in lessons.

Acorn

In Acorn all children will learn how to 'read' the sounds in words and how those sounds can be written down.

Reading

The children:

- learn 44 sounds and the corresponding letters/letter groups using simple picture prompts – see below
- learn to read words using Fred talk and sound blending
- read from a range of storybooks and non-fictions books matched to their phonic knowledge
- work well with partners
- develop comprehension skills in stories by answering 'Find It' and 'Prove It' discussion questions

Writing

The children:

- learn to write and form the letters/letter groups which represent the 44 sounds with the help of fun phrases
- learn to write words by using Fred Talk

- learn to build sentences by practising sentences out loud before they write

Talking

The children

- They work in pairs so that they:
- answer every question
- practise every activity with their partner
- take turns in talking and reading to each other
- develop ambitious vocabulary

Beech and Lime

Children follow the same format as Acorn but will work on complex sounds and read books appropriate to their reading level. Daily sessions of RWI phonics last for one hour. Once children reach the end of the programme they move on to whole class reading.

Five key principles underpin the teaching in all *Read Write Inc.* sessions:

Purpose – know the purpose of every activity and share it with the children, so they know the **one** thing they should be thinking about

Participation – ensure every child participates throughout the lesson. Partnership work is fundamental to learning

Praise – ensure children are praised for effort and learning, not ability

Pace – teach at an effective pace and devote every moment to teaching and learning

Passion – be passionate about teaching so children can be engaged emotionally.

Children will be taught how to read as follows:

Before you start to teach your child, practise saying the sounds below. These are the sounds we use to speak in English.

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 following video is an example of blending sounds with Fred.

RWI: How to teach blending

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 hear how to pronounce sounds correctly.

Children will also use pictures for each sound to help recognise the sound and then form the shape of the sound.

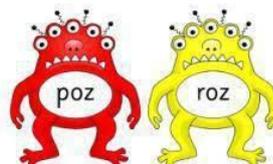


Step 2:

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**.

Long vowel sound	Set 2 Speed Sound cards Teach these first	Set 3 Speed Sound cards	
ay	ay: may I play	a-e: make a cake	ai: snail in the rain
ee	ee: what can you see	ea: cup of tea	e: he me we she be
igh	igh: fly high	i-e: nice smile	
ow	ow: blow the snow	o-e: phone home	ao: goat in a boat
oo	oo: poo at the zoo	u-e: huge brute	ew: chew the stew
oo	oo: look at a book		
ar	ar: start the car		
or	or: shut the door	aw: yawn at dawn	
air	air: that's not fair	are: share and care	
ir	ir: whirl and twirl	ur: nurse for a purse	er: a better letter
ou	ou: shout it out	ow: brown cow	
oy	oy: toy for a boy	oi: spoil the boy	
ire		ire: fire fire!	
ear		ear: hear with your ear	
ure		ure: sure it's pure?	

Nonsense words (Alien words)



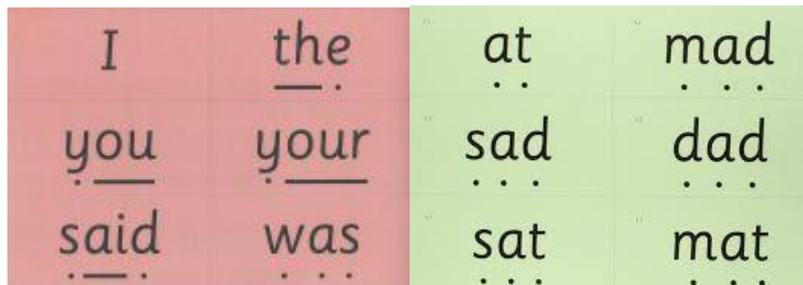
As well as learning to read and blend real words children will have plenty of opportunities to apply their sound recognition skills on reading 'Nonsense words'. These words will also feature heavily in the Year One Phonics Screening check in the summer term. There is more information about the Year One Phonics screen at the end of the booklet.

Step 3:

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.

Once your child has been introduced and taught these words in school we will send them home for you to continue practising with your child.

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**'.

Hold a sentence is an activity that encourages children to remember a whole sentence while focusing on spelling and punctuation.

Build a sentence is to give children the opportunity to create their own sentence to that shows the meaning of a word and edit a sentence allows the children to critique a sentence using their knowledge of spelling punctuation and grammar. Children complete a longer piece of independent writing, which gives them the opportunity to show off their creativity and to practice their spelling, grammar and punctuation.

Spelling Quiz



A spelling quiz will be held each week (This will only start in Reception when children are ready to write and form their letters). Children will 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.

Order of Story books: Children will hopefully follow the order listed below. The expectation is that all children will leave Year One as confident speedy readers, ready to take on the challenges of Year Two. However, some children may need extra support and your teacher will talk to you about this.

Books	Year Group Expectations	Green Words in Books
Red Ditty 1-10	Reception	Click here to help your child
Green 1-10	Reception	Click here to help your child
Purple 1-10	Reception/ Year One	Click here to help your child
Pink 1-10	Reception/Year One	Click here to help your child
Orange 1-12	Year One/ Year Two	Click here to help your child
Yellow 1-10	Year One/ Year Two	Click here to help your child
Blue 1-10	Year Two	Click here to help your child
Grey 1-13	Year Two	Click here to help your child

To help at home:

Your child will start to bring books home when they are confident readers. Please help them to read and give lots of praise!

If you have any other questions about RWI, please see your class teacher.

Getting ready for writing

Teachers will model how to form letters (graphemes) correctly, so that children can eventually acquire a fluent and legible handwriting style. These skills develop over a long period of time. A child’s ability to form a letter correctly is a separate skill from phonics. Holding a pen or pencil needs considerable co-ordination and practice in making small movements with hands and fingers.

In the early phonic phases children can use letter cards or magnetic letters to demonstrate their knowledge of phonics.

Writing in lower-case letters

We teach lower-case letters, as well as capital letters. As most writing will be in lower-case letters it is useful if you can use these at home. A good start is for your child to write their name correctly, starting with a capital letter followed by lowercase letters.

Ways you can support your children at home

Using the whole body:

For handwriting children need to be well co-ordinated through their whole body, not just their hands and fingers. Games that help co-ordination include throwing balls at a target, under-arm and over-arm, and bouncing balls, throwing a Frisbee, picking up pebbles from the beach and throwing them into the sea. etc

Hand and finger play:

Playing with dough or clay really helps strengthen little fingers, as does lego and using simple toolkits. Hand–eye co-ordination Pouring water into jugs and cups of different sizes in the bath, sweeping up with a dustpan and brush, cutting, sticking, tracing, threading beads, completing puzzles, peeling off stickers and sticking them in the right place – these all help hand–eye co-ordination.

Pencil hold:

The ‘pincer’ movement needs to be practised. This is important as it enables children to hold a pencil properly as they write. Provide them with kitchen tongs and see if they can pick up small objects. Move on to challenging them to pick up smaller things, for example, little cubes, sugar lumps, dried peas, lentils, first with chopsticks, then with tweezers. Ask children to peg objects to a washing line. Provide plenty of different types of pens and pencils; hold their hand to practise the correct grip.



What is the Year 1 phonics screening check?

The Phonics screening check is a short, light-touch assessment to confirm whether individual pupils have learnt phonic decoding to an appropriate standard by the end of Year 1. It also helps us identify the children who need extra help in Year 2 so they can be given support to improve their reading skills.

Children who have not reached the appropriate standard in Year 1 will retake the check at the end of Year 2 to see if they have caught up. If they have not, they continue to receive support until they have.

This year the Phonics Screening check will take place during the week commencing **Monday 8th June 2020**. Your child’s end of year report will show whether they have reached the appropriate standard.

Examples of words

day

snemp



slide

blurst



newt

spron



phone

stroft

