

The Teaching of Phonics and Reading in the Foundation Stage/ KS1

Phonics

At St Mary's School, we use phonics as the prime approach to teach children to read and write. Phonics is taught daily both in the Foundation Stage and Class 2, with sessions lasting around 20 minutes, using the RWInc synthetic phonics programme. Our F1 children start their phonics journey focusing on developing their speaking, listening and language skills through a series of games, alongside the introduction of one letter sound each week.

As children progress to F2 and year 1 and 2, they will focus on the skill of segmenting and blending as they are introduced to the different sounds (phonemes) that feature in the English language, including digraphs (two letters that make one sound) and trigraphs (three letters that make one sound). Children will be taught to make links between the sound and letter in order to apply this knowledge when reading and writing. The correct formation of the letter sound is also taught and reinforced throughout phonic sessions alongside the introduction of 'tricky' words, which do not follow the normal phonetic rules. In year 2 children are introduced to a variety of spelling rules to support their written work.

Reading

Reading is an integral part of our school day, which is modelled and enhanced at every teaching opportunity in order to develop passionate, confident and fluent readers. Children then demonstrate a good understanding as they move from learning to read to reading to learn.

Focused teaching of reading will take place through whole class teaching, phonics sessions, as well as small guided reading groups. Opportunities to practice with a reading buddy or an adult helper are also planned for throughout the week.

We continue to develop children's love for stories through 'daily story times', where we will share and enjoy good quality texts together. Discussing, recalling and even revisiting our favourite stories and authors over time, thus fostering a long-term love and enjoyment of sharing a good book!

Reading at home

Regular support with reading and recalling of keywords at home will make a significant difference to your child's progress, confidence and fluency. It is one of those activities that needs to be done little and often but one that parents can really get involved in and enjoy. It is important to make sure every reading session is a positive fun experience that your child wants to take part in. If your child is reluctant to join in every night, reading to them is just as beneficial and provides the perfect opportunity for you to model fluent and expressive reading, alongside developing your child's understanding through simple questioning.

In school our independent reading books are organised into colour bands. Within each band there will be a wide variety of reading books for your child to select from, that are of a similar level and appropriate for your child's decoding, understanding and key word knowledge. Children will be given opportunities to change their reading books throughout the week, bringing home 3-4 books alongside keywords. The idea is that they will try to read to you at least four times a week and have a new and exciting book to tackle each time. We ask parents to make sure books are brought to school daily, to ensure shared reading opportunities in school are not missed and books are available to be changed.

Home/ School Link

Alongside reading books and keywords, all children will be issued a home/school diary to share reading progress from home and school. We ask parents to regularly comment in their child's diary on successes, challenges or any aspects your child has thoroughly enjoyed.