



Getting Ready for Reading



An information booklet for
Parents

Fun with Phonics

What is phonics?

Phonics is a way of teaching children to read quickly and skilfully. They are taught how to:

- identify the sounds that different combinations of letters make - such as 'sh' or 'oo';
- blend these sounds together from left to right to make a word.
- recognise the sounds that each individual letter makes (e.g. a,b,c)

Children can then use this knowledge to 'de-code' new words that they hear or see. **This is the first important step in learning to read.**

Why phonics?

Research shows that when phonics is taught in a structured way - starting with the easiest sounds and progressing through to the most complex - it is the most effective way of teaching young children to read.

Almost all children who receive good teaching of phonics will learn the skills they need to tackle new words. They can then go on to read any kind of text fluently and confidently, and to read for enjoyment.

Children who have been taught phonics also tend to read more accurately than those taught using other methods, such as 'look and say'. This includes children who find learning to read difficult, for example those who have dyslexia.

If you would like to find out more about phonics, visit www.education.gov.uk/schools/teachingandlearning/pedagogy/phonics or search for 'phonics' on the Department for Education website at www.education.gov.uk.

Key words you will need to know

Phoneme - the verbal noise a sound makes when you say it out loud.

Grapheme - the letter or group of letters that represent a sound. It is the sound in its written form.

Digraph - 2 letters that make one phoneme (For example, 'th' as in *that*, 'll' as in *bell*, 'oa' as in *boat*).

High frequency words - regular words that can be decoded.

Tricky 'red' words - words that cannot be de-coded and must be learned by sight recognition. Also known as 'common irregular' words or your child may refer to them as 'Rainbow' words.



What we do at Norton C P School:

- **Daily Read Write Inc. phonics sessions** - focussing on children's individual needs while working through the alphabet following the Read Write Inc. program guidelines.
 - **Step One:** Your child will learn to say the phoneme (sound) that is represented by each letter or group of letters
 - **Step Two:** Sound out words, e.g. c-a-t, sh-o-p, s-t-r-ee-t
 - **Step Three:** Read Write Inc. ditties and story books, then book banded reading books

Step One - Speed Sounds

*In Read Write Inc. the individual sounds are called 'speed sounds' - Children will need to read them effortlessly by sight. In order for your child to become a fluent reader we also have to teach him/her how to sound out letters in a word and how to blend them together to read it. This is called 'sound blending'. We use fun and interactive flashcards with visual clues about the letter shape and the sound the letter makes (phoneme). We use **Phoneme Fred Fingers** to sound out each phoneme in a word.*

The speed sounds are divided into small groups. Once your child has learnt all the speed sounds in a group he or she can progress to sound-blending that group of speed sounds into words. Then they will move onto the next set of sounds. The sounds they are learning will be sent home with your child to practise at home.

Here are the groups of speed sounds in the order they are taught:

Group 1: *m a s d t*

Group 2: *i n p g o*

Group 3: *c k u b*

Group 4: *f e l h sh*

Group 5: *r j v y w*

Group 6: *th z ch qu x ng*

Note: Some sounds are represented by more than one letter: *sh* as in *sh-i-p*, *th* as in *th-i-n*, *ch* as in *ch-a-t*, *qu* as in *qu-i-t* and *ng* as in *s-i-ng*. These letters are called **digraphs** and should be pronounced as one phoneme. Once children can confidently recognise the sounds and letters for all Speed Set 1 cards, they will then move onto Speed Set 2 and 3.

Step two - Sound blending

Your child will begin blending phonemes once they have learnt the first set of speed sounds (**m a s d t**) and can say them in and out of order at speed. Your child will do this through **Phoneme Fred Talk** - Fred is a toy character used to engage children in saying the sounds correctly. When your child can sound blend all the groups of speed sounds - celebrate this success! **He or she will have reached a milestone in learning to read!**

Step Three - Ditties and reading books

When your child can sound-blend the speed sounds from the flashcards he or she will progress to reading *Read Write Inc. short ditties, storybooks* or lilac/pink book banded stories. This is when your child will begin to bring home reading books linked to their stage of phonic knowledge.

When children reach this stage, they will begin regular sessions reading with their teacher or teaching assistant. This will involve:

1. Practising the speed sounds before the story.
2. Reading the Red (tricky) and Green word cards.
3. Reading the story.
4. Re-reading the story to reinforce meaning.
5. Discussing the questions that support the story.
6. Practise reading the speed words.

*Note: **Red word cards** are words you cannot read by sound-blending. They have to be learnt by sight and are referred to as 'tricky' words. These words will be sent home to practise reading in the form of 'Rainbow' words. **Green word cards** are the words your child will be able to sound-blend.*

Each week your child will have ~

- **Weekly Phonics homework** ~ *My Phonics Folder*
- **Weekly Rainbow words to learn at home** ~ *It is important to read these words in and out of order randomly so they do not simply learn the order!*
- Weekly reading with class teacher/teaching assistant. Please try to read at least 3 times a week at home with your child. Re-reading stories can help your child become familiar with story language, key words and fluency.
- Daily phonics and Big Book sessions with the class teacher or teaching assistant
- As children begin to recognise sets of phonemes/graphemes (e.g. *m,s,a,t,d*), a reading book will be sent home. Please sign your child's reading record when you have read together. These may be picture books initially so it is vital you spent time making up stories to match the pictures with your child. Reading books sent home will be changed if they have read at home (an adult has signed the reading record to say so) and the teacher feels the child is ready for the next book.



Helping your child with phonics



Role Play Reading:

- Read familiar books
- Make sure your child sees you reading
- Use CDs of favourite stories and songs
- Tell stories to each other
- Place labels around the house, e.g. James' sock drawer etc.
- Talk about your plans

Experimental Reading:

- Talk about the characters, plots and settings of stories
- Draw attention to the print on jars, packages etc.
- Write a shopping list together
- Write messages on a message board
- Retell stories from the pictures in books

Early Reading: Read to your child every day

- Talk about what might happen next
- Find books in libraries and bookshops
- Look at a T.V. guide together
- Encourage your child to retell stories

Transitional Reading:

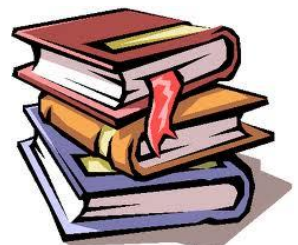
- Read humorous books and books that have been made into films
- Help your child to think of a word which would make sense when he/she becomes stuck
- Plan a cookery session using a simple recipe from a cookery book
- Find an interesting article/photo in a newspaper and encourage your child to tell you about it
- Look at weather forecasts together

Conventional Reading: Ensure your child is exposed to wide range of reading

- Encourage your child to read for different purposes
- Take an interest in books written by favourite authors
- Support your child's school research
- Collect newspaper articles and identify key words

...And, above all else, give lots of praise and encouragement to your children for the things they do right.

Happy Reading!



Other ways you can support your child at home

- * Play 'I Spy' on the way home from school
- * Greet children at the end of the school day and ask them about their school day (avoid texting on your phone all the way home!)
- * Make time to listen to your child
- * Switch off the radio, TV & mobile phone for periods of time
- * Go on a listening hunt - what can you hear?
- * Play/sing a tune - can you copy me?
- * Make instruments out of boxes
- * Use puppets to make up stories or retell favourite ones
- * Feely bag - what's inside my bag today? Really emphasise initial phonemes of the objects (for example, ccc...cat)
- * Make up silly rhymes or alliterative rhymes (super Suzie smiled at the slithery snake, Jake the snake fell into the lake)
- * Teach them 'Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers' and other tongue twisters.
- * Simon says stand u-p (up), Simon says p-a-t your l-e-g
- * Buy magnetic letters to put on your fridge - make up silly sentences/words, practise spelling and reading rainbow words
- * Have a few scraps of paper and pens to write on, encourage children to write shopping lists, recipes, stories, etc.
- * Let children write birthday cards
- * Sing the Alphabet song
- * Find specific letters in magazines or on signs.
- * Make up stories on the way to school
- * Play snap/pairs/bingo with the phonemes they are learning by writing them on pieces of paper several times.
- * Listen to story tapes/CD's/DVDs
- * Use chalk to form letters on the ground or paint brushes and water.
- * Go to Norton library and borrow books/story CD's as often as you can
- * Teach your child action rhymes (Incy Wincy Spider, etc.)
- * Use play-dough to create the letters they are learning
- * **Show them YOU enjoy reading!**
- * **Go on-line and search for games ~ here are a few suggestions:**
 - www.phonicsplay.co.uk
 - www.jollylearning.co.uk
 - www.youtube.com/ Search for Jolly Phonics songs/rhymes
 - <http://www.ictgames.com/literacy.html>
 - http://www.ictgames.com/phonics_fighter4.html
 - <http://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/ks1/literacy/phonics/play/letters-and-sounds.com/phase-2-games.html>

