

Phonics and Early Reading

At The Federation of St Mary's Catholic Schools, we believe that reading is a skill which is taught through planned, systematic phonics lessons which lead to the enjoyment of all kinds of books, the appreciation of different genres and the ability to access information independently. Through their own reading, we hope that children will develop their individual tastes in literature and be able to understand and justify their own choice of books.

Our primary aims are:

- To develop phonetic skills which lead to blending and reading fluently.
- To promote confidence and positive attitudes to reading.
- To promote and encourage good home/school links using a wide range of literature.
- To equip children with critical tools so they are able to analyse what they read.
- To give children access to a wide range of fiction and information books.
- To monitor each child's progress through the use of a range of assessment strategies including informal assessments and formal testing as appropriate.
- To support groups of learners in maximising their reading potential including those with special educational needs or those children who display gifts and talents.

Approach

At our Infant School (KS1) we follow the Read Write Inc approach to teaching Phonics, supplemented with additional reading materials. Our approach is systematic, consistent, rigorous and fun in order that all children become readers as quickly as possible.

RWI sessions take place daily as part of the English curriculum in Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 (until no longer needed by all children). Some children will require additional Read, Write Inc sessions or other reading intervention programmes beyond Year 2. These are monitored through our additional needs system.

Pupils are taught in ability groups thus enabling them to be taught according to their reading level in their own class.

The alphabetic code is taught first with children learning new sounds and practising pronouncing and blending these sounds on a daily basis. Simple mnemonics help the children grasp the letter sounds quickly. Then we match the sounds pupils know to the books they read, getting children to read those books a few times which helps them to read using a story tellers voice. Additionally children hear lots of other stories in school thus increasing their story knowledge and vocabulary.

What Can You Do To Help?

Children find it easier to learn to read and spell if they are taught pure sounds. You might like to watch this youtube video to make sure you are using the correct pure sounds with your child at home:

[Read Write Inc - Pure Sounds Video](#)

Every week, each child will take home a home reading book/books and log. To supplement the skills learnt at school your child should have opportunity to read at home too for 10 minutes per day.

For reluctant readers it might be nice to share the reading. If an adult reads the book first it will give the child confidence for when they read, as they will know what to expect in the story and they can enjoy the story with you first. Reading alternate pages together, as in Read Write Inc. lessons, takes the pressure off your child having to read for a long time.

Let your child ask you questions about the book, "Which is your favourite character, dad?" "Were you scared/happy about what happened in the book, mum?" This will help your child think about and verbalise answers; especially when they see you doing it too.

If your child would like to practise their letter formation, Read, Write Inc have rhymes for each of the letters to help the children shape them correctly.

Y1 Phonics Screening Check

The Phonics Screening Check is meant to show how well your child can use the phonics skills they've learned up to the end of Year 1, and to identify students who need extra phonics help. The Department for Education defines the checks as "short, light-touch assessments" that take about four to nine minutes to complete.

The checks consist of 40 words and non-words that your child will be asked to read one-on-one with a teacher. Non-words (or nonsense words, or alien words) are a collection of letters that will follow phonics rules your child has been taught, but don't mean anything – your child will need to read these with the correct sounds to show that they understand the phonics rules behind them.

The 40 words and non-words are divided into two sections – one with simple word structures of three or four letters, and one with more complex word structures of five or six letters. The teacher administering the check with your child will give them a few practice words to read first – including some non-words – so they understand more about what they have to do. Each of the non-words is presented with a picture of a monster / alien, as if the word were their name (and so your child doesn't think the word is a mistake because it doesn't make sense!)