



believe and achieve

EYFS: Phonics and Reading skills in Reception

Phonics is a method of teaching children to read.

At Hazelwood we teach **synthetic phonics**. The 'synthetic' part comes from the word 'synthesise', which means to put together. The Phonic part means that it is to do with sounds. So when you learn to read using Synthetic Phonics you learn to put sounds together to read words. Throughout Reception and KS1, children have daily phonics sessions based on 'Letters and Sounds' programme published by the Department for Education and Skills in 2007.

Useful terminology:

Phoneme- a smallest sound in a word and may be represented by one, two or more letters. E.g. ll as in bell, ss as in hiss, ck as in sock.

Correct pronunciation is vital! c not cuh or cee b not buh or bee a not ay

Grapheme- written representation of a sound; a letter or a group of letters

Blending- building words from their constituent phonemes to read (sound-talking): **c-a-t = cat**; the separate phonemes are spoken aloud, in order, all through the word, and are then merged together into the whole word.

Segmenting- breaking words down into their constituent phonemes to spell: **cat =c-a-t**; the whole word is spoken aloud and then broken up into its phonemes in order, all through the word.

*** reversible key phonic skills (decoding written text for reading and encoding words for writing)**

All the way through we teach the skills of 'blending' and segmenting'.



Ways you can support your children at home

- **Sound-talking or Robot-talking**

Find real objects around your home that have three phonemes (*sounds*) and practise 'sound talk'. First, just let them listen, then see if they will join in, for example, saying:

'I spy a p-e-g – peg.'

'I spy a c-u-p – cup.'

'Where's your other s-o-ck – sock?'

'Simon says – put your hands on your h-e-a-d.'

'Simon says – touch your ch-i-n.'

- **Magnetic letters**

Buy magnetic letters for your fridge, or for use with a tin tray. Find out which letters have been taught – have fun finding these with your child and place them on the magnetic surface.

- **Making little words together**

Make little words together, for example, *it, up, am, and, top, dig, run, met, pick*. As you select the letters, say them aloud: 'a-m – am', 'm-e-t – met'.

- **Breaking words up**

Now do it the other way around: read the word, break the word up and move the letters away, saying: 'met – m-e-t'.

Both these activities help children to see that reading and spelling are reversible processes.

- Make or buy an alphabet poster.

Practising Tricky words at home:

Children are also taught the 'tricky' words – those that cannot be read or spelt using the sounds of the letters. E.g. to, no, the, go. This will be achieved through the use of flash cards and games. (your class teacher will send a list home)

- Set a timer. Call out one word at a time and get your child to spell it on a magic board or a small whiteboard, against the timer – remember, they can use magnetic letters.
- Play a game – hunt the word - hide words in sand or flour, set a timer, hold up the word that you want them to hunt for, and 'go'! Repeat the word and encourage them to say –'I am looking for the word 'the'.
- Play 'Pairs', turning over two words at a time trying to find a matching pair. This is especially helpful with the tricky words: **the the, to to, no no, go go, I I**
- Don't worry if they get some wrong! These are hard to remember – they need plenty of practice.
- Practise reading and spelling some CVCC and CCVC words but continue to play around with CVC words. Children like reading and spelling words that they have previously worked with, as this makes them feel successful.
- Make up captions and phrases for your child to read and write, for example, *a silver star, clear the pond, crunch crisps*. Write some simple sentences and leave them around the house for your child to find and read. After they have found and read three, give them a treat!
- Look out for words in the environment, such as on food packaging, which your child will find easy to read, for example, *lunch, fresh milk, drink, fish and chips, jam*.
- Work on reading words together, for example, a street name such as *Park Road*, captions on buses and lorries, street signs such as *bus stop*.

As your child enters Key Stage 1 (Year 1) they will continue to take part in daily sessions on phonics.

They will learn that most sounds (*phonemes*) can be spelled in more than one way. For example, the **f** sound can be written as **f** as in *fan* or **ff** as in *puff* or **ph** as in *photo*.

This develops their knowledge of spelling choices. They will continue with this spelling work into Year 2 and beyond.

They will learn that most letters and combinations of letters (*graphemes*) can represent more than one sound. For example, the grapheme **ea** can be read as */ee/* as in *leaf* or */el/* as in *bread*.

This supports their reading development.

Many words cannot be sounded out so other strategies are needed.



Ways you can support your child at home

- Dividing the word into syllables, say each syllable as they write the word (re-mem-ber)
- Using kinaesthetic strategies (e.g. **look-say-cover-write-check**) that exercise and form visual memory when learning to spell
- Using mnemonics as an aid to memorising a tricky word (e.g. **people**-people eat orange peel like elephants; **because**- big elephants can always understand small elephants)
- Using a dictionary together

Thank you

The Reception Team