

Phonics and Early Reading

At Abbey Road Primary School, reading and enabling children to become independent readers as soon as possible is our priority. Our aim is for all pupils to leave our school being able to read fluently and have a love of reading as we know that reading is a lifelong skill which unlocks a love of learning. Therefore, we are dedicated to ensuring that early reading, through phonics, is taught effectively every day. We ensure that a robust system for the teaching of all aspects of reading is in place including teaching word reading skills and a range of comprehension strategies so that we know that children understand what they read.

As a school, we aim to engage and enthuse children in their learning of phonics through ensuring a systematic approach to our daily phonic teaching sessions and by providing wider application opportunities in the children's work and play. In Foundation, we begin by ensuring that all children are able to hear and discriminate different sounds. We use actions and movement to support in the teaching of this phase. We then move on to using a synthetic phonics approach and use Read Write Inc resources to teach Set 1 sounds. This includes recognising the sound, the skills of sounding out the individual sounds in an unknown word and blending these sounds together in order to read the word. The scheme teaches the sounds in an order which allows children to quickly begin to put sounds together to read words.

All Foundation and Year One children access a daily phonics session, which is then further embedded through planned English reading and writing activities. In Year 2, children initially recap previous learning before moving on to reading and spelling different digraphs. Those children who need further consolidation of phonics teaching also access additional sessions alongside spelling sessions.



Fred the Frog puppet plays an important role in our Read Write Inc lessons. Fred is only able to speak in sounds, not whole words. We call this Fred Talk.

For example, Fred would say m-a-t and we would say mat. Fred talk helps children read unfamiliar words by pronouncing each sound in the word one at a time. Children can start blending sounds into words as soon as they know a small group of letters well. During lessons, children are taught to hear sounds and *blend* them together in sequence to make a word. They also segment words to hear the units of sound and then use this knowledge to spell the word.

Order of teaching sounds

In Read Write Inc phonics, the individual sounds are called 'speed sounds' because we want children to read them effortlessly. Children are taught to:

- Say the sound
- Read the sound
- Write the sound

Sound letter pictures are used to help children learn these sounds quickly.

Set 1 sounds are the initial letter sounds. They are taught in the following groups.

m, a, s, d, t
i, n, p, g, o
c, k, u, b
f, e, l, h, sh
r, j, v, y, w
th, z, ch, qu, x, ng, nk

Letter formation

Children are taught how to form letters correctly using a handwriting phrase to help. This is practised in the phonics session.

There are 12 Set 2 'speed sounds' that are made up of two or three letters which represent just one sound, e.g. 'ay' as in play, 'ee' as in tree and 'igh' as in high.

When children learn their Set 2 sounds, they will learn:

- the letters that represent a speed sound e.g. 'ay'
- a simple picture prompt linked to the 'speed sound' and a short clause or phrase to say - e.g. May I play?

Every speed sound has a list of green words linked to it, so that children learn to 'sound out' and 'sound blend' words containing the new speed sound they have just learnt, for example s-p-r-ay = spray.

When learning Set 3 speed sounds, children are taught that there are more ways in which the same sounds are written - e.g. 'ee' as in tree and 'ea' as in tea.

Nonsense words (Alien words)

As children build up their knowledge of sounds, they are able to apply their decoding skills to any unfamiliar word - may it be real or nonsense. During lessons each day, children practise their decoding skills by sounding out the letters in 'alien words'. Children are unable to rely on existing knowledge of real words, and instead have to use their letter-sound knowledge. This is an important part of the statutory phonics screening check children complete at the end of year 1.

Red words

Red words are the words that are difficult to decode using sounds as they are not phonetically plausible. These are grouped into sets, teaching the most common red words first, and are taught as sight vocabulary to the children. These are words that the children need to be able to recognise and read effortlessly, rather than blend together to read. This helps to master the crucial skill of word recognition which enables children to read fluently freeing them to concentrate on the meaning of the text.

Spelling with your Fred Fingers

Children are taught to use their fingers to help them write words. The children say the word out loud and break it down into its individual sounds. If a word has 3 sounds, children hold up 3 fingers; if it has 4 sounds, then 4 fingers etc. Children then pinch each finger as they say the sounds needed in the word then they write the letters that represent each sound. When using 'Fred Fingers' each finger represents one sound.

Session structure

Each, daily phonic session has the following elements.

	Speed sounds – set 1
Hear and say	Do not show card yet Say sound – my turn / your turn Is it bouncy or stretchy? Bounce / stretch sounds together Show pictures or objects – my turn / your turn
Read	Copy picture sound onto board. Run your finger around the picture as you say the sound and then say the picture name eg. c-c-c-c-c Show picture side and explain letter is hidden behind Hide and flip card, children say picture or sound - caterpillar / c-c-c-c-c
Speed sounds review	Hide the sound in the pack of sounds taught so far (6 sounds) Read sounds and 'spot' the new sound (wave / thumbs up)
Write	Model forming letter on whiteboard Air write with children saying handwriting phrase Children write on whiteboards
Speed write	Choose 2 or 3 of sounds learnt so far Children say handwriting phrase as they write
Oral Fred talk	Say each word in sounds followed by word and children repeat c/a/t/ - cat
Read the green word cards	New words – sound out then push forward to blend Previously taught words – Fred in your head Known words – no Fred
Read the nonsense words	Alien language – say the sound and read the words "What a load of nonsense!"
Spelling	Tell children number of fingers to hold up Say the word Pinch sounds and trace letters on to fingers Children write on whiteboards Write the word on the board and children tick each correct sound
Red words	"You can't Fred a red" Introduce 2 or 3 new words and revise previously taught words Flash cards with increasing speed
Game (optional)	

Each, daily phonic session has the following elements.

	Speed sounds – set 2 and 3
Hear and say	Say sound – my turn / your turn Show picture side of card and explain picture Say the sound followed by phrase Say words listed on card in Fred talk, children repeat in Fred talk then blend
Read the sound	Show sound on card and explain that when they see the two or three letters together they make one sound – special friends For split digraphs – chatty friends Point to the new sound on the sound chart Flip between picture and digraph – children to say phrase and sound
Speed Sounds review	Hide the sound in the pack of sounds taught so far Repeat and increase speed Read sounds and wave / thumbs up for the new sound
Word time – reading (Green cards)	Words with today's sound Children say what special friends they can see Sound out then push forward and blend
Reading review (green cards)	Children say what special friends they can see Children read words with a previously taught grapheme using 'Fred in your head' Push forward to read Show words with a previously taught sound – children to read without sounding
Read nonsense words	"Alien words" Identify the special friends Sound out and push forward to blend "What a load of nonsense!"
Word time – spelling	3 / 4 words Say the word - children repeat Count out sounds on fingers (hidden behind back – say "fingers" then reveal) Pinch sounds on fingers Trace letters on to fingers Write the word and underline any special friends Teacher writes the word on the board – children tick or correct
Spelling review	Children write words with previously taught sounds using the steps above
Reading red words	"You can't Fred a red" Introduce 2 or 3 new words and revise previously taught words Flash cards with increasing speed
Game (optional)	

The table on the next page shows the handwriting phrase and the phrase associated with each sound.

Read Write Inc Progression in Phonics

Set 1		Set 2		Set 3	
Sound	Rhyme	Sound	Rhyme	Sound	Rhyme
m	Down Maisie, then over the two mountains. Maisie, mountain, mountain	ay	May I play?	ea	Cup of tea
a	Round the apple, down the leaf	ee	What can you see?	oi	Spoil the boy
s	Slide around the snake	igh	Fly high	ue	Come to the rescue
d	Round the dinosaur's back, up his neck and down to his feet	ow	Blow the snow	oe	Joe hurt his toe
t	Down the tower, across the tower	oo	Poo at the zoo	ie	Terrible tie
i	Down the insect's body, dot for the head	oo	Look at a book	a-e	Make a cake
n	Down Nobby and over the net	ar	Start the car	i-e	Nice smile
g	Round the girl's face, down her hair and give her a curl	or	Shut the door	u-e	Huge brute
o	All around the orange	air	That's not fair!	o-e	Phone home
c	Curl around the caterpillar	ir	Whirl and twirl	e-e	Go Pete and Steve
k	Down the kangaroo's body, tail and leg	ou	Shout it out	aw	Yawn at dawn
u	Down and under the umbrella, up to the top and down to the puddle	oy	Toy to enjoy	ur	Nurse with a purse
b	Down the laces, over the toe and touch the heel	ow	Brown cow	er	A better letter
f	Down the stem and draw the leaves	ai	Snail in the rain	ew	Chew the stew
e	Slice into the egg, go over the top, then under the egg	oa	Goat in a boat	au	Paul the astronaut
l	Down the long leg	wh	Whisk, whisk	kn	Knock knock, who's there?
h	Down the horse's head to the hooves and over his back	ph	Take a photo	ire	Fire, fire
sh	Slither down the snake, then down the horse's head to the hooves and over his back			ear	Hear with your ear
r	Down the robot's back, then up and curl			ure	Sure, it's pure
j	Down his body, curl and dot			are	Care and share
v	Down a wing, up a wing			e	he, we, she, me, be
y	Down a horn, up a horn and under the yak's head			tion	Pay attention, it's a celebration
w	Down, up, down, up the worm			tious cious	Scrumptious, delicious
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 then cross the other way				
ng	A thing on a string				
nk	I think I stink				
ck	Tick tock clock				

In the classroom:

- All children should have access to a phoneme mat on their table to support with their writing in all subjects.
- All phoneme mats will match the Read Write Inc cards.
- A speed sound chart is displayed and used for reference in each classroom

Assessment in phonics:

- Children will be regularly assessed on their phonic knowledge. This will inform the next steps in phonic teaching for the class, group and individual.
- Any child not making as much progress as their peers will receive additional phonics sessions, alongside the daily session.