

St Vincent's RC Primary School



Working Together; Beginning Reading



Reading and Phonics Guide for Parents

The aim of this booklet is to give you a clear picture of how we support a love of reading and how we approach the teaching of phonics and word recognition and how as a parent or carer, you can support and encourage your children at home. Reading is made up of a variety of skills including phonics, comprehension, sight word recognition and of course just enjoyment of books!



Why is reading so important?

Evidence suggests that children who read for enjoyment every day not only perform better during their time at school, but they also develop a broader vocabulary, increased general knowledge and a better understanding of cultures. It builds confidence and communication skills and of course, it is such a special time to share and bond with your child.

Parents are by far the most important educators in a child's life, so your support with reading is invaluable. It is the most important 'homework' you will ever do with your child.

How can I help my child with their reading?

- Read aloud to your children – even at this point as they start to read for themselves, when you read to your child they hear fluency, expression and enjoyment of books.
- Make books part of family life – always have books around so that your children are ready to read whenever there's a chance.
- Join your local library – a great resource for keeping interest in books alive. Let them choose their own books to encourage their interests.
- Match their interests – help them find books they enjoy – it doesn't matter if its fiction, comic books, or non-fiction as long as they engage and enjoy it.
- Get comfortable – Snuggle up somewhere warm and cosy with your child, either in bed, in a beanbag or on the sofa, or make sure they have somewhere comfy when reading alone.
- Ask questions – to keep them interested in the story, ask your child questions such as 'what will happen next? Where do you think they are? How do you think they are feeling?'
- Make sure your child has access to books – perhaps trips to libraries or bookshops to find new books to enjoy. Keeping books they love nearby so they can cosy up and enjoy them at any time.
- Read wherever you get the chance – sometimes sitting down to read a book can be a luxury we don't have, so find opportunities to read outside story time such as labels at the supermarket, letters, newspapers, street names
- Read again and again – encourage your child to re-read favourite books and poems. Re-reading helps to build up fluency and confidence.
- Bedtime stories – regularly read with your child or children at bedtime. It's a great way to end the day and to spend valuable time with your child.
- Have fun! This is an exciting journey to go on with your child, so enjoy it.

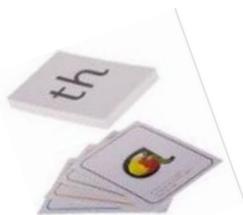
Understanding phonics

With phonics, children are taught to read by learning the phoneme (the sound) that is represented by a letter. For example the sound **ssssssssssss** is made when we see the letter **s**.

Once children build up this knowledge, they are taught to read words by blending these sounds together. For example, teaching children the sounds **/t/, /p/, /a/, /i/ and /s/** early on allow them to read words such as **tap, tip, pat, sip, sat and it** by blending the individual sounds together to make the whole word. Blending the sounds they read is the most important skill the children will need to learn for reading. If you can, practise placing letters cards together, sounding them out, and blending those sounds together to read the words.

They also learn that words can be broken down into their sounds. This helps children learn to write words. For example, the word **sat** has three sounds (phonemes) **/s/, /a/ and /t/** which the children listen for and then write down each sound using the correct letter (grapheme) **s, a and t**.

At St Vincent's Primary we teach phonics following the programme 'Read Write Inc' which dictates the order in which to teach the sounds. We support this with letter sounds phrases, pictures, word cards and books.



During the Autumn term, we introduce 4 new letters and sounds each week. Please see the link 'Read Write Inc Teaching Sequence' on the website for more information.

After Christmas, we begin to teach the children digraphs. This is when two or three letters work together to make one sound.

Consonant digraphs: ch, sh, th, ng

Vowel digraphs: ai, ee, igh, oa, oo, ar, or, ur, ow, oi, er

How can I help my child with phonics?

- Say the sounds correctly – it's important that the sounds are pronounced correctly, as they would sound in speech. Try to avoid adding 'uh' to consonant sounds, such as /t/ and /p/, as this makes it trickier to blend the sounds together.
- Link sounds and letters to make words – children are taught in school to quickly see a link between the phoneme (sound) and a written representation of that sound (grapheme). At home, practise making word with cards or magnetic letters to make words and blend the sounds together.
- Don't be scared – make it fun – playing games is the best way to engage children as they want to join in and find practising much more entertaining. Hopefully our session will give you lots of ideas.
- Practise – encourage your child to use their phonics knowledge when they are practising their reading. Make sure that they look at each letter in turn, all through each word. Encourage them to work out the sounds and then blend them together to make the whole word. Praise them for trying to use all the letters rather than guessing from just the first letter or the picture.

Tricky Words/ High Frequency Words

Phonics work is a necessary part of learning to read. However phonics alone does not provide the wider knowledge, skills and understanding needed to 'take off' as a reader. It is important to secure word recognition skills also. Learning tricky and high

frequency words is a vital part of becoming a confident reader. Through building the child's sight vocabulary it allows them to access an increasing range of books whilst developing fluency, intonation and expression.

There is no easy way to learn High Frequency words – just practise, practise, practise!!

Here are a few ideas for games for you to try at home using simple word cards:

- Stomp – lay tricky word cards out on the floor and ask your child to 'stomp' on a chosen word.
- Hide and Seek – hide your tricky words around the room and ask your child to hunt for them.
- Make copies and play 'snap'
- Shuffle your cards and make sentences using the words.
- Bingo – write 6 words out on a piece of paper and call out words from the cards – ask your child to cross them out as you call them.
- Pairs – make copies, lay the cards out face down and find matching pairs.
- Splat – using fly swotters place the cards face down and ask your child to 'splat' the word you say.
- Snap – give your child two or three tricky word cards and ask them to hold them up when they hear them as you read a story.
- Use the computer to write out the tricky words.
- How many tricky words can you read in 1 minute?/2 minutes?
Can you beat mummy and daddy?

High frequency words are sent home in an envelop as part of homework.

Letter formation – a quick reminder how each letter should be written.

As well as learning to read the letter sound, we teach the children how to correctly form each letter as we learn them. When your child is writing at home, please reinforce this letter formation with them, starting and ending letters in the correct place.

a b c d e f

g h i j k l

m n o p q

r s t u v

w x y z

List of useful websites:

<http://www.phonicsplay.co.uk/>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/wordsandpictures/>

<http://www.teachyourmonstertoread.com/>

http://www.familylearning.org.uk/phonics_games.html

<http://www.topmarks.co.uk/english-games/5-7-years/letters-and-sounds>

<http://www.ictgames.com/literacy.html>

<http://www.education.com/games/phonological-awareness/>

Thank You,

If you need any help or support with reading or phonics, please see your child's teacher and we will be happy to help.