

Reading and Phonics at Walter Infant School



Phonics

At Walter Infant School we are committed to providing the children with an excellent start to their literacy education. We aim to ensure that all children will be able to read before they leave us to begin their Junior School Education.

We believe that children learn in different ways and at different speeds, therefore we adjust our teaching and learning to meet the needs of all of our children. We endeavour to provide the children with exciting and memorable opportunities to develop their reading and writing skills rapidly and to provide activities which enable them to embed their learning in a variety of ways, using and applying their skills in practical experiences.

We teach phonics using the systematic approach in Letters and Sounds; the children begin working in Phase One in Foundation One and progress through the programme of Phases until they reach Phase Six in Year Two.

All the children at Walter Infant School have five phonics sessions a week; they work in ability groups and have opportunities to read and write using their phonic knowledge every day. The children are regularly assessed and if necessary receive additional support to close any gaps in their learning.

The teaching and learning in phonics is supported using Phonics Play which is a commercial resource that provides exciting interactive games and activities as well as a systematic planning process that teachers can choose to use to enhance the Letters and Sounds programme.



You can log on as a parent and have a go at playing some of the games with your children.

The children really enjoy their phonics sessions and are demonstrating that they are making good progress from their varying starting points.

All children will be assessed in Phonics in the Summer Term of Year One; they are expected to pass the benchmark to demonstrate that they have the ability to decode

words using their phonic knowledge. Some of the words they have to read are 'real' and some of the words are 'unreal'; for example 'jop' – the unreal words have an image of an alien next to them so that the children are aware that the words are from an 'alien' language. The screening assesses decoding skills and phonic knowledge only. If a child does not reach the benchmark in Year One, they will attempt it again in Year Two. The results of the phonics screening check are shared with parents.

Reading

We are very proud of the teaching of reading at Walter Infant School; the children have the opportunity to read one to one with an adult at least twice a week, once with the teacher and once with a Learning Support Assistant or parent volunteer. We have a varied collection of books for reading in class and for taking home.

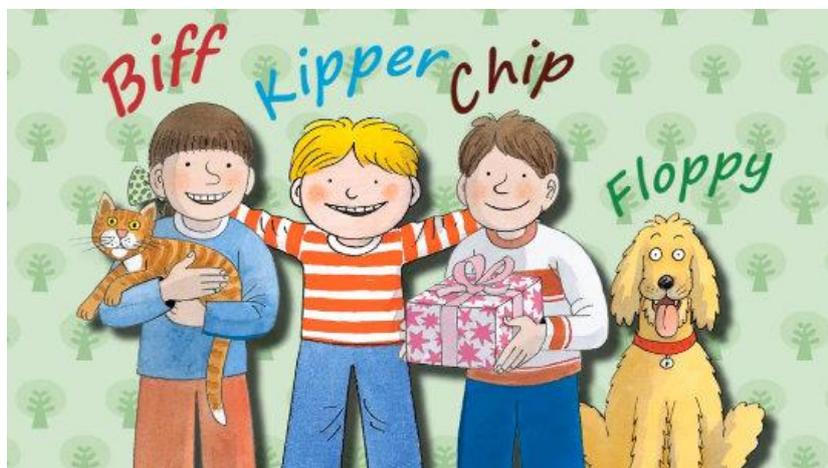
School Readers:

- The children bring home a school reader once it has been read with an adult in school

Home Readers

- The children choose their own home reading books, making sure they select from the correct colour group

One of the key reading schemes in school at the moment is The Oxford Reading scheme; the children enjoy reading a mixture of genres but also have the opportunity to get to know familiar characters like Biff, Chip and Kipper very well.



We encourage parents and carers to read daily with their children; asking questions about what they have read and making predictions about what might happen next. We hold meetings for parents at the beginning of each school year when we talk about how reading is organised at school. Each family receives a handout titled "Ways of helping your child learn to read" which includes ways to support your child to read for enjoyment. It also has a comprehensive list of the phonemes the children learn in their phonics sessions to help parents understand how to pronounce each grapheme.

Phonics glossary

blend (vb) — to draw individual sounds together to pronounce a word, eg s-n-a-p, blended together, reads snap

cluster — two (or three) letters making two (or three) sounds, eg the first three letters of 'straight' are a consonant cluster

digraph — two letters making one sound, eg sh, ch, th, ph

vowel digraph — two letters which, together, make one vowel sound, eg ai, oo, ow

split digraph — two letters, split, making one sound, eg a-e as in make or i-e in site

grapheme — a letter or a group of letters representing one sound, eg sh, ch, igh, ough (as in 'though')

grapheme-phoneme correspondence (GPC) — the relationship between sounds and the letters which represent those sounds; also known as 'letter-sound correspondences'

mnemonic — a device for memorising and recalling something, such as a snake shaped like the letter 'S'

phoneme — the smallest single identifiable sound, eg the letters 'sh' represent just one sound, but 'sp' represents two (/s/ and /p/)

segment (vb) — to split up a word into its individual phonemes in order to spell it, eg the word 'cat' has three phonemes: /c/, /a/, /t/

VC, CVC, CCVC — the abbreviations for vowel-consonant, consonant-vowel-consonant, consonant-consonant-vowel-consonant, which are used to describe the order of letters in words, eg am, ham, slam