



Phonics and Early Reading Curriculum Evening

EYFS

How do I know if my child is on track?

Every child is unique and on their own learning journey. We work with each child every day and know their individual needs for support and challenge.

Children in Reception are working towards achieving 'Expected' (an age-related expectation) in 17 Early Learning Goals (ELGs) across 7 areas of learning. Literacy is made up of three ELGs: Word Reading, Comprehension and Writing.

By the end of Reception, a child at 'Expected' in Word Reading will be able to independently:

- Say a sound for each letter in the alphabet and at least 10 digraphs (*two letters making one sound*);
- Read words consistent with their phonic knowledge by sound-blending.
- Read aloud simple sentences and books that are consistent with their phonic knowledge, including some common exception words (*e.g. the, me, go, to*).

By the end of Reception, a child at 'Expected' in Comprehension will be able to independently:

- Demonstrate understanding of what has been read to them by retelling stories and narratives using their own words and recently introduced vocabulary;
- Anticipate – where appropriate – key events in stories;
- Use and understand recently introduced vocabulary during discussions about stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems and during role-play.

All of the Early Learning Goals can be found at [Early years foundation stage \(EYFS\) statutory framework - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

I am not confident enough to teach my child phonics, I am worried I might do it wrong

Learning to read has changed a lot since we as parents were in primary school and you wouldn't be alone in feeling unsure about helping your child with phonics. However, you

don't need to *teach* your child any phonics, we teach daily phonics sessions at school and we will only ever send home sounds that your child has seen and interacted with at school beforehand.

To support phonics at home, be sure to say only the *pure sounds*. This means the sound alone, without an /uh/ at the end. The **Oxford Owl** website has an excellent video of a child reading each sound correctly.

To **blend** sounds to read a word, first point to each letter and say the pure sound before saying the blended word. Saying only the pure sounds allows the word to be heard and blended. Sounds can be blended orally too, for example by asking your child to get their c-oa-t, they begin to hear sounds blending together to make familiar words.

To **spell** a word, say the word very slowly, allowing the individual sounds to be heard. Some words that your child writes will not be spelled correctly because there are up to 9 different graphemes (letters or groups of letters written on paper) for one sound. In the early days of writing before we have learned the different spelling patterns and alternative graphemes, we applaud phonetically plausible attempts.

My child says the sounds correctly but when they blend it all goes wrong

Sound blending is a skill that needs to be learned and practise makes perfect. At school, when a child blends sounds incorrectly we model it back to allow the child to hear what the blended word sounds like. Repeating the sounds and 'pushing' them closer together (saying them quickly) helps the word to be heard. Always prompt your child to say the pure sound as any /uh/ endings make it difficult to blend the sounds together.

What about words that can't be sounded out?

Common exception words are referred to as 'tricky words' that are tricky for now but not forever. Some words are exceptions to the phonics rules or we simply haven't learned the grapheme-phoneme correspondence yet. Words like: the, of, her, into, do and be are so common that it is most beneficial to learn to read them by sight. If your child tries to sound out a 'tricky word' it is best to prompt them that this word is a tricky word and can't be sounded out. Maybe they can remember it from our tricky word tree display or tricky word bingo!

The importance of reading at home

Establishing a good routine for reading at home is one of the most helpful things you can do for your child to help them to learn to read. Early reading does take patience, practise and time, but it won't always be like that. The more effort, praise and positivity that we as adults put in at the beginning goes a long way towards your child seeing themselves as

a reader. As your child progresses through their own phonics journey, they soon won't need to use sounds to decode words steadily. The more words that they read, the closer they are towards becoming a fluent reader, only relying on their phonic knowledge to tackle unfamiliar vocabulary (in the same way we would break down the scientific name of a dinosaur into sounds or syllables, for example).

How often should I read with my child at home and what should I write in their reading record?

We hope that your child reads every day but recognise that this is not always possible. To allow your child to make the best possible progress, please read their reading book with them at least 3 times a week. We change books on Tuesdays and Fridays if there is a comment indicating that their current book has been shared at home. Rereading books aids fluency, automaticity and allows children to recognise repeated sentence structure (among other things).

Any comment on their reading experiences is helpful to us and we love hearing about reading at home. Even a smiley face to let us know that the book has been shared lets us know more about every child's reading experiences.

What is in my child's bookbag to help?

Reading books are closely matched to your child's phonic knowledge and their **reading record** accompanies it, please bring these to school every day.

Library books are chosen by your child as a book for you to read to them, to broaden their reading experiences, learn comprehension skills like predicting what will happen next and to foster a love of reading. These are changed on Mondays, if your child has chosen a particularly big/heavy library book, this may be kept at home until the following Monday.

Phonics folders share our in-class learning over the weekend. These go home on Fridays and should be returned the following Monday.

Sound tiles are sent home in phonics folders, these can be taken out and kept at home for sound recognition and word building games.

If you ever have any questions about your child's reading progress, please talk to the staff or make a note in their Reading Record. We are happy to give you more information about your child's progress and how you can help them at home.