Much Birch Church of England V.C. Primary School

'Helping Young Minds Grow'

Helping your child with reading and writing





Reception & Year 1



There are many ways you can help your child with reading and writing. This booklet is intended as a guide to provide information about how reading and writing is taught in school and also some suggestions about how you can help at home. However, it is not an exhaustive list! Please talk to your child's teacher if you are unsure about anything contained in this booklet or if you have any other questions.

Phonics is…

- Knowledge of the alphabetic code
- Skills of segmentation and blending

Terminology used in school

- **Phoneme** – smallest unit of sound used in a word. There are approximately 44 phonemes in English (it depends on different accents). Phonemes can be put together to make words.

- **Grapheme** – a letter or sequence of letters that represent a phoneme.

- **Segmenting -** This involves hearing a word, splitting it up into the phonemes that make it, then writing the graphemes down in the correct order.

- **Blending** – combining phonemes heard in isolation to identify words VC (e.g. in), CVC (e.g. cat), CVCC (e.g. felt)

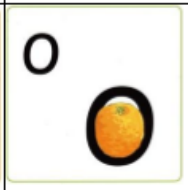
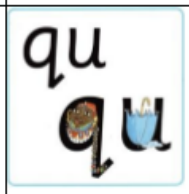
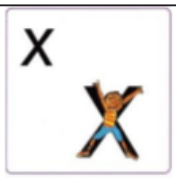
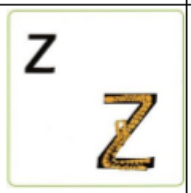
- **Digraph** - A grapheme containing two letters that makes just one sound (phoneme).

- **Trigraph** - A grapheme containing three letters that makes just one sound (phoneme).

- **Split digraph** - A digraph in which the two letters are not adjacent – e.g. m**a**k**e**.

- **Abbreviations** - a shortened form of a word or phrase – e.g. I've.

Learning to read

 Around the apple and down the leaf.	 Down the laces to the heel and around the toe.	 Curl around the caterpillar.	 Around the dinosaurs bottom, up his tall neck & down to his toes.	 Lift off the top and scoop out the egg.	 Down the stem and draw the leaves.
 Around the girls face, down her hair and give her a curl.	 Down the head, to his hooves and over his back.	 Down the body and dot for the head.	 Down his body, curl, dot for his head.	 Down the kangaroo's body tail and leg.	 Down the long leg.
 Down Maisie, mountain, mountain.	 Down Nobby and over his net.	 All around the orange.	 Down the pirates plait and around his face.	 Round her head, up past her earring, down her hair,and flick.	 Down the robots back and curl over his arm.
 Slither down the snake.	 Down the tower, across the tower.	 Down and under, up to the top and draw the puddle.	 Down a wing, up a wing.	 Down, up, down, up.	 Down the arm and leg, repeat the other side.
 Down a horn, up a horn and under head.	 Zig-zag-zig.				

Children are taught to read using a synthetic phonics approach. We follow the Read, Write, Inc. programme. Early in Reception your child will learn to read and write phonemes (sounds).

Blending

As well as learning the phonemes, children are taught to blend them to read words.

Oral blending: Adult becomes a robot that can say the sounds but cannot blend them to say the words and the child needs to help. E.g. adult: p-a-t child says 'pat'.

Visual blending: Use the graphemes to make the words. The child blends the phonemes to read it (e.g. p-a-t 'pat'). In order to read the words the children need to say the phoneme not the letter name.

Phoneme manipulation: For example, "I have the word 'sat' and I want to make 'pat', which sound do I need to change? I now want to make 'pin', which sound do I need to change now?"

Handwriting sheets



After your child has been taught a group of phonemes, they can use the handwriting sheet the letter they have learnt that day.

Reading with your child

Children will bring home picture books without words to begin with.



Pictures can tell a thousand words

- What can you see?
- Create a story – story language and structure – you may wish to create your own title too
- Prediction
- Add your own words (post-it notes) and then re-read
- Comprehension questions – 'who, what, why, where, when and how?'

As you read story books with your child ask them questions about the book to develop their understanding of the text, for example:

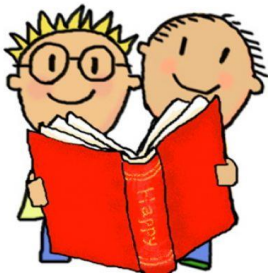
Who are the characters in the story?
What do you think will happen next?
What has happened so far in the story?
How will the story end?
Can you retell the story to me?
Did you enjoy the story? Why?
What was your favourite part? Why?
Can you see any words with the e.g. 't' sound?

As your child starts reading books with words and is more confident at blending, encourage your child to read with expression. This might mean using a different voice for each character, or changing their voice to suit the different forms of punctuation used.

Reading for a short time regularly is better than a long time once a week. Little and often will maintain your child's interest!

Above all, keep it fun and enjoyable. If your child is not 'in the mood', it is ok to have a night off, or even better, you read to them instead!

Other ways to support reading at home



- Read your child a bedtime story. This is an excellent way to model using expression, develop their vocabulary and to foster a love for reading.

- Encourage your child to read a wide range of reading materials, not just their reading books from school e.g. stories, non-fiction, poetry, instructions, comics, posters etc… This will help to broaden their reading experiences.

- Make use of your local library. As well as lending books they often provide fun story times for the children. Your child can choose their own books whilst there.

- Have a basket of books available for your child to read e.g. a basket of books in the living room.

- Show your child that you also read e.g. the newspaper, magazines and books.

- Reading opportunities are not just in books. Shops, road signs and much more can provide them!

Commonly asked questions about reading



How often should I hear my child read?

Ideally you should hear your child read for 5-10 minutes each day. Little and often is better rather than one long session as it is very tiring for young children. Reading could include sharing a book or learning sounds. You do not need to read everything each night.

How often will my child's book be changed?

Your child's reading records will be checked daily. If you have not written in the reading record then the book will not be changed as we will presume it has not been read. It is good to keep the same book for more than one day as your child may read a little and then discuss the story, predicting what may happen next. They then may revisit the book and retell the story so far in their own words before continuing. When children re-read books they will do so with much more fluency and therefore it will also boost a child's confidence.

Does my child have to read a school book?

Reading school books is important because they contain a structured approach to new vocabulary. However, children should be encouraged to read a wide range of material, including comics, non-fiction books etc… as this will help to develop their enjoyment of reading.

My child refuses to read, what shall I do?

This is not uncommon at some time whilst your child is learning to read!
Remember:

- Be positive and stay calm.
- Keep the reading time short.
- Share the reading with your child, e.g. you read a page, then they read a page.
- Praise your child when they do read.

What should I write in the reading record?

When your child has finished their reading book, please write a comment about how they have read. For example, whether they enjoyed the story, what they did well and anything they found particularly difficult. If you have not written in the reading record then the book will not be changed as we will presume it has not been read.

My child has been on a reading band for a while. Why have they not been moved up a level?

As children progress through the levels, they will remain on a particular colour band for longer so they can develop their breadth of reading. There are a range of different reading schemes in school and working through the variety of books provides more opportunities for your child to develop their reading skills. As your child becomes a fluent reader, it is important to check their understanding of the text and not just their ability to decode words. Moving onto higher levels too fast and too soon can have a negative impact on your child's reading ability and confidence levels.

Learning to write

It is incredibly important that children learn the correct pencil grip when they start using a pencil for mark making. This involves pinching together the index and thumb ('pinchy fingers' or 'frogs legs')





Children's posture is also very important when they are writing. They should sit with their writing hand resting on the table, paper tilted to the left, other hand resting on their work, both feet flat on the floor and their bottom back in the chair. Left handed children will write in the same way as right handed children, they will just tilt the paper to the right.





As children learn to read each phoneme, they will also learn the letter formation. This will enable children to spell words, which will help them to become fluent writers.

You can help your child to segment words by asking how many phonemes they can hear in a word, e.g. "how many sounds are there in 'pat'?". 3 phonemes: p – a – t

Once children are secure hearing phonemes in words they can write simple words. They will then move on to writing simple sentences, e.g. *The dog sat on the mat.*

Children are encouraged to write in all areas of the classroom, e.g. painting their name at the easel, writing a label for a model they've made out of Lego, making a card for someone, or using clipboards outside.

The developing writer



As your child's confidence with writing increases, they will be able to develop other writing skills in addition to segmenting words. This progression will be developed in school but can also be encouraged at home. This will include:

- **Punctuation:** Children are taught to use a capital letter at the start of a sentence and a full stop at the end. Capital letters are also taught for names. Examples of these can be discussed whilst reading with your child.

- Encouraging interesting language including using describing words (adjectives) e.g. the spotted dog. You can point out good examples as your child reads their reading book, or when you read a bedtime story to your child.

A final thought…

Please don't compare your child with another.
All children are different. Children develop and make progress at different rates and have different ways in which they learn best.

We hope that you find this booklet useful.

If you have any questions please come in and see your child's class teacher.