**Phonics**

Phonics is the teaching of letters and sounds as well as the skills of blending and segmenting. We teach phonics daily throughout your child’s first year at school and it is continued throughout Years 1 and 2. We teach phonics using a programme called **Letters and Sounds**, which is a resource published by the Department for Education and Skills in 2007. It sets out a detailed and systematic programme for teaching phonics skills starting by the age of 5, with the aim of children becoming fluent readers and developing writers by aged 7. We supplement this with **visual phonics** to learn the initial letter sounds. In 2012 the Government introduced a phonics screening check. The phonics screening check is a short, simple assessment to make sure that all pupils have learned phonic decoding to an appropriate standard by the age of 6. All year 1 pupils in maintained schools, academies and free schools must complete the check.

There are 6 phases within the programme. In Reception we cover Phases 1-4 and may start working within Phase 5.

**Phase 1** includes assessing children’s ability to recognise environmental sounds, rhyming and rhythm, alliteration and oral blending and segmenting.

***Blending- putting sounds together to read a word e.g. m-a-t, mat***

***Segmenting-breaking words down to hear the individual sounds to write a word e.g. hat, h-a-t***

**Phase 2** involves teaching children sets of letters by the sounds that the letters make.

**Set 1) s,a,t,p Set 2) i, n, m, d Set 3) g,o,c, k Set 4) ck, e, u, r Set 5) h, b, f, ff, l, ll, ss**

We do not focus on teaching children the letter names but do make reference to these and sing the Alphabet song. It is important for children to recognise the link between the letters by saying they have a name but the sound is important in enabling children to begin blending and segmenting and start reading and writing. Alongside the letter sounds (phonemes) we teach the shapes of the letters (graphemes). We concentrate on forming letters correctly and make reference to the 4 letter families to help children remember the starting point for each letter.

When the children are confident using these sounds to write and read simple words we move on to **Phase 3** where the children learn the final letters of the alphabet and their sounds. They also learn combination of letters that go together to make one sound.

**Set 6) j, v, w, x Set 7) y, z, zz, qu**

**Consonant digraphs) ch, sh, th, ng**

**Vowel digraphs and trigraphs) ai, ee, igh, oa, oo, ar, or, ur, ow, oi, ear, air, ure, er**

Alongside learning the letter sounds children are taught sets of tricky words. These are common words that cannot be segmented using letter sounds.

**Phase 2) the, no, go, I, to, into**

**Phase 3) he, she, me, be, we, was, you, they, all, are, my, her**

**Phase 4) said, have, like, so, do, some, come, were, there, little, one, when, out, what**

**Helping your child at home**

**Useful websites/apps:**

Phonics Play (website)

Cbeebies Alphablocks (youtube) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_ovFXpsWmS0>

Mr Thorne (youtube) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sUmUpf-JNoU>

Teach Your Monster to Read - app

Reading Eggs- app

Articulation of sounds <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BqhXUW_v-1s>

If you have any apps you have found useful please come and share them with us!

\*Encourage your child to blend sounds by segmenting words. For example;

***‘Put on your h-a-t.’ ‘It is time for b-e-d.’ ‘Can you get your b-oo-k b-a-g.’***

\*Practise reading and writing the tricky words.

\*Practise reading and writing the high frequency words.

\*Read books with your child and encourage comprehension by asking questions about what they have decoded and read. It is important for your child to enjoy reading and take meaning from what they are reading as well as being able to decode words.

\*Encourage your child to form letters correctly through fun handwriting activities. For example;

~Use a paintbrush and water. ~Chalk on the ground ~Whiteboards ~Using their finger in flour/salt/glitter or sand.

Please come and see us if you have any questions about phonics and ways in which you could support your child.

Thank you for your continued support.