



Swanmore Primary School

Parental Guide to  
supporting  
Children with  
their Reading  
and phonics in  
Early Years.

## Swanmore Reading Schemes

Almost all our reading scheme books are phonetic which means it is possible to sound out the word by saying the sound the letters make e.g. b-e-d. Phonics is a vital tool for reading but obviously requires the child to know the sounds that letters make (in the early stages they do not need to know the names of the letters.) Remember only to sound out words that are sound-out-able. Words like 'was', 'come', 'who', 'what' need to be learnt as sight vocabulary. To try and sound them out can be quite confusing! These words are known as high frequency words, or common exception words We learn to read and spell them in our phonics lessons and they are referred to as RED words, as opposed to GREEN words, which do sound out. Red words simply have to be learnt by reading them over and over again. It is much better to read words "in context." This means reading them in a sentence so the children can guess what the word could be by thinking about what would make sense. They should also use the picture for clues. Reading a book which has the pictures covered up is no fun at all but if you want to practise specific words there are some ideas in this booklet of how you could do this in an enjoyable way!

### Read Write Inc

The main reading scheme we use links to our phonics scheme and is called Read Write Inc. The children are given reading books that contain words that they are able to "decode" (which means sound out.) The children will progress through the phonics groups (and matching reading books) in the following order:

Set 1 word time, Set 1 ditties, Red, Green, Purple, Pink, Orange, Yellow, Blue and Grey

These are matched according to their ability to recognise and read words which include the sounds they have been taught. In addition to the RWInc storybooks the children read in their phonics lesson they will also be given books which match these (in other words contain the same sounds and are pitched at the same phonics level.) The children will only start to get phonics books with words in once they are able to recognise and blend sounds together.

### Oxford Reading Tree

Another of our reading schemes is called Oxford Reading Tree and most of the books are written by Roderick Hunt and illustrated by Alex Brychta. They are based on a family Mum, Dad, and twins Biff (a girl whose real name is Barbara) and Chip (a boy whose name is David) and a younger boy Kipper (whose real name is Christopher) and their dog Floppy.

This used to be our main reading scheme however the sounds are introduced in a slightly different order to RWInc so it is less easy to progress through ORT books stage by stage. Instead we have carefully selected and ordered the books which match the sounds the children will have learnt in phonics.

## Stage 1 Books with no words

Most children start the scheme at Stage 1 with books that have no words in them. This stage is crucial as it teaches the children fundamental things about books; how to hold a book and turn the pages from the beginning to the end, how to use the title /cover to predict the story and most importantly how to use the pictures to tell the story.



## Stage 1+ Repetitive stories

Rather than giving phonics books to children who are struggling to recognise and blend sounds we will give them books the characters names and sentences which are mostly repetitive or patterned. This will enable them to encounter words and learn the important skill of finger tracking and understanding the difference between a sound, word and a sentence.

## Reading at school



We endeavour to hear the children read in a group once a week and change their books. However, in high pressure weeks such as our Christmas production we may very occasionally just change their books. Children will be in groups for guided reading. We read one of the books they bring home to you. Sometimes all the children read together, sometimes they take it in turns to read out loud, sometimes they read to a partner and sometimes they will read individually to an adult. Children will also be reading their RWInc storybook in their phonics every day so by the time they bring this home on a Friday they should be familiar with it and should hopefully be able to read it with some element of fluency (recognising and remembering most of the words.)

Children are grouped according to reading readiness and ability at varying points through the year. Groups are fluid and children can change groups at any point through the year depending on changes in progress or confidence.

The first books taken home have no words and encourage children to look closely at pictures and develop a feel for characters and language through storytelling and sharing. Books with words are sent home as children grow in confidence and understanding.

There is no such thing as a typical group reading session. Each session varies according to the book, stage and understanding of the children. Initially we work on turning the pages one at a time, reading from left to right, pointing to a word as we say them, knowing the difference between a letter, a word and a sentence, recognising words on sight and lots and lots of blending. Later on, once we are more confident at blending we will work on comprehension, thinking about the characters feelings and why they behave in the way they do, as well as looking at speech marks and punctuation and how this affects how we read. We may work on using expression in their voices especially where there is speech or if there is an exclamation mark or a word is in bold print.

## Reading at home

Children who practise regularly at home make the most progress with their reading. We do not set homework for our Infant children as we want the focus of your home support to be on reading. Please try to do some type of reading activity with your child most nights. Our minimum expectation is that they read their reading scheme books on at least four occasions during the week. Re-reading the same book up to three times is vital to develop fluency and pace. The children will become much more confident on repeat readings and this will also enable them to develop their sight recognition of red words. Try to find a regular time that suits you. It may be when they go to bed, but you may find they are too tired then and it works better if you move it to earlier in the evening or in the morning before school.



We appreciate your comments in the reading diary and it should be used as a dialogue between us sharing experiences, achievements and concerns. But please don't feel you have to write much, the date and book title will suffice. If you do write a question please bear in mind it could be several days before we look at their diary.

First and foremost reading should be a pleasure NOT a chore. If you are anxious about it your child will pick up on this. Please come and talk to us if you have any concern and we will work with you to find the solution.

## Ideas/games/tips that can be used to support reading at home:

Invest in a magnifying glass-we want the children to become detectives!



- Look at the front and back cover. What does it tell us? Who is it about? What is the title? How many words are in the title?
- Prediction - Can you guess what may happen at the end of the story when you get to the middle of the book?
- Don't forget to read the left hand page before the right. Sometimes the writing is at the top and not the bottom which the children can miss.
- Learn the difference between a letter, word and sentence and try to encourage them to see the difference between a word and a letter and to notice spaces between words. (This will help when they begin to write.)
- How many letters are there in a word or sentence?
- How many words are there? Which word is longest/shortest?
- Find a word that is repeated in the story and be a detective. How many times is the word "was" written in the book? Can you see any words on this page that match each other? This helps with sight vocabulary.
- Look at a familiar sentence. Which word says...?

- It is not uncommon for children to “read” books from memory. One child several years ago boasted “I can read this one upside down and back to front!” This is a confidence booster for children. Praise them and set challenges.
- Pick out a sentence. Write each word on a separate piece of paper and muddle them up. Can you sort them out?
- Letter detective. I spy a word beginning/ending with...., something in the pictures beginning/ending with.... Can you spot words with the sound “ - ” in? Can you find words that begin with the same sound as your name? How many words on this page begin with the sound “ - ” or how many words on this page end with the sound “ - ” ?
- Punctuation detectives - It is also important to notice punctuation; pointing out full stops and explaining this is where we can take a breath. Discuss capital letters, brackets and commas. How many can you find? Try to spot exclamation marks which are used to make the sentence sound exciting. We call them excited full stops! Also notice question marks and how we can change our voice when reading a question. Also look out for speech marks and try out different voices for various characters.
- Number detective- can you read the page number you are on? In a non-fiction book you can use the contents page to choose which page you want to read about.
- Picture detective\_- Alex Brychta’s illustrations have so much humour in them. There is a wealth of discussion beyond the words in the books. Often the funniest things are happening in the background! What is this character doing? What might they be saying/thinking? The nosy neighbour is always a good starting point! There are usually things hidden to spot somewhere in the pages of each book. Encourage your child to look out for a pair of glasses and a bone, the nosy neighbour or the grumpy school caretaker!
- Is there a word they are stuck on? Write it on a few post it notes and hide them. Hunt for the word and shout it out when you find it.
- Write 3 or 4 words they struggle over on cards and spread them on the floor. When you say one of them they have to jump onto the correct card! This game can work well with words that are similar like “w” words like was/when/were.
- Draw a line around the outside of the letter shape to draw attention to the shape of the word (this helps them to remember.) Think about whether there are ascenders (letters that go up like a d), descenders (letters that go down like a y) or sitting on the line letters (like an m.)



## Introducing the Read Write Inc phonics scheme



Before your child can start to read, s/he needs to learn to:

- say the sound that is represented by each letter or group of letters
- sound out the word, e.g. c-a-t, sh-o-p, s-t-r-ee-t

Initially in Year R our phonics lessons focus on encouraging the children to listen to and distinguish initial letter sounds, rhyming words and begin to learn to blend sounds together to make words. The Year R children are taught Read Write Inc Phonics by staff in the Year R unit. Children who start school with some phonic knowledge will still start at the beginning to ensure the pure sounds are embedded and also to practise their letter formation (handwriting is an integral part of the session). Each half term children are assessed to see how far they have progressed. The children are then "streamed" across groups within the infants. Some children need to start back at the first sounds to revise and embed their understanding. Others will move up groups depending on their ability to recognise each letter sound as well as blending and reading words. The majority will continue working through the programme, learning a new pure sound each day and how to form each letter.

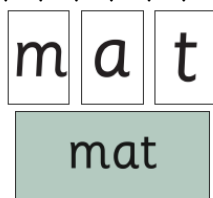
### What are speed sounds?

In Read Write Inc. phonics, the individual sounds are called 'speed sounds'. This is because we want your child to read them effortlessly, 'at speed'.

During this year, your child will be taught the sounds below by sight. They will then learn how to blend them together to read words e.g. c-a-t - cat.

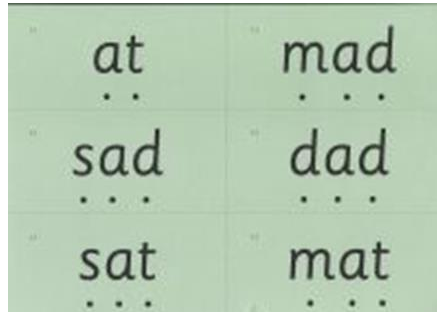
### Speed Sounds Set 1

m, a, s, d, t, i, n, p, g, o, c, k, u, b, f, e, l, h, sh, r, j, v, y, w, th, z, ch, qu, x, ng, nk ck ck



## What are 'green' words?

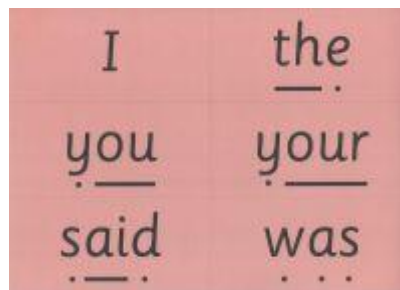
Every speed sound has a list of green words linked to it, so your child can 'fred talk' and 'sound blend' words containing the new speed sound they have just learnt, for example d-a-d - dad. They look like this:



The dots under each letter represent the remind children to sound each individual sound first, then blend them to say the word.

## What are 'red' words?

They can be thought of as the tricky words because you can't 'sound them out' to read them. These words are common words that appear often in reading and need to be learnt by sight. We practise these words as part of our daily phonic session.



We will send home a Red word sound mat to help your child learn to read and write some of these words.

Year R Red word mat							
A a	B b	C c	D d	G g	H h	I i	L l
all are	be	come	do	go	he her here	I	like love
M m	N n	O o	P p	S s	T t	W w	Y y
me my Mrs Mr	no	of one	put	said she some	the they to	was we what want why	you your



Each phonics session lasts for about 25 minutes every day. The format of the lesson is as follows:

- Look at new sound card with picture e.g. t and tower or sh and snake/horse
- Share picture cards which have the new sound e.g. tower, tree or shop, shoe
- Learn the 'formation' rhyme e.g. "down the tower and the steps, across the tower" or "sh said the horse to the hissing snake"
- Revise the previously taught sounds through flashcards
- Practise letter formation with our fingers in the air
- Worksheet letter formation
- Sit back down on floor with a partner
- Fred talk with Fred frog (the phonics puppet) begin to blend sounds to say words. Fred says "t-o-p", children say "t-o-p, top" back then turn to their partner and repeat.
- Finish the session with green word practise. Green words are sound-out-able words such as hat or shop (Red words are not sound-out-able e.g. the, was, when. These are taught later on in the programme) Look at the green word, count how many sounds (3 for p-o-t, 3 for sh-o-p, 4 for c-l-a-p). Children say each sound as the teacher points at the sound buttons beneath the letters then as they blend the sounds to read the word the teacher swipes across the word.



- When spelling words the children are taught to use Fred Fingers. If spelling the word hat they will learn there are 3 sounds. The children would hold up 3 fingers and then segment the word into the 3 sounds pointing to each finger in turn eg h (first finger) a (second finger) t (third finger). Certain sounds they will learn have more than one letter in for example - the sound igh in the word night. The children will learn the difference between a letter and a sound so night would only have 3 Fred Fingers for its 3 sounds n / igh / t despite the fact they need to write 5 letters.



## Activities to do at home together...

You will need a pack of Set 1 Speed Sound cards (see resources for home).

Practise Set 1 'speed sounds'

When you practise the Speed Sounds, you either have to stretch it or bounce it.

### Practising the stretchy speed sound m

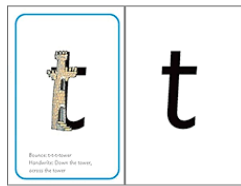
- look at the picture side - stretch *mmmmountain*



- stretch the sound and say the phrase *Maisie, mountain, mountain*
- repeat the phrase *mmmmountain. Maisie, mountain, mountain*
- look at the letter side - say *m* (as sound)
- green words - make up simple 3 letter words which have the sound in. These words will need a short vowel ( a, e, i, o or u ) in the middle e.g. mat, sam, gum, miss. Please encourage them to use Fred talk to read the words.

### Practising the bouncy speed sound t

- look at the picture side - bounce the sound and say *t-t-t*



- bounce the sound and say the phrase *t-t-t, Down the tower, across the tower*
- repeat the phrase *t, Down the tower, across the tower*
- look at the letter side - say *t* (as sound)
- green words - make up simple 3 letter words which have the sound in. These words will need a short vowel ( a, e, i, o or u ) in the middle e.g. but, tip, tap, ten. Please encourage them to use Fred talk to read the words.

Children use these phonics techniques in any reading or writing activities in class. At home you can encourage your child to sound out words they see at home and in the environment (shops, signs etc). You can have a go at segmenting words in Fred Talk to help them to blend. As they get more proficient with Fred Fingers they can apply this to their writing at home too.

**Also remember we only use pure sounds, we don't say the names of the letters e.g. ay bee sea dee. We only use lower case letters as demonstrated on the worksheets sent home. Capital letters are not introduced at this stage except for the beginning of their name.**

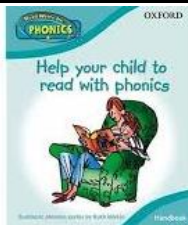
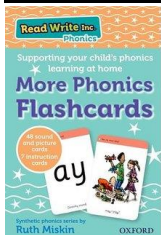
## Writing Letters

Here is a list of the letter sounds and their rhymes to support letter formation:

- a Round the apple down the leaf (apple)
- b Down the laces to the heel, round the toe (Boot)
- c Curl around the caterpillar (caterpillar)
- d Round his bottom up his tall neck and down to his feet (dinosaur)
- e Lift off the top and scoop out the egg (egg)
- f Down the stem, and draw the leaves (flower)
- g Round her face down her hair and give her a curl (girl)
- h Down the head to the hooves and over his back (horse)
- i Down his body, and dot for his head (insect)
- j Down his body curl and dot (jack-in-the box)
- k Down the kangaroo's body, tail and leg (kangaroo)
- l Down the long leg (leg)
- m Down Maisie, over the mountain over the mountain (Maisie and mountains)
- n Down Nobby, over his net (football net)
- o All around the orange (orange)
- p Down his plait and around his head (pirate)
- q Round her head, up past her earrings and down her hair (queen)
- r Down his back, then curl over his arm (robot)
- s Slither down the snake (snake)
- t Down the tower across the tower (castle tower)
- u Down and under, up to the top and draw the puddle (umbrella)
- v Down a wing, up a wing (vulture)
- w Down up down up (worm)
- x Down the arm and leg and repeat the other side (Exercise)
- y Down a horn up a horn and under his head (yak)
- z Zig-zag-zig (zip)

## Resource for home use

Read Write Inc. Phonics: More Phonics Flashcards set 1 and 2



They are great cards linked to the phonics scheme we use in school. They can be purchased on Amazon.

If you want to find out more about Read Write Inc. Phonics then Amazon is selling a Parent's Handbook which will explain things in more detail.

[www.oxfordowl.co.uk/](http://www.oxfordowl.co.uk/) is great website that has lots of useful information on it to help you with supporting your child's reading

As with any home learning at this age, it should be a pleasure for all involved. If you or your child gets stressed or anxious, then stop.

If you have any questions please ask any member of the team.

