



"Let your light shine" — Matthew 5.16

A Guide to Phonics at the Whitley





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Introduction

At the Whitley we know how important it is for parents and teachers to work together to give your child the best start. Reading together at home is one of the most effective and important ways in which you can help your child. Children should be encouraged to enjoy sharing books and read independently, as well as reading with an adult. This not only supports children's progression in reading but leads to them seeing reading as a source of pleasure and interest.

To support your child in becoming an effective and confident reader, we hope to work with you to develop their knowledge of phonics (letter sounds) to enable them to decode different words they may come across.

Through this booklet, we hope to give you an overview of phonics teaching with your child, and some ideas for how you can support your child at home.





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At the Whitley, we use a synthetic phonics programme called Read Write Inc. The children develop their reading using the Read Write Inc Phonics Programme. Read Write Inc Phonics is a complete literacy programme, for 3 to 7 year olds learning to read and write and for 7 and 8 year olds needing to catch up quickly.

What is phonics?

Phonics is the word used to describe the sounds the letters make. In simple terms the word 'sat' can be read from its three sounds: s-a-t.

These are not the names of the letters as we say them in the alphabet, but the sounds these letters make.

Likewise the word 'chick' is made up of three sounds: ch-i-ck. Similarly, 'dash' is made up of three sounds: d-a-sh.

Speed Sounds

In Read Write Inc phonics the individual sounds are called 'speed sounds' - because we want your child to read them effortlessly. Speed sounds are broken down into three sets.

Set 1 Speed Sounds

These are the Set 1 Speed Sounds written with one letter:

m a s d t i n p g o c k u b f e l h r j v y w z x

These are the Set 1 Speed Sounds written with two letters (your child will call these 'special friends'):

sh th ch qu ng nk ck

The Set 1 Speed Sounds are taught in the following order:

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

Once your child has learned the first five speed sounds, they will begin to blend sounds together. When they progress to the special friends in words, they will be encouraged to identify the special friends first, Fred talk all the sounds in order and then read the word. The children know this as: Special friends, Fred talk, read the word.



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Learning To Blend Sounds

We use Fred Frog to help the children learn to blend sounds. Fred cannot blend sounds, he can only say the sounds and the children are encouraged to say the sounds like Fred and then blend them together. We call this 'Fred talk'. For example:

ma-t mat

c-a-t cat

g-o-t got

f-i-sh fish

s-p-o-t spot

b-e-s-t best

s-p-l-a-sh splash



When your child is confident blending and reading words containing Set 1 Speed Sounds, they will progress to Set 2 Speed Sounds.

Set 2 Speed Sounds (The long vowel sounds)

There are twelve Set 2 'speed sounds' that are made up of two or three letters which represent one sound, for example, **ay** as in play, **ee** as in tree and **igh** as in high.

These are the twelve sounds:

ay, ee, igh, ow, oo, oo, ar, or, air, ir, ou, oy

It is important that your child does not pronounce these as 2 or three separate sounds but as one sound.

When your child learns their Set 2 Sounds they will learn:

- The letters that represent the sound, for example ay
- A simple picture prompt linked to the 'speed sound' and a short phrase to say, for example may I play
- We call these two/three letter sounds that go together 'special friends'

Every speed sound has a list of green words linked to it, so your child can 'sound out' or 'Fred talk' and 'sound blend' words containing the speed sound they have just learnt, for example, s-p-r-ay spray.



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Vowel sound	Set 2 Speed Sound Rhyme	Green words (decodable)
ay	ay: may I play?	day play say may way spray
ee	ee: what can you see?	See been seen sleep three green
igh	igh: fly high	high might light bright night fright
ow	ow: blow the snow	snow slow know show blow low
oo	oo: poo at the zoo	too zoo food pool moon spoon
oo	oo: look at a book	took shook cook foot look book
ar	ar: start the car	star part hard sharp car start
or	or: shut the door	sort short snort horse sport fork
air	air: that's not fair	fair stair hair air lair chair
ir	ir: whirl and twirl	girl third whirl twirl dirt bird
ou	ou: shout it out	out mouth round found loud shout
oy	oy: toy for a boy	toy boy enjoy

Your child will be encouraged to read the green words initially using 'Special friends, Fred talk, Read the word'. Then they will be encouraged to 'Fred in their head'. This is where your child will say the sounds silently to themselves and say the word out loud. Finally your child will do 'speedy reading'. This is where your child will be encouraged to read the words as quickly as they can.

When your child is confident reading Set 2 Speed Sounds and words, they will progress to Set 3 speed sounds.

Set 3 Speed Sounds

There are 20 Set 3 Speed Sounds. They are taught in the following order:

ea, oi, a-e, i-e, o-e, u-e, aw, are, ur, ow, ai, oa, ew, er, ire, ear, ure, tion, tious, e

And the additional 8 sounds of:

ue, ie, au, e-e, kn, ck, wh, ph

When your child learns their Set 3 Sounds they will learn:

- The letters that represent the sound, for example ea
- A simple picture prompt linked to the 'speed sound' and a short phrase to say, for example, cup of tea
- We call these two/three letter sounds that go together 'special friends'

When learning Set 3 Speed Sounds your child will be taught that there are more ways in which the same sounds are written, for example ee as in tree and ea as in tea.

Every speed sound has a list of green words linked to it, so your child can 'sound out' or 'Fred talk' and 'sound blend' words containing the speed sound they have just learnt, for example, b-r-ow-n brown.



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Vowel Sound	Set 3 Speed Sound Rhyme	Green words (decodable)
ea	ea: cup of tea	real please dream set cream
oi	oi: spoil the boy	join coin voice
a-e	a-e: make a cake	shake name same save late brave
i-e	i-e: nice smile	hide shine white nice wide like
o-e	o-e: phone home	hope home rose spoke note those
u-e	u-e: huge brute	tune rude use June excuse
aw	aw: yawn at dawn	saw raw law straw dawn crawl
are	are: care and share	bare spare scare square flare
ur	ur: nurse with a purse	burn turn hurl spurt nurse hurt
ow	ow: brown cow	how down brown cow town now
ai	ai: snail in the rain	paint train rain plain snail paid tail
oa	oa: goat in a boat	goat throat boat toast coat road
ew	ew: chew the stew	chew new knew flew blew drew grew
er	er: better letter	never better weather proper corner after
ire	ire: fire fire	fire hire wire bonfire inspire conspire
ear	ear: hear with your ear	fear dear gear spear year
ure	ure: sure it's pure	picture mixture adventure pure sure cure
tion	tion: pay attention it's a celebration	
tious/cious	tious/scious: scrumptious delicious	
e	e: he me she we	he me she we be

When your child is confident they will then learn the additional sounds below.

Vowel sound	Speed Sound Rhyme	Green words (decodable)
ue	ue: come to the rescue!	rescue blue glue queue due
ie	ie: terrible tie!	tie magpie flies tried pie lie
au	au: Paul the astronaut	Paul astronaut August author dinosaur pause
e-e	e-e: go Pete and Steve!	Pete Steve these theme complete
kn	kn: knock knock, who's there?	knock knight knee kneel know knot knit
ck	ck: tick tock clock	tick tock clock rock lick pick back snack neck stick
wh	wh: whisk whisk	wheel whirl whisper white wine
ph	ph: take a photo	trophy alphabet elephant nephew orphan



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Alien Words (nonsense words)

During phonics lessons, the children will also encounter alien or nonsense words when they are confident blending, for example, ost. These words are presented to the children with a picture of an alien so that they know the word is an alien word.

Red Words

Children also encounter "red words" during their phonics lessons. These are words that are not decodable.

Reading Books

During phonics lessons, children read books at their phonic level. These books are decodable but they also contain red words which children are introduced to prior to reading the book. The red words are printed in red in the text so children know they are a red word and cannot be decodable.

The Year 1 Phonics Screening Check

Children in Year 1 throughout the country will take part in a phonics screening check during the same week. The check usually occurs in June. Children in Year 2 will also take the check if they did not achieve the required result when in Year 1. The test contains 40 words. Each child will sit one to one and read each word aloud to their teacher. It takes approximately 10 minutes, although all children are different and will complete the check at their own pace. The list of words the children read is a combination of 20 real and 20 pseudo words (nonsense/alien words). Here is a sample of what the check will look like:

The mark at which children are said to meet age-related expectations is around the 32/40 mark but this could change year on year. The check usually takes place in June. It is very important that the check is not seen as a test and that children are not seen as failing if they do not meet the expected mark.

Sample: Answer sheet

KEY STAGE 1 Phonics

Screening check: Answer sheet

First name: _____
Last name: _____

Screening check responses: Please tick the appropriate box for each word. The use of the comment box is optional.

Word	Section 1			Section 2			
	Correct	Incorrect	Comment	Word	Correct	Incorrect	Comment
sun				vic			
sum				joand			
vap				terp			
gill				tege			
gank				enemp			
ghom				blurst			
road				gpron			
thap				stocle			
blan				clay			
thack				slide			
hidp				neat			
clawep				phone			
ghn				blank			
ghang				brans			
week				strop			
chill				scribe			
grit				rusty			
stare				finger			
stest				denest			
hoola				starling			
							Total correct

Practice sheet: Real words

in
at
beg
sum

Practice sheet: Pseudo words

ot	
vap	
osk	
ect	



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Reading Scheme

While your child is following the RWI phonics programme within school, they will bring home a Read Write Inc. Book Bag Book and another Read Write Inc Storybook or a Read Write Inc Non-fiction book each week. These RWI Book Bag Books are phonetically decodable books. Phonetically decodable books are books that contain decodable words. This means your child can read them using their phonic skills and knowledge. They also include some common exception words or tricky words. We call these words "red words" in school. These words are identifiable in the Book Bag Books as they are printed in red. These words are not phonetically decodable. Your child's books will be in a plastic wallet with your child's name on it along with your child's reading record. Please keep these together in the plastic wallet in your child's red reading book bag.

(If your child has visited the school library during the week, they may also bring home a school library book. This is not a phonetically decodable book. This is a book for your child to share with you.)

We kindly ask that you hear your child read each book three times. Re-reading books is one of the best ways for your child to become a fluent reader. The National Curriculum encourages children to re-read books, helping them to become more confident with each reading.

Inside the front cover of each of our books, there is guidance about how to read the book with your child. There are also some words that your child can practise reading before they begin reading the book. The first time your child reads the book, they will be decoding. They may use "Fred talk" to identify the sounds in the words and then blend them together to read the word e.g. **c-a-t** cat. The second time your child reads, they will be building fluency and word recognition. The third time your child reads, they will be reading with an author's voice and they will be reading for understanding and comprehension. After this third reading, ask your child questions about the book. There are questions included at the end of most of the books that you can ask your child. The more practise your child has reading their book, the more fluent and confident your child will become at reading.

We regularly assess your child's phonics reading level in school (every 6-8 weeks). At this time, you may notice that the colour of your child's book may change. If your child remains on the same colour book, your child will need more practise at this level before moving on.

Some children may not be ready for a reading book just yet for their stage in their phonics journey. They may bring home sound cards, a sound blending book or a paper "ditty" instead. A ditty will be printed on a sheet of paper or laminated sheet containing sounds, green words and phrases or sentences for your child to practise at home. If your child is at this level, please practise reading with your child daily.

Please ensure that your child brings their **red reading book bag to school every day** with their RWI books, sound blending book or paper ditty inside the plastic wallet. We will also endeavour to hear your child read with this book during the course of the week. We issue books on a Monday and we also request that the plastic wallet containing the book and your child's reading record are returned promptly the following **Monday**. The reason for this is two-fold. The first reason is to allow us to prepare your child's new books and secondly the book will be needed by another child.



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We also kindly ask that our books are looked after as they are expensive to replace. We know that accidents do happen from time to time so if a book is accidentally damaged, misplaced or lost, we kindly ask that you inform your child's class teacher.

Please note that children who complete the RWI phonics programme will transfer onto the Accelerated Reading Scheme.

Please try to hear your child read each book three times (more if possible) during the week and record a comment in your child's reading record each time you hear your child read. Our phonetically decodable books will have an enormous impact on your child's reading. They will allow your children to practise the words they have been learning to read in school and in turn increase their reading fluency. Your support really will make a difference to your child's reading and reading is the key to unlocking all learning.

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact Mrs Day in school, who is our Phonics Co-ordinator or speak to your child's class teacher.



Useful websites: www.ruthmiskin.com/parents

The above website contains useful parent films and home guidance documents.