

Warwick Class



Phonics, Reading and Writing

Why is phonics so important?

An awareness of letter sounds is the foundation upon which all other literacy skills can be built.

This awareness is about:

- Linking a letter to a sound
- Hearing the letter sound at the **beginning** of a word (initial letter sound).
- Hearing the letter sound at the **end** of the word (final letter sound).
- Hearing any sound **within** a word (medial sounds)
- Hearing similarities and patterns in words, such as the use of **onset and rime**. (**Cat - c=onset at=rime**) - (yes, rime is spelt in this way when referring to this element of phonics!!)

In our Nursery the children practice their listening skills with activities such as listening walks, guess the instrument and gaining an awareness of rhyme and alliteration from stories and games.

In Warwick Reception we aim to teach the children many of their sounds before Christmas, the sounds they learn will be accompanied by actions (Action sheet available!). The actions are a support mechanism and a multi sensory link. The important part is the **letter sound** and it is very important that **sounds are pronounced correctly. (No 'uh' after the sound)** Once children link the letters and sounds, they can decode words and begin to read. We also teach the letter name as this is important later in the phase when children are spelling tricky words and using digraphs, however the letter 'sound/phoneme' is more important at first.

How will the children begin to read?

Early reading occurs in many forms - all equally important.

- **Telling** stories and rhymes
- **Hearing** stories
- **Acting** out stories
- **Seeing** print in their environment
- **Sharing** books
- **Handling** books

It is important for children to handle books regularly to know the front from the back and to recognise the story beginning and end. At this point, children should begin to understand that in English print is read from left to right and top to bottom.

You can support reading at home by thinking about the following:

Discuss the pictures, make sense of **pictures** in relation to the **text**, tell stories from just the pictures, use a **story voice**, pick out **story language** (once upon a time....).

Your child will soon have a school reading record, please try to read with them as often as possible and use the record to let us know how they get on at home!

In addition to these skills, children will be learning to identify patterned or repeated language in text and they will be encouraged to pick out key words in the text.

Children will be attempting to read simple sentences that are often based on **repetition**: I went to the park... I went to the zoo... I went to the shop, etc.

We will be using early '**Dandelion**' Books that link to the sounds being learnt and a reading scheme called '**Read Write inc.**' (RWI) This scheme builds upon children's phonic knowledge and ties in with their key word recognition. There is also a series of **RWI** books that we will use alongside other schemes and these books are designed to reinforce key words and build confidence in reading. Please note the 'Read Write Inc' books do not start until '**Yellow**' level (books have yellow stickers) and once started should be read in numerical order (listed on the back of the book). Prior to yellow there are 'pink' books and 'red' sharing books. The adults reading with your child will let you know via their reading diary which level of books to choose. You can also choose books from our Story book box each day to share with your child.

Once your child is starting to blend vc (e.g on) and cvc (e.g mat) words and also recognising some simple 'tricky words' such as 'I' or 'no' then we will introduce our Keyword system 'Mission 300' This is based on the 300 most common words that we use in the English language and we work through them slowly in order, with the children gaining certificates after each phase.

What about writing?

Early writing is initially about making marks.

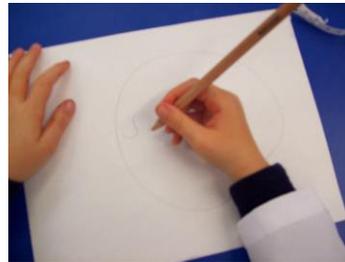
The next step is to know that these marks carry meaning.

Early writing (mark making) is developed through activities that involve making both large and small movements. Motor skills both fine and gross feed into writing.

Making big arm movements with ribbons, hoops, chinks on the playground, large paintings and general play develop gross motor skills which feed into fine motor skills being developed through activities such as Dough Disco!, threading small beads, peg boards, small world play, Lego, colouring, painting, cutting and sticking, drawing and writing in sand and other media such as shaving foam!



All of these activities will result in holding a pencil/felt tip pen/paintbrush comfortably and correctly. We never force a child to hold a pencil in a different way but if they look uncomfortable we may suggest trying different grips. We also have pencil grippers and other tricks that can help some children hold their pencil in a better position. Many children do also not choose a preferred hand until their Reception year so again this is not something we would ever attempt to change.



Phase 2 of our phonics programme will link into writing as The RWI scheme is designed to teach the sounds and the formation of the letter together. There are simple reminders such as their favourite for 'd' - around the dinosaurs bottom, up to his head and down his tail!

At Burford Primary School in key stage one, years one and two, the children are taught cursive writing (please see separate handwriting letter for more information). However in the early years we want to encourage the children's confidence in their writing skills, so whilst we do encourage correct letter formation when modelling writing using the RWI scheme, we also understand that children may not yet have the fine motor strength to form letters in a pre-cursive style.