

English at Puddletown First School

Phonics

To develop reading and spelling in the early years we place a strong emphasis on the teaching of phonics throughout the school. We follow the 'Little Wandle' scheme of work in Foundation Stage and Year One.

Parent information on this can be found at;

www.littlewandlelettersandsounds.org.uk/resources/for-parents

We carefully group for phonics teaching across KS1 ensuring that the children experience targeted teaching of this crucial step towards fluency in reading and accurate spelling.

In KS2 we run catch groups for those children who have experienced difficulty in developing a secure grasp of phonics. However, the majority of the class will be taught using the 'Support for Spelling' and 'No Nonsense Spelling.' This develops the children's understanding of spelling and grammar.

Terms

Phoneme: the smallest unit of sound that you can hear within a word; the word phoneme refers to the sound, **not** the letter(s) which represent the sound in writing. For example, in the word *gate*, there are three phonemes (g-long ay-t); in *school* there are four (s-c-long ooh-l).

There are 44 phonemes in English, which can be split into two groups: **24 consonant phonemes**: for example, 'b' (*bang*, *bubble*), 'm' (*monkey*, *hammer*), 'ch' (*chat*, *match*), 'ng' (*bang*). You can see in the examples that the sounds (the phonemes) can be written in different ways (different graphemes). **20 vowel phonemes**: there needs to be at least one vowel sound in every word.

There are short vowel sounds (*apple*, *egg*, *bread*, *kit*, *gym*, *octopus*, *wash*, *umbrella*, *won*), long vowel sounds (such as in *rain*, *tray*, *tree*, *me*, *light*, *kite*) and other vowel sounds (such as *book*, *could*, *fork*, *board*, *chair*). As before, the sounds can be written in different ways (different graphemes). **Top tip!** When you talk about sounds to your child, use the phonemes (the letter sounds). The reason for this is that sounding out words is practically impossible if you use the letter names: cat doesn't sound like 'see-ay-tee'. **Top tip!** When saying the sounds of **b, d, g, j** and **w** and other letters, you might notice the 'uh' sound which follows each ('buh', 'duh'...). It's hard to say the sound without it but do try to emphasise the main letter sound and avoid saying the 'uh' too much. In some letters, avoid the 'uh' completely (say 'mmm' rather than

'muh' and 'sss', not 'suh'). This is to avoid your child spelling a word like *cat* and wanting to add the 'uh' sound (c-u-a-t).

Grapheme: a grapheme is a 'symbol' of a phoneme –it's a letter or group of letters representing a sound and we use the letter names for this. A one letter grapheme is the 'c' in *cat* where the hard 'c' sound is represented by the letter 'c'; a two letter grapheme is in *leaf* where the long 'ee' sound is represented by the letters 'ea'; a four letter grapheme is contained in *through* where the letters 'ough' make the long 'oo' sound. To complicate matters even more, some sounds(phonemes) can be spelled with different graphemes (spellings). For example, the hard 'c' sound can be spelled with 'c', 'k' or 'ck' graphemes (as in 'car', 'kite' and 'lock'); the long 'ee' sound can be spelled with lots of different graphemes, such as 'ee' (*Leeds*), 'ea' (*beat*), 'ie' (*chief*), 'ei' (*ceiling*), 'e-e' (*theme*).

Blending: the merging together of the separate sounds in a word. The separate sounds (phonemes) are spoken in order, all through the word, and are then merged together into the whole word - this is a vital skill for **reading**. For example, the three phonemes ch-a-t are blended to make *chat*, whilst th-r-ee blend to make *three*.

Segmenting: breaking words down into phonemes to spell (so, the opposite process to blending). The whole word is spoken aloud and then broken up into its sounds (phonemes) in order, all through the word - this is a vital skill for **spelling**. For example, hearing that *leads* can be segmented into l-ea-d-s, with the 'long e' sound but also possibly represented by 'ee' (*Leeds*) and other possibilities (see the graphemes, above).

Decode: to read words.

Encode: to spell words.

CVC: a word containing the sequence 'consonant, vowel, consonant). For example, *cat* and even *chat* because the 'ch' grapheme works together to make a single sound (phoneme) – you wouldn't say c-h-a-t).

Tricky words: words like *they* and *said* which can't be sounded out easily.

Reading

We see phonics as providing just one of the tools needed to understand text. Therefore we also undertake guided reading sessions with each child reception and Y1 three times a week. In years 2,3 and 4 the children will have 2 guided reading sessions a week. In these sessions we explore the written text looking at the meaning of the text, develop pace and fluency and the children's comprehension of the text. In the later years we begin to look at the intent of the writer, explore the writer's vocabulary choices, the structure of the writing and the deeper meaning of the inferred text.

All children have a reading book provided by the class teacher and part of the expected home learning is regular reading at home. In reception

and Y1 the books are carefully linked to the Little Wandle scheme ensuring that the words within the book match the children's phonetic knowledge. The children bring these books home to practice once they have become familiar with them in class.

In Y2,3, and 4 the reading books are banded to ensure that they can match the children.

Writing

In Reception the work undertaken in pre school is followed up in reception by the development of gross and fine motor skills. This involves 'finger gym' activities as well as ensuring that the children have a good pencil grip. To support the acquisition of the movements needed for letter formation we use the 'Write Dance' scheme. Through play based learning activities the children are encouraged to use the opportunities for mark making and emergent writing. In reception as the children's phonetic knowledge develops they are taught letter formation and to undertake writing tasks in more formal situations. As the children journey through KS1 in years 1 and 2 opportunities for more sustained writing are provided by timetabled English lessons. A variety of genres are studied in these lessons, these where possible are linked to the children's topic learning. The children will also be learning the basics of good punctuation and grammar as well as undertaking regular handwriting practice.

In KS2 the children continue with daily English lessons in which the children continue to experience writing in different genres. Their lessons also look to develop their use of effective grammar and punctuation. We ensure that within a module of writing there is opportunity for extended writing.

Spelling is taught using the National framework with a weekly spelling list for Y2,3 and 4. Spelling forms a regular part of the English curriculum.

When we mark the children's writing as they move into Y2 we use an orange highlighter to indicate where improvement could be made and a green highlighter to indicate a strength of the writing in reference to the aim of the set task. In KS2 we provide opportunities for the children to peer and self assess their writing according to the stated learning intentions of the task.