



WHITMORE PARK PRIMARY SCHOOL

Phonics, Reading and Writing Information for Parents

Aim: to provide parents with information about how we teach phonics, reading and writing at school and how you can support your child at home.

Learning to read is the most important thing your child will learn at our school. Everything else depends on it, so we put as much energy as we possibly can into making sure that every single child learns to read as quickly as possible.

We want your child to love reading - and to want to read for themselves. This is why we put our efforts into making sure they develop a love of books as well as simply learning to read.

Phonics



How will my child be taught to read?

We use a phonics programme called 'Read, Write Inc' which has proved very effective in helping children to read quickly. We start by teaching phonics to the children in the Reception class. This means that they learn how to 'read' the sounds in words and how those sounds can be written down. This is essential for reading, but it also helps children learn to spell well.

The children also practise reading (and spelling) what we call 'tricky words', such as 'once,' 'have,' 'said' and 'where'.

The teachers read to the children too, so the children get to know all sorts of stories, poetry and information books. They learn many more words this way and it also helps their writing.

Useful Terminology:

CVC word	Consonant, Vowel, Consonant (e.g. cat)
VC word	Vowel, Consonant (e.g. it, am, at)
Tricky words or read words	I, no, go, to, the, he, she, we, me, said, my, you, are, some
Sound	is how we say the alphabet letter eg. mmmmm
Blending	reading the whole word together (e.g. cat)
Segmenting	Breaking down each word into sounds (e.g. c-a-t)
Fred Talk	Blending sounds together m-a-n = man
Fred Fingers	How many sounds within the word (c-a-t = 3)

What can I do to help? Is there anything that I shouldn't do?

Help your child to sound out the letters in words and then to 'blend' the sounds together to make a whole word. We call this 'Fred Talk.' Try not to refer to the letters by their names. Help your child to focus on the sounds. You can hear how to say the sounds correctly by searching on YouTube for 'Read Write Inc. Phonemes Pronunciation Guide.'

Sometimes your child might bring home a picture book that they know well. Please don't say, 'This is too easy.' Instead, encourage your child to tell you the story out loud; ask them questions about things that happen or what they think about some of the characters in the story.

We know parents and carers are very busy people. But if you can find time to read to your child as much as possible, it helps him or her to learn about books and stories. They also learn new words and what they mean. Show that you are interested in reading yourself and talk about reading as a family. You can find out about good stories to read to your child here:

<http://www.ruthmiskintraining.com/teacher-support/17/index.html>

Does it matter if my child misses a lesson or two?

It matters a lot if your child misses school. The way we teach children to read is very well organised, so even one missed lesson means that your child has not learnt something that they need to know to be a good reader.

What if he or she finds it difficult to learn to read?

We want children to learn to read, however long it takes us to teach them. We will find out very quickly if your child is finding reading difficult. First, we move children to a different group, so that we can make sure that they have learnt what they need to know. If they still struggle, we give them extra time with an adult, on their own.

Some children take a bit longer to learn to put sounds together to read a word, e.g. c-a-t to make the word 'cat'. At our meeting, we will explain how you can help your child to do this.

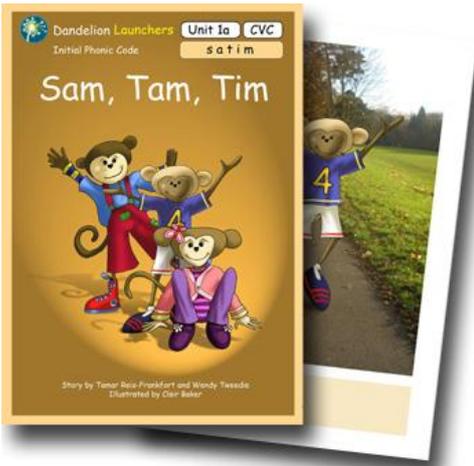
What if my child turns out to be dyslexic?

The way we teach reading is especially helpful for children who might be dyslexic. This is because we use a very well-organised programme that has a strong focus on phonics. This is very important for children who find learning to read difficult.

My child has difficulty pronouncing some sounds. Will this stop him learning to read through phonics?

This isn't a problem for learning to read as long as we know what sound the child is trying to say. This is not something to worry about. Many children have a few sounds that they can hear clearly but find it difficult to say, particularly the l-sound, r-sound, w-sound, th-sound, s-sound, sh-sound and j-sound. Often they say a t-sound for the c-sound; "tttssh" for the s-sound; "w" for the r-sound and "r" for the l-sound. You can help your child by encouraging him or her to look at your mouth when you say the sound. Whatever you do, do not make your child feel a failure. They can easily learn to read, even if they find one or two sounds difficult to say.

Reading Scheme - Reception



The Dandelion Launcher books (I am Sam) are designed to help children read more fluently.

The majority of children will be reading at **Units 1-2** this term. All of the books use basic words which become repetitive (Sam I am, I am Sam, Is it Sam?)

In order for the children to progress further they need to be confident in **blending and segmenting** words.

In school your child will spend time reading with an adult on a one to one basis. The **yellow reading record** will be completed by an adult at school and this should also be filled in at home. If you are concerned about their progress please talk to your child's class teacher in the first instance.

It is really important that reading bags are in school **every day** so we can change them at least once a week. At first, until children are able to blend sounds together to read, they may bring home a picture book without words and some words to learn. As they progress they will bring home books with simple words which they are able to blend. **All children will also bring home a book of their choice which is for you to read and share with your child.** We expect all children to read at home as often as possible (5 times a week is ideal)

Please remember that children do learn to read at differing speeds so do not be alarmed if your child brings picture books home at first. Spend time telling the story with them and asking them what they think is happening in the pictures.

Units 1-3 - Dandelion Launcher Books:

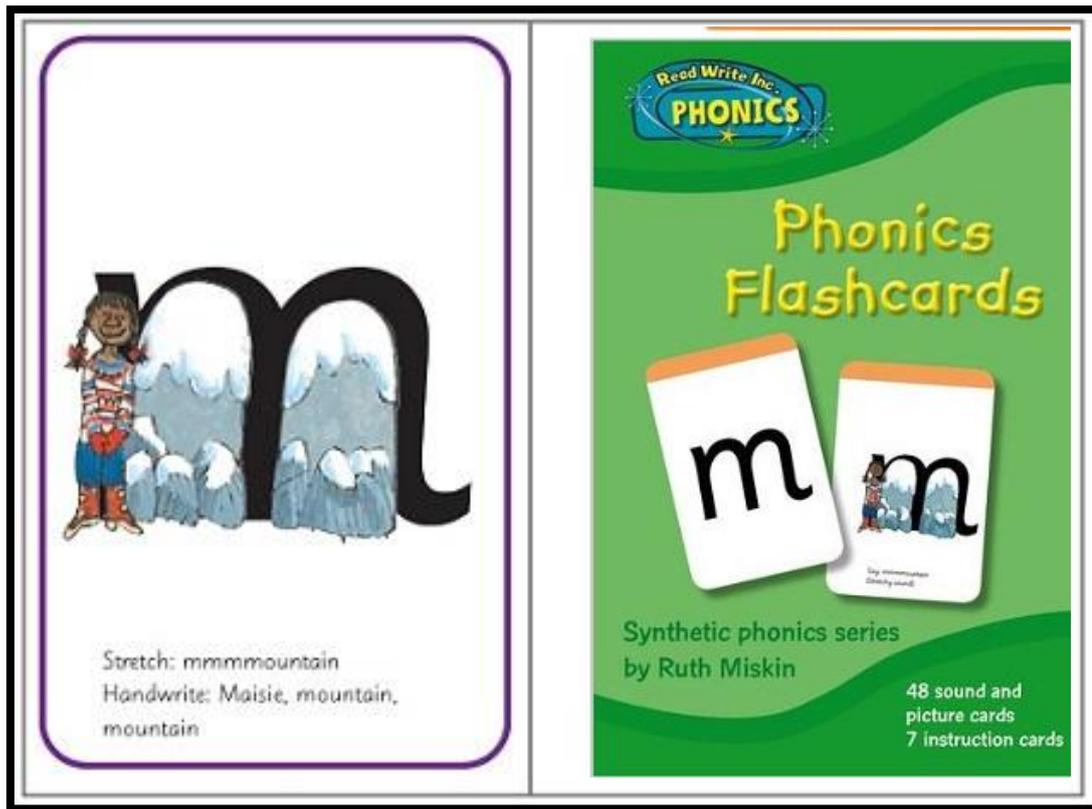
(Each unit has 4 different book titles)



- Please note- if a child is not confident at reading the book we don't advise moving into a different Unit. At this stage, the children need lots of praise as reading should be rewarding and fun.

Writing and Letter Formation:

In school we use **Read, Write, Inc.** which helps the children understand how we write each letter. Formation is really important because it helps the children in their writing and also boosts their self-confidence in phonics. We use the following flashcards in school. If you would like to purchase a pack, you can place an order in school, please speak to the admin office.



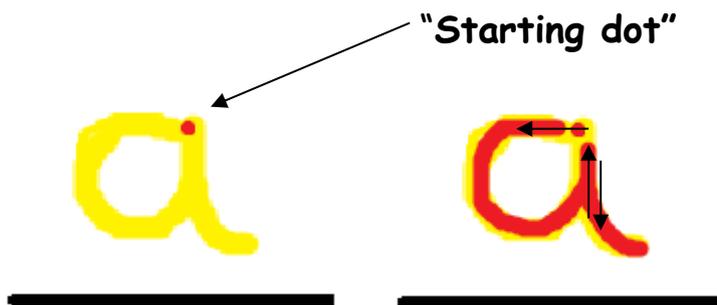
The most effective way to teach letter formation at home is by using flashcards so the children can see the **lower case letter**.

In school we also use 'practice books' from 8.45 to 9.00am which have the letter written in a coloured pen (or highlighter pen). We write the letter **4 times** on a line and ask the children to "copy write" over the coloured letter and then attempt to write it independently to the end of the line.



The letters should **not** be written in CAPITAL because this will confuse the children. An exception would be the beginning letter of their name.

The formation of the letters is really important and we tell the children to start at the top of the page (or line). For some children it helps to draw a small dot where you would like them to start from.



"Round the apple, down the leaf"

Some children often struggle to write the letter 'a' and often do a circle and add a flick. It's really important to remind your child to start at the top of the page and reinforce the "starting dot"

For most children the letters **a, d, h, n, p, b** are difficult to write because the letter formation involves curves and lines without moving the pen away from the paper.

The more practise children have at writing, the easier it will become. We send home letter formation sheets for children to practise at home weekly.

Correct letter formation

Letter Formation Phrases

This works best if your child practises for a short time every day.

1. Show the picture side and air-write as you say the phrase
2. Ask your child to practise in the air with you
3. Using a sharp pencil and sat at a table, encourage your child to have a go
4. Praise your child for their efforts

m Maisie, mountain, mountain

a round the apple, down the leaf

s slither down the snake

d round his bottom, up his tall neck and down to his feet

t down the tower, across the tower

i down the body, dot for the head

n down Nobby, over his net

p down the plait and over the pirate's face

g round her face, down her hair and give her a curl

o all around the orange

c curl around the caterpillar

k down the kangaroo's body, tail and leg

u down and under, up to the top and draw the puddle

b down the laces to the heel, round the toe

f down the stem and draw the leaves

e lift off the top and scoop out the egg

l down the long leg

h down the head to the hooves and over his back

r down his back and then curl over his arm

j down his body, curl and dot

v down a wing, up a wing

y down a horn, up a horn and under his head

w down, up, down, up

z zig-zag-zig

q round her head, up past her earrings and down her hair

x down the arm and leg and repeat the other side

