First Steps in Reading and Writing

A booklet for parents

Beauclerc Infant School and Chennestone Primary Schools

Successful Learners

Confident Individuals

Responsible Citizens
This section aims to help you understand the stages that children go through on their way to becoming a fluent and enthusiastic reader. It is intended to support you in helping your child with reading at home.

Our aim is that your child will learn to read in a way that will lead to the love of books and the enjoyment of reading.

How can I help my child with reading before they start school?
The Early Years Foundation Stage sets out milestones for your child in all areas of development from birth to age 5 years.

In reading, a child between the ages 30-50 months would be generally achieving the following goals:

- Enjoys rhyming and rhythmic activities.
- Shows awareness of rhyme and alliteration.
- Recognises rhythm in spoken words.
- Listens to and joins in with stories and poems, one-to-one and also in small groups.
- Joins in with repeated refrains and anticipates key events and phrases in rhymes and stories.
- Beginning to be aware of the way stories are structured.
- Suggests how the story might end.
- Listens to stories with increasing attention and recall.
- Describes main story settings, events and principal characters.
- Shows interest in illustrations and print in books and print in the environment.
- Recognises familiar words and signs such as own name.
- Looks at books independently.

In reading, a child between the age 40-60+ months would be generally achieving the following goals:

- Handles books carefully.
- Knows information can be relayed in the form of print.
- Holds books the correct way up and turns pages.
- Knows that print carries meaning and, in English, is read from left to right and top to bottom.

- Continues a rhyming string.
- Hears and says the initial sound in words.
- Can segment the sounds in simple words and blend them together and knows which letters represent some of them.
- Links sounds to letters, naming and sounding the letters of the alphabet.
- Begins to read words and simple sentences.
- Uses vocabulary and forms of speech that are increasingly influenced by their experiences of books.
- Enjoys an increasing range of books.
- Knows that information can be retrieved from books and computers.
Here are some ideas to help your child achieve these goals:

- Encourage your child to use stories they hear in their play e.g. act out the story of The 3 Little Pigs.
- Discuss with your child the characters in the books you have read. Encourage them to predict outcomes, to think of alternative endings and to compare plots and the feelings of characters with their own experiences.
- Focus on meaningful print such as your child’s name, words on a cereal packet or a book title, in order to discuss similarities and differences between symbols.
- Help your child to understand what a word is by using names and labels and pointing out words in the environment and in books.
- Read stories that your child already knows, pausing at intervals to encourage them to ‘read’ the next word.

At an early age it is important that your child learns that reading is for enjoyment. Share lots of books together and show your child that reading is fun.

What will happen when my child starts school?

Before your child starts school we shall contact their pre-school setting and gather information about your child’s progress in all areas of development, including reading. The pre-school setting will let us know how your child is progressing in relation to the milestones set out above. The Reception teacher will use this information to help plan the “next steps” for your child.

We would encourage all parents to read with their child on a daily basis from a range of different genre. It is also important to read different types of books such as picture books, comics, magazines, information books etc.

Here are some ideas for “Reading Together”

- Talk about the pictures and the story before you read the book to your child
- Try to relate the story to your child’s own experiences
- Ask your child to turn the pages
- Read the book again and pause at intervals to allow your child to predict the next word
- Let your child pretend to read the book on their own
- Talk about the characters and the ending and discuss alternative outcomes

At the same time, draw your child’s attention to words around him; road signs, street names, labels in the supermarket, posters and notices.
Once the teacher has spent some time getting to know your child and making observations of your child’s progress in reading they will place your child on our graded reading box system called “Bookbands”. This is a system that many schools use where a variety of reading scheme books have been grouped into graded levels of ability. This enables us to use a wide variety of reading scheme books and therefore meet the interest levels of all children.

Our Bookbanded boxes are linked to End of Year expectations so that the teacher can also make judgements about your child’s progress and attainment. Most children begin at Pink box, but occasionally children begin school with more advanced reading skills, and in these instances the teacher will place the child on the box that best matches their reading ability.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bookbands box</th>
<th>End of Year Expectations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pink</td>
<td>Reception</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red</td>
<td>Reception/Year 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yellow</td>
<td>Working towards Year 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue</td>
<td>Working towards Year 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green</td>
<td>Meeting Year 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orange</td>
<td>Meeting Year 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turquoise</td>
<td>Surpassing Year 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purple</td>
<td>Working towards Year 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gold</td>
<td>Meeting Year 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>Surpassing Year 2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How can I help my child when they start to bring home reading books?

Once your child begins our reading system they will select a book of their choice from the allocated box each day to read with you at home. For children beginning at Pink box we do not expect your child to read these independently at this stage. Your child will need to learn a bank of common words and how to focus on texts first. You can do this by practising some of the following skills:

- Tell your child the name of the book and talk about the pictures before reading the text. Ask your child to predict what will happen next before turning the page. This helps to get your child interested in the story before you read it. It also helps introduce unfamiliar vocabulary in the text so that your child can be successful when they come across it in the story.
- Ask your child to show you where to START reading and where to go to next (left to right directionality). Does your child know where to go when they get to the end of the line? (Return sweep). Do they know the difference between a word and a letter?
- Encourage your child to use the pictures to help them make sense of the text. Early reading scheme books are written with this purpose in mind.
- Ask your child to point to the words one at a time as you read the story together. This is called “one to one matching” and can be quite difficult for the child in the early stages of reading. To help your child, point to the words and ask your child to follow with their finger too while you read the text. A parent should aim to stop pointing to the words as soon as the child can do it for themselves.
• Early reading scheme books will have repetitive phrases that appear on every page. Draw your child’s attention to these phrases to help them read the story: e.g. We go to the farm, We go to the library, We go to the pool.
• Learn some common words by sight e.g. the, come, here, go and to.
• After you have shared the story together, relate the events in the text to your child’s own experiences: e.g. “Where do we like to go?”
• Once you have read the book together we ask that you sign the Reading Record sheet. The “comments” section is for you to write your child’s response to the book. This could be an opinion about a character or a comment about the favourite part of the book.

How can I help my child now he/she is beginning to read?

Once your child knows some common words that they can read on sight and can point to the words one at a time, they will be able to “focus” on print. Your child will now move from “playing at reading” to “beginning to read”. You will notice that your child is beginning to develop a range of reading skills and strategies to use when they are “stuck”. You can encourage your child to become an independent reader by doing the following:

• Always talk about a new book before your child begins to read it. Read the “blurb” at the back of the book to get a flavour of what the story will be about. Use the pictures to talk about the story but you may want to leave the ending as a surprise. Point out any difficult or unfamiliar vocabulary before your child begins so that they feel successful on their first attempt.

• Let your child point to the words themselves. It is important that your child reads at their own pace and is given time and encouragement to notice their own mistakes. If it is a familiar book, your child may not use their finger at all. This will help them read in a smooth and fluent way. Encourage your child to read familiar texts for enjoyment and to improve confidence.

• If your child becomes “stuck” on a word ask them a question that will encourage them to use their reading skills. The question you ask may vary depending on your child’s reading level and the type of word your child is “stuck” on. Here are some prompts:
  “Look at the picture/think about the story and what would make sense?”
  “Look at the first letter of the word and think what would make sense?”
  “Look inside the word and blend the sounds” e.g. c-a-t, sh-ee-p, w-ai-t (Refer to the section on “Letters and Sounds work”) 
  “Read on to the end of the sentence to give you a clue”

• Sometimes your child will make a mistake when they are reading. Don’t jump straight in and stop your child as soon as they do this. Children will often correct mistakes by themselves when they notice something else about the word or the meaning. Sometimes children will make a mistake and continue reading to the end of the sentence and realise that what they have just read does not make sense. Independent readers will go back to the beginning of the sentence, re-read it and correct the mistake themselves without any support. Pause to see what your child does before intervening.
If your child corrects themselves without your help praise your child for being independent. You could say:

“I liked the way you found out what was wrong all by yourself.”

“You put this word right by yourself. How did you know it was...?”

“I liked the way you thought about how the story/sounded out the letters/realised it didn’t make sense...that’s what good readers do”

This last phrase is a very powerful way of giving praise and reinforcing good reading strategies.

If your child makes a mistake and does not correct it for himself you can support your child to be independent by giving one of these prompts:

“What could you try to sort out the problem?”

“You made a mistake on that line, can you find it?”

“You said “.............” Does that make sense?”

“Reread that sentence and have another go.”

Direct your child to the pictures, the meaning of the story or blending the sounds within the word if they do not suggest any of these strategies to correct the mistake. If they are still stuck, just tell them the word.

Once you have read the book ask questions about the story. Can your child tell you the story in their own words? What was their favourite part?

How can I help my child now that they can use a range of reading strategies?

Once your child has learnt how to use a range of strategies quickly and efficiently when reading, they have become an independent reader. You may find that your child needs little support to read the words and may prefer to read silently, rather than reading aloud. The type of texts that your child brings home may be organised in chapters or sections.

You can still support your child with reading in the following ways:

- Talk about the title of the book, the author and illustrator and read the blurb at the back. You may want to read the opening pages to your child to get them started and interested in the story or text.
- Ask your child to read to themselves for at least 15 minutes. Encourage silent reading.
- Encourage your child to visualise or ‘play the movie’ in their head as they read to reinforce understanding.
- Teach your child to notice when they do not fully understand what they have read. Show them how to stop, reread and look for clues to help them.
- Help your child to make links to what they already know or have experienced for themselves. This aids understanding.
- Encourage your child to use the context of the sentence or text to work out the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary. After your child has read a section or chapter ask questions related to the text.
- Children often have a favourite author which they enjoy. Also encourage them to read a range of genres e.g. information books, poetry etc.
For fiction texts you may ask questions related to where the story takes place, the characters, the plot or the ending. Ask your child to give their opinion on characters actions and feelings and find evidence in the text to support their views. Sometimes your child will need to use clues in the story to make predictions and draw conclusions.

For non-fiction texts encourage your child to use the contents page or index to look up information. Encourage them to scan the text, looking for key words, when searching for information.

- At times your child will want to read a section or a few pages aloud to you. Encourage fluent reading, correct intonation and use of expression.
- As well as reading texts brought home from school, joining the library will also help your child practise selecting books. Encourage them to spend time reading the blurb at the back.

What are the age related expectations for my child in reading?

At the end of the Reception year your child will come to the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum. The Early Learning Goals set out what most children should be able to achieve in reading by the age of 5 years.

Early Learning Goals for reading:

Children read and understand simple sentences. They use phonic knowledge to decode regular words and read them aloud accurately. They also read some common irregular words. They demonstrate understanding when talking with others about what they have read.

It is important to remember that children progress in their reading at different rates, and your child’s teacher will place your child on the appropriate Bookbands level for their ability. Regular on-going assessments will assist the teacher in making decisions about when to move your child on to the next Bookbands level.

Whatever stage of reading your child is at, the most important skill that you can teach your child is to read for enjoyment. Sharing a book at home should be a positive experience and remember that children of all ages will continue to enjoy being read to by an adult.

Here are some websites to help you select suitable books for your child:

- **Reading Zone** [www.readingzone.com](http://www.readingzone.com) for book recommendations and children’s book news
- **Booktrust** [www.booktrust.org.uk](http://www.booktrust.org.uk) for recommendations and author information

Please do not hesitate to come in and discuss any questions or concerns that you have about your child’s reading and we shall be happy to give you some further advice.
Letters and Sounds

This section has been written to help you understand the stages that children go through when learning their letters and sounds. It is intended to support you in helping your child when learning letters and sounds at home.

Our aim is that your child will develop their letter knowledge in a variety of different fun and enjoyable ways.

A structured letters and sounds programme is taught as a separate daily session from Reception to Year 2. This programme is a six-phase teaching programme. Phase One concentrates on activities to promote speaking and listening skills, on awareness of letter sounds and the oral blending and segmenting of words. Segmenting consists of breaking words down into phonemes to support spelling. For example c-a-t. Blending consists of building words from their phonemes to support reading. For example b-oo-k. Phase Two to Six focus on phonic work which will support the development of fluent reading skills and lay the foundation for spelling.

Phase One

This is taught throughout Nursery and consolidated in the first half term of Reception. The activities within these phases are mainly adult-led with the intention of teaching children to have an awareness of sounds by listening to and copying what they hear. E.g. listening to and copying animal noises.

How can I help my child with Letters and Sounds before they start school?

The Early Years Foundation Stage sets out milestones for your child in all areas of development from birth to age 5 years.

In reading, a child between the ages 30-50 months would be generally achieving the following goals:

- Enjoys rhyming and rhythmic activities.
- Shows awareness of rhyme and alliteration.
- Recognises rhythm in spoken words.

In reading, a child between the age 40-60+ months would be generally achieving the following goals:

- Continues a rhyming string.
- Hears and says the initial sound in words.
- Can segment the sounds in simple words and blend them together and knows which letters represent some of them.
- Links sounds to letters, naming and sounding the letters of the alphabet.

Here are some ideas to help your child achieve these goals:

- When singing or saying rhymes, talk about the similarities in rhyming words.
- Make up alternative endings and encourage your child to supply the last word of the second line, for example ‘Hickory Dickory bot, The mouse ran down the...’.
First Steps in Reading and Writing Guidance

- When walking to the shops, park or neighbours house, listen for and identify the sounds you can hear.
- When listening to a piece of music encourage your child to play musical instruments. E.g. bang a drum
- Enjoy singing nursery rhymes and action songs together.

What will happen when my child starts school?

Before your child starts school we shall contact their pre-school setting and gather information about your child’s progress in letters and sounds. Once your child starts school the Reception teacher will carry out her own assessments in letters and sounds, this information shall be used to help her plan the “next steps” for your child.

How can I help my child once they start the letters and sounds programme?

Phase 2

This is taught in Reception over a period of 6 weeks. During this phase your child shall be learning 19 letters set out in the following sets:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Set 1/week 1</th>
<th>s a t p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Set 2/week 2</td>
<td>i n m d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Set 3/week 3</td>
<td>g o c k</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Set 4/week 4</td>
<td>c k e u r</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Set 5/week 5</td>
<td>h b f f l l s s</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The aim of this phase is to support children moving on from the oral blending and segmenting of words such as c-a-t to being able to write these words using the same skills. This will help your child when reading and spelling vowel consonant words such as – it, at, in and CVC (consonant, vowel, consonant) words such as pig, cat. Throughout this phase your child shall also be learning the following tricky words:

| the | to | go | no |
What games can I play to support phase 2 at home?

During the first term, your child will bring home a set of letter cards and picture cards which will reflect the letter sounds they will learn at school. You can use these cards when playing the following games:

Find the pair:

Using alphabet and picture cards, mix them up and place face down on the table in rows to form a rectangle. Take it in turns to turn over any two cards. If the cards do not match they are replaced face down in their original positions. If the cards selected are a pair, letter sound/name matching picture, they keep them and take another turn. The activity continues until all the pairs have been found. Make sure you ask your child to articulate the letter sound each time a pair has been found.

Snap!

Using alphabet cards and picture cards, shuffle and deal them out between two players. The first player places a card face upwards in the centre of the table and the second player places a card next to the first card. If the letter card matches the sound of the object on the picture card, the winner is the first person to shout SNAP! The game continues with each player in turn adding a card to their central pile and shouting “SNAP!” if the top card matches. The winner is the player with the most pairs. Make sure you ask your child to articulate the letter sound each time a pair is found.

See it, say it, write it

Display a picture card e.g. the picture of a sun, and say SssssSun. Repeat this a number of times encouraging your child to join in. Place an s card next to the sun and say sssssss. Ask your child to put their writing finger or pencil in the air and follow you in making an s shape in the cursive handwriting script, (see examples at the end of book) also saying the sound. Repeat this a couple of times. Ask them to do the same again, either tracing s in front of them on the carpet or on the back of someone else. Finally, ask the child to write the letter using the cursive handwriting script. (see appendix A)
Phase 3

This is taught in Reception over a period of 12 weeks. There are two sets of letters which your child shall be taught in the first 2 weeks.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Set 6</th>
<th>j v w x</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Set 7</td>
<td>y z zz qu</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Throughout the next 10 weeks your child shall be learning another 18 graphemes most of which are made up of two or more letters. (A grapheme is a letter or group of letters representing one sound.) These can be taught in any order but you will be informed by the Reception teacher which graphemes your child is concentrating on weekly.

Phase 3 graphemes with an example word

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ch</th>
<th>igh</th>
<th>ow</th>
<th>ee</th>
<th>oo</th>
<th>ng</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>chop</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>cow</td>
<td>seen</td>
<td>moon</td>
<td>look</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sh</td>
<td>shed</td>
<td>oa</td>
<td>ur</td>
<td>ai</td>
<td>ear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>them</td>
<td>oi</td>
<td>letter</td>
<td>ar</td>
<td>or</td>
<td>air</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>moth</td>
<td>join</td>
<td>car</td>
<td>fork</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The aim of this phase is to practice CVC blending and segmenting. Your child will be encouraged to apply their knowledge of blending and segmenting to their reading and spelling of simple words and captions.

Throughout this phase your child shall also be learning to read and spell the following tricky words:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>no</th>
<th>go</th>
<th>I</th>
<th>the</th>
<th>to</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>he</td>
<td>she</td>
<td>we</td>
<td>me</td>
<td>be</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>was</td>
<td>you</td>
<td>they</td>
<td>her</td>
<td>all</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What games can I play to support phase 3 at home?

Each week your child shall continue bringing home a set of letter cards which will reflect the letter sounds that they have been learning at school. You can use these cards to support you in playing the following games.

**Countdown**

Using the Phase 3 graphemes make a list of words containing these graphemes and display them for your child one underneath the other. The object of the game is to read as many of these words as possible before the sand timer or stop clock signals stop. The next time your child plays the game, see if they can beat their score.

You may choose a list of words using the same graphemes or a list of words using a mixture of different graphemes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ee</th>
<th>such</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>see</td>
<td>shell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>feel</td>
<td>ring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>weep</td>
<td>main</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>feet</td>
<td>sigh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jeep</td>
<td>coat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>seem</td>
<td>park</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sound talk

Ask your child to sound-talk the name of an object or picture. Ch-o-p, f-eet, r-ai-n. Use objects or pictures which contain the phase 3 graphemes.

Quickwrite words

Say a word to your child containing one of the phase 3 graphemes. Ask your child to sound talk the word i.e. sh-e-d, c-ar, f-ai-r. Then ask your child to write the word within a phoneme frame as set out below. (A phoneme frame allows the child to see how many sounds a word may contain when blending or segmenting,) The phoneme frame below shows the child that there are only 3 sounds within the word.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>For example</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>t</td>
<td>ee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>s</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d</td>
<td>ow</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Phase 4

This is taught over a period of 2 weeks, taught either in Reception or Year 1. The purpose of this phase will be to consolidate your child’s knowledge of the graphemes taught within the previous phases and also to support your child when applying these skills in their reading and spelling of words.

Throughout this phase your child shall be extending their knowledge of letters and sounds, learning to blend and segment 2 consonants together. (See bold type in the following table)

Example words for Phase 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CVCC words</th>
<th>CCVC words</th>
<th>CCVCC words</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>bel</td>
<td>grab</td>
<td>stand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>land</td>
<td>clap</td>
<td>trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chimp</td>
<td>green</td>
<td>stamp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>toast</td>
<td>float</td>
<td>crunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>desktop</td>
<td>treetop</td>
<td>trunk</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Throughout this phase your child shall also be learning to read and spell the following tricky words:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>said</th>
<th>so</th>
<th>have</th>
<th>like</th>
<th>some</th>
<th>come</th>
<th>were</th>
<th>there</th>
<th>little</th>
<th>one</th>
<th>do</th>
<th>when</th>
<th>out</th>
<th>what</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
What games can I play to support Phase 4 at home?

Sound talk
Ask your child to sound-talk the name of an object or picture containing 4 phonemes. Ask your child to write the word in a phoneme frame.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>d</th>
<th>u</th>
<th>m</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>l</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>s</td>
<td>t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g</td>
<td>r</td>
<td>ee</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I can...books

Your child could make a book of I can statements. For example, I can skip, I can jump. You could extend this exercise by asking your child to turn their statement into action phrases. For example, I can kick a ball. I can punch a bag. I can drink my milk.

Writing sentences

Ask your child to write a sentence containing a word or words from Phase 3 and Phase 4. These sentences should include words from the tricky words list set out for each phase as well as words using the specific graphemes taught at each phase.

Phase 5

This phase is taught in either Reception or Year 1. The aim will be to allow your child the opportunity to broaden their knowledge of graphemes in order to support their reading and spelling. Your child will learn some new graphemes as well as some alternative pronunciations for graphemes taught in previous phases.

New graphemes for Phase 5:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ay</th>
<th>wh</th>
<th>o-e</th>
<th>ou</th>
<th>ph</th>
<th>u-e</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>clay</td>
<td>when</td>
<td>bone</td>
<td>about</td>
<td>dolphin</td>
<td>flute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ie</td>
<td>ew</td>
<td>ea</td>
<td>oe</td>
<td>oy</td>
<td>au</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pie</td>
<td>blew</td>
<td>seat</td>
<td>toe</td>
<td>toy</td>
<td>launch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ir</td>
<td>ey</td>
<td>ue</td>
<td>e-e</td>
<td>aw</td>
<td>i-e</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>girl</td>
<td>money</td>
<td>true</td>
<td>these</td>
<td>paw</td>
<td>like</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Alternative pronunciations for graphemes previously taught:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grapheme</th>
<th>Previous pronunciation as in...</th>
<th>New pronunciation as in...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>hat</td>
<td>acorn/fast/was</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e</td>
<td>bed</td>
<td>he</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i</td>
<td>mind</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o</td>
<td>hot</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>u</td>
<td>but</td>
<td>unit/put</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ow</td>
<td>down</td>
<td>low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ie</td>
<td>pie</td>
<td>chief</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ea</td>
<td>sea</td>
<td>head</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>er</td>
<td>farmer</td>
<td>her</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ou</td>
<td>out</td>
<td>you/could/mould</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
First Steps in Reading and Writing Guidance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>y</th>
<th>yes</th>
<th>by/gym/very</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ch</td>
<td>chin</td>
<td>school/chef</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c</td>
<td>cat</td>
<td>cell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g</td>
<td>got</td>
<td>gent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ey</td>
<td>money</td>
<td>they</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Throughout this phase your child shall also be learning to read and spell the following tricky words.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>oh</th>
<th>their</th>
<th>people</th>
<th>Mr.</th>
<th>Mrs.</th>
<th>looked</th>
<th>called</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>asked</td>
<td>said</td>
<td>so</td>
<td>have</td>
<td>like</td>
<td>some</td>
<td>come</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>there</td>
<td>water</td>
<td>where</td>
<td>who</td>
<td>again</td>
<td>thought</td>
<td>through</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>work</td>
<td>mouse</td>
<td>many</td>
<td>laughed</td>
<td>because</td>
<td>different</td>
<td>any</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eyes</td>
<td>friends</td>
<td>once</td>
<td>please</td>
<td>little</td>
<td>one</td>
<td>do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>when</td>
<td>what</td>
<td>out</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What games can I play to support phase 5 at home?

**Rhyming words**

With your child make a list of rhyming words for each grapheme listed above. Include words from the new graphemes taught at phase 5 as well as words from the new pronunciations list.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>day</th>
<th>low</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>play</td>
<td>grow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>may</td>
<td>snow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stray</td>
<td>glow</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Best Bet**
Support your child when sorting a list of words under the correct grapheme.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ow</th>
<th>ea</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>down</td>
<td>sea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cow</td>
<td>seat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>how</td>
<td>beat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>town</td>
<td>meat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Countdown**

Using the Phase 5 graphemes make a list of words containing these graphemes and display them for your child one underneath the other. The object of the game is to read as many of these words as possible before the sand timer or stop clock signals stop. The next time your child plays the game, see if they can beat their score.
**Phase 6**

This is taught throughout Year 2. During this phase your child will be encouraged to become a more fluent reader and an increasingly accurate speller.

**Reading:** at this stage many children will be reading longer and less familiar texts independently and with increasing fluency. The shift from learning to read, to reading to learn takes place and children begin to read for information and for pleasure.

**Spelling:** During this phase your child will begin learning about the use of past tense, e.g. I looked and irregular past tenses e.g. went, came, said. Your child will also learn about suffixes. For example see the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>stops</th>
<th>fizzes</th>
<th>riding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>baked</td>
<td>rider</td>
<td>finest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hidden</td>
<td>spiteful</td>
<td>rudely</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**What games can I play to support Phase 6 at home?**

**Introducing the past tense**

You can say to your child “Today I am eating an egg”. “What did I eat yesterday?” The response could be “Yesterday you ate a sandwich.” “Yesterday you ate some jam.” You could say “Today I am jumping on the bed”. “Where did I jump yesterday?” The response could be “Yesterday you jumped on the bed”.

**Word Sort**

Give your child a set of word cards and ask your child to categorise these words according to their spelling pattern. Sort the cards under the following headings, -ing, -ed, -en, -est etc...

**What are the age related expectations for my child in letters and sounds?**

At the end of the Reception year your child will come to the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum. The Early Learning Goals set out what most children should be able to achieve by the age of 5 years.

**Early Learning Goals for Reading**

Children read and understand simple sentences. They use phonics knowledge to decode regular words and read them aloud accurately. They also read some common irregular words. They demonstrate understanding when talking with others about what they have read.

**Assessment for the end of Phase 5**

- Give the sound when shown any grapheme that has been taught.
- For any given sound, write the common graphemes.
- Apply phonics knowledge and skill as the prime approach to reading and spelling unfamiliar words that are not completely decodable.
- Read and spell phonically decodable two-syllable and three-syllable words.
- Read automatically all the words in the list of 100 high-frequency words.
- Accurately spell most of the words in the list of 100 high-frequency words.
- Form each letter correctly.
Phonic Awareness Check takes place in June. This is a statutory short assessment to confirm whether individual children have learnt phonic decoding to an appropriate standard. Results are then shared and discussed with parents.

**Assessment for the end of Phase 6**

- Apply phonic knowledge and skill as the prime approach to reading and spelling more complex and unfamiliar words that are not completely decodable.
- Read and spell phonically decodable three-syllable and four-syllable words.
- Apply knowledge of past tense when writing.
- Apply knowledge of suffixes when writing.

It is important to remember that children progress through the phases at different rates, and your child’s teacher will use regular on-going assessments in order to meet the needs of all individuals and to plan for their next steps. Whatever stage your child is at it is important to remember that your child should develop their letter knowledge in a variety of different fun and enjoyable ways.

**Writing**

This section has been written to help you understand the stages that children go through on their way to becoming an enthusiastic and confident writer. It is intended to support you in helping your child with writing at home.

Our aim is that your child will learn to write in a way that will lead them to becoming an enthusiastic and creative writer.

**How can I help my child with writing before they start school?**

The Early Years Foundation Stage sets out milestones for your child in all areas of development from birth to age 5 years.

In writing, a child between 30-50 months would generally be achieving the following goals;

- Sometimes give meaning to marks as they draw and paint
- Ascribe meanings to marks that they see in different places.

In writing, a child between 40-60+ months would generally be achieving the following goals;

- Gives meaning to marks they make as they draw, write and paint.
- Begins to break the flow of speech into words.
- Continues a rhyming string.
- Hears and says the initial sound in words.
- Can segment the sounds in simple words and blend them together.
- Links sounds to letters, naming and sounding the letters of the alphabet.
First Steps in Reading and Writing Guidance

- Uses some clearly identifiable letters to communicate meaning, representing some sounds correctly and in sequence.
- Writes own name and other things such as labels, captions.
- Attempts to write short sentences in meaningful contexts.

Here are some ideas to help your child achieve these goals:

- Make books with your child of activities they have been doing, using photographs of them as illustrations.
- Write poems and short stories with your child, scribing for them.
- Support your child in recognising and writing their own names.
- For children who already have some letter knowledge you can encourage your child to use their phonic knowledge when writing consonant-vowel-consonant (CVC) words.

It is important that your child learns that writing can be fun. Enjoy lots of writing together for a variety of different purposes.

What will happen when my child starts school?

Before your child starts school we shall contact their pre-school setting and gather information about your child’s progress in writing. The pre-school setting will let us know how your child is progressing in relation to the milestones set out above. The Reception teacher will use this information to help her plan the “next steps” for your child.

Every child will go through similar stages of development in their writing. Set out below are the 5 stages of progression with possible activities which you can do at home to support your child’s writing development.

Stages of children’s writing

Stage 1 – Scribbling and mock handwriting: Mark making will be your child’s first attempts at writing. This will be their first explorations of using a marking tool for a purpose other than drawing. Random marks or scribbles will often occur on a page with their drawings. Your child will produce lines of wavy scribbles in order to imitate the adult cursive writing. Always praise your child for their efforts with their writing.

How can I help my child at home?

- Allow for your child to experiment with a range of writing tools such as paints, crayons, pencils, felt pens and chalks.
- Use stencils and templates.
- Track left to right on a squiggly line with their finger or writing tool.

Stage 2 – Mock letters and conventional letters: Your child will start to attempt to form letters of the alphabet making alphabetic representations; sometimes these may be back to front or upside down but this is normal. Your child will make letter-like shapes that resemble conventional letters. Their first experiences with real letters are usually the letters from their name or family member’s name. This is because these letters are familiar to them and they are more than likely to use these letters repeatedly to represent a number of different words. As children’s mock letters become more conventional, real letters of the alphabet will begin to appear.
How can I help my child at home?

- Allow opportunities for your child to experiment with writing, for example, a shopping list, leaving a message, writing an invitation or making a card.
- Write poems and short stories with children, scribing for them.
- Support children in recognising and writing their own names using the correct handwriting script. (See examples at end of book)

Stage 3 – Invented spelling: Often you will notice that the words which your child writes do not resemble either the look or the sound of the actual word they have attempted. Once your child if fairly comfortable with writing the conventional letters, they will begin to cluster letters together to make word type forms. Don’t worry if these do not look or sound like real words. It is very important at this stage not to correct their spelling. At this stage they will often ask you, “What did I write?”

What can I do to help my child at home?

- Encourage your child to write about a picture that they have drawn, or label their favourite character.
- Make books with your child of activities they have been doing, maybe using photographs of them as illustrations.
- Provide opportunities for children to write in their play. For example making a job list for Bob the Builder, or writing a shopping list for Mummy bear.

Stage 4 – Approximated (Phonetic) Spelling: Your child will start to apply their knowledge of sounds to letters to approximate the spellings of words. This may just be the beginning sounds of the word or an ending sound. Often it will be the most dominate sound within the word or sounds which your child will hear and therefore write. The middle sounds will follow and then your child will begin to write all the sounds within a word. Your child will attempt to spell words based on their growing awareness of letter sounds and on their memory of words. Continue to praise your child for their attempts at writing. There is no need at this stage to correct their spelling.

I love my mum – I lv m mum

A cat sat on the mat – a ct st o a mt

What did the elephant say? – wot d ele ft sy

How can I help my child at home?

- Encourage your child to use their ability to hear the sounds at the beginning of words and then in the order in which they occur through words in their writing.
- Play games with your child that encourages children to link sounds to letters and then write letters and words. (See letters and sounds section)
- Encourage children to re-read their writing as they write.
Stage 5 – Conventional Spellings: Your child’s spelling will then become more and more conventional. Your child’s own name is usually written first, followed by words such as mum, dad or other family members.

How can I help my child at home?

You can help by providing your child with an environment that is rich in print and by pointing out print in the outside world, such as road signs, store signs, and labels. You can support the child’s move to conventional spelling by providing a number of opportunities when children can play at writing. It is important that we encourage our children to become creative in their writing. Try to encourage the use of interesting words and a range of vocabulary. It is very important that the adult continues to serve as a good writing role model. There are many opportunities for writing, you could model and encourage your child to write for the following purposes:

- Shopping Lists
- Invitations
- Recipe
- Instructions
- Stories
- Memos
- Diary
- Messages
- To do list

What are the age related expectations for my child in writing?

At the end of the Reception year your child will come to the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum. The Early Learning Goals set out what most children should be able to achieve in writing by the age of 5 years.

Early Learning Goals for writing:

Children use their phonic knowledge to write words in ways which match their spoken sounds. They also write some irregular common words. They write simple sentences which can be read by themselves and others. Some words are spelt correctly and others are phonetically plausible.

Whatever stage of writing your child is at, the most important thing is to remember that writing should be fun. Writing at home with your child should be a very positive exercise when you can encourage them at their own level. If you should require further support and guidance please do not hesitate in approaching your child’s class teacher, they will be happy to offer some advice.