

Early Reading & Phonics – A Brief Overview for new staff

At Mossgate, Early Reading & Phonics are an absolute priority.

Phonics is taught from the beginning of Reception and is a key focus for all children throughout Reception and Year 1.

If secure by the end of Y1, children in Y2 are well equipped to focus more on comprehension when reading texts and within Phonics Lessons they will focus more significantly on spelling.

Key Terms & Information

What is synthetic phonics?

Synthetic phonics is a method of teaching where words are broken up into the smallest units of sound (phonemes). Children learn to make connections between the letters of written texts (graphemes, or letter symbols) and the sounds of spoken language. Synthetic phonics also teaches children how to identify all the phonemes in a word and match them to a letter in order to be able to spell correctly.

Children are taught how to break up words, or decode them, into individual sounds, and then blend all the way through the word.

Example: In the word bat, children learn to identify three individual phonemes using the synthetic phonics method: /b/ /a/ /t/ that can be blended back together to produce a word. The 'synthetic' part of this particular phonics instruction derives from the process of synthesising or blending sounds to create words.

New sounds are not introduced in alphabetical order, and they are introduced quickly. Synthetic phonics means that children are able to read a range of easily decodable words sooner.

This means that if a child is introduced to the sounds /m/ /s/ /a/ /t/ they can quickly read the words at, mat, sat, am, Sam etc.

It is **crucial** for staff to pronounce the sounds correctly and correct children who add the schwa e.g. saying n-uh instead of n.

Watch this video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lwJx1NSineE>

Decoding

Decoding is the ability to apply your knowledge of letter-sound relationships, including knowledge of letter patterns, to correctly pronounce written words. Understanding these relationships gives children the ability to recognise familiar words quickly and to figure out words they haven't seen before.

Blending (Blending Fingers / Build & Blend)

Blending is the process of putting sounds together to read a word.

Segmenting (Robot Arms)

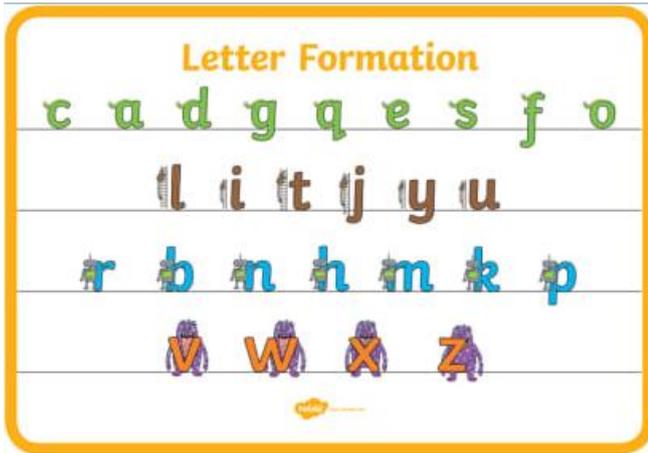
Segmenting is the process of breaking up sounds to spell a word.

Tricky Words

These are words that cannot be decoded at the stage of learning phonics the child is at e.g. the, no, we. These words are taught as whole words with the "tricky bit" highlighted to children to help them remember what to look out for e.g. the naughty a in was that's making an o sound!

As letter-sound correspondences are introduced, so is the correct letter formation. We do not teach the cursive script but letters must **not** be printed and must have a flick. This leads to joining letters in Y2. We teach letter formation explicitly describing the formation as we write e.g. when writing the letter d we would

say: “curl it round like a curly caterpillar, up high then back down and flick”. We have a document entitled: *Letter Formation: What to say* that you can refer to in order to support & model correct letter formation.



We use letter formation mats like this across Reception & KS1 to support children.

All staff **must** model writing in this way and must always write using this style for writing that the children will see, thus providing a good model to the children.

Phonics Progression

There is an established progression for phonics through 6 phases. In Reception we teach Phases 2-4 with some early work incorporating later aspects of Phase 1 which should have been taught in Nursery/Pre-School. In Year 1 Phase 5 is taught and in Year 2 Phase 6 is taught.

It is important for staff to know the teaching order and expectations for being “on track”. We have a document entitled: *Phonics Expectations Tracker* which outlines all you need to know, however class teachers should discuss with you the key focus each week so that you know how to support children in an appropriate way based on what has already been taught. The progression in Tricky Words linked to phonics phases is included at the end of this document.

It is crucial that children are not asked or expected to read or write letters/sounds or Tricky words that they have not yet been taught to read or spell. This is particularly important in the books that children take home to read with parents. Teachers should make decisions about when children begin reading books with words and when they should progress from set to set, which is in line with their developing phonics knowledge & skills.

Reading Fluency

Reading Fluency is **key**. We have a separate document entitled: *Reading Fluency* which explains what this means and gives many examples of how staff can support children in improving their reading fluency.

Reading Partners

You may be asked to be one or hear that other staff are acting as a Reading Partner for a child or children. This is a reading intervention that we use at Mossgate to support children who are not on track with Phonics & Early Reading in Reception/KS1 or who do not meet year group expectations as they move through KS2. The intervention aims to fill the gaps in phonic knowledge / word reading and to build reading fluency through using familiar texts coupled with new texts. Full training will be given to any staff asked to do this & refresher training will take place annually.

Phonics Scheme

At Mossgate, we have developed our own bespoke Phonics Scheme in Reception & Year 1. In Year 2 we will be drawing on resources from the Twinkl scheme for teaching Phonics/Spelling following our own progression that ensures all phonics and spelling expectations are taught by the end of KS1.

Tricky Word Progression

It is really useful for all staff to know these, so that you know whether to expect a child to be able to read or spell the word.

It is also useful to remember that children learn to recognise/read letters/words at a much earlier stage to being able to write/spell.

Phase 2-5 Tricky Words			
Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4	Phase 5
I	he	said	oh
no	she	have	Mrs
the	we	like	people
to	me	so	their
go	be	do	called
into	you	some	Mr
	are	come	looked
	her	little	asked
	was	one	could
	all	were	
	they	there	
	my	what	
		when	
		out	