



Letter and Sounds at Manor Primary School

Introduction

As you know, the ability to read and write is a vital skill for all children. Children practice many of the skills they need for reading and writing from a very early age. They do this through a wide range of activities and experiences, at home and in school. They explore and learn through singing and saying rhymes, making and listening to music, talking with others, sharing books with adults and other children, dressing up, experimenting with writing and using puppets and toys to retell and make up stories.

For children to make a good start in reading and writing, they need to have an adult listen to them and talk to them. Speaking and listening are the starting blocks for reading and writing.

How can you help your child?

Everyday activities such as preparing meals, tidying up, putting shopping away and getting ready to go out gives you the chance to talk to your child, explaining what you are doing. Through these activities, children hear the way language is put together into sentences.

Books are a wonderful source of new words for children – words you would not use in everyday conversations often come up in books. Read aloud and share books as often as you can. They will enjoy it and it will be useful to them when they come across these new words in their own reading.

What is phonics? Sounds in spoken language – the beginnings of phonics

At Manor Primary School all of our Early Years and Key Stage 1 children take part in high quality, daily phonics sessions. These are fun sessions involving lots of speaking, listening and games where the emphasis is on children's participation. They learn to use their phonic knowledge for reading, writing and independent play.

From a very early stage, children develop an awareness of different sounds in spoken language. They develop an understanding that spoken words are made up of different sounds (phonemes) and they learn to match these phonemes to letters (graphemes).

Phonics is about children knowing how letters link to sounds (graphemes to phonemes), e.g. **c** as in 'cat', **ll** as in 'fell', **ee** as in 'sheep'.

Children use this phonics knowledge when they are reading and writing. This system has been shown to be a quicker and more efficient way for children to learn to read the words on a page fluently and accurately. This also helps them greatly with their spelling.

At Manor Primary School we use the phonics programme. **Letters and Sounds**. Letters and Sounds is divided into six phases with each phase following closely from the last. Children have time and practice to improve their ability to read and spell words. They are also taught to read and spell 'tricky words' – words with unusual spellings or which children have not yet been taught.

Phase 1

Phase 1 begins in nursery and is all oral (spoken).. The teacher plans activities that will help children to listen to sounds around them. Teachers teach a wide range of nursery rhymes and songs. They read good books to and with the children. This helps to increase the number of words they know – their vocabulary – and helps them to talk confidently about books.

The teacher shows the children how to do this – c-a-t = cat. The separate sounds (phonemes) are spoken aloud, in order and are then merged together into the whole word. The merging together is called blending – it is a vital skill for reading.

Children will also learn to do this the other way round – cat = c-a-t. The whole word is spoken aloud, and then broken up into its sounds (phonemes) in order. This is called segmenting – it is a vital skill for spelling.

Phase 2

In this phase children will practice what they have learned in phase 1, including 'sound talking'. They will also be taught the phonemes (sounds) for a number of letters (graphemes), which phoneme is represented by which grapheme and that a phoneme can be represented by more than one letter, e.g. ll as in b-e-ll. They may be using pictures or actions to remember these.

VC and CVC words

C and V are 'consonant' and 'vowel'. VC words are words such as am, at and it (words made up of a vowel and then a consonant). CVC words are words such as cat, rug and sun (consonant, vowel, consonant). Words such as bell and tick also count as CVC words – although they have four letters, they only have three sounds. For example, in the word bell – b = consonant e = vowel ll = consonant

Now the children will be seeing letters and words, as well as hearing them. They will be shown how to make whole words by pushing magnetic or wooden letters together to form little words, reading little words on the interactive whiteboard, and breaking words up into individual sounds which will help with their spelling.

These will be simple words made up of two phonemes, e.g. *am, at, it*, or three phonemes, e.g. *cat, rug, sun, tick, bell*.

Tricky words:

The children will also learn several tricky words: the, to, I, go, no.

Saying the sounds

Your child will be taught how to pronounce the sounds (phonemes) correctly to make blending easier. The teachers will practice these skills with the children so they can be sustained.

A useful website for the pronunciation of the sounds

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v+lwJxNSineE>

Phase 3

The purpose of this phase is to:

- Teach more graphemes, most of which are made up of two letters, e.g. 'oa' as in boat
- Practice blending and segmenting a wider set of CVC words, e.g. fizz, chip, sheep
- Learn all letter names and begin to form them correctly
- Read more tricky words and begin to spell some of them
- Read and write words in phrases and sentences

CVC words

Here are some examples of words they will be reading - tail, week, right, soap, food, park, burn, cord, town, soil

Tricky words

The number of tricky words is getting larger. These are so important for reading and spelling: he, she, we, me, be, was, my, you, her, they, all.

Phase 4

In this phase the children will continue to practice the graphemes (letters) and phonemes (sounds) they have already learned. They will also learn how to read and write CVCC words – tent, damp, toast, chimp.

e.g. in the word 'toast', t = consonant, oa = vowel, s = consonant, t = consonant

They will also learn to read and spell CCVC words – swim, plum, sport, cream, spoon. E.g. in the word 'cream', c = consonant, r = consonant, ea = vowel, m = consonant.

They will be learning more tricky words and continuing to read and write sentences together.

Tricky words

said, so, do, have, like, some, come, were, there, little, one, when, out, what

Phases 5 and 6

As your child moves onto phases 5 and 6 they will learn that most sounds can be spelled in more than one way. For example the f sound can be written as f as in fan, ff as in huff or ph as in photo.

This develops their knowledge of spelling choices. They will continue with this spelling work into Year 2 and beyond.

They will learn that most letters and combinations of letters (graphemes) can represent more than one sound. For example, the grapheme ea can be read as /ee/ as in leaf or /e/ as in bread.

This supports their reading development.

Good phonics knowledge and skills help your child to read words fluently and spell words, but they need to understand what they are reading and understand the processes and purposes for writing too.

They will also be introduced to the common exception words for Year 1 and Year 2.

Please be aware that spelling is harder than reading words. Little whiteboards and pens and magic boards are a fun way for children to try out spellings and practice their handwriting at home.

The school handwriting guidelines and policy is available on our website

Useful websites and leaflets for more information

www.phonicsplay.co.uk

This is a website we use frequently in school. There is a special parents section on the homepage that has information on phonics and lots of interactive games you can play with your child.

www.parentscentre.gov.uk/foragegroup/3to5years/readandwritetogether

This link to the Parents Centre website gives some really good ideas about how you can enjoy sharing books with your child and tells you a bit more about phonics