



Flitwick Lower School Information Booklet Literacy



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Phonics

What is phonics?

Phonics is the system of ‘blending’ sounds together to read, and ‘segmenting’ sounds to spell. They are both complimentary and interlinking skills that are taught together. You may hear your child use some vocabulary that you are not familiar with that they have learnt in their phonics lessons. A phoneme is the smallest unit of sound that we use in the English language. A phoneme can be made up of one letter as in the alphabet sounds – s, a, t, p, i, n etc, or two letters (a digraph) as in sh, ch, th, ay, ar, or three letters (trigraphs) as in air, ear, ure. Phonemes cannot be broken down into separate sounds. A grapheme is the way we spell a phoneme. A phoneme may have only one grapheme for example ‘b’. Or may have several different spellings –for example ‘or’ can be spelt ‘or’ as in fork, ‘aw’ as in saw, ‘au’ as in sauce. The children will initially be introduced to one common grapheme for each phoneme, but as they progress through the school, they will be taught the less common spelling alternatives and encouraged to try and choose the correct grapheme for a particular word they are trying to spell. Consonant blends are made up of two or three phonemes blended together quite quickly as we learn to read e.g. sc, sm, bl, pr, str. Short Vowel Sounds are the vowels such as ‘a’ in c a t. Long Vowel Sounds are the vowels such as ‘ay’ as in day, ‘oa’ as in boat or ‘igh’ as in night.

How do we teach Phonics at Flitwick Lower School?

Phonics lessons are taught daily in Foundation and Key Stage 1 (years 1 and 2) for approximately 20 minutes. We follow the Letters and Sounds scheme and use a mixture of different resources and teaching styles to engage and motivate the children, including THRASS, magnetic boards and letters, whiteboards and pens, games, flashcards and a lively visual program ‘phonics play’ on our Interactive whiteboards. We have phonic based

guided reading books for teachers to use with groups when teaching reading and there are some phonic based home readers in all book boxes. In Key Stage 2 (years 3 and 4), phonics is taught through spellings twice a week and focuses on suffixes and prefixes. For those children who still require support with their sounds, phonics is provided through intervention.

How can you support your child at home?

It will be useful to revise the phonemes your child has learnt that week at school and also later to go over some from previous weeks to reinforce their learning. It is also very beneficial to point out some phonemes when reading at home with your child, particularly those recently learnt. Each week the phonic focus will be sent home on *the learning at home* sheet in Foundation and the key words / weekly spellings will be sent home on the *learning at home* sheet for Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.



Reading

The aim of the reading scheme is to produce competent readers who read for enjoyment and discovery about the world around us. In addition to developing children's fluency and understanding of a text, we want to help children to find a real pleasure and joy in reading.

All of our books are banded in line with the National Book Bands issued by the government. Within those book bands are a range of fiction and non-fiction from a variety of different publishers and schemes including Oxford Reading Tree, Rigby Star, Ginn and Collins Big Cat. This provides for depth and consolidation for our children. The children are offered a wide variety of genres including poetry, playscripts, chapter books and information books.

To support children in reading for pleasure, we allow them to choose a book from the book band they are currently reading at or the book band above. This ensures children are choosing a book that they will enjoy reading whilst allowing them to extend their own learning. We want reading to be a positive experience and for the children to look forward to reading with you at home.

As the children become more confident, they move onto carefully selected paperbacks, which are still 'banded' to provide structure and guidance. The children also have the opportunity to visit the library on a weekly basis where they have a range of books and story CDs to choose from. During their library session, the children spend time reading quietly and listening to a story.

Each day the children participate in a reading workshop, this provides the opportunity for children to read with the teacher once a week in small groups, allowing the teacher to question the children about a text and develop their comprehension skills. The reading workshop also enables children to listen to story CDs, work on comprehension questions, use the learn pads for interactive stories or read independently. In addition to this,

they work with a teaching assistant once a week to develop their comprehension skills and their spelling rules.

How can you support your child at home?

Reading daily with your child is very important and helps them to build confidence and fluency.

The inserts provided in your child's reading record provides helpful information in how to approach reading and how to use questioning to check understanding of the book. Please write in the home reader so that we can look at what your child is reading and how you feel they are getting on or encourage your child to write in the home reader if they are able to.



Writing

Children write across a variety of genres to enable them to develop their knowledge and understanding of different forms of writing. This includes: narratives, letters, lists, information texts, diaries, newspaper reports and fact files. As part of the creative curriculum we link all of our writing to our termly topic e.g. World War 2, Earthlets and All Aboard.

Children are taught how to structure a sentence correctly, and grammar is integral to every lesson across all areas of the curriculum.

Cursive handwriting is taught from year 1. Handwriting is taught discretely on a weekly basis.

How can you support your child at home?

If your child is writing a letter, a list, an invitation , a set of instructions or a card you might like to try some of these:-

- Let them see real examples and talk about the ways they are written
- Show them how you would write them
- Talk to them about what they are going to write
- Give them plenty of opportunities to write to friends or family
- Ask your child to write your shopping list or a set of instructions for a neighbour



Grammar

With grammar now an important element of the curriculum, children receive grammar lessons discretely. However, within all areas of writing across the curriculum, grammar is a key focal point and the children are reminded and encouraged to use this at all times.

For guidance on grammar, please see the learning platform where you will find information for each year group.

How can you support your child at home?

- Encourage your child to use capital letters ...
 - at the start of a sentence
 - for “I”
 - At the start of names of people and places
 - For the first letter of days of the week and months of the year
- If your child is writing, check they use the correct homophone
- Discuss the correct tense e.g. if they are writing about something that has happened are they using the past tense?



Spelling

Spelling is a key element of writing and expectations for all year groups are that children will spell key words correctly most of the time in order to meet the expected level for that year.

Weekly spellings are sent home to practise and children are tested on these the following week through dictation of a sentence. This ensures the spellings are put into context.

In Key Stage 1 children are taught spelling rules and suffix endings. They are also taught how to use an apostrophe in spelling and how to spell words which sound the same but are spelt differently (homophones) e.g. blue / blew, there / their / they're, sun / son. In addition to this, there is a list of common exception words which the children must spell correctly if they use them in their writing.

In Key Stage 2 children are taught more complex spelling rules for suffixes and prefixes. They also have a list of words they need to learn to spell. The children practise spelling the common exception words on a daily basis.

Spelling lists and common exception words can be obtained from our website or through your class teacher.

How can you support your child at home?

- Encourage them to have a go using their knowledge of letter sounds and words.
- Compare your child's attempt to the correct spelling and compare where they have gone wrong.
- Talk about tricky words
- Encourage children to clap out the syllables to break down the word to help them to spell e.g. sat-ur-day



Speaking and Listening

At Flitwick Lower School children take part in a high-quality communication, language and literacy development designed to promote your child's learning. From a very early age, your child will need to experience a wide range of activities and experiences with you to develop their early reading and writing skills, for example singing and saying rhymes, making and listening to music, listening to them and joining in conversations, painting and pretend play. These activities will help your child take the first important steps towards reading and writing. As they progress through the school, they are offered a wide range of opportunities to develop speaking and listening skills including singing, discussion, debate and role play.

The aim is to:

- Learn to use drama games, activities and practical techniques to enhance creativity and learning in the primary curriculum, encourage group co-operation and have fun!
- To support literacy objectives, including speaking, listening and writing
- Develop critical thinking in history (including Ancient Egypt, Ancient Greece and British evacuees in World War Two) using multimedia, improvisation and role-play
- Take away ideas for using drama to enhance science and maths

Children are encouraged to share their opinions, question each other, explain their thinking and debate. This allows children to develop their own ideas and explore the different views and ideas of others.

Other Information

Year 1 – Phonics screening.

The phonics screening check is a short assessment to confirm whether individual children have learnt phonic decoding to an appropriate standard. It will identify the children who need extra help so they are given support by their school to improve their reading skills. This takes place in June on a 1:1 basis with the class teacher. The children will cover all of the sounds they need to know by the time of the check.

Year 2 SATs

At the end of year 2 the children will take SATs tests in maths, reading, punctuation, spelling and grammar. These are official government tests and are compulsory. Children are tested on what they have been learning at school. They will also be assessed by their teacher (known as the teacher assessment) on speaking and listening, writing and science.

For more information on the following areas please see the school website.

Book banding

Spelling lists

Common exception words

Spelling rules

Grammar requirements by year group



