



Reading and Phonics at Mablins Lane

English is taught daily with work appropriately differentiated to match all abilities. We aim to nurture in the children a love of literature and language and the confidence to continue reading and writing throughout their lives.

With parental support, we want our children to:

- speak clearly and confidently in any situation.
- listen actively and respond appropriately, developing knowledge and opinion.
- read fluently for both pleasure and information.
- write clearly and with confidence in any given genre.
- use spelling rules, phonics and grammar accurately.
- be able to proofread their own work and make amendments and improvements.

What is phonics?

There has been a big shift in the past few years in how we teach reading in school. This is having a huge impact and helping many children learn to read and spell. Phonics is recommended as the first strategy that children should be taught in helping them learn to read. Phonics runs alongside other teaching methods to help children develop vital reading skills and give them a real love of reading – hopefully for life.

Phoneme? Grapheme?

Words are made up from small units of sound (phonemes) and phonics teaches children to listen carefully and identify the phonemes that make up each word. This helps them learn to read and spell words.

In phonics lessons children are taught three main things:

- 1 GPCs (grapheme phoneme correspondences)

GPCs simply means that children are taught all the phonemes in the English language and ways of writing them down.

2 Blending

Children are taught to blend sounds together by merging the individual sounds together until they can hear what the word is. This is a vital reading skill.

3 Segmenting

Segmenting is the opposite of blending! Children are able to say a word and then break it up into the phonemes that make it up. This is a vital spelling skill.

Why is phonics so tricky?



The English language is very complicated! England has been invaded so many times throughout its history and each set of invaders brought new words and new sounds with them. As a result, English only has around 44 phonemes but there are around 120 graphemes or ways of writing down those 44 phonemes. Plus, we only have 26 letters in the alphabet so some graphemes are made up from more than one letter.

ch th oo ay (these are digraphs – graphemes with two letters)

There are other graphemes that are trigraphs (made up of 3 letters) and a very few made from 4 letters.

Some graphemes can represent more than one phoneme, ie, **ch** can make different sounds, **chip**, **school**, **chef**

Learning to read is like cracking a code so teaching phonics is a way of teaching children to crack the code. As reading is the key to learning it is important that we teach phonics clearly and systematically learning easy bits first then progressing to trickier bits!

At Mabllins Lane Community Primary School reading and phonics are taught in accordance with the National Curriculum and the Revised Literacy Framework using:

- **Letters and Sounds**
- **Oxford Reading Tree**
- **Nelson Cengage**
- **Songbird Phonics**
- **Treetops**
- **Wayland Start Reading**
- **Collins Big Cats**
- **Usborne Young Readers**

We are passionate about teaching children to read. Reading enriches children's vocabulary, their writing and their spelling. They have access to the wider curriculum and their self-esteem is enhanced because they realise they are succeeding.

Each child's reading journey begins in EYFS where phonics is introduced using the Letters and Sound scheme. As children progress through school and their phonetic awareness develops, reading books from [Oxford Reading Tree](#) and [other scheme books](#) are introduced.

All the children are grouped, across the school, in terms of their reading ability. This means that they are reading at their own level, every day. This means teaching is more focused in terms of children's progress. Children who are progressing faster or more slowly than their peers move quickly to another group. Children who continue to struggle have one-to-one tutoring (starting from the Reception year), so that they catch up again as soon as possible. Children who have special educational needs are supported, for however long it takes, until they can read.

The children to decode by learning 44 sounds and matching letters/ letter groups; by learning to blend sounds to read words and by reading specially written books that include only the sounds that the children have been learning and therefore ensuring success as the children are never given anything that they can't read. The English language has 44 phonemes (letter sounds), but more than 150 graphemes (the way the sound is written down) so therefore is a very complex code. Through Read Write Inc., children are taught a simple code first before moving on to the complex code.

Teacher modelling

The teacher explains and uses direct instruction for every activity – 'My turn, your turn', ensuring that all the children in the group are watching her and mirroring what she is doing. The children then take it in turns to teach their partners the same thing. The teacher observes and listens carefully, picking up on any errors or uncertainties. She repeats the activity until all the children are confident at every step. Revision and consolidation at the start of the next day's lesson are vital in supporting their learning, step by step.

Partner work

Children work with a 'Perfect Partner' in all the lessons. Story-time has a high profile. In every lesson, the teacher models sentence-building, using ambitious vocabulary and showing children how they can extend sentences, building them up gradually. This develops the children's understanding of how a sentence should sound. Choral speaking is used after each stage of modelling. Children discuss questions with their partners – 'Turn to your partner'. The teacher then selects individual children to give feedback after the discussions with their partners.

Teaching and learning:

Reading

The alphabet is taught first and firmly embedded. The children rapidly learn sounds and the letter or groups of letters they need to represent those sounds. Simple and enjoyable mnemonics help all children to grasp this quickly, especially those who are at risk of making slower progress or those

who are new to learning English. This learning is taught and consolidated every day. High-frequency words that are not phonically regular are taught as 'tricky' words and practised frequently. Well-written, lively phonic books are closely matched to children's increasing knowledge of phonics and 'tricky' words, so that, early on, they experience plenty of success. Repeated readings of the texts support their increasingly fluent decoding. Discussion of each story helps children both to understand what they are reading and to build up their knowledge of how texts work.

ECAR Every Child a Reader

We have two fully trained ECAR teachers delivering ECAR on a daily basis in our ECAR intervention classroom.

Writing

As with reading, the alphabetic code is embedded first, so that children can write simple consonant-vowel-consonant words early on and build on their success. The children write every day, rehearsing what they want to say orally and composing, sentence by sentence, until they are confident to write independently. They write at the level of their spelling knowledge, that is, they use their knowledge of the alphabetic code and the 'tricky' words they have learnt. In every lesson, they are rapidly building up their knowledge, so that they are soon able to spell more complex words confidently, accurately and fluently. The children can use adventurous vocabulary in their writing because they have encountered such language in their reading and they have talked about what the words mean.

Children also participate in weekly guided reading sessions in small groups where they can apply their phonic and reading skills to a variety of fiction and non-fiction texts.

