



Woodfield Primary School

How we teach reading – answers for parents

The Read Write Inc. Phonics programme

Learning to read is the most important thing your child will learn at our school. Everything else depends on it, so we put as much energy as we possibly can into making sure that every single child learns to read as quickly as possible. We want your child to love reading – and to want to read for themselves. This is why we put our efforts into making sure they develop a love of books as well as simply learning to read.

How will my child be taught to read?

At Woodfield we use the *Read Write Inc.* phonics programme. We start by teaching phonics to the children in Reception class. This means that they learn how to ‘read’ the sounds in words and how those sounds can be written down. This is essential for reading, but it also helps children learn to spell well. We teach the children simple ways of remembering these sounds and letters with rhymes e.g. ‘ay’ may I play? and ‘ou’ shout it out. Ask them to tell you what these are.

The children also practise reading (and spelling) what we call ‘red words’ or ‘tricky words’, such as ‘once,’ ‘have,’ ‘said’ and ‘where’.

The children practise their reading with books that match the phonics and the ‘tricky words’ they know (decodable books). They start thinking that they *can* read and this does wonders for their confidence.

We also enjoy a wide range of books with the children and read out loud to them in story time everyday. Your children will get to know all sorts of stories, poetry and information books. They learn many more words this way and it develops their love of reading. We have listed the core texts that we read to the children in our Woodfield Reading Spine (which is also available on our website).

How will I know how well my child is doing?

We will always let you know how well your child is doing. We use various ways to find out how the children are getting on in reading but at this stage the main way that we assess your child is by using the Read Write Inc. assessments to check which sounds your child knows speedily and also by listening to them read to assess their speed and fluency. We use this information to decide what reading group they should be in. Your child will work with children who are at the same reading level as them and will move to a different group as soon as we think that they are ready. Your child will have one-to-one or group support if we think they need some extra help to keep up.

We also use a reading test, once the children are reading with greater fluency, so that we can make sure that all our children are at the level that they should be for their age compared to all the children across the country.

In the summer term, the government asks us to do a phonics check of all the Year 1 children. That gives us extra information about their progress. We will talk to you about how well your child has done, and especially if we have any worries at all.

How long will it take to learn to read well?

By the end of Year 2, your child should be able to read aloud books that are at the right level for their age. In Year 3 we concentrate more on helping children to understand what they are reading, although this work begins very early on.

How do I know the teaching will be good?

All the staff have been trained to teach reading in the way we do it in this school. We believe that it is very important that all the teachers and teaching assistants work in the same way. Senior leaders watch other teachers teaching to make sure that the children are learning and progressing as expected. If you are worried about the teaching or you have any questions, please come to school and talk to us at any time.

What can I do to help? Is there anything that I shouldn't do?

All Reception parents are invited to a meeting so that we can explain how we teach reading and how you can support your child with reading at home. If you have any questions you can always speak to your child's teacher or our school reading leader Maya Holt mholt@stbartsmat.co.uk

Once your child is able to read whole words accurately and speedily, they will begin to bring 'decodable' reading books home. They will bring home a RWI Book Bag book that matches the colour RWI group that they are in plus a copy of the RWI book that they are currently learning about in school. These books contain only sounds and words that the children already know so that they can be successful in reading it. The more often that they can read these out loud to you at home the better, and we encourage children to re-read these books to develop speed and fluency.

When you are listening to your child reading a decodable RWI book, please encourage them to use their phonics to help them read by sounding out and then blending to read the word. In school we remind them by saying 'Special friends, Fred Talk, Read the word'. In the earlier stages, children will say each sound out loud before blending them together to read the whole word. You can hear how to say the sounds correctly at this link: <https://ruthmiskin.com/en/find-out-more/parents/#lg=1&slide=2> As children progress, they begin to Fred in their Head, which means not saying each sound at loud just reading the whole word in one go. As they encounter longer words, it may help them to break the word down to read one syllable at a time.

Children are also able to choose a 'sharing book' from the school library that they will enjoy listening to you read to them. We know parents and carers are very busy people, but whenever you are able to read to your child it helps them enormously to develop their vocabulary and understanding of a range of stories.

Does it matter if my child misses a lesson or two?

It matters a lot if your child misses school. The way we teach children to read is very well organised, so even one missed lesson means that your child has not learnt something that they need to know to be a good reader. We will always support your child to catch up on what they have missed and the programme is designed to revisit previous teaching; however, poor attendance does impact on their learning.

What if he or she finds it difficult to learn to read?

We want children to learn to read, however long it takes us to teach them. We will find out very quickly if your child is finding reading difficult. First, we move children to a different group, so that we can make sure that they have learnt what they need to know. If they still struggle, we give them extra time with an adult, on their own. These adults are specially trained to support these children. Your child will still be in the same group with the other children and won't miss out on any of the class lessons.

If we have any serious worries about your child's reading, we will talk to you about this.

Some children take a bit longer to learn to blend sounds together to read a word, e.g. c-a-t to make the word 'cat' but this is not uncommon and we help lots of children with blending in the early stages of reading in school.

What if my child turns out to be dyslexic?

The way we teach reading is especially helpful for children who might be dyslexic. This is because we use a very well-organised programme that has a strong focus on phonics. This is very important for children who find learning to read difficult. If you are worried about your child, please come and talk to us.

My child has difficulty pronouncing some sounds. Will this stop him learning to read through phonics?

This isn't a problem for learning to read as long as we know what sound the child is trying to say. This is not something to worry about. Many children have a few sounds that they can hear clearly but find it difficult to say, particularly the l-sound, r-sound, w-sound, th-sound, s-sound, sh-sound and j-sound. Often they say a t-sound for the c-sound; "tttssh" for the s-sound; "w" for the r-sound and "r" for the l-sound. You can help your child by encouraging them to look at your mouth when you say the sound. Whatever you do, do not make your child feel a failure. They can easily learn to read, even if they find one or two sounds difficult to say.

Don't hesitate to contact us if you have any concerns. We are here to help.