



Learning to read at Mildmay Primary School

Mrs V Foley & Mrs J Hagen

"Growing, caring and learning together; meeting challenges, making the most of opportunities and enjoying the journey."



Readiness to Read

The Reception teachers have been busy preparing your child to learn to read. This does not mean that they have begun formal learning of phonics and reading, but instead they have been putting into place important skills to ensure that when structured learning begins your child will be able to succeed with reading straight away.

- Making sure your child is settled and happy at school
- Developing listening and attention skills
- Developing phonological awareness through playing with sounds and rhymes, singing songs, oral blending
- Developing enjoyment of books and a keenness to learn to read
- Developing vocabulary and story language
- Use of wordless books to establish reading behaviours





Blending

One of the first steps to reading is the ability to orally 'blend' sounds to make a word.

c-a-t = cat

Studies show that smooth blending enables the children to hear the blended word more effectively so we blend like this

caaaaaaaaaaat

C is a short sound, a is long and the t is short – it sounds more like the word than in short bursts.

Blending is a skill which can take a while to master so please don't be discouraged if your child finds this difficult to start with. It is important for you to model the smooth blending so that they can hear the sounds being put together. We will be practising everyday at school but the more you can practise at home using the blending booklet the easier it will become for you child.





Phonics

All schools must use phonics for teaching children how to read.

If a child memorises ten words, the child can read only ten words. BUT if a child learns the sounds of ten letters, they will be able to read 350 three sound words, 4320 four sound words and 21, 650 five sound words.

Martin Kozloff 2002

At Mildmay we teach phonics through a scheme called 'Essential Letters and Sounds'. In Reception and Year 1 the children will receive daily direct teaching of phonics.





Phonics Glossary

Phoneme the smallest unit of sound in a word

Grapheme the written representation of a phoneme

Digraph two letters making one phoneme 'sh' 'ee' 'th'

Trigraph three letters making one phoneme 'igh'

CVC words words made up from a consonant/vowel/
consonant nap bag fish chart

CVCC/ CCVC words tent hand frog drop



Teaching phonemes and their graphemes

- There are about 44 phonemes in the English language. These are represented by about 250 graphemes!
- The phonemes are not introduced in alphabetical order.
- The sounds may be slightly different to how you learned them at school. If you are in any doubt about how to pronounce the sounds then please send us a tapestry message and we can advise you.
- 'Mr Thorne does Phonics' is helpful if you can forgive his funny hat and giraffe puppet?!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LLTw0oiLNys>





Blending using graphemes

Once a few phonemes and graphemes have been learnt your child will move on from oral blending to blending the graphemes to read a written word.

s a t p i n

tap	sit	sat	pin	tip	pit	sip
it	in	pip	tin	as	Tim	nap
at	ant					



Harder to read and spell words

HRSW are words that cannot easily be sounded out within your child's current level of phonics.

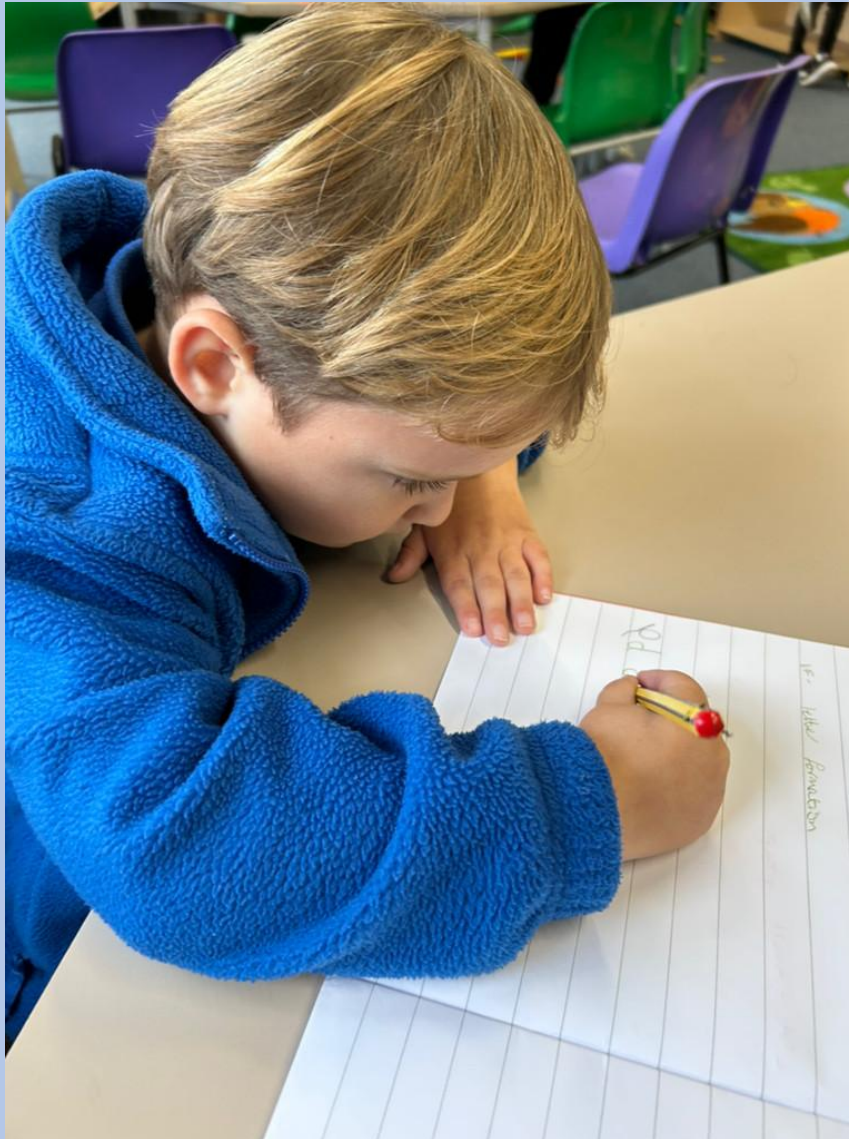
to when sounded out will not read as 'to'.

Children may learn these as sight words until they have enough phonic knowledge to decode them.

Children need to be able to identify them from flash cards but more importantly to identify them in texts.



Segmenting



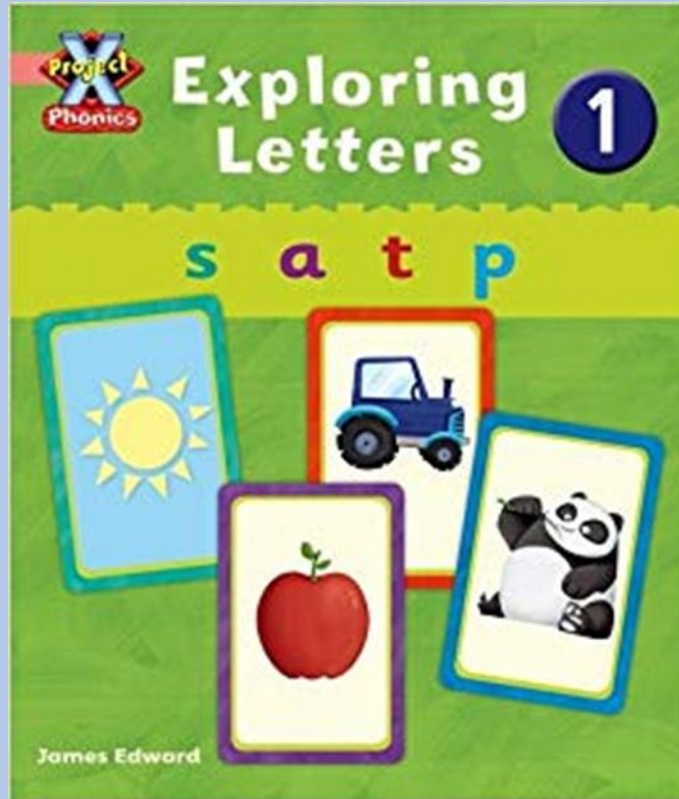
In order to be able to write independently, children must learn to 'segment' a word into its individual sounds (opposite of blending)

cat = c a t

During our daily phonic sessions we practise both skills.



Activity Books



At the start of each week you will receive an *Exploring Letters* book which introduces the letters that we will be learning that week. It includes games and activities to do at home.

Please complete only 1 letter sound a day and try to stick to the letter that your child has learned that day in class.

The teachers follow the order in the books, which is usually one new sound a day Monday – Thursday with a recap on Friday.

Example daily task for the sound 'ck'

ck

Listen

TALK

- Explain that all of these words include the /ck/ sound. This is the sound made by the letters ck in the words *duck* or *sock*. The /ck/ sound makes the same sound as the /cl/ and /k/ sounds.

ACTIVITY

- Point to each object and say each word slowly. Ask children to listen for the /ck/ sound as you say the words.
- Say the words again, asking children to point to the letters that make the /ck/ sound and to say where they appear in the word (e.g. at the end or in the middle). Note that children may not be able to read the whole words at this stage – they are simply identifying an individual sound.

Tip

Emphasize the /ck/ sound if children find it tricky to hear it in the word. See the inside back cover for more guidance on sounds.



duck



sock



chick



sack



rocket



bucket

Jack-in-a-box!





Reading Books



Each Exploring letters book has two reading books which are '*fully decodable*'.

This means that they contain only the letters that the children have learned so your child should be able to read everything within it. Great for reading confidence!

At the end of the week you will receive a 'reading book' – a story or non-fiction book to keep over the weekend then this will be swapped on Monday.

At any time you should have an Exploring Sounds book and a reader.

Please return all books every Monday & Friday!



How to use the reading books



There is lots to do within these books!

Please don't feel you have to labour through every page every night – one or two pages per night is fine.

Re-reading is important! So is making sure reading is fun!

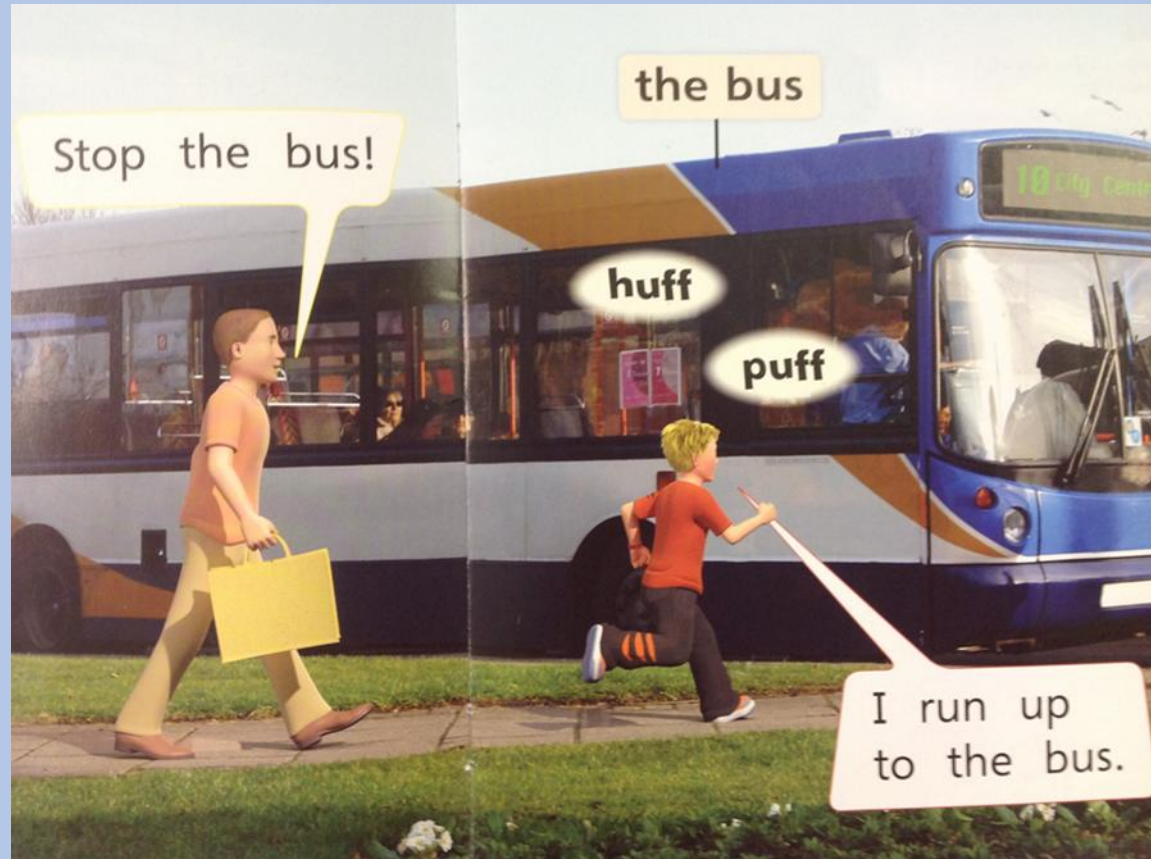
Your child should be able to read the speech bubbles, labels and sentences within the pictures – but adults please use the side panel too to help with understanding and inference and to develop vocabulary.



Progress

Progress is quick with Letters and Sounds.

It's fast paced and by Christmas the aim is that your child will have finished Phase Two and begun Phase Three and learnt 30+ sounds and be able to read full sentences.



But it does need help from home to consolidate our learning at school.

It is really important you aim to read every day at home with your child.

If your child is absent please ask us which sounds have been learned.



Expectations

- By Christmas the expectation is that your child will know the 30+ phonemes that have been taught. They will recognise the corresponding graphemes and be able to blend these to read words.
- They will have learnt 33 tricky words.
- Each week when we hear your child read we will assess whether they can recognise the previous weeks sounds. If there is a sound that they are not confident with, we will send home the activity sheet for that sound. Please continue to practise until your child is secure with it.



Thank you

Please tapestry message your class teacher if you have any further questions.

We are looking forward to working with you all this year.

