



## Phonics

At Holy Trinity we base our phonics on the government's scheme Letters and Sounds [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/190599/Letters and Sounds - DFES-00281-2007.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/190599/Letters_and_Sounds_-_DFES-00281-2007.pdf)

We have also adapted the Jolly Phonics programme <https://www.jollylearning.co.uk/> to teach letter sounds.

Other phonics resources are used to supplement teaching phonics such as Play Phonics and letters and sounds <https://www.letters-and-sounds.com/>.

Phonics teaching is a synthetic method that focuses on the pronunciation or the pure sounds rather than the name of the sound. Phonics is taught from Nursery onwards.

At Holy Trinity parents of Nursery and Reception children are invited to a meeting to find out how they can support their child with phonics at home and school.

These are the different phases to the systematic teaching of phonics alongside a guide to they are taught.

**Phonics**

We follow 'Letter and Sounds' which is a national document for guidance on teaching phonics. It is broken down into phases.

- **Phase 1** – Nursery / Recap in Reception
- **Phase 2** – Reception / Some sounds in Nursery z o t p l n m d c k e h r g o u l f b l l s s f f
- **Phase 3** – Reception j v w x y z z z o u c h s h t h n g a t e e i g h o o
- **Phase 4** – Reception / Year 1
- **Phase 5** – Start in Reception / Year 1

• Year 1 Phonics test based on Phase 5.

When learning phonics, children start with individual letter sounds; matching a letter to a given sound and also making the correct sound when shown a letter.

**Phoneme** A phoneme is the sound we hear. The Jolly Phonics programme uses songs and actions to help the child remember the sounds. These can be found on you tube Phase 2 <https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=jolly+phonics+songs+42+uk++youtube+uk&adlt=strict&view=detail&mid=8903868891FD1AD6EA268903868891FD1AD6EA26&&FORM=VRD GAR>

A **phoneme** is the smallest unit of sound in a word



c-a-t  
f-r-o-m  
t-ee-th  
sh-o-p

## Blending

Blending is when sounds merge together so the full word can be heard.

As children move into Phase 2 they begin to recognise the letter sounds in a written word and blend them in order to produce the word, for example c-u-p says cup, m-a-n says man. Children need this skill in order to read.

As children move into Phase 3, they will be introduced to digraphs (2 letters making 1 sound) and trigraphs (3 letters making 1 sound). They need to identify digraphs such as sh, ch, ai and trigraphs such as eg igh, air, ear, in order to blend and build words accurately.

**Oral blending-reading**

- Blend phonemes and recognise the whole word

c - a - t  cat

b - ir - d  bird

•Activities

Can you put your hand on your l-e-g / f-ee-t /c-oa-t/ h-o-p?

Cross the river- the crocodile says only these animals things can cross the river.

Which one? Lay objects out and encourage child to pick the correct object/ which has disappeared.



**Some definitions**

**Digraph**  
Two letters, which make one sound. A consonant digraph contains two consonants:  
sh ck th ll

A vowel digraph contains at least one vowel. A E I O U  
ai ee ie oa ue

**Trigraph**  
A single sound that is represented by three letters, for example: igh as in sigh, air as in fair, ear as in dear and are as in dare.

We often place sound buttons on words.

then	that	shell	fish
this	with	shock	cash

The books children bring home to read are chosen specifically to develop their blending skills. The range and number of words within the books increase as children develop an understanding of more digraphs and trigraphs and are more proficient at blending.



Children can access a variety of books from a number of recognised schemes within school which are linked the phonic stage that they are working within. This is supplemented by the children accessing Bug Club at home. Reception children have their own personal login details in their diary. They also have a phonics folder in their book bag so parents / carers can work regularly with their child to reinforce letter recognition at home.

The more children read, the more they build up their sight vocabulary, enabling them to recognise words on sight rather than having to blend sounds and word build each time. As a result, their reading becomes more fluent. Regular reading at home is essential to consolidate skills and knowledge learnt in school. Little and often being the rule of thumb. Ten minutes on a daily basis will significantly improve your child's phonic knowledge and enable them to become a fluent and confident reader.

We also teach the children 'tricky' words. These are words in which the letters cannot be blended / segmented to form the word.

### Tricky words

the, was, I, he, she, could, here, said, you, some, they

Children cannot blend or segment these words, because they are irregular, therefore must be recognised as whole words.

Explain to the children that for some common words phonics doesn't work and must be specifically taught.

Games & activities will ensure that children become familiar with the main sight words.

### Reading

There are two parts to reading

- recognise words, putting sound together
- understanding what is happening - Comprehension

Reading starts when your child is a baby. Enjoy sharing books and reading to your child. Sharing books with a child allows them to begin to feel the joy that comes from the words and the pictures; it builds their interest. Also, let children see you with a book in your hand, reading. This shows them that you value books and that you see reading as a worthwhile thing to do. Lots of the weekly topics in school are based around books.

Children need to make sense of what is happening in the book and we encourage lots of 'book talk'.

### Helping Your Child Learn To Read

- Look at the pictures together and tell the story
- Hold the book themselves and turn the pages
- Encourage children to take part in reading the story by making appropriate sounds and actions. Join in with repetition - I'll huff and puff and blow your house down/ There's no such thing as a Gruffalo
- Can they point out the rhyming word / repetitive lang
- Answer questions about the pictures. What? Why? Who?
- Talk about the book. What might happen at end? Why did that happen? What was your favourite part-why?
- Praising children for joining in and listening to the story will help children develop confidence in reading
- Recognise words in the environment
- **Have fun!!**

At Holy Trinity we work on these skills from Nursery to Year 6. These are some of the questions we focus on in Early Years.



### School Reading Focus

**Understanding text**  
 What word tells you...?  
 What word means...?  
 What does the word ..... mean  
 Find a word that describes how...  
 Copy a word that means the same as ....

**Identify and explain characters /events /titles information (retrieval)**  
 Which...? What...? How...? How...? Where...?  
 When...? Why...? Why...? Who...?  
 Give me a reason why...?  
 Which character...?  
 Identify two ways...

**Identify/explain sequence**  
 Order what happened in the story.  
 What happened after?  
 What happened before?  
 Which of the events happened first?  
 Which events happened last?

**Make inference from text**  
 Why do you think...?  
 Which do you think...?  
 How do you know...?  
 True false questions  
 What evidence is there that...?  
 What is this characters attitude?

**Predict**  
 What will happen next?  
 What would happen if..

## Segmenting

Segmenting is the opposite to blending. It is the ability to hear the individual sounds in words. It is essential that children develop this skill as it enables them to spell. In Nursery children are encouraged to identifying the individual sounds in a spoken word (e.g. cat = c-a-t) and they progress to writing each letter for each sound - 'cat'. We often use 'Robot Arms' or 'Sound Buttons' to represent each individual sound.

## Writing

The earliest form of writing is 'Mark Making'. As a child begins to make marks they need to develop their fine motor skills

### Developing Gross & Fine Motor Skills

**Gross Motor Control**  
 Big movements - Jumpy movements, round & round, springing up and sliding down movements with hands in the air - Write Dance  
 Ensure your child knows direction up / down / across

**Fine Motor Control**  
 Involve the children in chopping and peeling in cooking activities.  
 Fasten buttons and zips  
 Use finger rhymes, counting fingers, playing with words and sounds, etc.  
 Provide small construction toys.  
 Structure sand and water play to include pouring, picking up toys using tools, etc.  
 Develop the pincer movement: show the children how to use tweezers to pick up and sort sequins, small beads, etc., sprinkle coloured sand, glitter, salt, etc. on pictures.  
 Provide the children with paints / finger paints. Talk about the patterns they make.  
 Encourage the children to strengthen their fingers by using clay, play dough, Plasticine, etc., for modelling.  
 Encourage the children to cut out large letter shapes or patterns.  
 Emphasise that circles and curly caterpillars need to be traced from the top and anticlockwise.  
 Give the children thick paintbrushes and water to paint patterns on walls, fences, etc.  
 Let the children make patterns using pegboards.  
 Provide sewing, threading and weaving activities.

Pencil Grip		Writing
	<b>Moving and Handling</b> 8-20months Holds pen or crayon using a whole hand (palmar) grasp and makes random marks with different strokes.	
	22-36 months Beginning to use three fingers (tripod grip) to hold writing tools.	
	30-50months • Holds pencil between thumb and two fingers, no longer using whole-hand grasp. • Holds pencil near point between first two fingers and thumb	
	40-60months Begins to use anticlockwise movement and retrace vertical lines. • Begins to form recognisable letters. • Uses a pencil and holds it effectively to form recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed.	Links sounds to letters, starting and sounding the letters of the alphabet • Uses some clearly identifiable letters to communicate meaning, representing some sounds correctly and in sequence • Writes own name and other things such as labels, captions • Attempts to write short sentences in meaningful contexts

### Making Marks

The child  
Upto 26 months

Holds the pencil/crayon in the palm of the hand in a fist like grip

Random marks, often made over other marks

Is usually unable to distinguish between his/her writing and his/her picture

22-36months / 3 years old  
May hold the pencil/crayon with three fingers- tripod grip

Makes a definite attempt to make individual marks  
Attempts to close shapes making an inside and an outside; these shapes are often circles and lines  
Begins to use dominant hand  
Combines shapes and lines: these marks will often represent one word

30-50 months 2 half- 4yrs 2months  
May hold the pencil/crayon in a tripod hold between the thumb and two fingers

Copies adults and makes marks going across the page; these are often zigzags and wavy lines

Has a clearer idea of the marks he/she wants to make

May use either hand for writing  
Copy letters from name

### Making Marks

40-60 months 3yr 4months - 5yrs

May hold the pencil/crayon in a pincer grip between the thumb and index finger

Makes individual marks and uses some letters from own name to communicate a message

Begins to understand that drawing and writing are different

Is becoming aware that print carries a message

Forms symbols and some recognisable familiar letters that follow on next to each other

writing conveys meaning and may 'read' own writing

Writes a message using familiar letters

Writes some upper and lower case letters

Writes his/her name reliably

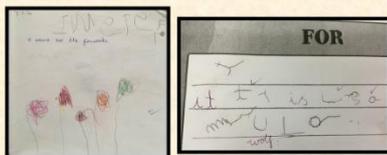
Even before children can form letters we encourage them to become independent writers.

### Reading into Writing

- ✔ We encourage all children to have a go at writing, even before they know any sounds!
- ✔ Once children have learnt a collection of common sounds, and have made progress with forming the letter shapes, they can begin to attempt writing words.
- ✔ Many words will not be spelt correctly, it should be phonetically plausible - we can still 'get the message'. For example - kite may be written k ight t and bike may be written b igh k.
- ✔ Even if they only know initial sounds, then that is what they write.
- ✔ This stage is very important - because they can begin to read back their own writing to themselves or to their teacher.

These are some of the examples of writing from our Holy Trinity.

#### Examples...



Hearing initial sounds and writing them using a letter strip.  
The 'It is...' sentence structure is where we begin.

#### Examples...



Segmenting independently, writing sounds in a sequence using resources to help independently.

#### Examples...



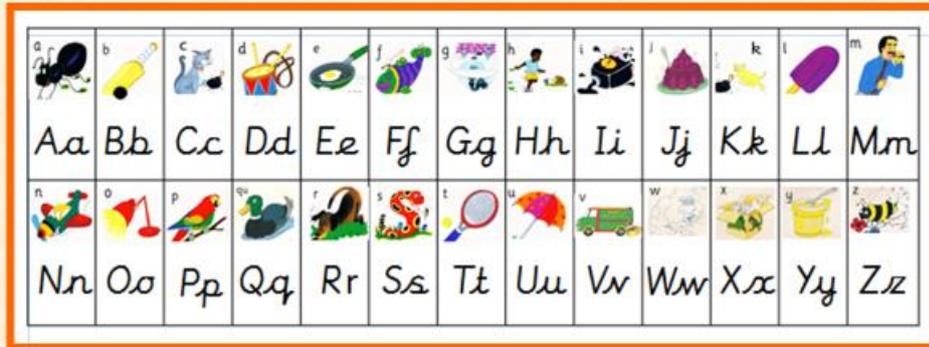
Children segmenting independently, writing sounds from memory. Writing tricky words from memory or using resources independently.

We teach cursive script from early Years onwards at Holy Trinity. There are many reasons we expect children to be forming their letters in the pre-cursive style.

- Letters are formed accurately from given starting points, making letter formation flow more easily
- Pupils do not need to learn a new handwriting when they begin to join all letters further through school.
- Research has proven that cursive script can support spelling because of the efficient development of hand /eye coordination .

# Handwriting

- Cursive handwriting is so important. This is something the children practise a lot in school.



You can support your child's early writing through encouraging them to use a variety of sizes of pens, pencils, crayons, felt tips and paint brushes to mark make, draw, colour, follow patterns or practise letter formation. To begin with some children may not have a 'dominant hand' so allow them to explore mark making with both. As they become more proficient they will have a preference for holding a pencil. When this happens we will encourage them, at school, to use an efficient 'grip' so that that pencil control becomes more proficient as they begin to form letters accurately.