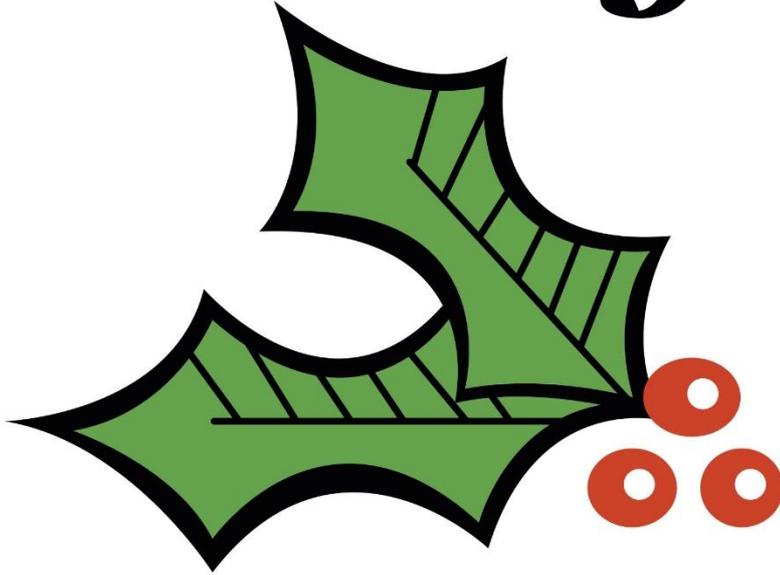


Holly



Primary School

Phonics and Reading.

A guide for parents.

Dear Parents and Carers,

We want to warmly welcome you and your child to Holly Primary. Whether your child has been at Holly for a while or will be new to our school, full time education is an exciting time for them. They will make new friends and meet fresh challenges every day. They will become part of our Holly family where they will be nurtured and allowed to blossom.

At the heart of this is sharing a love of books. We believe that English is fundamental to learning across every area of the curriculum, and that the ability to speak, listen, read and write is the greatest gift that we can give to the children at our school. We are providing them with the means to become lifelong learners. To this end, we put reading at the heart of our curriculum. As a school we invest heavily in high quality texts that will be valued by children and parents alike and nurture a love of books and what lies within.

As soon as your child starts their full time education at Holly, they will be starting a well-structured phonics programme, where they will learn their letter sounds. This phonics programme follows the National Letters and Sounds document. The aim of learning the sounds that letters make is that children are able to blend them together to read and spell words. For example, once they know the sounds c-a-t they can say and write the word cat. I've included at the back of this leaflet the order in which these are taught so that you can see the next steps in more detail. Your child's teacher will keep you up to date with this at every stage.

Alongside their daily phonics lessons, your child will read with their teacher, who will model reading to them so that they make the link between phonics and reading. They will use books that match the sounds that they are working on. These books will also be sent home with your child. The stories at the beginning are very simple and may seem less exciting than a normal story book. But they are key to your child becoming a reader. They begin to realise that by blending together the sounds that they have learnt, they can read for themselves. This is a very exciting time for both them and us. In order for them to succeed at this they need to read the same book a number of times. Initially, they will need to sound out each word. This will be slow and tricky to begin with. But on each reading they will become more confident until eventually they will know that cat says cat without having to sound it out.

There is a temptation to want to push them on, but evidence shows that repetition is key to progressing and developing as a reader. Your child will therefore have their phonics reading book for up to a week and need to read it at least once a day. Your support and encouragement is key to them becoming a reader quickly.

As well as bringing home a phonics reading book, your child will also bring home a beautiful story book. This is the book that you will read to your child. Children love to hear favourite stories over and over again and by listening to these they learn story language, expression and grammar. Young children often choose the same book many times. This is how they begin to learn stories by heart and then apply that knowledge to their own writing. So make that story time a special time of day where there is no background noise and you can do your best Oscar-winning performance!

Your child will have a reading diary for you to fill in and we'd love them to read every day. Each class has a wall of reading stars and the children move along with every read in their diary. When your child reaches 100 reads at home they receive a gift and a certificate. At 200 reads they are able to choose their own, brand new book to keep and at 300 reads they are invited to a party to celebrate their commitment to daily reading.

I hope this helps you to understand how we teach reading at Holly and how key you are in supporting us with this. If you have any questions at any point then please ask. You can either come to me, as English lead, Miss. Beety as phonics lead or your child's class teacher.

Once again, it's lovely to welcome you to Holly Primary school. Happy reading!

Caroline Savage

What is phonics?

The alphabet only has 26 letters but spoken English uses 44 sounds. These sounds are called phonemes. These phonemes are represented by letters and these letters are called graphemes. In other words, a sound can be represented by a single letter (eg. e or p) or by a group of letters (eg. sh or ee).

A letter sound is the first thing that a child needs to recognise, rather than the name of the letter. Initially, the only time we use a capital letter is for the beginning of a child's name. When they are ready, we introduce the idea of a capital letter at the beginning of a sentence. In all other early year's writing we use only lower case letters.

Letter shape (how it is written) = grapheme

Letter sound (what the letter sound is) = phoneme

Letters and sounds.

Schools follow a government programme of how to teach these letters and sounds. It is a six-phase programme that focuses on daily high-quality phonics work. By the end of Year Two children should have completed phase 6 and be equipped with the skills and knowledge they need to be fluent readers. The teacher assesses which phase the children should be working at and they are placed in the appropriate group. The role of the parent is important when encouraging careful listening and asking the children to talk about what they see, hear and do. We support this in school during our outdoor learning sessions, when the children are away from the bustle of school and the technologies that surround them in everyday life.

The six phases.

Phase One.

The aim of Phase One is to develop children's listening and speaking skills in preparation for learning to read and spell with phonics. Children have fun exploring and experimenting with sounds and become familiar with rhyme, rhythm and alliteration.

Phase Two

Phase Two continues the verbal side of phonics but also introduces the grapheme/phoneme correspondence (the link between how a letter looks and the sound it makes). Children begin to learn that words are constructed from phonemes and that the phonemes are represented by graphemes. They begin with a small selection of common vowels and consonants (s, a, t, p, i, n) and begin to put them together to read and spell CVC words (consonant-vowel-consonant).

E.g. c-a-t s-i-t p-a-n

Phase Three

Phase Three teaches children one grapheme for each of the 44 phonemes in order to help them read and spell simple regular words.

Children learn to link sounds to letters, naming and sounding the letters of the alphabet. They hear and say sounds in the order they occur in words and then read simple words by blending the phonemes from left to right. They recognise common digraphs (where one sound is made from two letters e.g sh) and read some high frequency words (the ones we come across the most).

E.g. sh-e-ll b-oa-t t-r-ai-n

Phase Four

Phase Four teaches the children to read and spell words which have adjacent consonants. They move from the simple CVC words (cat, put) to CVCC words (pots) and CCVC words (spot) and then CCVCC words (spots). They then move onto polysyllabic words (words with more than one syllable) e.g. shampoo, helper. If a child is able to blend and segment words, then they can apply this skill when learning to read and spell.

Phase Five

Phase Five teaches children to use alternative ways of pronouncing the graphemes and spelling the phonemes that they have already been taught. For example, they will learn that the phoneme "ai" can be spelt "ai" as in paid, "ay" as in day, "ey" as in hey and "a_e" as in made. They will also learn that "c" can be pronounced as "c" in coat or "c" in city.

Phase Six

The aim of Phase Six is to embed the skills that they have learnt and to use them automatically in their reading and spelling. Once they have these in place they can begin to read for meaning, rather than read mechanically. Their phonic knowledge will mean that they can recognise and spell an increasing number of complex words.

The ultimate aim of a structured phonics programme is that the children can read and spell the majority of words that they will come across and therefore be able to focus on the content and their comprehension of a book, rather than the mechanics of reading, with no understanding of what the text says.

Phonics Screening Test

In 2012 the government introduced a phonics screening test for all children in Year 1. The purpose of this is to check that children are learning how to use phonics to decode words. The test is usually administered by your child's class teacher on a one to one basis. It is not a written test. Your child will be given 40 words to read containing the phonemes that they have learnt. It checks that your child can sound out and blend graphemes to read simple words, that they can work out one and two syllable words, such as sand and windmill, and that they can work out nonsense words, such as phush and snorb. The nonsense words are included to check that your child can decode a word using their phonic skills rather than rely on their memory. The pass mark is generally around 32 out of 40. If your child doesn't pass, then they are required to resit the test in Year 2. The results are sent to the local authority.

Blending for Reading

Throughout the foundation stage and into Key Stage One the children will be learning the phonemes and graphemes that we have looked at. But to be able to read and spell the children must be able to blend these sounds together smoothly.

Blending sounds fluidly helps to improve their fluency when reading. Blending is more difficult to do with longer words so learning how to blend at an early age is very important.

Showing your child how to blend is necessary for teachers and parents.

Remember some sounds (digraphs) are represented by 2 letters, such as ee or oi. Children need to recognise this and not try to sound these separately. Some words have trigraphs, which is where 3 letters represent one sound (ear, air).

So, when reading the word “hear”, the child will recognise the sounds h and ear and blend them. This process is reversed when spelling a word. We call this segmenting. In order to be able to spell a word the child has to recognise the sounds that they can hear. Eg. ran r-a-n.

Early games used in the teaching of phonics focus on the child’s ability to hear these sounds. I spy is ideal for focusing on initial sounds. Once they have this concept they can move on to the middle sound in a word, which is harder to hear. Rhyming games and poems are also helpful when tuning into sounds. It is important to take care with digraphs, for example in the word fish, which has 4 letters but only 3 sounds.

Tricky Words

There are many words that cannot be sounded out so have to be learnt by heart. This is because they don't fit the usual spelling patterns, such as "was", "they" and "one". We call these tricky words and different tricky words are introduced in different year groups.

High Frequency Words

These are the words that are frequently found in many of the books that children read and in their early writing. These would include "to", "and", "the" and "look".

CVC words

CVC stands for consonant-vowel-consonant. There are 5 vowels- a, e, i, o, u. All words in English have a vowel in. The letter y is an exception. It can be used as a vowel, as in cry, or a consonant, as in yellow. All the other letters are called consonants.

The Phonemes/graphemes and tricky words

The phonemes/graphemes taught from Foundation through to Year 2 tend to be taught in the following order.

Phase 2: S, a, t, p, i, n, m, d, g, o, c, k, ck, e, u, r, h, b, f, ff, l, ll, ss

Tricky words: the, to, l, go, into, no

Phase 3: j, v, w, y, z, zz, qu

Consonant digraphs: ch, sh, th, ng

Vowel digraphs: ai, ee, igh, oa, oo, ar, or, ur, ow, oi, ear, air, ure, er

Tricky words: we, me, be, was, no, go, my, you, they, her, all, are

Phase 4: By Phase 4 the children will be able to represent all these sounds with a grapheme. They will blend phonemes to read CVCC words (pots) and CCVC (spot). They will be able to read the tricky words learnt as well as being able to spell some of them.

Tricky words: said, so, she, he, have, like, some, come, were, there, little, one, they, all, are, do, when, out, what, my, her

Phase 5: Children at this phase will be taught new graphemes and alternative pronunciations for the graphemes they already know. They will be learning which grapheme to use when writing. Once they have these they will consolidate all their learning in Phase 6.

New Graphemes: **ay** day, **oy** boy, **wh** when, **a_e** make, **ou** out, **ir** girl, **ph** photo, **e_e** these, **ie** tie, **ue** blue, **ew** new, **i_e** like, **ea** eat, **aw** saw, **oe** toe, **o_e** home, **au** Paul, **u_e** rule

Tricky words: oh, their, people, Mr, Mrs, looked, called, asked, water, where, who, again, thought, through, work, mouse, many, laughed, because, different, any, eyes, friends, once, please