

Woodlands Academy of Learning

How we teach reading – answers for parents

The Read Write Inc. Phonics programme

We have written this for parents. It explains how we teach reading using the *Read Write Inc.* 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?

We start by teaching phonics to the children in the 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. Ask them to show you what these are.

The children also practise reading (and spelling) what we call ‘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. They start thinking that they *can* read and this does wonders for their confidence.

The teachers read to the children, too, so the children get to know all sorts of stories, poetry and information books. They learn many more words this way and it also helps their writing.

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. We use the information to decide what reading group they should be in. Your child will work with children who are at the same reading level as him or her. Children will move to a different group if they are making faster progress than the others. Your child will have one-to-one support if we think he or she needs some extra help to keep up.

We also use a reading test 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 his or her age. In Year 3 we concentrate more on helping children to understand what they are reading, although this work begins very early on. This happens when the teacher reads to the children and also when the children read their own story book.

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 teachers watch other teachers teaching to make sure that the children are learning in the way we want them to learn.

If you are worried about the teaching or you have any questions, please come to school and talk to us.

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

You will be invited to a meeting so that we can explain how we teach reading. Please come and support your child. We would very much like you to know how to help.

Your child will bring different sorts of books home from school. It helps if you know whether this is a book that your child can read on their own or whether this is a book that you should read *to* them. The teacher will have explained which is which. *Please* trust your child's teacher to choose the book(s) that will help your child the most.

Help your child to sound out the letters in words and then to 'push' the sounds together to make a whole word. Try not to refer to the letters by their names. Help your child to focus on the sounds. You can hear how to say the sounds correctly at this link:

<https://ruthmiskin.com/en/find-out-more/parents/#lg=1&slide=2>

Sometimes your child might bring home a picture book that they know well. Please don't say, 'This is too easy.' Instead, encourage your child to tell you the story out loud; ask them questions about things that happen or what they think about some of the characters in the story.

We know parents and carers are very busy people. But if you can find time to read to your child as much as possible, it helps him or her to learn about books and stories. They also learn new words and what they mean. Show that you are interested in reading yourself and talk about reading as a family. You can find out about good stories to read to your child here: <https://www.facebook.com/miskin.education>

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.

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 put sounds together to read a word, e.g. c-a-t to make the word 'cat'. At our meeting, we will explain how you can help your child to do this.

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 him or her 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.

Parent FAQs for Read Write Inc. Phonics

[Where else can I find information?](#)

[Glossary](#)

[How can I support my child's reading and writing?](#)

[What will my child bring home to read?](#)

[How can I support my child to learn Set 1 sounds and to blend?](#)

[How can I support my child to learn Set 2 or 3 sounds?](#)

[How do I listen to my child read?](#)

[What do I do with the picture books?](#)

[How can I help my child to practise their handwriting?](#)

[How can I help my child to spell words?](#)

[How else can I develop my child's language?](#)

[What resources can I buy to support my child's reading and writing at home?](#)

Where else can I find information?

Watch video tutorials on <http://www.ruthmiskin.com/en/parents/> to help you to understand more about Read Write Inc. Phonics and how to help your child read and write at home.

Other useful websites:

- Ruth Miskin Facebook:
- <https://www.facebook.com/miskin.education>
- Free e-books for home reading:
- <http://www.oxfordowl.co.uk/Reading/>
- YouTube
- https://www.youtube.com/ruthmiskintrainingedu?mc_cid=63bfb74b56&mc_eid=4ec2ad9cea

Glossary

'Special Friends'

Special friends are a combination of two or three letters representing one sound, e.g. ck, ay, igh, oa.

Fred Talk

Fred the Frog helps children read and spell. He can say the sounds in words, but he can't say the whole word, so children have to help him.

To help children read, Fred (the teacher) says the sounds and then children say the word.

For example, Fred says c-a-t, children say cat, Fred says l-igh-t, children say light.

Teachers are encouraged to use Fred Talk through the day, so children learn to blend sounds.

For example:

- Play Simon Says: Put your hands on your h-ea-d/ f-oo-t/ kn-ee.
- Put on your c-oa-t/ h-a-t/ s-c-ar-f.
- Set the table with a b-ow-l/ f-or-k/ s-p-oo-n.

‘Fred in your head’

Once children can sound out a word, we teach them to say the sounds silently in their heads.

We show them how to do this by:

1. whispering the sounds and then saying the whole word;
2. mouthing the sounds silently and then saying the whole word;
3. saying the whole word straight away.

Perfect pencil grip

Children sit at a table to write.

They hold up a pencil in a tripod pencil grip with the non-writing hand flat holding their paper.

How can I support my child’s reading and writing?

Here are the top five things you can do.

See the other FAQs for further detail.

1. Ask your child to read the Speed Sound cards speedily.
2. Use Fred Talk to help your child read and spell words.
3. Listen to your child read their *Read Write Inc. Storybook* every day.
4. Practise reading Green and Red Words in the Storybook speedily.
5. Read stories to your child every day.

What will my child bring home to read?

- ‘Last and past’ Storybooks: contain sounds and words the children know. This is the Storybook they have just read at school and maybe some they have read before, for extra practice. Please don’t worry that books are too easy. Children enjoy re-reading stories they know well. Their speed and understanding improves on every read.
- Book Bag Books: matched to the Storybooks children read in school and used for extra practice. They include many of the same reading activities that we use in class and include parent guidance.
- More Storybooks and Non-fiction books: matched to the sounds and words your child knows well.
- Picture books to share with you: read these stories to children or encourage them to retell the story by looking at the pictures. They are not expected to read the story themselves.
- Speed Sounds cards: for children to practise reading speedily. If needed, show your child the picture side of the card to help them remember the sound.
- Red Word book pages: challenge your child to read the Red Words speedily across the rows and down the columns. Set a timer – can they beat yesterday’s time?

How can I support my child to learn Set 1 sounds and to blend?

- Use pure sounds, not letter names. Watch the ‘how to say the sounds’ parent film on <http://www.ruthmiskin.com/en/parents/>.

- [Watch the](#) 'Reading the stretchy sounds with your child', 'Reading the bouncy sounds with your child' and 'Reading the digraphs with your child' [parent films on <http://www.ruthmiskin.com/en/parents/> to see how to teach Set 1 sounds.](#)
- [Practise reading known Set 1](#) Speed Sounds cards speedily. If needed, show your child the picture side of the card to help them remember the sound.

We teach children to read and spell using Fred. He is a toy frog who can say the sounds in words, but not the whole word. Children have to help him.

To help children learn to blend, we say the sounds as Fred and then children repeat the sounds and say the whole word.

Here are two ways you can use Fred Talk at home:

1. play Fred Games together – see Fred Games document on <http://www.ruthmiskin.com/en/parents/>
 2. speak like Fred throughout the day e.g. time for l-u-n-ch! Let's p-l-ay!
- [Watch the 'Sound-blending' parent film on <http://www.ruthmiskin.com/en/parents/>](#)

How can I support my child to learn Set 2 or 3 sounds?

- [Watch the 'Set 2/3 tutoring' film on <http://www.ruthmiskin.com/en/parents/>.](#)
- [Help your child practise reading known](#) Speed Sounds cards speedily. If needed, show your child the picture side of the card to help them remember the sound.

How do I listen to my child read?

Your child has a Storybook matched to the sounds and words they know – a decodable book – so they should be able to read all the words.

Please avoid saying, "This book is too easy for you!" but instead say "I love how well you can read this book!"

'Special Friends', 'Fred Talk', read the word

Remind your child to read words using 'Special Friends, Fred Talk, read the word' (see glossary).

For example 'ship': spot the 'sh', then Fred Talk and blend to read the word e.g. sh, sh-i-p, ship.

Red Words

Red Words are also known as common exception or tricky words. They occur in stories regularly (said, what, where) but have unusual letter combinations ('ai' in the word 'said' makes the sound 'e').

Remind your child not to use Fred Talk to read Red Words but instead to 'stop and think'. Tell them the word if you need to.

Read the same book again and again

Children love reading the same book again and again. Their reading becomes speedier and they understand what they are reading.

- Encourage your child to read words using 'Fred in your head' (see glossary).

- Show your child how to read the story in a storyteller voice.
- Share your enjoyment of the story when they read it again and again.

What do I do with the picture books?

One of the most important things you can do as a parent at home is read *to* your child. Loving stories is important because children who love stories want to read stories for themselves. Children who read a lot become better readers.

Here are some top tips for storytime:

1. make it a treat – introduce each new book with excitement
2. make it a special quiet time – cuddle up!
3. show curiosity in what you're going to read
4. read the story once without stopping so they can enjoy the whole story. If you think your child might not understand something say something like 'Oh I think what's happening here is that...'
5. chat about the story e.g. I wonder why he did that? Oh no, I hope she's not going to...
6. avoid asking questions to check what they remember
7. link to other stories and experiences you have shared e.g. this reminds me of...
8. read favourite stories over and over again – encourage your child to join with the bits they know. Avoid saying 'not that story again!'
9. use different voices – be enthusiastic!
10. love the book – read with enjoyment.

How can I help my child to practise their handwriting?

Remind your child:

- to hold their pencil in 'perfect pencil grip' (see glossary)
- say the handwriting phrase to help them form the letter correctly – see Handwriting Phrases on <http://www.ruthmiskin.com/en/parents/>.

Challenge your child to see how many sounds they can write in a minute.

Say the sound and children write e.g. 'write m', 'write s', 'write w'.

How can I help my child to spell words?

- Encourage your child to use Fred Fingers to spell words.
- Ask your child to say the sounds in the word as they press the sounds onto their fingers.
- Ask your child to then write the letters – if they get stuck, say the sounds again.
- Praise your child for spelling using the sounds they know, even if their handwriting is not perfect.

How else can I develop my child's language?

Children will have a large vocabulary if they are part of a 'talk-a-lot' family:

- use every opportunity to talk with your child throughout the day – meal times, playing together, bath time
- use new and ambitious vocabulary e.g. miserable instead of sad, stroll instead of walk
- speak to your child in complete sentences
- make up stories together - there's no need to write it down.

What resources can I buy to support my child's reading and writing at home?

You can purchase the below from Amazon to support your child with blending at home:

- Set 1/2/3 flashcards
- My Reading and Writing Kit age 3-5 – Set 1 Speed Sounds and blending
- My Reading and Writing Kit ages 5-7 – Red Ditty books
- My Reading and Writing Kit ages 5-7- Set 2 Speed Sounds, Green and P