



Phonics at Glenmere

Here we hope you will find everything you need to know about how the children in Reception and Key Stage 1 are learning to read. Mrs Pell is the Phonics Lead at Glenmere so if you have any questions please feel free to contact her and she will be more than willing to support you.

The ability to read is within the reach of every child. The most direct route to reading for the vast majority of children is through systematically taught, 'synthetic phonics'. At Glenmere we follow a 'phonics first' approach to reading, where children learn to decode (read) and encode (spell) printed words quickly and fluently by blending and segmenting letter sounds. Our teaching and learning follows the progression of 'Letters and Sounds', organised into 6 phases, using resources from Read, Write Inc. and enhanced for the expectation of the new National Curriculum 2014.

We support the children's application of phonics to their reading by using both 'Dandelion Readers' phonics books and Oxford Reading Tree books in school and to send home. Children who are just beginning to learn the letter/sound correspondences are learning at the same time to tell stories using books which do not have words to begin with. This is crucial in the development of spoken language and vocabulary. It is a necessary stepping stone towards becoming an accomplished reader and writer.

What is Phonics?

Phonics is a way of teaching children how to read and write. It helps children hear, identify and use different sounds that distinguish one word from another in the English language.

Written language can be compared to a code, so knowing the sounds

of individual letters and how those letters sound when they're combined will help children decode words as they read.

Understanding phonics will also help children know which letters to use when they are writing words.

Phonics involves matching the sounds of spoken English with individual letters or groups of letters. For example, the sound *k* can be spelled as *c*, *k*, *ck* or *ch*.

Teaching children to blend the sounds of letters together helps them decode unfamiliar or unknown words by sounding them out. For example, when a child is taught the sounds for the letters *t*, *p*, *a* and *s*, they can start to build up the words: "tap", "taps", "pat", "pats" and "sat".

Phase One

Before they can learn to read, children need to develop their listening and visual skills.

A crucial listening skill is **phonological awareness**, the ability to discriminate different sounds such as the different endings of the words "cut" and "cup." This develops naturally as children learn to listen to the sounds around them. Music, poems and nursery rhymes and everyday sounds are all key elements in developing this skill.

The visual skills which help children to acquire letter knowledge include shape recognition, and the ability to visually sort and classify objects.

Children generally develop most of these skills naturally through their interactions with parents and caregivers. Their reception year teacher will help them continue developing these skills before introducing them to a formal reading programme.

Phase Two

Once they have acquired the necessary basic skills, children are gradually introduced to their first graphemes and the sounds they represent. These may be single letters, such as *s* and *n*, or pairs of letters, such as *ck*. These first graphemes consistently represent the same sound. Children are encouraged to blend the graphemes together in order to sound out words (as in our previous example of *s* + *a* + *m* = *sam*) as soon as they have learnt enough graphemes to do so.

Phase Three

Children are introduced to an additional 25 graphemes. These consist of both single letters and **digraphs**, groups of letters (generally pairs) which represent a single sound. They learn consonant digraphs such as "sh" and "th" first, and then vowel digraphs such as "oa" and "oo".

This is also the stage at which children begin to learn **sight words**. These are common words that cannot always be sounded out according to the synthetic phonics method. These include words such as she, they, and you among others.

Phase Four

At this stage children practice the skills they have learnt and learn to blend groups of consonants such as tr, str and lk. They also continue to learn more sight words.

Phase Five

Once children can read words automatically without having to sound them out, they learn more vowel digraphs and different ways to write the same sound. For example, the words mail, way and whale all show different ways of representing the same ay sound. They also learn alternative pronunciations for the same graphemes, such as the ea in tea, head and break. They also continue adding sight words to their repertoire.

Phase Six

At this stage pupils are able to read familiar words automatically, and decode most new words silently without having to sound them out aloud, although they may need to sound out complex unfamiliar words. The goal at this stage is for children to improve their reading fluency by reading a wide variety of material, both fiction and non-fiction, to develop their spelling accuracy and writing skill.

Phonics Screening Check

Across England, all Year 1 children take part in the Phonics Screening Check in the Summer Term. The check is designed to give teachers and parents information on how your child is progressing in phonics. It will help to identify whether your child needs additional support so that they do not fall behind in this vital early reading skill.

Letters and Sounds information

Letters and Sounds Document

[Link to PDF of document](#)

Past Phonics Screening Check Papers

[Links to past papers in PDF format](#)