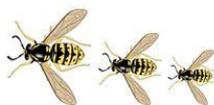


W. A. S. P. S



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Friday 23rd October 2020

Dear Parents,

We have put together information about how we teach literacy and maths in school along with some ideas of how you can support your child at home.

Phonics

The children are learning phonics through the Read, Write, Inc. (RWI) scheme devised by Ruth Miskin. This scheme teaches the children to read and write the letter sound using a picture clue and phrase.

The RWI [sound chart](#) that tells you the little phrase the children have been taught in order to correctly write the letter. The chart can be found on the Reception website for you to refer to.

We teach the children how to say the sounds in a 'pure' way so that they don't add an 'uh' sound for example 'mmmmm' rather than 'muh'. This method enables the children to blend the sounds into words. Click here to see a [YouTube](#) video of the correct pronunciation.

The Ruth Miskin website also has lots of information about the RWI scheme for parents and carers. Follow this link to access the information <https://www.ruthmiskin.com/en/>

We teach sounds in groups in the following order rather than alphabetical order:

m, a, s, d, t

i, n, p, g, o

c, k, u, b, f

e, l, h, sh, r

j, v, y, w, th

z, ch, qu, x, ng, nk.

All these sounds are referred to as set 1 phonics.

This order enables the children to begin making words very quickly. After each group has been taught the children can read and write a huge number of words.

Handwriting

The children are taught the correct formation of lower case letters using the Read Write Inc phrases. To begin with, the children trace over letters (graphemes) that we have written with yellow highlighter

pen. They practise going over the yellow letters, and then try writing a few on their own without yellow highlighter. They are also asked to draw a picture that begins with the correct sound.

The lines in the exercise books we use are 15mm apart. The children's handwriting will naturally get smaller as their pencil control develops. We do lots of activities to help strengthen the muscles needed for good pencil control including using tweezers, threading beads, playing with Lego and manipulating playdoh. We use handwriting books in the summer term, and these have the lines closer together with additional lines for the ascenders (tall letters such as h and t) and descenders (letters that hang off the line such as g and y).

At the moment, correct formation of each individual letter and matching the grapheme to the sound is most important. If the children have not yet refined their fine motor skills enough to have good pencil control, we trace the letters into sparkly purple sand or try outside on the playground with chalk.

Joined handwriting

We ensure each letter is formed correctly before the child can move on to joining their writing. The children will learn to join their names first followed by high frequency words. When children are sounding out words for spelling, it can be difficult to join, so the children will print the words to begin with. The more familiar the words become, the more confidently they will start to join. Some of the children will be confident to join their writing towards the end of reception, and others will develop this skill during Year 1. It is more important that each individual letter is formed correctly first. Capital letters are taught after all of the lower case letters, with the exception of the first letter in your child's name. We follow the Cripps scheme for handwriting, which is not cursive. These pictures will help you to see the correct formation (for [right handed](#) children and [left handed](#) children). Once the children are ready to join, they learn that b, g, j, p, q, x, z and y do not join with the letter that comes after.

Key words

Click [here](#) to see all the 45 high frequency words we will teach during the reception year. We send these home in groups of 7 or 8 words, on a different picture card. Some of the words can be sounded out using phonics (e.g. d-o-g) and some words are 'red' words (they don't follow the rules) and the children just have to know them. These tricky words are underlined (e.g my).

The children need to practise reading the words and then eventually spelling them. They have nearly a whole term to become familiar with each set. We play lots of games in class with the words, and children could demonstrate they can spell them using magnetic letters if they are finding it tricky to handwrite them.

Reading books

We will be sending home reading books and a yellow reading diary. The children will have one book from the school scheme. Some children will not be able to actually read the book to start with, but will be able to learn the book off by heart very quickly due to the picture clues and repetitive nature of the text. The range of books offered to the children allows them to develop their decoding skills as well as the opportunity to come across more high frequency words and to develop other skills such as inference and deduction.

We have listed some tasks that you could try at home to support your child with their early reading skills.

Literacy tasks to try at home

- Ask your child to say the sounds as you point to them or flick through them on cards
- Ask your child to write a sound as you say it
- Ask your child to blend sounds together (you say c-a-t and they repeat until they can blend to make the word)
- Ask your child to break up a word into sound (you say 'dog' and see if they can split it into d-o-g)
- Play I-spy, giving the child the sound that the object begins with
- Practise writing their name (trace over yellow highlighted letters, make with magnets or join dots)
- Colouring in
- Mazes
- Share books with them
- Make up stories together
- Put on a puppet show

Maths

The children will develop a strong grounding in number throughout the reception year.

We work with numbers to 10 to create a really secure understanding of these numbers including being able to recognise amounts without counting, and the composition of numbers (starting with 2, 3, 4 and 5). Where possible we try and create real life situations that involve numbers, for example there are six children here but only two apples, how many more do we need? We also practise lots of counting using objects so the children can do this accurately. They learn that when you count, the last number indicates the total number of the group.

During activities we use manipulatives (stuff/resources) to help the children understand the concept of number e.g. five pebbles, numicon, dice and dominoes. We often use a tens frame (click [here](#) for an example of an empty tens frame, and [here](#) for some examples of the learning the children may do with them). Eventually the children recognise numbers to ten without counting and are able to see how numbers are made up from other numbers. If they have 5 items in a tens frame they can see how many squares are empty.

[Click here](#) for an interactive tool to help with ten frames.

We use building blocks to help children understand how different shapes work together – we challenge them to see who can make the tallest tower, and question them to develop their thinking skills, problem solving and reasoning. Can you make a tower with a sphere? Why not?

We think about the mathematical language we use and model the correct language wherever possible e.g. more than, fewer, less than, equal to, tallest, shortest, longest, full empty, in front, behind, underneath. Talk to your children using comparative language. Ask your child to test a prediction – does the bottle hold more than the teapot?

We have some rhymes to help with [number formation](#), and a little poem to help with learning our [number bonds](#). Click on the links if you would like to practise these at home.

We teach children to have a go, be brave learners and to not be afraid to make mistakes.

Maths tasks to try at home

- Complete jigsaws - can your child complete an increasingly difficult puzzle?
- Play games using dice – can your children recognise the number on the dice without counting?
- Play hide and seek with your child – can you hide under something or behind something?
- Play games like ‘What is my rule?’ to identify the repeating pattern
- Compare amounts of items, share them out and think about the relationship between one more and one less
- Talk to your children about maths – spot patterns, relationships (what shape is the bottom of a cereal packet)
- Share out food at meal times
- Sing songs, share poems and stories and play games that involve counting
- Encourage children to show a certain number of fingers without counting – e.g. show me four
- Include maths in daily conversation – how many? What do you notice about?
- Count verbally beyond 20 and notice patterns
- Make deliberate mistakes to see if your child can spot it
- Bake a cake, or just play with the scales

We hope you have fun learning together. If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to ask.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Bevan Mrs Markall Mrs Schwartz Mr Dismore
Class teachers

Mrs Amanda Trim
Assistant Headteacher, Early Years Lead