



# Thomas Johnson Lower School

*Dream - Discover - Flourish*

## Our Approach to Reading and Phonics

**Covid note:** *Certain changes have been made for our current circumstances, such as in ability grouping and classroom set up.*

*In 2020-21 special adaptations have been made for Year 2 pupils who missed out on their Year 1 phonics test. They will have taken a baseline test at the end of the Autumn Term 2020. Those children who are still working towards the pass mark, will re-sit the test in June 2021. This will ensure that teachers have an accurate assessment of those pupils entering KS2 who have achieved the required standard, and those who will require further support.*

### Reading

Reading is central to our ability to understand, interpret and communicate. Children who read on a regular basis, in school and at home, have a higher chance of fulfilling their potential. We aim to make learning to read pleasurable, purposeful and successful. Teachers use a variety of teaching styles and resources to facilitate the development and extension of reading skills. A range of rich and stimulating texts is provided, progressively widening to include more challenging material as children develop independence as readers. Tier 3 vocabulary (subject specific vocabulary) is taught across the curriculum.

Our reading scheme is based on the Oxford Book Band Levels. Children begin on Red Level in Foundation Stage and work their way up through the colour bands to the 'free reader' levels which range from Brown to Black Level. This ensures that children are reading a text that is appropriate for their level of phonic knowledge, but also importantly, suitable for their level of comprehension and maturity. In addition, a selection of high quality fiction and non-fiction is available in the classrooms for children to read at 'free reading' times. Children are encouraged to read at home daily.

### Phonics

Thomas Johnson Lower School uses the Letters and Sounds programme to teach phonics. We teach phonics every day for 25 minutes to all pupils in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2. The children work in ability groups, which means that learning is specifically tailored to meet their needs and is appropriately challenging, neither too slow nor too fast, so that they can achieve their full individual potential.

In Years 3 and 4 we continue to focus on phonics through our spelling scheme, combining weekly spellings with the focused phoneme and key words. Teachers are aware of those pupils who did not pass the Year 2 phonics re-sit test and continue to support these identified pupils through adapted learning and homework tasks.

### The Year 1 Phonics Test

In June of each year the children in Year 1 (Foxes) take the National Phonics Test. This test is administered by the Class Teacher (or a teacher known to the children) and consists of a

booklet showing 40 simple words. Some are real words, ranging from “jump” to “portrait”, and some are “non-words” (also sometimes called “alien words”) such as “vap” and “blure”. The pass mark tends to be around 32 out of 40, but it may change from year to year. Children who do not gain the required pass mark re-sit the test again in Year 2.

### The phonics lesson

The format of a typical phonics lesson is:

- Specific letter/sound work.
- Shared reading of a text containing the identified letters/graphemes and sounds/phonemes.
- A follow up activity to reinforce the new or revised learning.

By teaching phonics in this way we aim for our children to:

- Match graphemes for all phonemes with increasing speed and accuracy.
- Read accurately by blending sounds.
- Decode words (both real and “nonsense”) accurately thereby giving them confidence to attempt more challenging words in their home reading.
- Read and re-read phonetically appropriate books with increasing confidence, enabling them to discuss their understanding and express views about the texts they are reading.
- Develop a love and enjoyment for reading.

### Here to help you

Your child may be using some reading terms at home that are unfamiliar to you and this glossary may be useful in helping you understand them more fully. Whilst the terms may look very demanding, the children are using them frequently in class and understand them. If you need further clarification, please speak to your class teacher who will be happy to explain. Your class teacher will also be able to advise you about computer games to support phonic teaching at home.

You can find out more about phonics and how to say the phonic sounds correctly by following this You-tube link



<https://youtu.be/UCI2mu7URBc>

## Key Terminology:

Grapheme	A single letter or group of letters representing one sound eg: sh, ch, th, igh, ough
Phoneme	The smallest single identifiable sound eg: sh is one sound but sp represents two (s and p)
Blend	To draw individual sounds together to pronounce a word eg: s-n-a-p blended together is snap
Cluster	Two or more letters making one sound eg: str in straight
Digraph	Two letters making one sound eg: sh, ch, ph, th
Vowel digraph	Two vowels making one sound eg: ai, oo, oi Some vowel digraphs may have more than one sound eg: ea in head, beak, break
Split digraph	A vowel and letter e split by a consonant making one sound eg: a-e as in make, i-e as in site
Grapheme/phoneme correspondence	The relationship between sounds and the letters that represent them, also known as letter/sound correspondence
Pure sound	The short sound for each letter eg: letter s is 'ss' not 'suh', letter f is 'ff' not 'fuh'
Segment	To split a word into its individual phonemes in order to spell it eg: cat is c/a/t, shop is sh/o/p
Mnemonic	A device for memorising or recalling something eg: using a snake to represent letter s