

Thomas Willingale Phonics

Most parents of young children were taught to read using a different strategy to the one used today, which is why it can be hard to know what to do for the best. This guide provides some information and advice about the current strategy in our school.

We teach children how to read using phonics. There are some other useful words you might want to know like phoneme (the sound of each letter) and grapheme (what each letter looks like).

Phonemes (sounds) and graphemes (how it looks) are now taught in a special order, this is because education specialists have worked out that this is the best way to help children learn to read. The phonemes-graphemes are also split into 5 groups called phases. This is to help teachers assess where they are with their phonics.

We emphasise the very short sounds that letters make. You may remember being taught "t" and a "ter" sound, now it has a very short and snappy "t" - if you whisper it, it's easier to make the sound. Some of the trickier sounds to pronounce are l and n. With the "l" sound, pronounce as you would at the end of "Hull", more of an "ul" sound. With "n", don't be tempted to say "ner", it's very a "n" on its own, like in "Euan". Another tricky one is "r", not "rer" as you might think, but more of a growling "rrr" sound. When you say a letter, think how it actually sounds in a word, for example "f" might come out as "fer" then this word would become "ferluffer".

For quite a lot of letters, there is the temptation to put an "er" on the end, "h", "j", "t" being a few examples. It's really important though that you keep the sounds really short, because when children are blending (which means putting the sounds together to make words), it won't work if all of the letter end with an "er" sound.

The vowel sounds (a, e, i, o, u) can be taught as you normally say them (a as in apple, e as in elephant, i as in igloo, u as in under and o as in orange), however, there are some exceptions (e.g. child) but these will be addressed in school later on. There is also a list of tricky words (which were sent home as spellings).