

Lydgate Infant School



Early Literacy Skills – booklet for parents

Aiming High and Having Fun!

Learning for Life

Self
managers

Effective
participators

Resourceful
thinkers

Reflective
learners

Independent
enquirers

Team
workers

Learning to Read at Lydgate

We believe that the greatest gift that we can give a child is the ability to read. More than that, we want children to develop a real love of reading and books. Our aim is that all our children leave Lydgate Infant School fluently reading a range of books and other texts both for information and for their own enjoyment. We want all our children to love reading and we teach reading by focusing on two linked skills: learning to read words and learning to understand what has been read.

Word-reading

The primary way we teach children to read words is through phonics. The word 'phonics' means 'sounds' (and the English language is made up of around 44 sounds). Some sounds can be written in many ways (e.g. the long /a/ sound could be written as 'stay' and 'rain'). In phonics, children are taught to blend sounds (phonemes) together to read, and segment them in words to spell.

e.g. f/or/k sh/o/pp/i/ng ch/ee/se

They are taught to apply these skills whenever they read. We follow the Letters and Sounds programme which is taught in Reception, Year One and Year Two.

Comprehension

Of course, reading involves far more than just being able to read words. The children build their understanding through discussions about texts they have read themselves and stories, poems and nonfiction writing that are read to them. Through English lessons, storytime, small group sessions and 1:1 reading lessons, children are taught the skills to develop their understanding of what they read. These are some questions which will help your child understand the books they read:

What do you think this book will be about? (making predictions)

Tell me what has happened so far/what this book is about (checking their literal understanding of what has happened so far).

How do you think the character feels? Which words tell you this? (using clues in the text)

What do you think might happen next?

Does this remind you of any other books/films/TV programmes? (making links with other stories)

Enjoying books

Your child will have a Storytime every day at school and this is a chance to enjoy and discuss stories and information books with his or her classmates and teacher. What we can't do when reading to a whole class, however, is tailor these stories to every child's individual interests every day, which is why reading stories and other texts to your child at home is so important. Enjoying books which are read to them at home (with a cuddle and a chat) helps children to understand what all the fuss about reading is and helps them to keep motivated as they go through the early stages of learning to read words, which can be quite hard work. In addition, children who have had stories and other texts read to them develop better comprehension skills and go on to be better readers themselves. They also have experience of a wider range of vocabulary and sentence structure, which will also help them with their own reading and writing as they get older. You can watch this [five minute clip](#) which details the benefits of bedtime stories.

Reading skills

At school, we devote a lot of time each day to teaching children to read, whether that is through our daily phonics lessons, Storytime, English lessons, group or individual reading sessions. During these times, we introduce children to the skills they will need to read words and understand what they read. We make the most of every opportunity to help the children put these skills into practice in a range of contexts and using a wide range of reading material. However, it is very helpful to children's reading development if they also have opportunities to read to adults at home, rehearsing the skills they have learned at school until they are fluent and confident in applying those skills. We recommend that children read at home to an adult three to five times each week.

Helping Your Child to Read at Home

Learning to read is a partnership between home and school: for children to become confident and engaged readers who are happy to share books, we both need to work together. That is why we use this Home/School diary as our main record of your child's reading experiences at school – we want you as parents and carers to feel as informed as possible about your child's development as a reader.

Stumbling blocks

Children work very hard and use up lots of energy at school so they are often tired when they get home. Likewise, family life is likely to be very busy in the hours between children getting home and going to bed. Making the time and finding the energy to read together is not easy and we understand that at Lydgate. Nonetheless, it is incredibly valuable for your child's reading if you can make that time several times a week and it is definitely true that every little helps. Here are some tips to help you and your child when it comes to home reading:

- Try to get into a routine if possible by reading at a similar time each day. This makes it much easier to fit in and also to persuade your child if they are feeling tired. Try not to veer off this routine so it becomes something your child expects.
- Don't feel you have to read for very long. With young children between the ages of 4 and 7, five or ten minutes reading may well be plenty. You don't have to finish a whole book every night.
- Share the load. Say 'I'll read this page, and you read the next' or 'Let's take it in turns to read each sentence'. Reading at home shouldn't feel like a test.
- Set a time limit: 'We'll stop when we get to page 4' or 'We'll stop when the long hand gets to the 6 on the clock'.
- Sometimes, don't read a book: play a word-recognition game (e.g. snap, but with words instead of pictures) or a memory game such as find the pair with words your child is learning at the moment. You could also use an online app to practise some of your child's phonics skills.
- Allow your child to read non-school books: motivation plays an important part in learning to read and it's important children don't just see reading as something we do at school, so reading recipes, football programmes, instruction manuals or non-school books your child likes is a very good idea from time to time.
- Involve older siblings, grandparents or other family members: family life can be hectic for any number of reasons so, if possible, ask for help.
- Do praise your child when they have tried hard

How We Teach Phonics at Lydgate

Our school's phonics scheme is based on 'Letters and Sounds' and it is separated into six phases. This programme introduces children to graphemes they need to know to read and spell words (the sound mats in this booklet show the order in which the graphemes are taught). A grapheme is simply the way a spoken sound (or phoneme) is represented in writing. So the phoneme /ee/ can be represented by several graphemes: 'ee' (seed), 'ea' (bean), 'e' (she), 'e_e' (theme), 'y' (daisy), 'ey' (monkey), 'eo' (people) etc.

- Phase One builds children's awareness of sounds through songs, rhymes and other language and sound games.
- In Phase Two, children are introduced to single letter graphemes and some 2-letter graphemes.
- In Phase Three, more 2 and 3 letter graphemes are taught in the sequence shown on the next page.
- In Phase Four, the focus is on consonant blends and beginning to read words with more than one syllable.
- In Phase Five, the children learn alternate ways to write the phonemes introduced in Phase 3, e.g. 'ai' in 'rain' can also be represented by 'ay' (play) and 'a_e' (lake).
- In Phase Six, children learn some more alternate graphemes and further spelling patterns (e.g. how a root word changes when the -ing suffix is added to it).

PHONICS SKILLS

Hearing Initial sounds

This is as simple as I-Spy but it is definitely something that needs to be taught. Being able to say the first sound in a word is not an innate skill. It is something that can be practised as part of everyday conversation eg “P-p-pick up your rubbish, put it in the b-b-bin.” You can ask your child to name lots of words that begin with a letter or change it around so they say what sound a word you are saying begins with. You can also play what is the last sound as this is also an area that children can find tricky.

BLENDING FOR READING

Sound blending

Learning to blend sounds can take some time to master, so don't worry if your child doesn't pick it up straight away.

Ask your child to look at you as you:

Say the pure sounds in an exaggerated manner,

Eg mmm-u-d, not muh-u-der

Ask your child to copy

Say the sounds followed by the whole word,

Eg m-u-d, mud

Ask your child to copy.

Eventually as your child becomes skilled at oral blending, they will be able to listen to you saying the sounds and then tell you the whole word you have just sounded out.

Blending written words

This is very tricky as children need to be able to combine a number of skills; listening to themselves as they sound out the word (rather than someone else), orally blend and have instant recognition of the letter shape and know the corresponding sound.

What to do:

Point to each sound in the word, saying each sound as you point.

Sweep your finger under the word and say the whole word.

It's a good idea to model this in an exaggerated way so that your child will see that it is a skill that needs to be learnt. They may have to sound out the word a number of times before they can blend the sounds to say the whole word.

SEGMENTING FOR SPELLING

Orally segmenting

This is the opposite of oral blending (blending the sounds together to make a word), oral segmenting is splitting a word up into its sounds. At Lydgate, we use our fingers to help us do this.

Tell the children how many sounds a word has got and ask them to show the correct number of fingers.

Say the word e.g. mat

Point to each finger as we say the sounds e.g. m – a – t

At the end sweep your pointing finger across the sounds and say the blended word.

Remember that digraphs (2 letters, one sound such as sh) and trigraphs (3 letters, one sound such as igh) are one sound and so are matched to one finger



You may need to model this many times in an exaggerated way, generally children find oral segmenting more difficult than oral blending.

The website below has tutorials on how to say all of the 44 sounds (you may hear them referred to as phonemes). You can hear the pure sounds being spoken on the tutorials. You can also google oral blending and segmenting, you tube has plenty to offer <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vU2vWZKS7rY>

METAL MIKE GAME

A fun thing to do with your child is to make a robot called Mike with a slit for his mouth that you can post words through.

Mike will eat anything, but only if you can “sound out” what he is eating!

Practising oral blending: Adult says “Metal Mike would like to eat a b-oo-k. Can you find it?”
Child then posts the correct picture through Mike’s mouth and says “b-oo-k, book.”

Practising segmenting (spelling): Child takes on the adults role described above and the adult has to find the correct picture.

WRITING

Communication and Language

Our belief is that language and communication is the bedrock for all learning. If children are able to speak well, ask questions and be inquisitive learners they are more likely to become confident, articulate life-long learners. Having communication and language at the core of the curriculum provides a firm foundation for children's literacy development.

We use an approach called "Time to Talk" which is a research-based approach to promoting and developing communication skills for children. It dedicates time each day to following children's interests, developing language, conversation and communication skills and sets out specific strategies and techniques that can be employed to sustain and extend both peer-to-peer and adult-peer conversation.

Planning for Supporting Children's Writing

Planning is a combination of providing planned opportunities for developing age appropriate knowledge, skills and understanding and "in the moment" planning based on children's lines of enquiries and their individual interests and needs. Our team have a strong grasp of child development and use this to inform learning opportunities that enable each child to develop to their full potential. The curriculum is based around real life experiences and follows EYFS guidance. We believe communication, language and conversation are crucial in supporting children to learn and as a result the prime areas of learning are our focus, in order to create happy, confident children who are independent and ready to learn. In addition to this approach and quality first teaching, EYFS achieve this by:

- Effectively using a range of teaching strategies and research based approaches which have a direct impact on practice including "Time To Talk" to support the needs of all children.
- Employing story scribing techniques using the concepts from Helicopter Stories. An approach that involves children telling an adult their story which is then acted out by the class later on that day.
- Supermovers – a research based approach that recognises the correlation between immature motor skills and educational achievement. It involves daily fun, controlled movements set to music where children pretend to be different animals.
- Using a text or real life experience to focus literacy experiences (both adult guided and child led) so children can see themselves as writers and understand that they can communicate through mark making.
- Employing clearly defined strategies in writing – structured scaffolding that not only supports but also extends writing for each individual.
- Having a strong team of practitioners with expert knowledge of the themes and principles of the EYFS allowing the adaptation and constant improvement of the continuous provision, something which is vital for children's development in EYFS.
- The level of knowledge in the team also enables early intervention of children's needs (for children working at all levels (e.g. emerging, expected and exceeding), whether in prime or specific areas of learning.
- Having strong working relationships with parents through daily contact, parents evenings and parent meetings.
- Collaboration with other schools and settings to moderate, compare and share best practice.

Mark Making

As children become aware that they can communicate through mark making and the written word, they become increasingly interested in using this to tell us interesting things. Mark making starts long before learning how to form letters appropriately.

Valuing children’s drawing and making – having an understanding that what children create externally may represent what they are thinking or feeling internally can be very powerful. They can begin to make or draw something that symbolises what is important to them. For example, two toilet rolls can become a pair of binoculars on a jungle adventure, or what appears to be a scribble could be an “active drawing” symbolising the route to the park they took at the weekend.

Providing an appropriate environment for mark making – Generally, children’s mark making control becomes more refined as their muscles develop through the pivot points in their arm; shoulder, elbow, wrist. At first, when children are pivoting through their shoulder, you might observe them lying on the floor making large sweeping motions with their whole arm (this is called “tummy drawing”) or standing up and drawing long vertical or horizontal lines on a blackboard. For this stage of development we start big! We offer many gross motor opportunities including large pieces of paper on the floor or the wall that provide the space for children pivoting from the shoulder to mark make.

During the next stage of development, when children are pivoting through their elbow, you might see children leaning up against a low table and resting their elbow on it and mark making with sweeping movements from the elbow. As children transition to pivoting through their elbow we have kneel-up tables that support children’s body weight as they lean against them.

Finally, as children’s core develops they will begin to have more fine motor control when they rest their final pivot, the wrist, on a table and begin to form recognisable shapes and letters on a smaller scale.

 <p>1. Pictures</p>	 <p>2. Random Scribbling</p>	 <p>3. Scribble Writing (Written in linear fashion to mimic real writing.)</p>	 <p>4. Symbols That Represent Letters</p>
 <p>5. Random Letters (No relationship between sounds of letters and what the child is trying to say.)</p>	 <p>6. Letter Strings (Progresses from left to right and top to bottom when the child “reads” his writing.)</p>	 <p>7. Letter Groups (The groups have spaces in between to resemble words.)</p>	 <p>8. Environmental Print (Child copies print found in the room, often without knowing what the words are.)</p>
 <p>9. Beginning Sounds (Child begins to write simple sentences using sight words and just the beginning sounds of words.)</p>	 <p>10. Early Inventive Spelling (Includes the same elements as the previous level, but with more consonant sounds represented and spaces between words.)</p>	 <p>11. Inventive Spelling (Has the same elements as the previous level, but with more sounds per word written, including the vowels. Some conventional spelling patterns may appear.)</p>	 <p>12. Transitional Writing (Includes all of the previous elements, plus some real spellings of words with silent letters and other spelling patterns. Punctuation is beginning to appear.)</p>

Developing fine motor movements

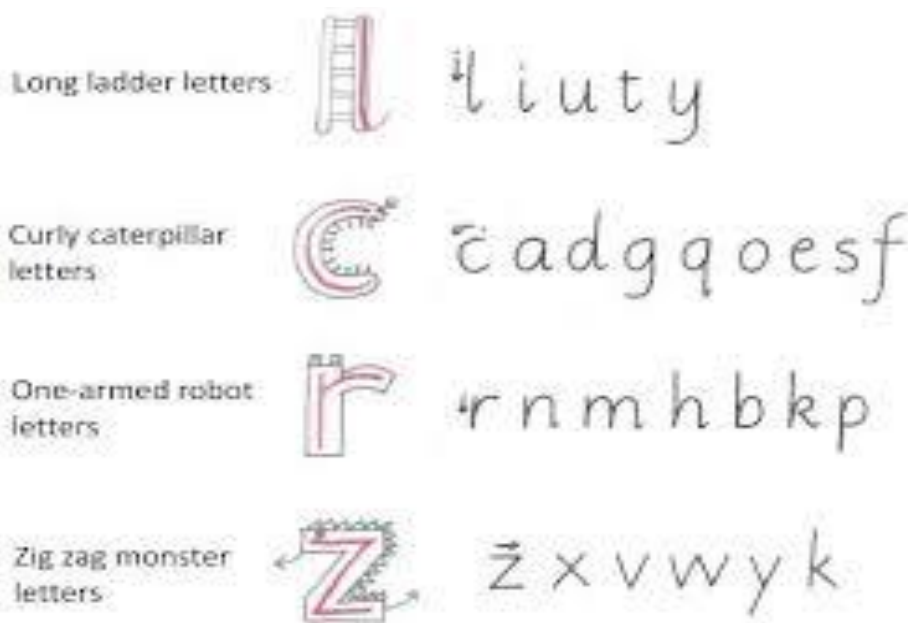
At LIS we do this in many different ways:

- Offering lots of opportunities both in the inside and outside classroom for children to get their fingers moving. Have a look for the “finger Gym” in your classroom. These can include activities such as threading, jigsaws, squeezing objects, tweezers and many more!



- Mark making specific patterns that mimic the movements that we make when writing– this can be done on paper, in sand, on the floor with wet paint brushes or on a blackboard – anywhere and with anything!

- Teaching the formation of letters in handwriting families. Each family has the same shape in it.



Writing Progression



I can say a sentence I want to write.

I can segment the sounds in words.

I can write some letters to represent the words I want to write.

I can say what the marks I make



Children start on the moons and when it is developmentally appropriate they will move on to the stars. The aim is that children can use the stars to support their self reflection of their writing, for example when a child has finished writing a sentence, the adult working with them will say “Have you checked your stars?” This may then prompt the child to reread their sentence and add a missing full stop at the end.

Children that develop further in writing will move on to the shooting stars.

ELG: Comprehension

- Demonstrate understanding of what has been read to them by retelling stories and narratives using their own words and recently introduced vocabulary;
- Anticipate – where appropriate – key events in stories;
- Use and understand recently introduced vocabulary during discussions about stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems and during role-play.

ELG: Word Reading

- Say a sound for each letter in the alphabet and at least 10 digraphs;
- Read words consistent with their phonic knowledge by sound-blending;
- Read aloud simple sentences and books that are consistent with their phonic knowledge, including some common exception words.

ELG: Writing

- Write recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed;
- Spell words by identifying sounds in them and representing the sounds with a letter or letters;
- Write simple phrases and sentences that can be read by others.

Writing sentences

Writing sentences is really difficult! You have to be able to simultaneously utilise many skills; develop a sentence you would like to write, hold that sentence in your head, segment each word in turn to know which sounds make up the word, match the sound to its written representation, have the fine motor skill to be able to form the letters and finally be able to read back what you have just written to ensure it's what you wanted to write in the first place. No wonder it takes lots of practice!

Helpful hints for writing

- Get your body ready! Get your posture right, give your fingers a wiggle and make yourself comfortable.
- Count the number of words in the sentence. This will help them to check their sentence after they have written it.
- Draw a quick picture as an aide memoire for the sentence you're thinking of.
- Think about the sentence before you write – this gives children the chance to think about the difficult parts first so that they can understand what is difficult about it and process this before they start to write. Look for spelling patterns and rhyming words that have a similar spelling patterns (e.g. if you know how to spell cat then spelling mat will be easy). Spot the repeated words, why spend time spelling it out again? It also prevents them from getting bogged down in the middle of writing their sentence.
- Re-reading sentences after you've written each word. This will help them to remember which word comes next and prevent them from missing out words when writing a sentence.
- Have a sound mat available – this offers a good level of scaffolding and as your child becomes more secure in matching the correct letter to the sound, they will not need it.

Phoneme frames

Lydgate Infants use phoneme frames to support children's sentence writing. This scaffolds some of the steps involved in writing. The phoneme frame below shows the sentence "It is fun". The number of sounds is already set out for you, finger spaces are in place and it shows you where on the page the letters should be placed. It also supports children understanding of how to segment – often in the early stages of writing children will just write the first sound in a word and think that it is finished – phoneme frames offer a visual representation that there are other sounds in the word.

I	t
---	---

i	s
---	---

f	u	n
---	---	---

Learning to Read Information and games to play at home

Please find below some links to information and interactive games that can be used to support your child in learning their sounds, oral blending and blending written words. This short video also is a good introduction to oral blending – it explains oral blending and models a variety of games that you can play with your child



<https://rb.gy/ryrqxe>

Recognising Letters

These games can be used to help match letters to their sound.



<https://rb.gy/6sqwz6>



<https://rb.gy/7en3ck>

Oral blending

Oral blending needs to be secure before you can move on to blending written words (website links below). This website can be used for some ideas to support oral blending:

Interactive games to practise oral blending – remember to choose Phase 2 when asked (start with the first set and build up as you become more skilled in oral blending)



<https://rb.gy/889ots>



<https://rb.gy/y16l2t>



<https://rb.gy/umsjrt>

Blending written words

When you click on these links, please choose Phase 2. You can choose to “revise all sounds” but if this is too tricky then you can select the first set of sounds and build up to using all Phase 2 sounds.

This one asks you to match the word to a picture:



<https://rb.gy/myi6vp>

These three ask you to blend a written word and decide if it is a real or fake word:



<https://rb.gy/re94ee>



<https://rb.gy/911mr4>



<https://rb.gy/jqyu1w>

Fun phonic games

What is in the box.

Put a picture in the box. Segment the sounds for the picture eg m-a-n ~ can your child blend the sounds and say the word? Let your child check which picture was in the box. Were they correct? Repeat with other pictures. Let your child have a go at being the robot. Can your child segment the sounds in the words?

Alliteration - Which one matches?

Put out two pictures eg snake and sock then give the child a choice of three picture cards eg paint, ant and snail ~ Can the child say which picture should match with the snake and the sock? Say the words snake, sock, snail then practice the “s” action. Repeat for different letter sounds.

Which one?

Put out three out pictures eg man ,dog, pin. Tell your child you are “thinking about” one of the pictures. Sound out one of the pictures eg d-o-g. Can the child point to the correct picture and say the word? Repeat with other pictures. Let your child have a go at being the robot. Can your child segment the sounds in the words?

North, South East, West – choose 4 sounds eg sh, ch, th, ng. Then say words (like king, thin etc). Child chooses the correct sound in the word. Play this using cards at a table or outside using chalk to write each sound in different areas of the garden.

Quick write – how many words can you write in 1 minute? Focus on one sound and give the child words with that sound eg “sh” ship, shop, fish.

Count the Sounds Aim: to practice segmenting to spell. Say a word. Child has to decide how many sounds the word has and then say each sound in the word as they pinch their fingers. Do they know what letter make up each sound. Eg ch –i- ck (3 sounds, the /ch/ sound is made up of c and h.

Kim’s game A selection of magnetic letters/flash cards that need revising. Name and orientate the letters. Preferably children have a board each, or at least a list of the letters being used, that they can refer to. A cover is put over the letters or the children hide their eyes while one letter is removed. The children have to look and say the letter that is missing – if they cannot remember they will need to look at their board of letters or the list to check which are present they may also need to point to the board to identify the letter missing if they cannot name it. In naming the sound the adult can reinforce the letter/ sound knowledge.

Bingo - can be quickly made on rough paper relevant to the sounds that need to be revised.
























Musical letters Aim: letter/sound revision – small to large group

Pictures of objects or the objects themselves beginning with the letter sounds. Really the music and dancing is just a way to move them around to different pictures. Play some music, when the music stops say a sound and they have to find the object that begins with that sound.
























Quick scan Aim: to practice left to right scanning, to develop visual memory for letter shape.

Show children a sound, the children have highlighter pen and a newspaper and they scan highlighting when they see the letter. First to find 5 or who can find the most in 3 mins?

My Phase 2 Sound Mat

s 	a 	t 	p 	i 	n 	m 	d 
g 	o 	c 	k 	ck 	e 	u 	r 
h 	b 	f 	ff 	l 	ll 	ss 	























My Phase 3 Sound Mat

j 	v 	w 	x 	y 	z 	zz 	qu 
ch 	sh 	th 	ng 	ai 	ee 	igh 	oa 
oo 	oo 	ar 	or 	ur 	ow 	oi 	ear 
air 	ure 	er 					

My Phase 4 Sound Mat

st  starfish	nd  hand	mp  lamp	nt  tent	nk  ink	ft  gift	sk  tusk	lt  belt
lp  help	lf  shelf	lk  milk	pt  script	xt  text	tr  tree	dr  drawing	gr  grandpa
cr  crab	br  brush	fr  frog	bl  blackberry	fl  flag	gl  glasses	pl  plane	cl  clown

My Phase 5 Sound Mat

ay  ay	ou  ou	ie  ie	ea  ea	oy  oy	ir  ir	ue  ue	ue  ue
aw  aw	wh  wh	ph  ph	ew  ew	ew  ew	oe  oe	au  au	ey  ey
a-e  a-e	e-e  e-e	i-e  i-e	o-e  o-e	u-e  u-e	u-e  u-e		

Tricky Words

Tricky words are learnt alongside the sounds in each phase. Tricky words are non-decodable and need to be read on sight (for example if we were to spell the word 'go' phonetically then we might write 'gow')

Phase 2 Tricky Words	Phase 3 Tricky Words	Phase 4 Tricky Words	Phase 5 Tricky Words
the to I no go into twinkl	you he they she all we are me my be her was twinkl	said have like so do some come were there one little when out what twinkl	oh could their people Mr Mrs looked called asked twinkl

FS2 Environmental Print Hunt

(As you come and go from school, see if you can spot these places around the outside. They might be in the front playground or the back playground)

Can you find these places in your new school? Tick them off when you find them.

