



Read Write Inc. Phonics programme at Northway

How we teach reading – answers for parents

Learning to read is the most important skill your child will learn at Northway. Everything else depends on it, so we put as much energy as we possibly can into making sure that every single child learns to read as quickly as possible.

We want your child to love reading – and to want to read for themselves. This is why we put our efforts into making sure they develop a love of books as well as simply learning to read.

How will my child be taught to read?

At Northway we follow the Read Write Inc. phonics programme which is a successful programme taught with passion and fidelity. All staff are trained to teach the programme ensuring that every child receives high quality teaching at each stage.

We start by teaching phonics to the children in the Reception class. This means that they learn how to 'read' the sounds in words and how those sounds can be written down. This is essential for reading, but it also helps children learn to spell well. Your child will be taught to say the sound for the letter and not the letter name, so 'm' as in 'mat', not 'em'; 's' as in 'sun' not 'es'. We teach the children simple ways of remembering these sounds and letters using rhymes. Ask your child to share the rhymes for the sounds they know.

When teaching the children to read and spell we use Fred. He is a toy frog who can say the sounds in words, but not the whole word. Children have to help him. To help children learn to blend, we say the sounds as Fred and then children repeat the sounds and say the whole word. You can play Fred talk games at home with your child by using Fred talk throughout the day e.g. *put on your s-o-ck, it's time for l-u-n-ch*

The children also practise reading (and spelling) what we call 'red words' or 'tricky words', such as 'once,' 'have,' 'said' and 'where'.

All children practise their reading with books that precisely match the phonics and the 'tricky words' they know. This allows the children to succeed at all levels, building their confidence and passion for reading.

The teachers regularly read to the children beyond phonics lessons so the children get to a range of stories, poetry and information books. This supports the development of a rich vocabulary which can then be applied into their writing.

How will I know how well my child is doing?

We will always let you know how well your child is doing. We use various ways to find out how the children are getting on in reading. We use the information to decide what reading group they should be in. Your child will work with children who are at the same reading level as him or her. The school reading leader will ensure children are assessed regularly, which allows all children to make rapid progress through the groups. Your child will have one-to-one fast track tutoring support if we think he or she needs some extra help.

In the summer term, the government asks us to do a phonics check of all the Year 1 children. That gives us extra information about their progress. We will talk to you about how well your child has done, and especially if we have any worries at all.

How long will it take to learn to read well?

By the end of Year 2, your child should be able to read aloud books that are at the right level for his or her age. In Year 3 the phonics programme continues for those who require this support and when they are ready they move onto reciprocal reading which focuses more deeply on the comprehension of a text.

How do I know the teaching will be good?

All the staff have been trained to teach reading in the way we do it in this school. We believe that it is very important that all the teachers and teaching assistants work in the same way. The school's reading leader regularly conducts coaching and training sessions with all teachers to ensure that all children are receiving the best teaching and making rapid progress.

Does it matter if my child misses a lesson or two?

It is vital that they attend school and arrive on time. The reading/spelling sessions start at 9:30am each day, Monday to Friday. The way we teach children to read is very well organised, so even one missed lesson means that your child has not learnt something that they need to know to be a good reader.

How can I help with my child's reading at home?

As soon as your child starts to read the Read Write Inc. Phonics Storybooks, he or she will bring home a black and white Storybook. This is a copy of the colour version he or she will have read at school. The purpose of this is to ensure your child is accessing a Storybook matched to the sounds and words they know – a decodable book – so they should be able to read all the words. This helps to develop your child's confidence as well as developing their reading speed and comprehension of a text which are vital skills. Help to build your child's confidence by encouraging repeated reading and using phrases such as 'I love how well you can read this book'.

Your child will also bring home a reading for pleasure book, this will be a picture book or a chapter book that they have chosen from our school library. This book will not be decodable but is there to develop a love for reading. Loving stories is important because children who love stories want to read stories for themselves. Children who read a lot become better readers.

We know parents and carers are very busy people. But if you can find time to read to your child as much as possible, it helps him or her to learn about books and stories. They also learn new words and what they mean. Show that you are interested in reading yourself and talk about reading as a family. Here are some top tips for storytime:

1. make it a treat – introduce each new book with excitement
2. make it a special quiet time – cuddle up!
3. show curiosity in what you're going to read
4. read the story once without stopping so they can enjoy the whole story. If you think your child might not understand something say something like 'Oh I think what's happening here is that...'
5. chat about the story e.g. I wonder why he did that? Oh no, I hope she's not going to...
6. avoid asking questions to check what they remember
7. link to other stories and experiences you have shared e.g. this reminds me of...
8. read favourite stories over and over again – encourage your child to join with the bits they know. Avoid saying 'not that story again!'
9. use different voices – be enthusiastic!
10. love the book – read with enjoyment.

How else can I develop my child's language?

Language development is a vital skill to support reading and comprehension. Children will have a large vocabulary if they are part of a 'talk-a-lot' family. Here are some ideas to develop vocabulary at home:

- use every opportunity to talk with your child throughout the day – meal times, playing together, bath time
- use new and ambitious vocabulary e.g. miserable instead of sad, stroll instead of walk
- speak to your child in complete sentences
- make up stories together - there's no need to write it down!

What if he or she finds it difficult to learn to read?

We want children to learn to read, however long it takes us to teach them. We will find out very quickly if your child is finding reading difficult. First, we ensure your child is in the correct group, receiving teaching that is matched to their level. If required, we also give them extra time with an adult, on their own to receive one to one tutoring to address any areas that need support.

These adults are specially trained to support these children. Your child will still be in the same group with the other children and won't miss out on any of the class lessons.

If we have any concerns about your child's reading, we will talk to you about this.

My child has difficulty pronouncing some sounds. Will this stop him learning to read through phonics?

This isn't a problem for learning to read as long as we know what sound the child is trying to say. This is not something to worry about. Many children have a few sounds that they can hear clearly but find it difficult to say, particularly the l-sound, r-sound, w-sound, th-sound, s-sound, sh-sound and j-sound. Often they say a t-sound for the c-sound; "tttssh" for the s-sound; "w" for the r-sound and "r" for the l-sound. You can help your child by encouraging him or her to look at your mouth when you say the sound. Whatever you do, do not make your child feel a failure. They can easily learn to read, even if they find one or two sounds difficult to say.

Don't hesitate to contact us if you have any concerns. We are here to help.

Will Northway provide any support for parents?

Our Reading Leaders will regularly run reading and phonics workshops throughout the year. We would love for you to attend these and you will be informed of these dates through the Parent App or Seesaw..

Miss McLachlan and Mrs Reilly are the Reading Leaders in our school and will always be there to offer any support you may need.

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