



PHONICS WORKSHOP

What will be covered?

- **Introduction to Phonics:** Understanding the foundations of phonics and its role in early reading development.
- **Key Terminology:** Essential terms to support your understanding of phonics instruction.
- **Our Approach:** How phonics is taught at St Martins, including structure and progression.
- **Sound Pronunciation:** Guidance on correct articulation of phonemes.
- **Blending Skills:** How children learn to blend sounds to read whole words.
- **Supporting at Home:** Practical tips to reinforce phonics and reading skills outside of school.

Key Terminology in Early Phonics Instruction

- **Phoneme:** The smallest unit of sound in a word that can be identified and distinguished. For example, the word *cat* consists of three phonemes: /c/, /a/, /t/. Some letter combinations, such as *sh*, represent a single phoneme, while others like *sp* represent two distinct phonemes: /s/ and /p/. The English language contains 44 phonemes, yet only 26 letters are available to represent them.
- **Digraph:** A combination of two letters that together represent one phoneme, such as *sh*, *ch*, *th*, and *ph*.
- **Trigraph:** A group of three letters that together make one phoneme, for example, *igh*.
- **Split Digraph:** Two letters that work together to make one sound, but are separated by another letter. Examples include *a-e* in *make* and *i-e* in *site*.
- **Blend :**The process of combining individual phonemes to read or pronounce a word. For example, blending the sounds /s/, /n/, /a/, /p/ results in the word *snap*.

What is phonics?

Phonics is a method of teaching reading and writing by developing learners' phonemic awareness—the ability to hear, identify, and manipulate phonemes. This approach is essential in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) as it lays the groundwork for literacy skills in young children.

Why teach phonics?

- **Develops Decoding Skills**

Phonics enables children to decode unfamiliar words by sounding them out, which is essential for independent reading.

- **Improves Reading Fluency**

As children become more confident in decoding, they read more fluently, with better accuracy, speed, and expression.

- **Supports Spelling and Writing**

Understanding how sounds map to letters helps children spell words correctly and apply their phonics knowledge in writing.

“High quality phonics teaching gives children a solid base on which to build as they progress through school. Children who **master the mechanics of reading** are well-placed to go on to develop a love of reading.”

How is phonics taught at St Martins?

We teach phonics through Ruth Miskin's "**Read Write Inc.**" programme.

"Read Write Inc" is a commercial phonics resource which groups phonemes (sounds) and corresponding graphemes (written representations) into three stages.

How is phonics taught at St Martins?

Phonics is delivered through daily whole-class and small-group sessions across the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), Year 1, and Year 2. These structured lessons ensure consistent, systematic teaching of phonics skills tailored to the developmental needs of all learners.

In addition to formal instruction, children are actively encouraged to explore and apply their phonics knowledge throughout the learning environment.

Opportunities for independent and guided phonics practice are embedded across the curriculum, supporting the reinforcement and consolidation of key skills in meaningful contexts.

How is phonics taught at St Martins?
































In the early stages of learning to read, children develop two essential decoding skills:

Phoneme recognition – the ability to identify the individual sounds represented by written letters.

Blending – the skill of combining these individual sounds to form and read whole words.

As their understanding grows, children begin to apply these phonics skills to their writing, using the sounds they have learned to construct and spell words independently.


















Speed Sounds Set 1

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 

Speed Sounds Set 2

ay  may I play?	ee  what can you see?	igh  fly high	ow  blow the snow	oo  poo at the zoo
oo  look at a book	ar  start the car	or  shut the door	air  that's not fair	ir  whirl and twirl
			ou  shout it out	oy  toy for a boy

Speed Sounds Set 3

ea  cup of tea	oi  spoil the boy			
a-e  make a cake	i-e  nice smile	o-e  phone home	u-e  huge brute	aw  yawn at dawn
are  care and share	ur  nurse with a purse	er  a better letter	ow  brown cow	ai  snail in the rain
oa  goat in a boat	ew  chew the stew	ire  fire, fire!	ear  hear with your ear	ure  sure it's pure

Pure sounds

When helping your child learn phonics, it is important to use “**pure sounds**”—that is, pronouncing each sound clearly without adding an extra vowel sound at the end. For example:

Say **/mmm/** rather than **/muh/**

Say **/lll/** rather than **/luh/**

Using pure sounds helps children blend phonemes more easily when reading and spelling words. This clarity supports their ability to decode words accurately and develop strong early reading skills.

Blending

Blending Sounds in Early Phonics

Once children have learned a number of individual sounds, they begin to develop the skill of **blending**—combining these sounds to read, pronounce, and write words.

As part of this process, children are introduced to a strategy known as “**Fred Talk**”. This involves saying each phoneme in a word aloud, using one finger to represent each sound. After articulating the individual sounds (e.g. /c/ - /a/ - /t/), they then blend them together to say the whole word: *cat*.

c a t
• • •
cat

Blending with special friends (digraphs)

Qu ee n.

queen

Year 1 Statutory Phonics Check

In the Summer term, all Year 1 children will take the national Statutory Phonics Check.

Red/Tricky Words

Some common words in English have irregular or unpredictable spellings, making them difficult to decode using standard phonics strategies. Examples include words such as *my* and *she*. These are often referred to as **high-frequency tricky words**.

In the Read Write Inc. phonics programme, Ruth Miskin refers to these as “**red words**”—words that children cannot sound out and must instead learn by sight. To support this, activities such as flashcard games and repeated exposure are effective ways to help children recognise and remember these words automatically.

How can you support your child with phonics?

- Read with your child.
- Play games e.g. I spy, I hear with my little ear.
- Encourage your child to use pure sounds.
- Practice tricky words frequently

Resources

We offer a variety of resources to help you support your child's phonics learning at home:

Handouts

A selection of handouts is available on the table today for you to take home. These include key information discussed during this session, such as phonics terminology and sound mats.

Website Resources

Our school website hosts a range of phonics materials, including the current list of *red words* your child is learning. A video demonstrating correct pronunciation of the phonemes will also be available soon to support accurate practice at home.

Half-Term Learning Packs

Before each half-term break, children will receive a phonics learning pack. These packs provide opportunities to revisit and practise the phonemes taught so far, helping to reinforce learning in a fun and engaging way.

Thank you

Thank you for attending this workshop, we hope you have found this information useful.