

SOUNDS WRITE

At St Bega's we believe there is no greater skill that we can teach a child than how to read fluently, thus opening a world of endless learning possibilities and academic success. Early reading is underpinned by good quality systematic phonics teaching. Phonics is the process that is used to help children break down words into sounds, as well as building letter and word recognition. From the very beginning of their school journey children in Nursery are immersed in a reading environment where books are a natural part of everyday life and experience. Children are provided with daily opportunities to explore and experiment with sounds, differentiate between sounds and become familiar with rhythm, rhyme, and alliteration along side frequent opportunities to sing songs and rhymes. Alongside this, children also develop their auditory skills, visual discrimination, sequencing and memory which are the pre-skills to reading and writing. Well-trained practitioners are intuitive to children's development and seamlessly incorporate next steps into children's play.

In our Reception year we start teaching the children how to read and write. Phonics is taught as a daily discreet 30-minute lesson throughout EYFS and KS1, whilst its application is integrated across the curriculum and across all Key Stages. Our aim is to develop confident and fluent readers and writers through a consistent approach. The phonics journey continues across school until a child becomes a confident and competent reader and speller. At St Bega's School we are in the process of introducing a new a phonic programme called Sounds-Write. All EY and KS1 teaching and support staff have been trained in this programme and we are rolling out training across the rest of school.

Sounds Write is a government approved linguistic phonics programme that teaches the children about sounds and symbols. We therefore, when teaching, talk about sounds that we can hear in words and that symbols (letters) represent those sounds. 'Blending' the ability to push sounds together to build words to read and 'segmenting' the ability to pull apart the individual sounds to write are the key skills we emphasise throughout our phonic teaching. Another key skill introduced to children is phoneme manipulation. This is the ability to insert or delete sounds in words. In Reception children are taught listen carefully to hear the sounds in words, identify the symbol that represents the sound, say the sounds to read the word. We constantly reinforce that sounds need to be said very precisely. For example, when we see the spelling , we say /m/ and not 'muh'. When they are writing they are taught to say the sounds and write the letter that represents them. (Sounds - Write refers to as the Initial Code). For example, at the start, simple, one sound, one spelling CVC words (consonant, vowel, consonant) are introduced. Pupils quickly learn to read and spell words such as 'mum', 'dog', 'jam' and 'sit'. As the programme progresses, the complexity of one-syllable words is carefully increased through a variety of VCC, CVCC, CCVC, CCVCC and CCCVC words, such as, for example, 'elf', 'hand', 'swim', 'trust' and 'scrub'. Thus children are taught to read and write polysyllabic words applying their phonic knowledge of sound-spellings (code) to read these more complex words. After this, pupils' understanding of the concept 'two letters – one sound' is further developed through the introduction of the most common consonant two-letter spellings: ", " and ", in words like 'shop', 'chimp' and 'thin', for example.

In Year 1 and Year 2, the children are taught that the same sound can be spelled in more than one way e.g. that , and represent the sound /ai/ in 'rain', 'break' and 'stay' (Sounds-Write refers to this as the Extended Code). When reading, they continue to 'say the sounds, read the word', looking for the spelling patterns they have been taught to help them read new and less familiar words. Phonics teaching continues in Year 1 and at the end of this year, the Phonics Screening Test (introduced by Department for Education in 2011) takes place to assess achievement in Phonics. On a daily basis children undertake a variety of activities using relevant materials in a meaningful context that support their developing knowledge and skills to become confident, fluent readers and writers. Children will have the opportunity to read books daily that are carefully matched to their decoding ability. We use Sounds-Write and Dandelion reading schemes that are matched to the progression of the Sounds-Write programme. Children are encouraged to read the same book at home to develop their fluency. These books will be changed weekly. If you have any further questions about Sounds-Write, our approach to phonics or how to help at home, please see a member of staff.