How we promote Phonics and Literacy?

The government strongly promotes the use of synthetic phonics when teaching early literacy skills to children. Synthetic phonics is simply the ability to convert a letter or letter group into sounds that are then blended together into a word.

At Durham Trinity School & Sports College we teach pupils the skills they need to communicate in ways relevant to their individual needs, developing their skills in spoken language, reading and writing. This is supported through English lessons, cross curricular themes and opportunities for Literacy across the Curriculum. Phonics forms an important part of the literacy curriculum.

The teaching of phonics is based on ‘Letters and Sounds’. Pupils are taught phonics in 6 distinct phases and pupils work within the phase appropriate to their level of learning.

Phase 1 of Letters and Sounds concentrates on developing pupil’s speaking and listening skills and lays the foundations for the phonics work which starts in Phase 2. Pupils practice making sounds, listening to sounds and copying sounds. Pupils may have listening activities in school and when engaged in off site educational visits. We practice listening for sounds at the beginning, in the middle, and at the end of words. If and when possible, we practice blending sounds together verbally to make words. The activities introduced in Phase 1 are intended to continue throughout the following phases, as lots of practice will be needed before pupils become confident in their phonic knowledge and skills.

In Phase 2 we begin to teach pupils single letter sounds. Pupils learn the sound and formation of each letter. Letters and their sounds are introduced one at a time in the following sequence:

Set 1: s, a, t, p
**Set 2:** i, n, m, d

**Set 3:** g, o, c, k

**Set 4:** ck, e, u, r

**Set 5:** h, b, f, ff, ll, ss

As soon as each set of letters is introduced, pupils will be encouraged to use their knowledge of the letter sounds to blend and sound out words e.g. learn to blend s-a-t to make the word *sat*. They will also start learning to segment words e.g. find the letter sounds that make the word *tap* from a small selection of magnetic letters.

We constantly reinforce the importance of correct formation of these letters, practising in many different, multi sensory ways, such as using glitter, sand and play dough as appropriate. Alongside Letters and Sounds we also focus on high frequency words, such as I, the, home, we, look where pupils learn these by sight.

To enhance the teaching of reading, we also, as appropriate use Jolly Phonics (a synthetic phonics programme) linked to Letters and Sounds. This is a multi sensory approach to reinforce initial letter sounds using actions.

At the end of Y1 it is a statutory requirement for pupils to receive a Phonics Screening Check. The assessment is delivered by the EYFS Leader. Where pupils do not meet the expected standard for their peer group additional targeted work is delivered and pupils retake the check the following year (where appropriate).

**Reading**

Reading is promoted in a variety of ways. Each day starts with a class reading/reading related activity. This may involve pupils reading for pleasure, accessing a variety of reading materials, taking part in a reading related activity, listening to a story read by an adult. One of the most successful strategies promoting
reading skills has been the introduction of Accelerated Reading, particularly within
the secondary department. Pupils are very positive about these activities to start
each day and they have actively promoted reading throughout school and at home.
As pupils literacy skills develop they access a variety of resources including Oxford
Reading Tree, Phonic Reading Books (Dandelion Reader), Read & Write Inc Fresh
Start, LEXIA, Communicate in Print, Signed Stories, Audio books, IPad apps,
Education City and Accelerated Reading.
There are also many opportunities throughout our curriculum for pupils to develop
their spoken language and communication skills. Key words are on display in
classrooms.
We have a range of age-appropriate books which are designed to appeal to older
pupils who are still at a very early stage of reading. For children who become
proficient, fluent readers we have a range of current and up to date authors to
engage the pupil’s interest and continue to promote their enjoyment of reading.
For pupils with higher level literacy skills they will access dictionaries, thesaurus,
reference books, carry out internet research, develop skimming and scanning skills
as appropriate.
There is a primary and a secondary library for pupils to access.

Writing
Pupils learn to write the letters/letter groups which represent the 44 sounds.
They learn to write words by saying the sounds and graphemes.
They learn to write simple, then more complex sentences.

Spelling
Pupils are encouraged to spell words correctly. However, it is the class staff that
know the pupil best and as a general rule correction of spellings will be considered,
taking into account the level of ability of the individual pupil and how they respond to
correction. For instance some pupils with ASD become very agitated if their written work is corrected in their book. This can demoralise and demotivate an individual.

**How you can support your child at home**
The sounds taught are “pure sounds” and may be different to how you would say them or how you were taught. There is a website oxfordowl.co.uk which is free and will help your child learn to read and love to read. There are over 100 free ebooks to enjoy with your child and there is a phonic guide which will help you how to say the sounds correctly.

Read with your child. Look at books for pleasure. Experience a variety of books (fiction, non-fiction, rhymes). Discuss the different features of different books. Talk about the books and other reading materials that you have shared. Explain the meaning of new words. Most importantly though, show the fun that can be gained by listening to stories and reading a range of texts (e.g. Cereal packets, shopping lists, road signs, web pages, magazines, newspapers etc.) that develop real life reading skills.

Help your child learn to read words by sound-blending e.g. c-a-t = cat. Help your child to say the pure sounds, as quickly as they can, and then to blend the sounds together to say the whole word.

**Useful websites**

www.educationcity.com

www.starfall.com

www.oxfordowl.co.uk