

Synthetic Phonics

Parents' Guide

This guide is to help you understand how we teach reading at The Latham School and the part that you can play in helping your child become a confident and fluent reader.

Our aim is for our children to become independent, life long readers, able to read a wide range of texts for a variety of purposes with understanding and for pleasure.

We welcome and encourage support from home in the teaching of reading. We hope that the information here will be of help in this partnership between home and school.

First of all, what is synthetic phonics?

It is a technical name and nothing to do with being artificial. The synthetic part refers to synthesizing or blending sounds to make a word. Phonics is a method of teaching children how spoken words are composed of sounds called phonemes and how the letters in words correspond to those phonemes. The process of reading involves decoding or 'breaking' words into separate phonemes, so that meaning can be gained. The process of spelling requires the writer to identify all the phonemes in a word and then use their knowledge of the phonemic code to write or 'make' the word.

We can make a word from the sounds and then break it apart again when we want to spell it. You will find that the teaching of spelling goes hand in hand with the teaching of reading; once you know the alphabetic code and how to listen for each phoneme then spelling becomes as easy as reading.

Written English is recognised as being a complex language. We have 26 letters but 44 "speed sounds" (phonemes) in the spoken language. There are a huge number of letter combinations needed to make these

44 phonemes. Other languages are more regular having fewer letters and fewer sounds, which makes them easier to learn to read.

There are many resources that can be used to teach synthetic phonics. At The Latham School we use the Read Write Inc programmes.

Parents might wish to go to www.ruthmiskin.com/en/parents where you will find videos giving further information about synthetic phonics and, importantly, **how to say the sounds**.

How can I help my child learn to read?

Read as many stories to your child as you can. Talk about the stories. Explain the meaning of new words. Most importantly though, show the fun that can be gained by listening to stories. What you read to your children today, they will be able to read for themselves very soon.

When listening to your child read:

PAUSE- to help them work out new words.

PROMPT- by asking them to sound out the word, read the sentence to consider which word fits, look at the pictures for clues. PRAISE- them for trying whether they are right or wrong.

Other ideas:

Start with the title, look at the cover and briefly chat about what you might find inside.

At the bottom of each page, encourage children to predict what might happen next.

If your child gets stuck on a word, ask what word would fit best, ask them to sound it out.