



**The Firs**  
**Lower School**

12<sup>th</sup> October, 2018



Dear Parents/Carers,

### Reading at The Firs

"Teach a child to read and keep them reading and we will change everything"- Jeanette Winterson



*In 'Learning to Blend', the teacher guides the child through the blending process.*

Learning to read is the most important thing your child will learn at our school. 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 *In*

### How will my child be taught to read?

Read, Write, Inc. is a synthetic phonics scheme. This means that children 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 as well. We are teaching the children simple ways of remembering these sounds and letters.

The programme is designed to start in Reception, continue through Year 1 and has the aspirational target that for the majority of children, they should complete it and be reading fluently during the course of Year Two.

The children also practise reading (and spelling) what we call 'tricky words', such as 'once,' 'have,' 'said' and 'where' which cannot be sounded out.

The children practise their reading together in lessons with books that match the phonics and the 'tricky words' they know. They will start thinking that they *can* read and this will do wonders for their confidence. The daily RWI lesson focuses on decoding, teaching reading for comprehension and encouraging expression and 'story voice'. With this in mind, children have reading practice every day.



Headteacher: Adam J.G Campbell B.A.

The Firs Lower School • Station Road, Ampthill, Bedford MK45 2QR  
Telephone: (01525) 402735 • Fax: (01525) 755881  
Email: firs@cbc.beds.sch.uk • Web [www.firslower.co.uk](http://www.firslower.co.uk)



For children who move beyond the Read Write Inc. programme, there will be focused literacy work, designed to introduce children to a greater range of different texts whilst enabling them to extend their comprehension skills.

### **When will teachers hear my child read?**

All children will practice their reading on a daily basis within Read Write Inc. sessions or as part of their literacy lessons if they are off the programme. This offers a systematic approach to developing phonic knowledge and comprehension skills, that has been proven to be highly effective in schools across the country. Research has clearly indicated that this focused approach helps children to make far more rapid progress than could be achieved using previous methods.



In addition, it is also valuable to give children the opportunity to share their individual reading book with their teacher. To achieve the high standards that we want for all our children, teachers have to be actively engaged with the children, shaping and directing their learning throughout each lesson. This makes allocating time for one-to-one reading challenging. Despite this however, we will ensure that your child will be heard read by their class teacher once every half term. In addition to this, children may receive additional support with their reading if this is deemed necessary.

*We learn to spell every day!*

### **How do we make sure that children make rapid progress?**

At the heart of RWI is the principle that children should be given a programme that accurately meets their needs. For this reason, we carry out a rigorous one-to-one assessment procedure every half term. This enables us to reorganise groups to ensure that children can make rapid progress. It also helps us to identify any children who need further help with their phonics.

Your child will work with children who are at the same reading level as him or her. Children will move to a different group if they are making faster progress than the others. Your child will have one-to-one support if we think he or she needs some extra help to keep up.

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

### **How do I know the teaching will be good?**

All the staff have been trained to teach reading so that the programme is consistently delivered across the school. We believe that it is very important that all the teachers and teaching assistants work in the same way. Our RWI leader, Kerry Mercer, other senior colleagues and occasionally a RWI consultant, observe RWI sessions to make sure that the children are learning well.



*Fred the 'Phonics Frog' only talks in sounds (Fred Talk) e.g. he says c-a-t and not 'cat'*

If you have any questions, please come to school and talk to us because we are very passionate about this programme and would be happy to discuss it with you.



*We use 'Fred Fingers' to segment the sounds in words.*

## What can I do to help? Is there anything that I shouldn't do?

Your child will bring different sorts of books home from school for example, fiction, non-fiction, poetry etc.

When your child is reading a book to you, help your child to sound out the letters in words and then to 'push' the sounds together to make a whole word (blending). Try not to refer to the letters by their names.

Help your child to focus on the pure sounds. You can hear how to say the sounds correctly by visiting:- <https://ruthmiskin.com/en/find-out-more/parents/> and then selecting the pronunciation guide. There are lots more useful video clips to watch on this same page which are definitely worth watching.



*Magnetic letters are used in 'Learning to Blend'.*

Some words cannot be sounded out such as 'here' and 'said' and these are known as 'tricky' words because they have a tricky part to them. You can tell your child the tricky word if they cannot read it.

If your child comes across a word which contains a sound they haven't been taught, e.g. 'oa' in 'boat', you will need to tell your child the sound which will then allow them to sound it out.

Sometimes your child might bring home a book that they know well. Please don't be worried that it might be too easy. Sharing this book is a great opportunity to encourage your child to tell you the story out loud; ask them questions about things that happen or what they think about some of the characters in the story.

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. There are lots of lovely, good quality story books which can be borrowed from the library. These books have a rich and varied vocabulary which your child will learn. Show that you are interested in reading yourself and talk about reading as a family.

We hope that this information has been helpful. Please also refer to the RWI Powerpoint presentation which will be added to the website next week (week beginning 15th October).

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Adam J G Campbell".

Adam J G Campbell  
Headteacher

Kerry Mercer  
Assistant Headteacher and RWI  
Leader