



Barkisland EYFS Reading & Curriculum Evening

Wednesday 14th October



Aims

- Share how we teach early reading at Barkisland, from Nursery to Year 2.
- Explain how phonics, language and stories work together to build confident readers.
- Show you how Monster Phonics supports your child's learning.
- Offer practical ideas for how you can support reading at home.
- Highlight the importance of our home-school partnership in developing a love of reading.
- Brief introduction to how the Early Years' curriculum operates.

Partnership

- Helping children to become confident, fluent readers is very much a partnership between home and school.
- The journey starts long before a child opens their first book, with the conversations they have every day. The more words children hear, the richer their vocabulary becomes, and this makes a real difference to how well they read later on.
- For example, a child who is read to daily by the age of five may have heard nearly 300,000 words, compared with just a few thousand for a child who is rarely read to.
- Talking, listening, and sharing stories with your child really does transform their reading journey.



Developing Children's Spoken Language

From the very beginning, children need to experience books not just as texts to decode but as sources of enjoyment, imagination and understanding.

Storytime, songs, and rhymes play a vital role. They help children tune into patterns of language, remember new words, and feel the rhythm of spoken English.

Listening to the same favourite story again and again is just as valuable as hearing new ones – with each retelling, children understand more deeply, anticipate favourite parts, and build emotional connections that will later motivate them to read independently.



Developing Children's Spoken Language cont...



Studies show that children typically gain several new words a day, acquiring vocabulary at an astonishing rate.

The number of words a child has heard and can speak by the age of 3 is a predictor of later language development.

At school we deliberately create language-rich environments, particularly in Nursery, Reception and Year 1.

Adults talk with children throughout the day, modelling good listening, asking questions, and encouraging them to put ideas into words.

These back-and-forth conversations are crucial for developing the comprehension skills that sit alongside phonics as the foundations of reading.

Busy environment



All this interaction, scaffolding, modeling, listening, talking, practicing and giving feedback to build children's language comprehension even before they start picking up a book to read is absolutely crucial and all part of children learning to read.

The Department for Education say teachers do not have to collect and record evidence of children's achievements for the EYFS. Observation puts the adult in a state of judgement rather than interaction. Every moment spent in observing, recording, collecting and compiling evidence takes teachers' time away from teaching including talking.

Storytime

Literature is probably the most powerful medium through which children have a chance to inhabit the lives of those who are like them. For example, celebrating a birthday, having their hair cut, worrying about a new sibling, going to the seaside etc.

Children also need to learn about the lives of those whose experiences and perspectives differ from their own. Choosing stories and non-fiction that explore differences begins to break down a sense of otherness (them and us) that often leads to division and prejudice.



Thriving on repetition



It isn't just the number of different stories children listen to that matters.

On each reading, their familiarity with a story deepens and, with that, comes a greater emotional engagement.

Re-reading gives children the chance to:

- Explore the language
- Explore the characters and their feelings
- Relive the emotions they felt on the first reading
- Hear the same words and gain comfort in knowing what follows
- Wait for their favourite bits, ready to join in, to be scared etc.

Their attachment to the story equips them to retell it and, when they have learnt to read, encourages them to read it for themselves.

Poetry & Rhymes



The predictability of rhymes in poems and songs also helps children to memorise and re-use newly acquired words and phrases.

In school, the younger children in EYFS & Year 1 will have songs or poems daily.

Further up the school, the children are exposed to poems through the English curriculum and reading for pleasure.

Word reading & spelling

Phonics itself gives children the key to unlock the alphabetic code.

From Nursery onwards, children at Barkisland are gradually introduced to sounds and letters in a structured way.

We use Monster Phonics because it is colourful, engaging, and memorable, helping children to see the links between letters and sounds more clearly.

This systematic approach, combined with the richness of stories, rhymes and everyday talk, ensures that children not only learn to read but also want to read.



What exactly is phonics?



Phonics is the process which we teach children to read and write.

When children begin phonics, they follow a structured sequence.

In Nursery, the focus is on listening skills — noticing environmental sounds, body percussion, rhymes, and starting to blend and segment orally.

In Reception, they quickly move on to learning letter–sound correspondences. For example, early on they learn phonemes like s, a, t, p, i, n, and how to blend them to read words such as sat or pin.

As they progress, they meet digraphs (2 letters that make one sound) and trigraphs (3 letters that make one sound) like ch, sh, th, igh, and begin to read longer words, simple captions, and high-frequency “tricky” words such as the, to, go, no.

Then things become more complicated as the children move into Year 1

- By Year 1, children are introduced to the “complex code,” where the same sound can be written in many different ways — for example, the long a sound in ai, ay, a-e, ea, eigh.
- They also learn that the same grapheme (shape of a letter) can represent different sounds, such as the a in cat, acorn, wash.
- In Year 2, the focus broadens further to spelling rules, prefixes, suffixes and grammar, all within the Monster Phonics programme.
- The colour-coded monsters help children see and remember the patterns, making phonics both systematic and fun.



Why did we choose Monster Phonics?



As a school we know our children well - what appeals to them and what inspires them to learn and be successful. We chose Monster Phonics as the programme is fun and engaging and appeals well to both boys and girls. They love the little Monsters that help them to learn their sounds as part of early reading.

Colour helps children to see the sound that different spellings make.

Phonics is simplified and easier to understand if we categorise the speech sounds into 10 groups and use the Monsters as a categorisation.

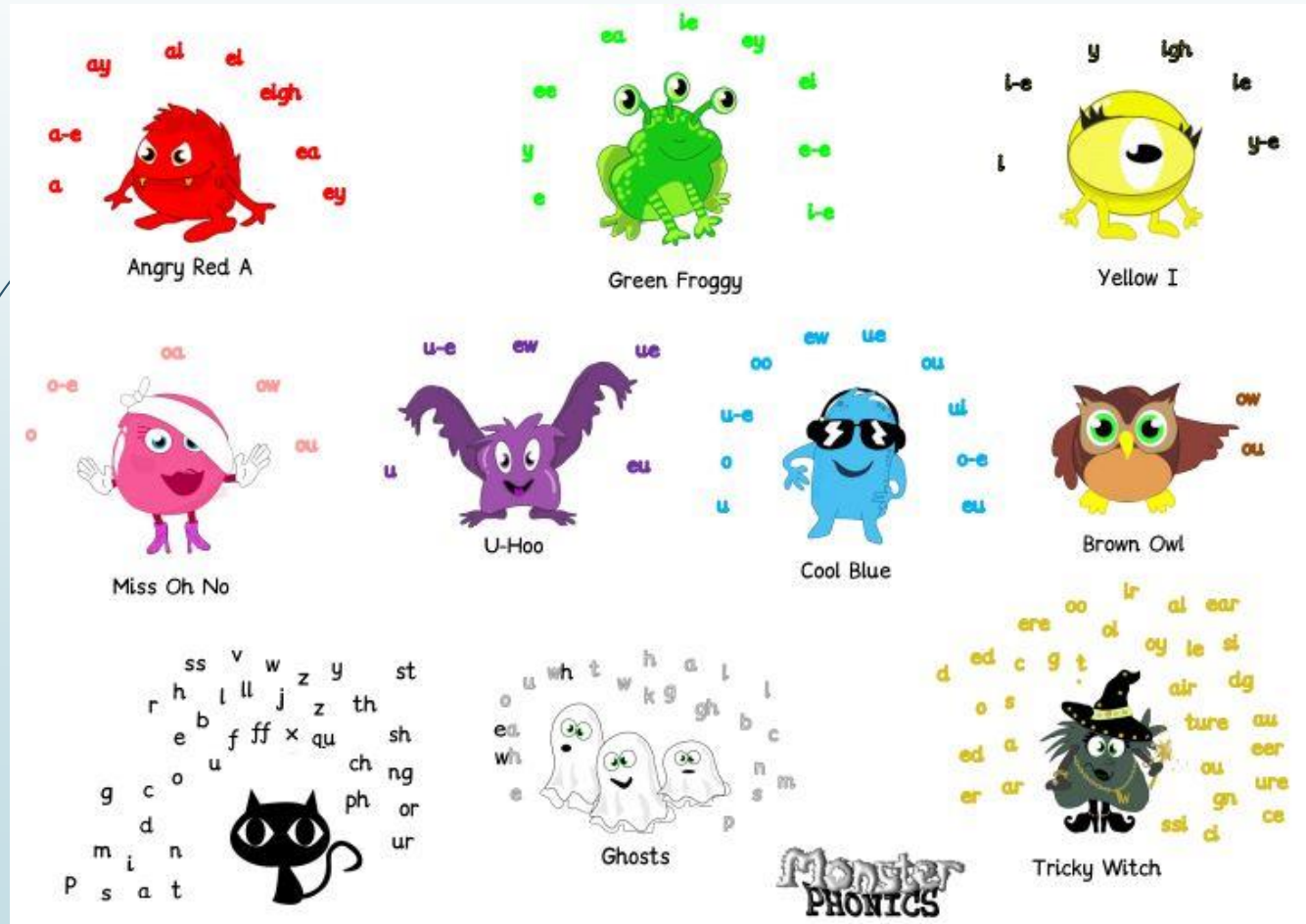
Each monster has a different colour.

That colour represents that way of spelling the sound.

Meet the Monsters



These are the 10 categories of sounds your children will be meeting across their phonics journey from Reception to Year 2



Monster Phonics videos

This video explains how monster phonics works
and we get to meet the monsters

<https://monsterphonics.com/how-it-works/>



Guided Reading

- Alongside phonics, children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 take part in guided reading sessions in small groups.
- Each child has their own copy of the book, carefully matched to their phonics level, and practises it with an adult in school before bringing it home.
- The idea is not to rush through levels, but to build fluency and confidence — so although the books may seem a little easier than the stories they enjoy with you, this secure practice is what helps reading “click.”
- At home, your role is to provide time, space, and encouragement, sharing the phonics book for practice as well as a “reading for pleasure” book to enjoy together.



Ways to support reading at home:



At home, the most important thing you can do is keep reading positive and consistent.

Make sure your child has regular access to books, magazines or newspapers, as well as a quiet space and time to read.

Let them see you as a reader too — choosing books, visiting the library, or talking about what you're reading.

When you read with your child, take turns, support them gently, and save their favourite bedtime stories for pure enjoyment, while treating the Monster Phonics books a little more like homework practice.

What's happened so far...

- Settling in/getting used to routines
- Developing a bank of sounds and know how to apply these to reading (EYFS specifically)
- Assessments are allowing the teacher to match books to children's ability



What will happen next

- Children will bring home both a decodable Monster Phonics book, carefully matched to their phonics ability, and a “reading for pleasure” book to share as a family.
- Please sign the reading record each time they read, even if they revisit the same book several times — this repetition builds fluency and confidence.
- Parents will be invited in to see our phonics and Early Years’ curriculum in action.





Parent/Carer Monster Phonics Webinar

- Monster phonics hold information sessions throughout the year and school will share any links to any sessions available.
- Below is a link to a pre recorded webinar for parents.
- https://youtu.be/_za_HaQlvQk

And a link to Monster Phonics webpage for parents:

<https://monsterphonics.com/monster-phonics-for-parents/>

Key Messages

- Learning to read is a partnership between home and school.
- Talking and listening with your child every day builds the vocabulary and comprehension they need to succeed.
- Repetition matters – reading the same book again builds fluency, confidence, and enjoyment.
- Phonics unlocks the code: Monster Phonics makes sounds and spellings clear, fun and memorable.
- Guided reading and decodable books are carefully matched to each child's ability; reading for pleasure books spark a love of stories.
- Most importantly, children need to see and hear reading as enjoyable – read with them, to them, and alongside them.





Resources



- Parents can purchase resources off the website
- <https://monsterphonics.com/product/standard-parent-starter-pack/>



Our Vision & Curriculum

- * A safe, happy, nurturing place where children feel proud of their achievements
- * Opportunities to explore, succeed and grow in confidence and independence
- * Curriculum built around exciting topics and high-quality stories to develop a love of reading
- Learning through play and adult-led activities that build key skills
- * Nursery and Reception come together in the afternoons for collective worship, to play, learn and build friendships

Curriculum Overview

- Three-year cycle of topics to provide breadth and depth
- Curriculum planned around core stories to spark imagination and develop a love of reading
- Topics bring learning to life and help children make meaningful connections
- Development Matters used as a guide for progression (not a checklist)
- Balance of child-led play and adult-led activities
- Focus on developing communication, independence, and key skills across all seven areas of learning

Cycle 2 | Nursery

Topics	Communication and Language	Personal, Social, Emotional Development	Physical Development
Colours Everywhere! (Diwali focus)	Use a wider range of vocabulary. Sing a large repertoire of songs. Start a conversation with an adult or a friend and continue it for many turns.	Develop their sense of responsibility and membership of a community. Become more outgoing with unfamiliar people, in the safe context of their setting.	May hop, stand on one leg and hold a pose for a game like musical statues. Start taking part in some group activities which they make up for themselves, or in games. Use one-handed tasks and equipment, for example, making snow globes with cotton.
Christmas			
 literacy	Mathematics	Understanding the World	Expressive Arts and Design
Develop their phonological awareness, so that they can: - spot and suggest rhymes - count or stop syllables in a word - recognise words with the same initial sound, such as mixing and mellow	When someone points to: - Show finger numbers up to 5. - Describe a familiar route. - Record and create ABBB patterns - tick, tick, tick, tick	Show interest in different occupations. Continue developing positive attitudes about the differences between people.	Explore how different materials being to develop their ideas about how to use them and what to make. Create shared displays with continuous lines, and begin to use these displays to represent objects. Listen with increased attention to sounds, remember and sing whole songs.

Nursery | Cycle 2

Autumn 2

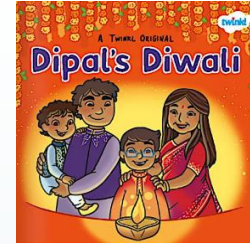
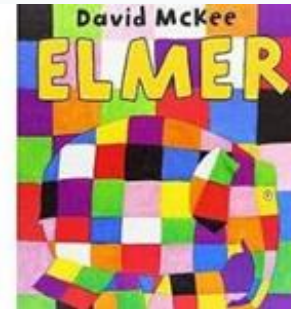
Topics	Communication and Language	Personal, Social, Emotional Development	Physical Development
Colours Everywhere! (Diwali focus)	Use new vocabulary through the day. Articulate their ideas and thoughts in well-formed sentences. Listen carefully to rhymes and songs, paying attention to how they sound. Learn rhymes, poems and songs.	Express their feelings and consider the feelings of others. Show resilience and perseverance in the face of challenge.	Develop their small motor skills so that they can use a range of tools competently, safely and confidently. Suggested tools, pencils for drawing and writing, paintbrushes, scissors, knives, forks and spoons.
Christmas			
 literacy	Mathematics	Understanding the World	Expressive Arts and Design
Read some letter groups that each represent one sound and say words for them. Read a few common exception words matched to the school phonics programme. Read simple phrases and sentences made up of words with known letter sound correspondences and, where necessary, a few exception words.	Compare numbers. Subtract. Understand the link more than/less than relationship between consecutive numbers.	Understand that some places are special to members of their community. Recognise that people have different beliefs, and celebrate special times in different ways. Draw information from a simple map.	Use their core muscle strength to achieve a goal position when sitting at a table or sitting on the floor. Combine different movements with ease and fluency. Sing in a group or on their own, increasingly matching the pitch and following the melody. Recognise that people have different beliefs, and celebrate special times in different ways. Create collaboratively, sharing ideas, resources and skills.

Reception | Cycle 2

Example Topic: Colours Everywhere!

(Diwali Focus) (Autumn 2)

- Core Story: Dipal's Diwali & Elmer
- Story helps children explore real-life roles & responsibilities
- Learning opportunities across all 7 areas:
 - * Celebrations & Colours! Through stories & conversations (Communication & Language)
 - * Sense of responsibility, friendships & differences. Through stories, conversations & taking on roles (Personal, Social and Emotional Development)
 - * Rangoli patterns, colour sorting with tweezers & moving to music (Physical Development)
 - * Writing signs, shopping lists & sorting coloured objects linked to their initial sound (Literacy)
 - * Colour, shape & pattern exploration (Maths)
 - * Learn about shopkeepers; Create a Diwali shop for children to role play (Understanding of the World)
 - * Role playing shops & drawing Elmer (Expressive Arts & Design)



Key Approaches

- Communication is at the heart of learning
- “Ask me about...” stickers to spark talk at home
- Consistent daily routine builds security and confidence
- Positive behaviour approach – focusing on kindness and respect
- Balance of phonics, early maths, story, play and adult-led activities



Parents as Partners

- Parents: children's first and most important teachers
- Support at home through talk, stories and independence
- Invited into nursery and school to observe phonics, early maths, story sessions etc
- Sharing learning via newsletters, stickers and Class Dojo
- Value contributions from home (photos, comments and home learning)

<p>Celebration Chat Talk about how Diwali and Christmas are celebrated and share any special traditions, foods or memories your family has.</p> 	<p>Sharing Kindness Create a colourful kindness card for a family member, friend or neighbour to show appreciation and care.</p> 	<p>Festive Five Meter Fun Thread colourful beads, pasta or paper shapes to make a festive decoration for Diwali or Christmas.</p> 
<p>Celebration Books Read a story about Diwali or Christmas together and encourage your child to talk about their favourite part of the story.</p> 	<p>NURSERY & RECEPTION TAKE-AWAY HOMEWORK Autumn 2 Colours Everywhere! (Diwali Focus) and Christmas</p> 	<p>Pattern Making Use coloured objects, toys or paper shapes to create repeating patterns such as red-blue-red-blue or gold-green-gold-green.</p> 
<p>Light Around Us Explore different light sources at home and talk about why light is important during celebrations such as Diwali and Christmas.</p> 	<p>Colourful Creations Design and make a bright rangoli pattern, festive card or decoration using a variety of colours, materials and creative ideas.</p> 	<p>If you have these books at home read our core stories. If not visit the library to see if you can borrow them or listen to them online - or read your favourite story and talk about it.</p> 

Practicalities & Celebrating Children

- PE days & belongings (**please label everything**)
- Absences: inform school promptly
- Class Dojo: only for sharing learning
- Queries via school office
- Clear communication = smooth routines
- Celebrating success big and small
- Stickers, star of the week, merit assembly etc
- Sharing work in displays, merit Assembly, floor books & Twitter

