

Phonics and Reading

Our Approach to Phonics

At Middleham CE VA Primary School, we follow the Letters and Sounds programme, supplemented by the Jolly Phonics scheme and Read, Write Inc.

In Foundation Stage, children are introduced to phonemes (sounds) linked to the letters of the alphabet, as well as one way of spelling each of the other 16 phonemes used in the English language, such as 'igh' and 'ch'. Children are taught to blend or sound out phonics to read a variety of words and segment or break down the sounds in simple words for spelling. Jolly Phonics gives children an action for each sound, which supports children who learn in an active way.

In Year 1, children learn more about the variety of ways in which each phoneme can be spelt and they also learn about the different pronunciations made by different letters or groups of letters, such as 'a' in 'ant' and 'was'. At the end of Year 1, children will be tested on their phonics knowledge, using a national test featuring 20 real words and 20 pseudo-words.

From Year 2 onwards, children consolidate their phonics knowledge, learning when to apply different spelling rules as well as how to spell plurals and different verb tenses.

Our Approach to Reading

At Middleham CE VA Primary School, children are encouraged to read at home every day. In Foundation Stage, children begin by taking home wordless books, to allow them to spend time talking to a parent about the book, without being constrained by the necessity to read words. Once children have a good understanding of how books work and have gained some phonics knowledge, they begin to read books containing simple words which can be blended or sounded out.

The reading books are colour banded and, as children become more confident and able readers, they will take home books from different colour bands. The books in the first few colour bands are primarily phonics based, allowing children to apply their phonics knowledge. Once children become fluent readers, a range of books are provided to allow children to engage in more lengthy discussions about the content of the book. From Year 2 onwards, the reading scheme is supplemented with books from our well-stocked library.

We do not follow any particular reading scheme but use a variety of books matched to our children's needs and interests.

Becoming a reader is not only about phonics though - we teach children to read in teacher led guided reading sessions with a group of children at a similar level. Guided reading offers not only the opportunity to become confident and competent decoders but also to explore meaning, characterisation and settings and to develop the skills of inference and deduction. Teachers keep detailed records during these sessions and use their observations to make their termly assessments and to feed back to you about your child's progress.