



At Silver Springs Primary Academy, we use the First Class Phonics scheme to teach children to read and write using phonics. This scheme is the latest, most up-to-date scheme on the market and follows a well-researched progression document. From Reception to Year Two your child will have daily First Class Phonics sessions. During these sessions they will be taught how to use their knowledge of phonics to read and write. They will be introduced to the skills needed to segment and blend to read words and to segment to spell words. Your child's teacher will be able to explain more about these skills during parent information evenings.

The First Class Phonics scheme is divided into Phases or Parts of Phases:

- Phase 2
- Phase 3 Part One, Two and Three
- Phase 4 Part One and Part Two
- Phase 5 Part One, Part Two, Part Three, Part Four, Part Five, Part Six, Part Seven, Part Eight, Part Nine

Each section is divided into sets of letters and the children are taught a set of letters a week with time to learn how to read and spell words containing these letters. Teachers will use a combination of PowerPoints and word and picture cards to teach your child to read and spell words using these new letters. Your child will also be playing a variety of games designed to give them time to practise reading and spelling words, become more confident readers and spellers and to have lots of fun during their First Class Phonic sessions.

Teachers keep teaching records to support communication between all the teachers and teachers that help your child to learn at school. They also use tracking grids to monitor progress and identify children who may need extra support. Teachers use guidance documents to ensure that children in each year meet the end of year expectations and are on track to meet national standards. They also have access to detailed planning grids and assessment methods to ensure your child makes the best progress possible in phonics.

What does First Class Phonics look like in a Reception Class?

First Class Phonics starts in the Reception Class where children are introduced to letters (graphemes) and the sounds they make (phonemes). Most children who attend either a school nursery or private nursery will have played games that prepare them for phonics. This pre-phonics stage is called Phase 1. However, for all children regardless of whether they have attended a nursery class/centre, we plan lots of activities to give all Reception children appropriate Phase 1 experiences. We then decide when to start Phase 2. In Phase 2, your child will be introduced to letters in a specific sequence starting with c a t s n i p. This order has been deliberately chosen so that children from their earliest experience of phonics can read a simple word 'cat', match it to a picture of a cat, read a phrase 'a cat' and even a sentence 'A cat sat.' During the sessions, your child will also be taught how to form these letters correctly. They may come home talking about 'big pencil' writing! We will be sending home an information sheet about correct letter formation and how you can help your child with 'big pencil' writing at home. In Reception, we provide lots of activities that will help your child become 'ready to write'. These are designed to make sure that your child can hold a pencil comfortably when writing. In time, your child will learn to write words. However, First Class Phonics will first give your child the opportunity to spell words by using 'manipulative spelling resources'. They will use magnetic letters, letter cards and even bottle tops, choosing the right letters and moving them into the correct order to spell words.

Children are taught to make the sounds that these letters make accurately with their voices (voice sounds) and to use these sounds to orally segment and blend by looking at pictures. As more and more letters are systematically introduced, teachers will use a greater number of the First Class Phonics word and picture cards. Your child will play lots of fun, interactive games that will engage them, at the same time helping them to independently read words and match these to pictures. Most of these words will follow simple structures. These will either be VC words or CVC words. A VC word is a word with a vowel followed by a consonant e.g. at, in. A CVC word is a word that starts with a consonant C, followed by a vowel V and then ends with a consonant C e.g. cat, dog, run. Your child will also be

introduced to words that have two letters making one sound e.g. the 'c' sound in the word 'duck'. This is called a digraph and they will learn more of these when they move to Phase 3.

As part of their First Class Phonics sessions, your child will also be taught how to read short phrases and eventually sentences. These will look like the sentences that are found in their reading books. When your child brings home their first reading books, you will see that some of the words end with an 's' e.g. runs, cats, digs. These are called CVCC words. They will be introduced to words like this during their First Class Phonics sessions. By reading words with an 's' on the end, your child will become a more confident reader in Reception.

Once your child is confidently using the letters (graphemes) in Phase 2, they will move to Phase 3 Part One. For most children, this will probably happen sometime during the Spring Term. However, some children may take a little longer to develop their confidence with phonics. We intend for all children in Reception to reach at least Phase 3 Part Two before they go into Year One.

As well as being taught how to read words using their phonics, your child will also take part in weekly sessions that develop their sight reading of High Frequency Words. These are words they can read with their phonics that occur again and again in their reading books. We encourage them to learn these words 'by sight' so that they do not slow down reading. Your child may come home talking about Izzy the Busy Bee. This is a puppet that the teacher uses to encourage the children to learn High Frequency Words by sight.

These weekly sessions also develop their sight reading of Tricky Words. These are words that they will not be able to read using phonics because they have unusual letter combinations such as the word 'said' or they use phonic knowledge that is introduced at a later date. These Tricky Words are also often found in their reading books. Your child may come home talking about Trevor the T-Rex. Trevor is a puppet that the teacher uses to encourage the children to learn to read Tricky Words by sight.

What does First Class Phonics look like in Year One

In Year One, your child will be continuing on their 'phonics journey'. They will become more confident readers and spellers as they acquire more phonic knowledge. The First Class Phonics scheme has been written to ensure that your child learns an increasing number of graphemes to help them to read and spell.

In Year One, your child will be increasing their knowledge of digraphs and trigraphs. A digraph is a sound (phoneme) that is made with two letters e.g. in the word 'ship' the 'sh' sound is made with two letters and in the word 'boat' the long 'o' sound is made with two letters o and a. A trigraph is a sound (phoneme) that is made with three letters e.g. in the word 'light' the long 'i' phoneme is made with three letters 'igh'. Your child will also be taught to read and spell words with more complex word structures. These are words that will usually have more letters but more importantly will have more consonants. For example, learning to read frogs, jumps, straps and sprains what are called adjacent consonants where there may be two or three consonants next to each other. Some children may find reading these words difficult so we will take time to help them to do so in Phase 4 Parts One and Two.

At the end of Year One, your child will be given a Phonics Screening Check. This check is designed to see how much phonic knowledge your child has. It is a national check and involves your child reading a range of words, some of which are not real. They will start to talk about Alien Words and also Luna the Moon Unicorn. This is a new puppet that is used to prepare children for the Phonic Screening Check. She teaches children to read words that they do not come across in their reading books. We call these 'unicorn words' and we also take this opportunity to teach children new words. Luna also looks after a lot of Aliens and the children learn to recognise that these words are not real but that they just need to use their phonic knowledge to read them. We expect most children will meet the goal set for Year One children in phonics.

What does First Class Phonics look like in Year Two

Children in Year Two will still be on a phonics journey. We expect most Year 2 children to be confident readers at the end of Year 2. They will be learning more graphemes and digraphs but will also start to make good choices when spelling unknown words. Some children, because they did not meet the standard set for the Phonics Screening Check in Year One, will take the Check at the end of Year Two. All children in Year One will continue with First Class Phonics until they reach the end of Phase Five Part Nine.

What does First Class Phonics look like in Key Stage Two.

Phonics is such an important part of reading and spelling that we continue to teach it in Key Stage Two. Some children will be continuing their journey with First Class Phonics in Key Stage Two. It is important that all children learn to read and spell with phonics, regardless of which class they are in or how old they are.