

# Phonics and Reading at St Matthew's



*With God nothing is impossible You are the light of the world*

Reading is at the heart of everything we do at St Matthew's. Reading and writing go hand in hand, and without one the other cannot flourish. We know that decoding (reading) and encoding (spelling) are skills we need to equip our children with from the moment they come into school, and that is why we value our phonics provision.

The children are taught to decode and encode through explicit teaching and practice of the key skills and concepts:

## Skills

- Blending
- Segmenting
- Phonic Manipulation

## Concepts

- Letters are symbols that represent sounds
- Sounds can be spelled using 1,2 3 or 4 letters
- The same sound can be spelled in more than one way (fly, bright, hibernate, tie)
- Many spellings can represent more than one sound (head, seat, break)

We use Sounds-Write at St Matthew's. A programme which is clear, consistent and cumulative. In Reception, Y1 and Y2, the children will have daily Sounds-Write lesson. They then continue with a rigorous spelling curriculum in KS2, consisting of 2 x 45-minute sessions a week. Year 3, 4 and 5 are taught using the Sounds-Write approach.

Sounds-Write is a perfect way for us to discover and learn new vocabulary. We analyse words, understand the morphology (how the word is built – prefix, root, suffix) and the etymology (where the word originates from). This fits perfectly with our Latin provision. Children are genuinely excited when it's time for the word analysis part of any lesson. This is because they are spotting patterns, making links between words and therefore their spelling schema is developing.

Through the development of code knowledge and vocabulary, we make sure there is ample opportunity to retrieve previous learning, so that the children can continue to build their understanding of the English Language, on a solid foundation.

The reading curriculum at St Matthew's builds on the Sounds-Write approach and takes into account the wide variety/forms of reading (both in and out of school) which are now universally valued as essential tools for the 21st Century: including digital, online and moving image media.

We encourage teachers to develop their own expertise as readers, to create a community of readers in the school. When choosing texts, we look for a balance of fiction, non-fiction and poetry. Reading is one of the most important ways in which children observe and absorb the best language skills. So, while components, such as grammar and KS1 reading vocabulary are important in the new curriculum, they will also be taught in a contextualised way, through the enjoyment of shared reading.

The school's main reading scheme is Scholastics PM Books. In KS1, we also use a range of phonetically decodable texts, linked to Sounds-Write, to support the early stages of reading. Once pupils are confident, we encourage teachers to use quality texts to support the teaching of reading skills and deepen reading for pleasure, which is foundational and is at the heart of our school.