

Kirkton Primary School



Parent Guide

Active Literacy



October 2019

Within Kirkton we use an approach called Active Literacy when we are teaching phonics (letter sounds).

What is Phonics?

Phonics is a method of teaching children to read. Phonics works by breaking words down into its individual sounds. There are 44 different sounds in the English language. Learning to read with phonics is therefore a bit like learning a code, after learning just a few sounds, your child will be able to use this code to read 100s of words. The more sounds your child knows, the more words they will be able to work out how to read.

Not all words are phonetically decodable however, a select few words you need to learn through the 'sight words' method of learning to read. Sight words is when you learn to read by memorising 1,000's of words individually. Although, it could be argued that this is not the most efficient way to learn to read. An example of this is that someone who has learnt to read through the sight words method might have memorised and be able to read the word 'boat', but may struggle if asked to read the word 'oat'. This would be an easy task for someone who had learnt to read with phonics who was able to use their decoding skills to break each word down into its individual letter sounds.

Strategies used within Kirkton Primary School

What is the FIVE Finger Strategy?

From primary one the children are taught the **FIVE Finger Strategy**. It is basically an easy way for the children to remember what they need to be able to do with each of their spelling words. The strategy works alongside the magnetic boards with magnetic letters.



SAY	Children say the word
MAKE/ BREAK	Children make the word and they break it into its different sounds
BLEND	Children push the word back together and run their finger under the word as they say it.
READ	They then read the word
WRITE	And finally they write the word

What is a Phoneme?

A Phoneme is a sound as it is said. A Grapheme is a sound that is written. Joined phonemes are two or three letters that work together to make the same sound. A Split digraph is two letters that work together to make the same sound, separated by another letter.

Single Sound	a	as in	<u>a</u> pple
	d	as in	<u>d</u> og
Joined Phoneme	sh	as in	<u>sh</u> op
	ch	as in	<u>ch</u> ur <u>ch</u>
	ight	as in	<u>l</u> igh <u>t</u> <u>s</u> igh <u>t</u>
Split Phoneme	a-e	as in	<u>l</u> a <u>n</u> e
	i-e	as in	l <u>i</u> <u>n</u> e

What are common words and phoneme words?

Common words are words that are used most commonly in reading books or by the children to write in school. Phoneme words are words that can be sounded out, or can be placed in an elkonin box.

What are Elkonin Boxes?

These boxes are named after their inventor and they are a great way for children to demonstrate that they can pick out all of the different sounds within a word. Every sound is placed in its own box.

If you think about the word faster and say it out loud, you can hear every letter making a sound.

<i>f</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>s</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>e</i>	<i>r</i>
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In the word speed, you don't hear the 'e' sound, you hear 'ee.' Speed would look like this:

<i>s</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>ee</i>	<i>d</i>
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<i>e</i>	<i>l</i>	<i>e</i>	<i>ph</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>t</i>
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Within the class pupils will use whiteboards and magnetic boards to record their learning.

What are whiteboards?

White boards are laminated boards that are used in class for the children to make words, write sentences or revise letter formation. Children use a dry wipe marker on these boards.

What are magnetic boards?

Magnetic boards are boards with a thin layer of metal. The boards are used with magnetic letters and the children are encouraged to make, break and blend words on these boards. They are mainly used in primary one, two and three.

If you would like more information on Active Literacy and our Phonics programme, please contact the school.

