



**First Class Phonics**  
**Parent's Information**



At Wild Bank, 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 systematic, synthetic 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 and the Phase your child is on.

The First Class Phonics scheme is divided into nine sections:

- Phase 2
- Phase 3 Part One, Two and Three
- Phase 4 Part One and Part Two
- Phase 5 Part One, Part Two and Part Three

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 range of resources to teach your child to read and spell words using these new letters. Your child will also play 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 EYFS your child will start their phonics journey. In Nursery, they will develop an awareness of sounds, rhyme, rhythm and other important skills needed for reading and writing. In Reception, they will be introduced to letters (known as graphemes) and the sounds they make (known as phonemes) in a specific sequence. 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 their phonics lessons, they will also be learning to spell using 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. In the beginning, 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. They will also be introduced to words that have three letters making one sound e.g. the 'long i' sound in the word 'light'.

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 is in Reception, they will bring home a reading book which has words ending with an 's' e.g. runs, cats, digs. These are called CVCC words. 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 then move to Phase 3 Part One and follow a very structured phonics journey all the way to Phase 5 Part Three. As they acquire more phonic knowledge, they will become more confident readers and spellers. 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. 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 words like 'frogs', 'jumps', 'straps' and 'sprains' which have 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.

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 are often used 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.

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 puppet that is used to prepare children for the Phonic Screening Check. Luna the Moon Unicorn 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 Alien words and the children learn to recognise that these words are not real. They just need to use their phonic knowledge to read them.