



Merton Junior School

Phonics at Home

A booklet for parents



Enjoy reading:

A guide to phonics at home.

“At Merton Junior School, we believe that reading is an essential life skill and we are committed to enabling our children to become lifelong readers.”

Why is reading so important?

Evidence suggests that children who read for enjoyment every day not only perform better in reading tests than those who don't, but also develop a broader vocabulary, increased general knowledge and a better understanding of other cultures.

In fact, there's evidence to suggest that reading for pleasure is more likely to determine whether a child does well at school than their social or economic background.



What difference could I make?

Learning to read is about listening and understanding as well as working out words. Through hearing stories, children are exposed to a rich and wide vocabulary. This helps them build their own vocabulary and improve their understanding when they listen, which is vital as they start to read.

As children start to learn to read at school, you can play an important role in helping to keep them interested in books, finding out what interests them and helping them to find books that will be engaging and fun for them. Give time to helping them practise reading the books they will bring home from school.

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Understanding phonics:

What is phonics?

With phonics, children are taught to read by learning the phonemes (sounds) that represent particular graphemes (individual or groups of letters). At Merton Junior School, we follow Rocket Phonics by Rising Stars (the same scheme as Merton Infant School).

Top tips for helping phonics:

Say the sounds correctly:

It's important that the sounds are pronounced correctly, as they would sound in speech. Try not to add 'uh' to consonant sounds, such as /t/ and /p/, as this makes it trickier to blend the sounds together into words.

Practise:

Encourage your child to use their phonic knowledge when they are practising their reading. Make sure that they look at each letter in turn, all through each word.

Link sounds and letters to make words:

Children are taught in school to quickly see a link between the phoneme (sound) and a written representation of that sound (grapheme). At home, encourage your child to do the same whenever they read.

Don't be scared – make it fun!

Phonics can seem daunting for parents who were probably taught to read in a rather different way. However, simple games such as 'I spy' are great for helping reading, as the children have to listen to sounds and work through their decoding strategies.

With this knowledge, children can begin to read words by learning how to blend the sounds together. Unlocking how this alphabetic code works means they can learn to decode any word they come across.



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Further information:

There is lots of information out there but we are more than happy to help, guide or recommend ideas. Below are some useful sites to help get you started.

For advice on reading to your child:

www.pearson.com/uk/learners/primary-parents.html

www.wordsforlife.org.uk

Find a book online:

www.amazon.co.uk

www.bookfinder.com

www.waterstones.com

www.lovereadng4kids.co.uk

Mums net & Literacy Trust:

www.mumsnet.com/education

www.literacytrust.org.uk

Where to find your local library:

www.gov.uk/search-library-catalogue

Useful links for phonics:

<https://www.risingstars-uk.com/parent-hub>

<https://www.readwithphonics.com/parents-phonics-guide>

“The more you **read**
the more **things** you know.
The more that you **learn**
the more **places** you’ll go.”
-Dr. Seuss