



What schools do to teach reading

The Rose Review

In March 2006 a report was published called The Independent Review of the Teaching of Early Reading, more commonly known as The Rose Review. This report had very clear recommendations about the teaching of early reading. This was very welcome as prior to this there was a lot of confusion about what schools should be doing.

In a nutshell, schools should:

Teach phonics as the main first method for children to learn to read words.

For most children this should begin at age 5.

Before the age of 5 children should be involved in pre-reading activities to prepare them for phonics work (See Phase 1).

Phonics should be taught in a systematic way across the school.

Phonics should be set within a rich language curriculum that develops speaking and listening, reading and writing skills.

Phonics teaching should be multisensory. This means children will learn using all their senses e.g. by singing, dancing, acting, using magnetic letters, making

shapes in the air, looking at pictures, playing games, using computers, making sounds, making choices and as many other ways as possible. This is vital because all children learn differently.

In addition, schools should be making sure that:

All teachers have adequate training.

Monitoring is in place to ensure that all phonics teaching is high quality. This is essential to prevent children from falling behind wherever possible.

There are assessment systems in place to keep track of how all children are doing in phonics.

Where children do fall behind, they are given intervention (specific support with their phonics) to help them catch up as soon as possible.

What will this actually look like?

All schools following the recommendations will be using a systematic phonics programme. The programme published by the government and available free to all schools is called Letters and Sounds. Other schools may have chosen to buy a commercial programme. There are a number of these available but the school should have taken care to make sure that any programme they use meets the recommendations in the Rose Report. Other schools may have created their own programme or have taken elements from more than one programme and merged them together.

In schools using the Letters and Sounds programme, you would expect to see the following (schools following other programmes may vary slightly):

Children in Reception, Y1 and Y2 should have a 15-20 minute phonics session every day. This session should be fast, fun and multisensory (see above). Each session will follow a clear sequence as follows:

Introduction - The teacher will explain to the children what they will be learning today and get them enthusiastic and motivated for the session.

Revisit and review - The children will play a quickfire game to practise something they have learned before and help build their confidence.

Teach - The children will be taught a new phoneme/grapheme or a new skill - this will be taught in a fun multisensory way and may well involve: songs, actions, pictures, puppets, writing giant letters in the air.

Practise - The children play fast, fun games to practise the new thing they have just learned. Many of the games on this site will be used in this section of the session.

Apply - The children will have a quick go at reading or writing sentences that involve the new thing they have just learned.

Each of these sections lasts a few minutes at most.

Outside of the phonics session children should be given lots of opportunities to apply the new skills that they have learned in all the lessons that they do. The more opportunities they are given the sooner they will become confident with these skills.

Is this the only way that children are taught to read?

Absolutely not! Phonics is the first step in helping children to crack the code of reading and writing. However children also need to learn strategies to tackle words that can't be decoded easily and also to be able to understand and engage with what they read.

Reading skills are also developed through regularly **Reading Aloud** to children.

Guided Reading sessions involve a group of children reading the same book with a teacher. Within the session they will revise specific skills then read independently up to a certain point in the book. The teacher will move around the group listening to each child read. Then the group will discuss how they used the specific skill they worked on at the start of the session and also discuss their thoughts, feelings and observations about what they have read.

Literacy Lessons are another key opportunity for teaching reading. Each literacy unit usually lasts for several weeks and will tackle a particular type of text e.g. fantasy stories, instructions etc. Over the course of those few weeks children should read various texts of this type and ideally learn one off by heart including actions and sound effects. They should also develop speaking and listening skills by exploring these texts through drama and role play and discussing how they feel about them. Specific skills related to the text, such as sentence structure or getting things in the right order should be explored and finally children should have a go at writing their own text. Clearly many parts

of this process will help to develop children's reading skills. Within this process there will be many opportunities for **Shared Reading** in which a teacher will plan to model or develop a specific reading skill with a group of children.