**Amberley Parochial School**

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 ***becoming***

**Head Teacher:** Miss S Cale ***reflective, independent and aspirational learners for life***

21st September 2020

Dear parents and carers,

We all know that reading opens the door to a world of learning and experience. A child who reads (and is read to) regularly will become a good reader. As they develop fluency, they will be able to read more challenging material. A child who reads challenging material is a child who will learn and the more a child learns, the more they want to find out.

At Amberley, we are passionate about helping your children to become confident and successful by making reading and writing an enjoyable, rewarding experience. We hope that the following information will help you to experience this journey in partnership with us.

What is Phonics?

All words are made up of individual sounds and these sounds are merged together to form words; for example, cat has three sounds c-a-t; ship has three sounds sh-i-p and light also has three sounds l-igh-t. As you can see, some sounds have a single letter and other sounds are made using more than one letter.

We use 44 sounds to make all the words in the English language, yet we only have 26 letters. These letters work singularly, in pairs (a digraph) and sometimes in threes (a trigraph) to make a sound. Many of the 44 sounds are spelled in different ways; for example: **e**mail, happ**y**, sl**ee**p, **ea**ch.

It can all get a bit confusing!

We teach children to read and write by first learning the individual sounds made by single letters. They then learn to blend these together to read simple consonant, vowel, consonant (cvc) words like sat, pin and dog. Children also learn to segment words into individual sounds (sometimes referred to as sounding out) in preparation for writing.

When your child is ready to start reading, we will introduce them to a toy frog called Fred.  Fred can only say the sounds in a word and needs your child to help him read the word. Fred will say the sounds and children will work out the word. For example, Fred will say the sounds c–a–t, and children will say the word cat. We refer to this as ‘Fred talk’: sounding out the word.

We will introduce 4 or 5 new sounds (please note that we don’t refer to it as a letter) a week. Each sounds is accompanied by an image and saying which reinforces correct letter formation. The children will practice saying and writing the sound and the accompanying formation saying. When they have been introduced the first set of sounds, they will be ready to try and blend the sounds together to read simple (cvc) words.

Home learning to support phonics

We will be sending home a sheet which corresponds to the sound that has been taught that day. Please help your child to practice saying and writing the sound, and the short formation saying which goes with it (these will be written on the sheet). The sheets should then be placed into the folder which we will give your child and returned to school.

At the end of the week, we will send home a pot with small sound cards in it. Please encourage your child to practice these sounds individually and then make attempts to blend them together to read simple (cvc) words. Please ensure that the pot is in your child’s bag on Fridays, so that we can place the next set of cards in it.

There is a helpful guide for parents at  [www.oxfordowl.co.uk/for-home/reading-owl/find-a-book/read-write-inc-phonics--1/sound-blending-phonics-video](http://www.oxfordowl.co.uk/for-home/reading-owl/find-a-book/read-write-inc-phonics--1/sound-blending-phonics-video)

Please note that although we use many of the resources from the scheme mentioned above, we do not follow their programme entirely and that we teach the initial sounds in a slightly different order. At Amberley, we have developed our own programme of study based on our wealth of experience in teaching phonics and considerable time has been put into ensuring that it is an effective system. Our reading books have been carefully matched to the sounds that children have learned, in order to develop confident readers.

Our class webpage offers links to helpful guides and explanations, but if you would like further support, please feel free to get in touch.

Thank you for your continued support,

Kate Crampton and Sarah Penn