

Bosley St. Mary's CE Primary School



How to Help Your Child at Home

# What are Strong Foundations?



At Bosley, we are placing a daily focus on Strong Foundations because these core skills make the biggest difference to children's confidence, independence and long-term success in learning.

Before children can fully access the curriculum, they need secure basics. When handwriting is fluent, reading is automatic, spelling is more accurate and number facts are secure, children can focus their thinking on understanding rather than struggling with the mechanics of learning. This reduces frustration, supports wellbeing and helps children keep up with the pace of lessons as they move through school.

Strong foundations are not about rushing ahead – they are about getting the essentials right so that everything else becomes easier.

Each day, we will practise key foundational skills in short, focused sessions. Over time, this consistent practice builds stamina, accuracy and confidence.

This booklet explains the six areas we focus on:

- Hold a pencil comfortably
- Write letters and numbers correctly
- Spell words accurately
- Read fluently
- Orally compose sentences first
- Recall number bonds quickly



This guide offers clear, practical ways you can support your child's Strong Foundations at home. Your child's teacher may highlight specific pages that are most relevant, so you can focus on the areas that will have the greatest impact.

Small, regular practice at home can have a powerful impact on your child's confidence, independence and progress. Even just five minutes each day helps to strengthen these essential foundations, making learning feel easier, less frustrating and more successful in school.

# Hold a Pencil Comfortably



A secure pencil grip underpins all writing. When grip is efficient, children tire less, gain better control and can focus on their ideas rather than holding the pencil. This skill develops from the inside out, as strong core, shoulder and arm muscles support the hand and fingers to work effectively.



## Palmar Supinate (Fisted Grip):

- Focus on whole arm movement.
- Encourage large movements like dancing, running, and balancing; outdoor mark-making with large sticks in the mud; and using chunky crayons on large paper



## Digital Pronate:

- Focus on arm and wrist strength.
- Visit the park for climbing frames and monkey bars; try vertical painting with water on a fence or easel; and set up "astronaut writing" by taping paper underneath a table.



## Splayed Four-Finger Grip:

- Focus on hand strength and palm arches.
- Have water fights with spray bottles to build palm strength; help with baking by kneading dough; and use a rolling pin to stabilise the wrists



## Static Tripod/Quadropod:

- Focus on finger independence.
- Sing and act out finger rhymes like "Incy Wincy Spider"; play with finger puppets; and practice the "table piano" by lifting one finger at a time



## Dynamic Tripod (Mature Grip):

- Focus on refining fluency and stamina.
- Help hang washing using clothes pegs; use tweezers to move pom-poms in games; and enjoy threading beads to refine the pincer grip

# Write Letters and Numbers Correctly



Correct letter and number formation supports fluency, neatness and confidence in writing. When children form shapes correctly, writing becomes automatic and less tiring, allowing them to focus on spelling, ideas and problem solving rather than how to write each symbol.

Incorrect formation can quickly become a habit that is difficult to unlearn, so consistent practice is key.



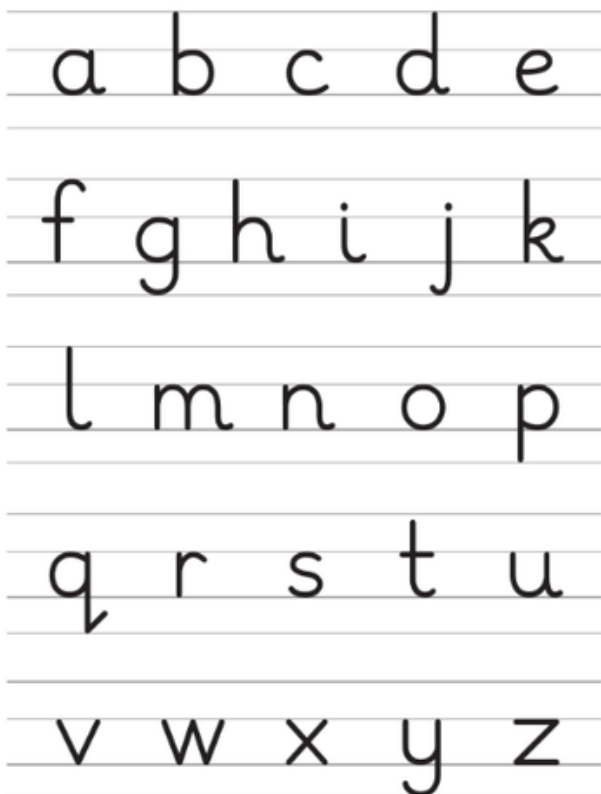
## What You Can Do

- Focus on correct starting points and formation patterns
- Use short daily practice rather than long writing sessions



## Activity Ideas

- Writing in sand, shaving foam or paint
- Tracing over large letters and numbers
- Whiteboard practice
- Chalk writing outside
- Saying the formation aloud



We teach print handwriting in EYFS and Year 1; in Year 2, children begin to learn to write cursively when they are ready.

# Spell Words Accurately



Spelling is about understanding sounds, patterns and how words are built. Secure spelling helps children write more fluently and with greater confidence, as they are not stopping to work out every word.

Strong spelling also supports reading and vocabulary development.



## What You Can Do

- Focus on hearing sounds in words first
- Practise common and tricky words regularly



## Activity Ideas

- Look, say, cover, write, check
- Magnetic letters to build words
- Writing spellings in different ways (pens, chalk, paint)
- Spotting spelling patterns in books
- Quick daily practice of 3-5 words

### Consonant Sounds

|    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| f  | l  | m  | n  | r  | s  | v  | z  | sh | th | ng |
| ff | ll | mm | nn | rr | ss | ve | zz | ti |    |    |
| ph | le | mb | kn | wr | se |    | s  | ci |    |    |
|    |    |    |    |    | ce |    | se |    |    | nk |

|    |    |    |    |   |     |    |    |    |    |   |   |     |
|----|----|----|----|---|-----|----|----|----|----|---|---|-----|
| b  | c  | d  | g  | h | j   | p  | qu | t  | w  | x | y | ch  |
| bb | k  | dd | gg |   | g   | pp |    | tt | wh |   |   | tch |
|    | ck |    |    |   | ge  |    |    |    |    |   |   |     |
|    | ch |    |    |   | dge |    |    |    |    |   |   |     |

### Vowel Sounds

|   |    |   |   |   |     |     |     |     |
|---|----|---|---|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| a | e  | i | o | u | ay  | ee  | igh | ow  |
|   | ea |   |   |   | a-e | y   | i-e | o-e |
|   |    |   |   |   | ai  | ea  | ie  | oa  |
|   |    |   |   |   |     | e   | i   | o   |
|   |    |   |   |   |     | e-e | y   |     |

|     |    |    |     |     |    |    |    |     |     |     |
|-----|----|----|-----|-----|----|----|----|-----|-----|-----|
| oo  | oo | ar | or  | air | ir | ou | oy | ire | ear | ure |
| u-e |    |    | oor | are | ur | ow | oi |     |     |     |
| ue  |    |    | ore |     | er |    |    |     |     |     |
| ew  |    |    | aw  |     |    |    |    |     |     |     |
|     |    |    | au  |     |    |    |    |     |     |     |

|      |        |          |        |
|------|--------|----------|--------|
| the  | we     | mum      | get    |
| and  | can    | one      | just   |
| a    | are    | them     | now    |
| to   | up     | do       | came   |
| said | had    | me       | oh     |
| in   | my     | down     | about  |
| he   | her    | dad      | got    |
| I    | what   | big      | their  |
| of   | there  | when     | people |
| it   | out    | it's     | your   |
| was  | this   | see      | put    |
| you  | have   | looked   | could  |
| they | went   | very     | house  |
| on   | be     | look     | old    |
| she  | like   | don't    | too    |
| is   | some   | come     | by     |
| for  | not    | will     | day    |
| at   | then   | into     | made   |
| his  | were   | back     | time   |
| but  | go     | from     | I'm    |
| that | little | children | if     |
| with | as     | him      | help   |
| all  | no     | Mr       | Mrs    |
| an   | saw    | off      | called |
| so   | make   | asked    | here   |

# Read Fluently



Fluent reading means reading accurately, smoothly and with expression. When reading becomes automatic, children can focus on understanding the text rather than decoding every word.

Fluent readers develop stronger comprehension, confidence and enjoyment of books.



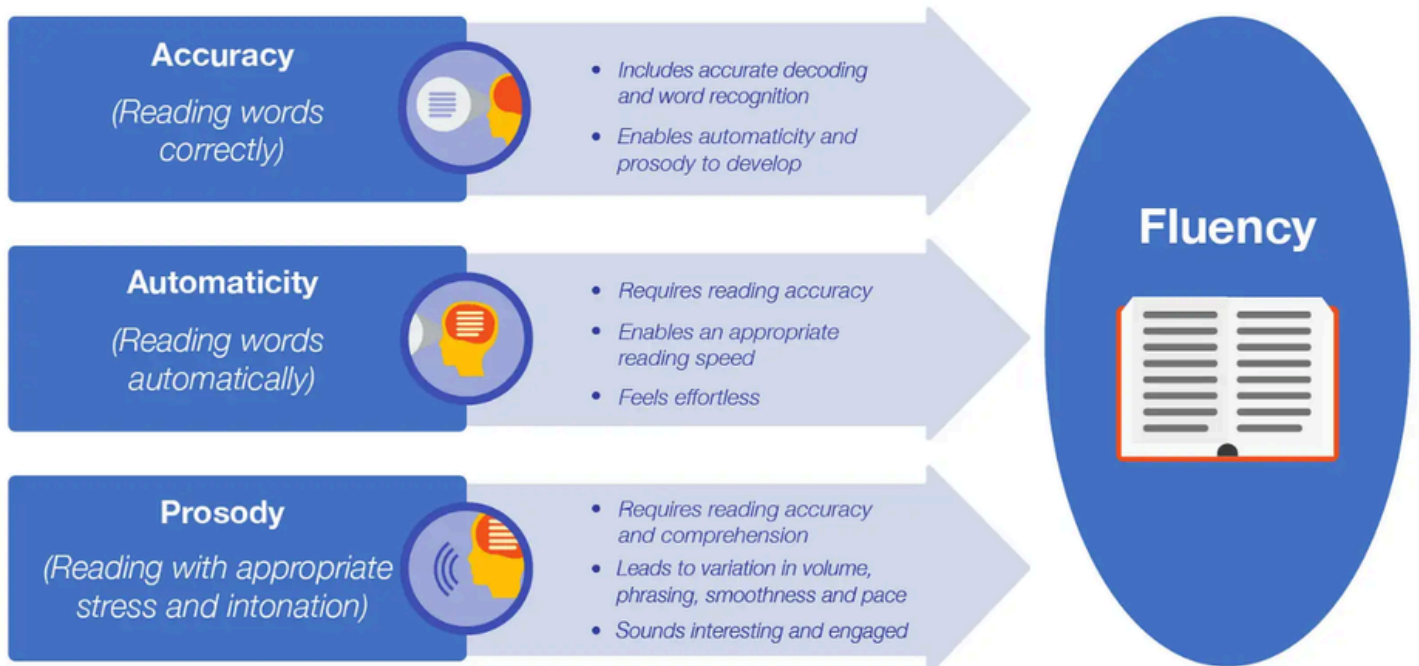
## What You Can Do

- Focus on regular reading aloud
- Re-read familiar books to build confidence and flow



## Activity Ideas

- Daily reading together (even 5 mins)
- Echo reading (you read, they repeat)
- Paired reading
- Listening to audiobooks
- Re-reading favourite books



# Say Sentences Out Loud First



Oral composition means saying a full sentence before writing it. This helps children organise their ideas, use better vocabulary and structure their writing more clearly.

Speaking first reduces cognitive load and makes writing feel more manageable and less overwhelming.



## What You Can Do

- Encourage full sentences in conversation
- Ask children to say their sentence before writing



## Activity Ideas

- Describe a picture in full sentences
- Storytelling about their day
- Role play and imaginative talk
- Expanding sentences (who, what, where, why)



First...  
then...

My favourite...  
because....

The answer is...  
because I know....



# Recall Number Bonds Quickly



Number bonds are pairs of numbers that make a total (e.g.  $7 + 3 = 10$ ). Quick recall of these facts builds strong mathematical foundations and supports mental maths, calculation speed and confidence.

When number bonds are automatic, children can solve problems more efficiently and with less frustration.



## What You Can Do

- Focus on quick recall rather than counting each time
- Practise little and often



## Activity Ideas

- Quick-fire number bond games
- Dice and domino games
- Number bond flashcards
- Using real objects (toys, snacks, coins)
- Number bond songs and chants



Scan to access  
maths games for  
free