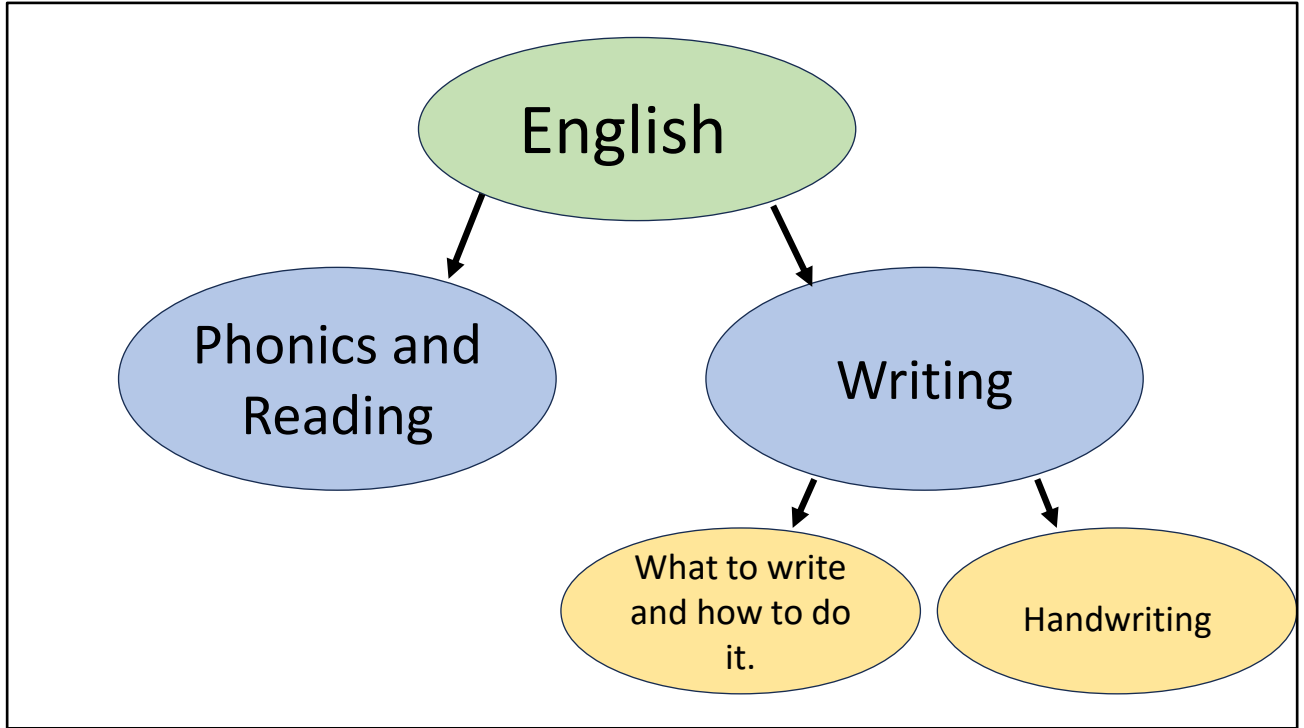


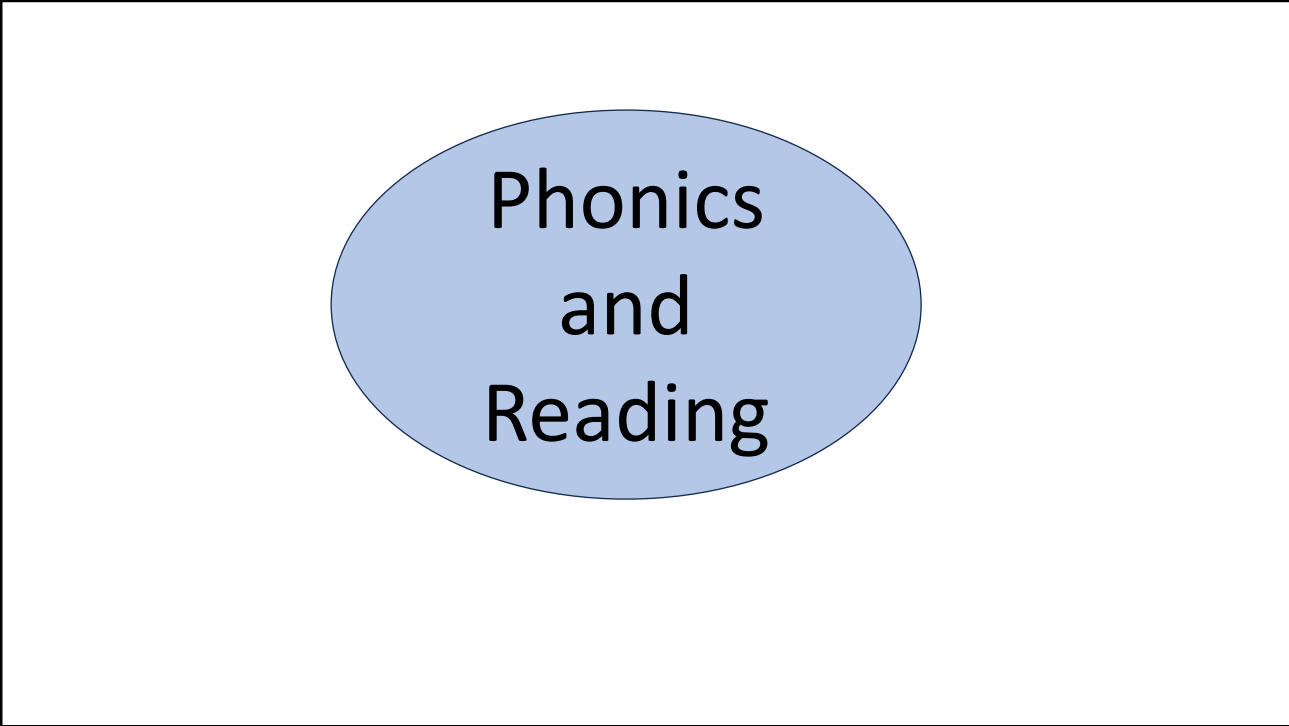
Learning the basics in Year R at St Mark's





Hello everyone. Today I'm going to give you a snapshot of how we teach phonics, reading and writing in Year R. Then I'll move onto Maths!

Hopefully you'll find it useful you'll feel better informed and able to support your child at home.



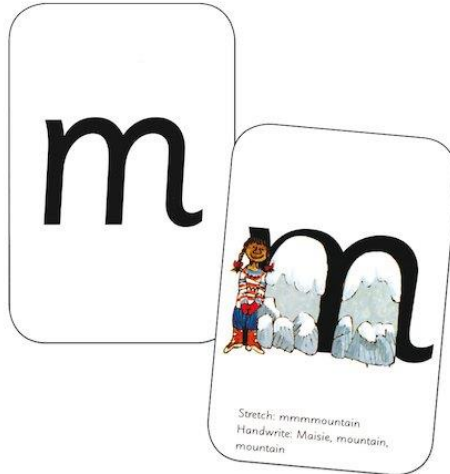
Phonics
and
Reading



RWI

At St Mark's we will use the Read Write Inc programme – a synthetic phonics programme. All this means that we teach the children the sounds the letters make, rather than the letter names.

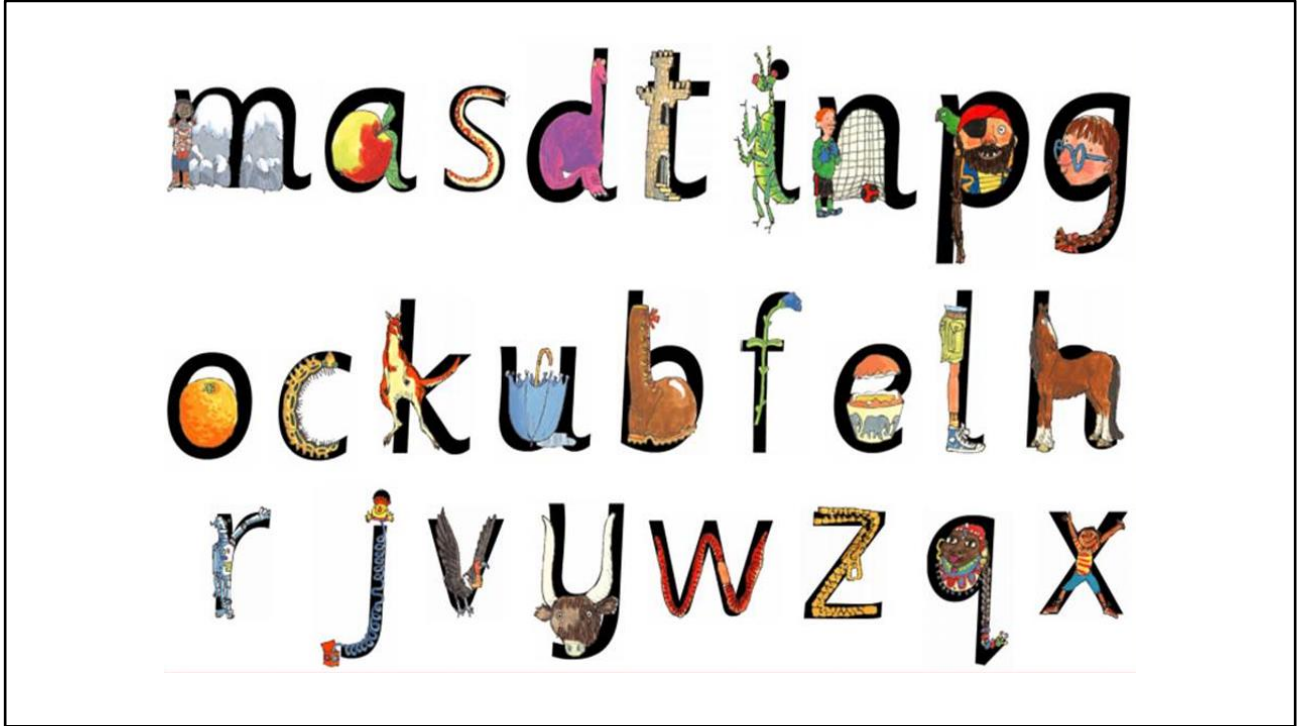
We will have phonics sessions 5 days a week and we will start by introducing all of the single sounds, which are the alphabet letters.



Each sound has a picture associated with it.

This is the first sound we teach, m.

On one side of the card is the letter and the children learn to say 'mmm', and on the other is a picture of a character called Maisie and the children learn to say 'Maisie, mountain, mountain.



The programme enables children to see the relationship between reading, writing and spelling from an early age.

It gives them the code to be able to begin making sense of print.

This is very different to how you may have learnt to read where you were probably taught to recognise words purely by sight.



We introduce the sounds in a rather strange order.

We start with m, a, s, d, t rather than with a, b, c.

This is so the children can start building words quickly using the first 5 sounds introduced.



at

am

as

mat

sad

dad

sat

Sam

mad

Once a child knows the first 5 letter sounds they can start reading and writing simple regular words and this is such a confidence boost for them!

In the RWI programme we teach the children to read 'green words' like this.

The term 'green word' just means that the words are decodable ie the children are able to sound them out.



Our Read Write Inc mascot is 'Fred Frog'

This is Fred and he sits on our shoulder throughout session. He can only talk in sounds and as part of the engagement the children need to help him learn.

One important thing to tell you is that he only talks in **Pure** sounds – no 'schwa' So c,b,t NOT cuh, buh, tuh

Fred Talk



mat

We teach the children to read words using 'Fred Talk'. This just means saying those pure sounds as they read a word. So, a word like mat will be read as m-a-t, not M-A-T.

The children are taught to press the sound buttons you can see here. As they do this, they are **sounding out** the word. We also call this **segmenting**; breaking it up into segments of sound. The children use this to read a word, and also to hear the sounds they need to write a word down.

Once the word has been segmented, the children are then taught to **blend** the word together again. We use blending mainly for reading. This just means building the word back together after they've sounded out a word.

Fred Fingers

m a t

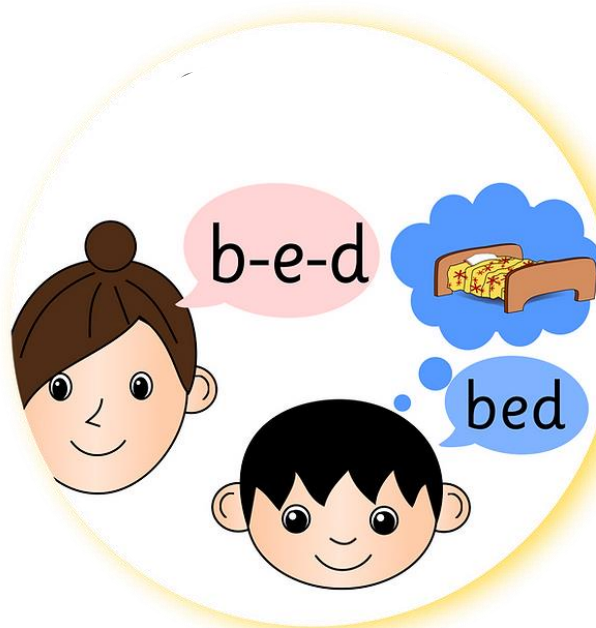


We'll also teach the children to use **'Fred Fingers'**.

We use them to help us listen for all the sounds in a word. We will tell the children how many sounds a word has and then the children hold up that many fingers and slowly sound it out. It's particularly helpful when they are learning the middle sounds.

MODEL sounding out m-a-t, mat.

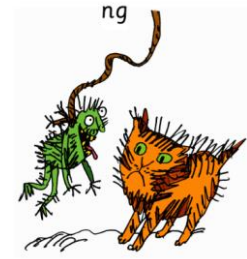
Oral blending



As well as being able to segment and blend when looking at print, the children are also taught to 'orally blend' confidently and quickly. This is a vital pre-reading skill which we will focus on alongside our introduction of each sound.

As this picture shows, an adult says a word out loud in Fred Talk e.g. b-e-d, and the child needs to be able to internally blend it to work out what the adult is saying. They need to be able to do this confidently before we can expect them to transfer the same skill to reading print.

'Special friends'



a thing on a string



I think I stink

Once we have taught all of the single sounds, we will start learning sounds made with 2 letters like sh, ch, th, qu, ng, nk. In the RWI programme these are called 'special friends'.

The children will be taught to look for these letters together in a word and only say the one sound instead of the two separate sounds.

'Special friends'



We will then move on to teach them further special friends such as **ay**, **ee**, **igh**

RWI reading and phonics practice at home



Sound and word practice



- mad
- sat
- mat
- sad
- at

Ditty sheets

Ditty 1: pop

Speed Sounds - read the sounds (not the letter name)

a g t p n s d o i

Green Words - read these words by blending the sounds together

not got sip pop dad did dog

Red Words - read these words but tell your child the word if they get stuck

I the

I got pop
dad got a sip
the dog did not



'Take home' books



Reading

We read with your child twice a week in school, once with the teacher and once with an LSA.

The books or reading material your child will be reading with us individually in school, and at home will be closely matched to their daily phonics learning in school.

Sound cards

To begin with this reading material will be practical. As we teach each group of letter sounds we will send them home for your child to practise recognising. We'll also send home a list of words using the sounds taught so far. These are for oral blending practice, segmenting and blending practice and for your child to practise building using their sound cards.

Ditty Sheets

Once they can recognise most single sounds and use them to read simple words independently, they will begin bring 'Ditty Sheets' home.

These Ditty sheets will include the sounds they have learnt, as the children consolidate their early decoding skills (pointing to and saying each letter in a word and then blending these sounds to read the word.)

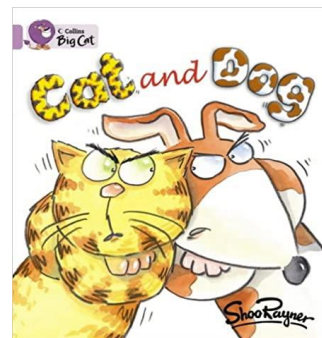
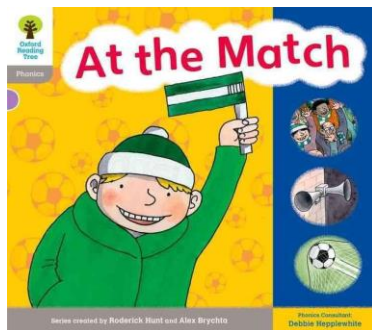
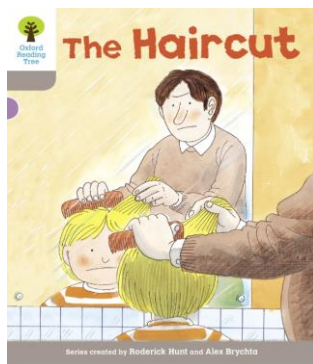
At this stage the children will be introduced to 'red words'. In the RWI programme these are words which cannot be sounded out such as 'the', 'put', 'to'. You may have heard these referred to as 'high frequency' words or 'keywords' before.

Take Home books

Once they are confidently segmenting and blending

during their phonics sessions, can recognise the first 6 'special friends' and read words containing these sounds, the children will be ready to begin bringing home a 'take home' book. These books contain words, settings and characters which match the separate RWI book they will have been reading with us at school. The focus for you at home is helping your child read these books confidently and develop their sight recognition of the **already** familiar words.

The RWI book they have been reading in school will also be issued on the 'Oxford Owl' website so the children can consolidate their reading for that week. We will add your child's login details for Oxford Owl later in the year when we're ready to start using it.



Sharing books

picture versions



In addition to the children's RWI reading material each week, whether it be sound cards, ditty sheets or a take home book, your child will also choose their own 'sharing book' to bring home each week. These books will have a sticker on the spine as shown on the side.

These will initially be picture books as the children develop their understanding of story language and patterns, telling stories and answering questions about the story.

In these early stages of their reading development it is crucial that they develop their confidence to approach, and enjoy books.



Once they have progressed further through the RWI scheme and are bringing home a 'take home' book, they will choose from a selection of sharing books which include text.

These are books for you to enjoy sharing together to encourage a love of books and reading. You may read the whole text to your child and talk about the story and enjoy it together. It might be that your child chooses to try to read a few words, or more, alongside you and that is fine and can be encouraged, but it is important to remember that there is no expectation for your child to read this book independently.

Their RWI 'take home' book is the book that is carefully matched to your child's phonic knowledge and is the one that we would encourage your child to read independently at least 3 times. This will support your child most in learning to read and help them to make the best progress.

Reading rich environment



Comprehension

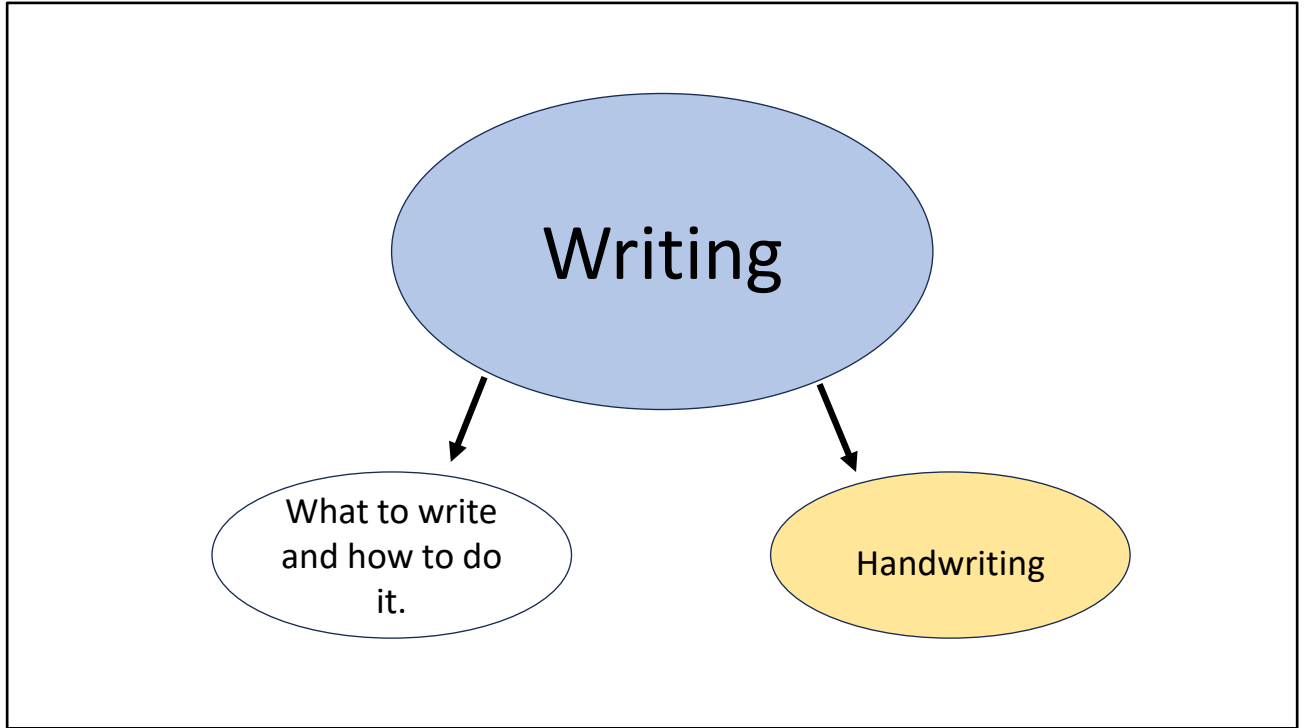
As well as teaching the children phonics and the mechanics of how to read, it is as equally important that the children develop their comprehension and understanding of books whether it's fiction or non-fiction.

- How stories are made up - **Beginning, middle and end, problem and resolution**
- Different characters - **Goodies, baddies**
- Different settings - **under the sea, in the woods, in space**

- How to answer questions - **comprehension skills**

We will develop these skills using their RWI books, during whole class Write Stuff sessions (which I'll talk about a bit later), and you can focus on these areas when sharing their RWI book, sharing book or library book with them at home.

Any questions?



When we talk about teaching the children to write we mean two things:

1. Writing – the purpose of writing, what to write and how to present it (as a list, letter)
2. Handwriting – letter formation – the mechanics if you like.

“Writing is the process and handwriting is the tool.”

We’ll look at **handwriting** first.

It is very important that we develop the children's arm, shoulder and wrist muscles as well as their hand muscles to help the children control a pencil comfortably.

We work on the children's Gross Motor Skills and Fine Motor Skills to support your child in learning to comfortably hold and control a pencil for handwriting.

Gross Motor Skills = control of large muscle movements such as shoulders.

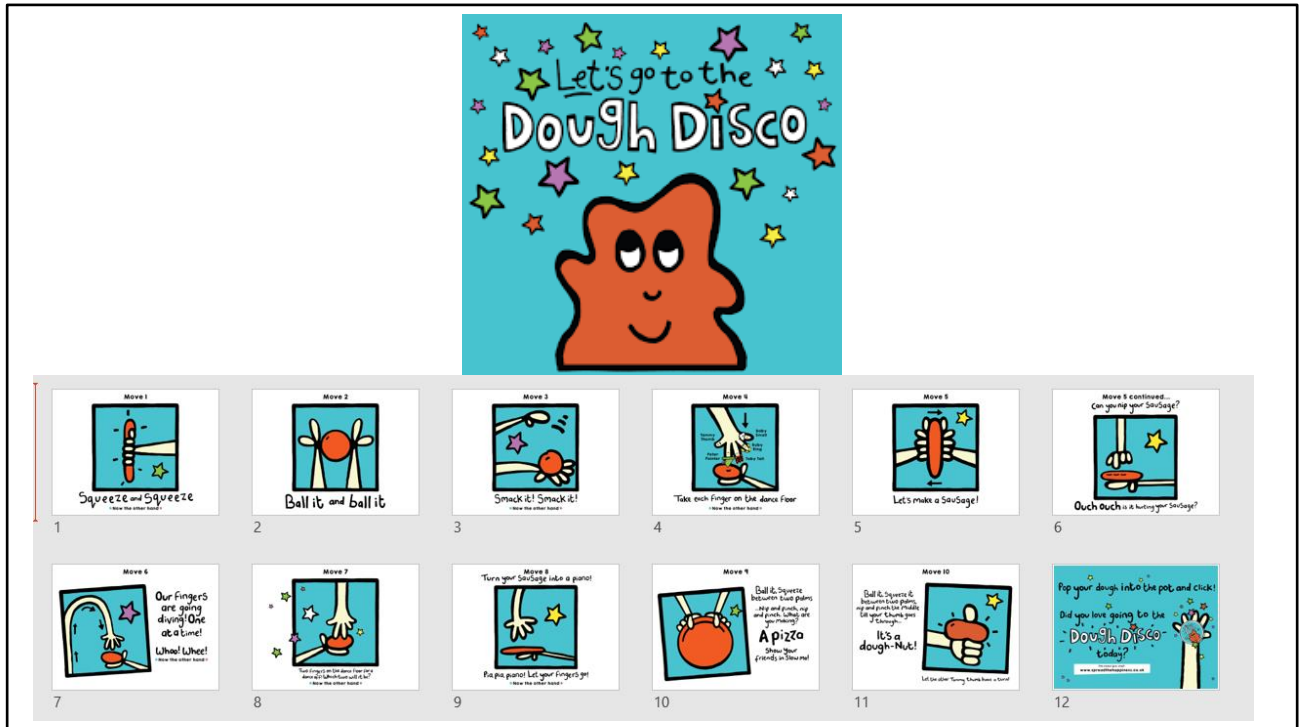
Fine Motor Skills = control of small muscle movements such as palmar grasp, and pincer grip.

Write Dance



One of the ways we work large muscles and develop gross motor movements is through **Write Dance**.

This is a programme of themed dances which the children complete to music, and each is designed to work particular movements which can then be translated further down the line into particular handwriting shapes e.g. The Volcano which is our first dance focussed on strong up and down movements which the children need to form the letters l, t, i.

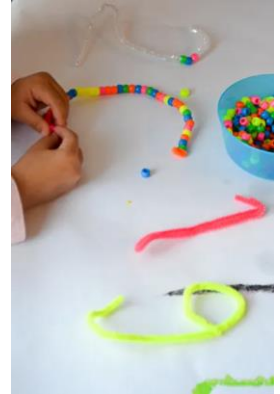


One of the ways we work smaller muscles needed for fine motor control is through **Dough Disco**.

We dance to music with an individual ball of dough, completing various finger and hand movements in our dough.

They are squeezing and poking and prodding and they absolutely love it!

Funky Fingers



To further develop and maintain the children's fine motor muscles and dexterity, the children have **Funky Fingers** sessions.

These sessions will include a range of fiddly activities aimed at working the children's pincer grip and developing their hand to eye coordination. These sessions are also completed to Music.



We make sure that there are lots of activities inside and outside which focus on these ‘fine motor’ and ‘gross motor’ skills.

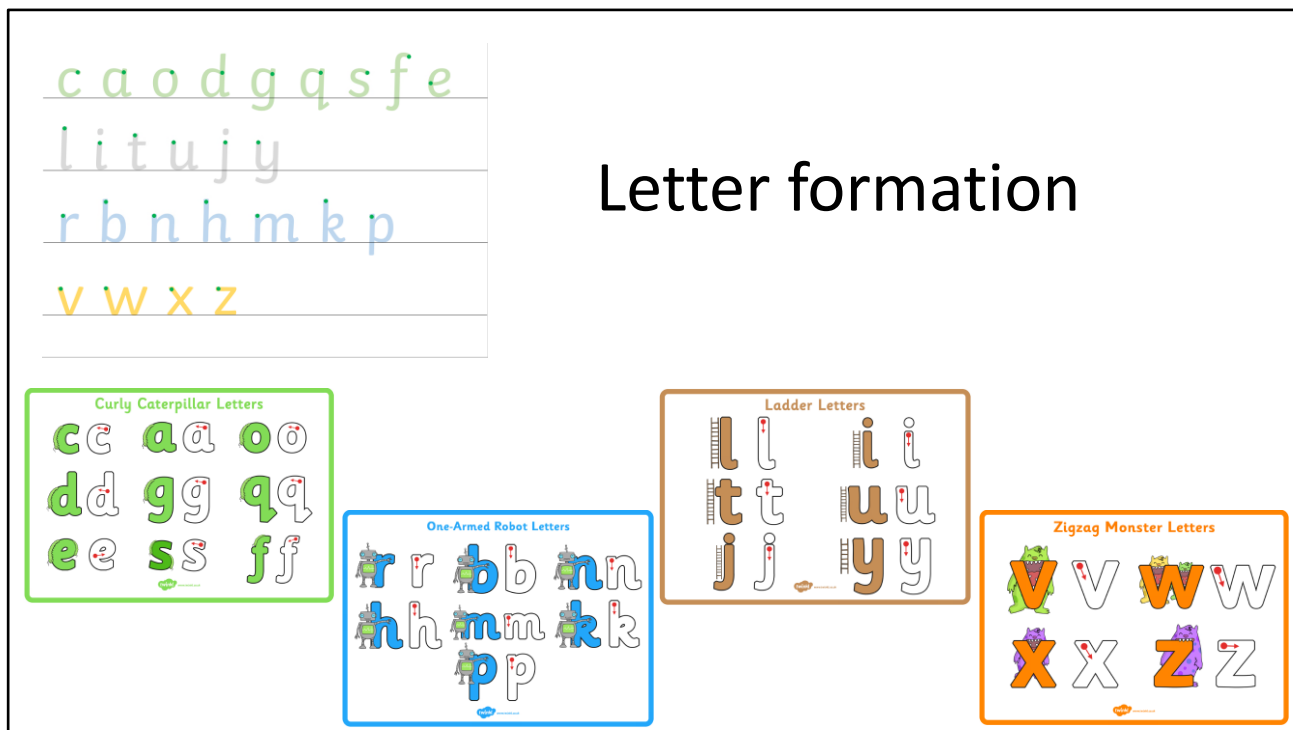
Letter formation



Alongside supporting the development of the children's gross and fine motor skills we will be teaching the children handwriting.

As we introduce the RWI sounds, each letter has its own rhyme so these are introduced during our phonics sessions.

For example, when learning 'm' we teach the children to say 'Maisie, mountain, mountain' as they form their letter M.



We also use the ‘letter families’ you can see here to support the children’s understanding of how similar letters will use repeated movements in order to be formed correctly.

We sent home a letter formation card in your child’s pack **like this one on the slide**. It shows our handwriting script. We start on the green dot.

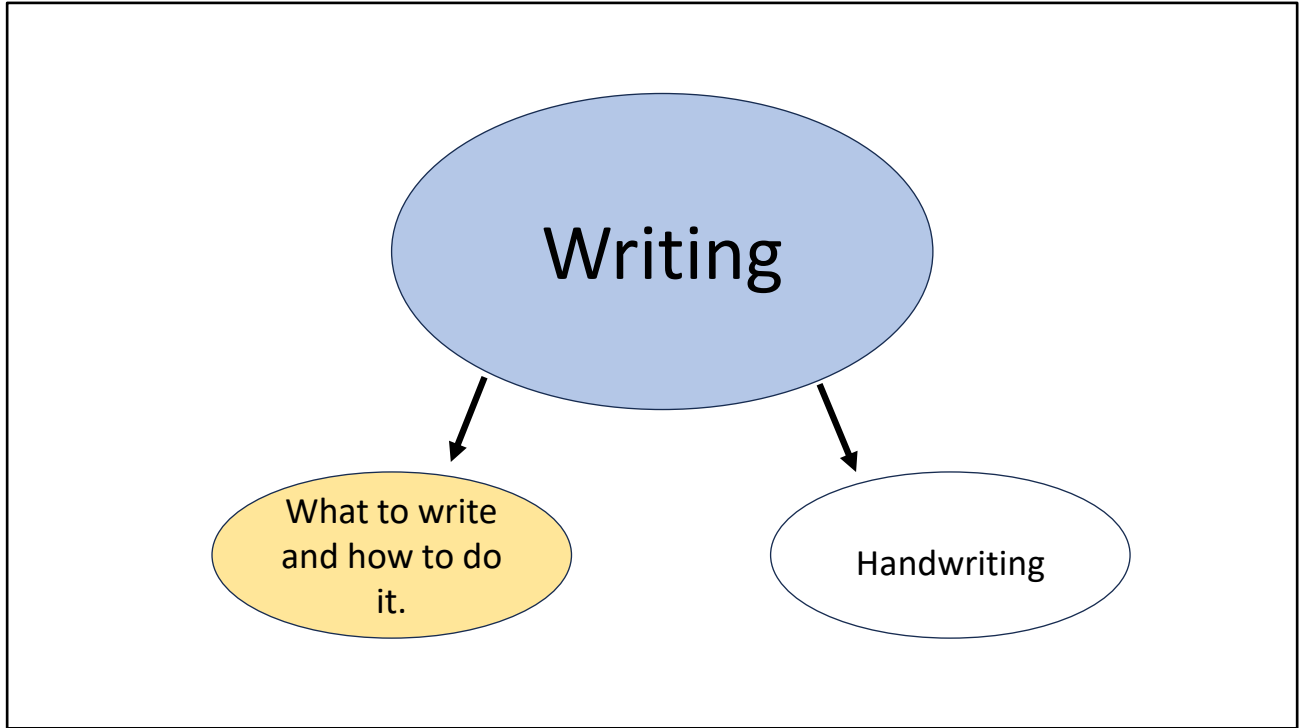
For those of you who have older children at St Marks, we have moved away from teaching the cursive script with lead ins and lead outs that you will be familiar

with. They will be introduced to this later in KS1, when they are able to write more fluently.

We **do not** use capital letters at all except for at the start of a sentence or at the beginning of a name.

If your child has already learnt to write in capitals, please support our teaching in school by helping them switch over to these lower case letters at home. We call these 'school letters' with the children so if they come home talking about 'school letters' they just mean lower case letters.

If you yourself tend to write in capitals please can we ask that you write in lower case letters too. You are their most important role model!



What to write and how to do it

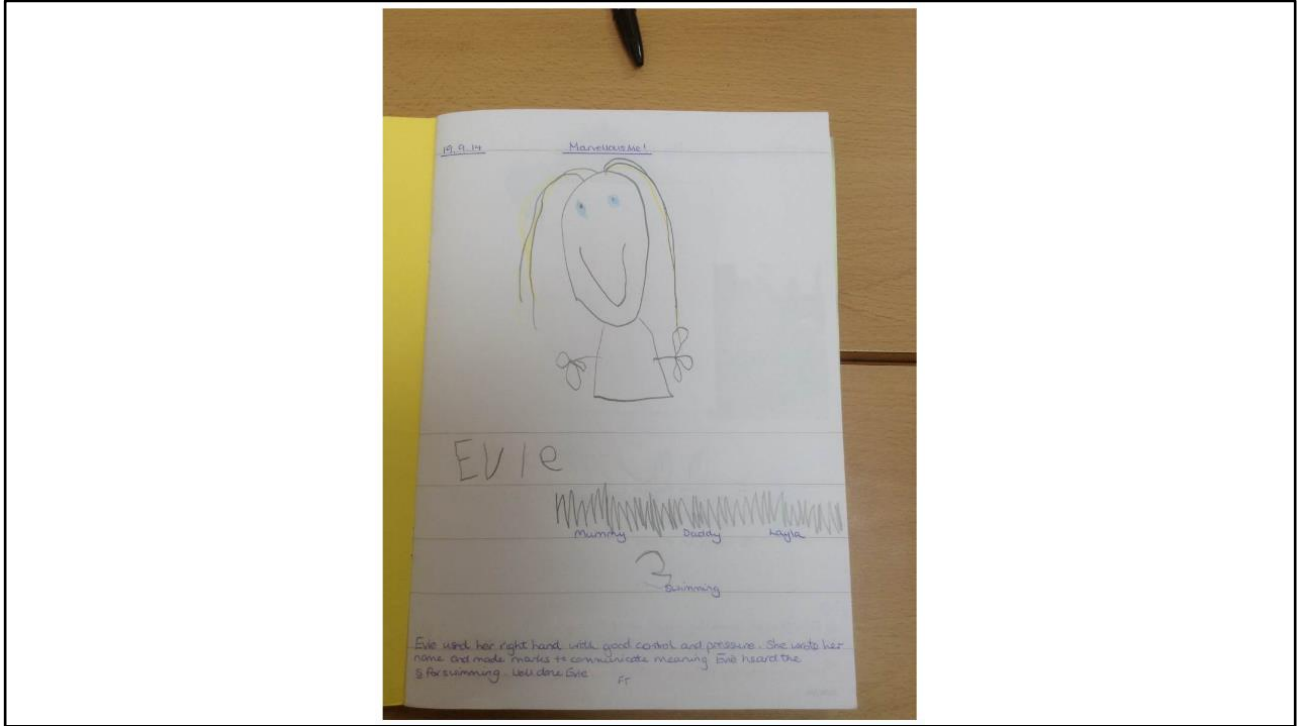
Our goal is for the children to write for purpose using their own ideas and spelling words independently using their phonic knowledge.

Writing Journey

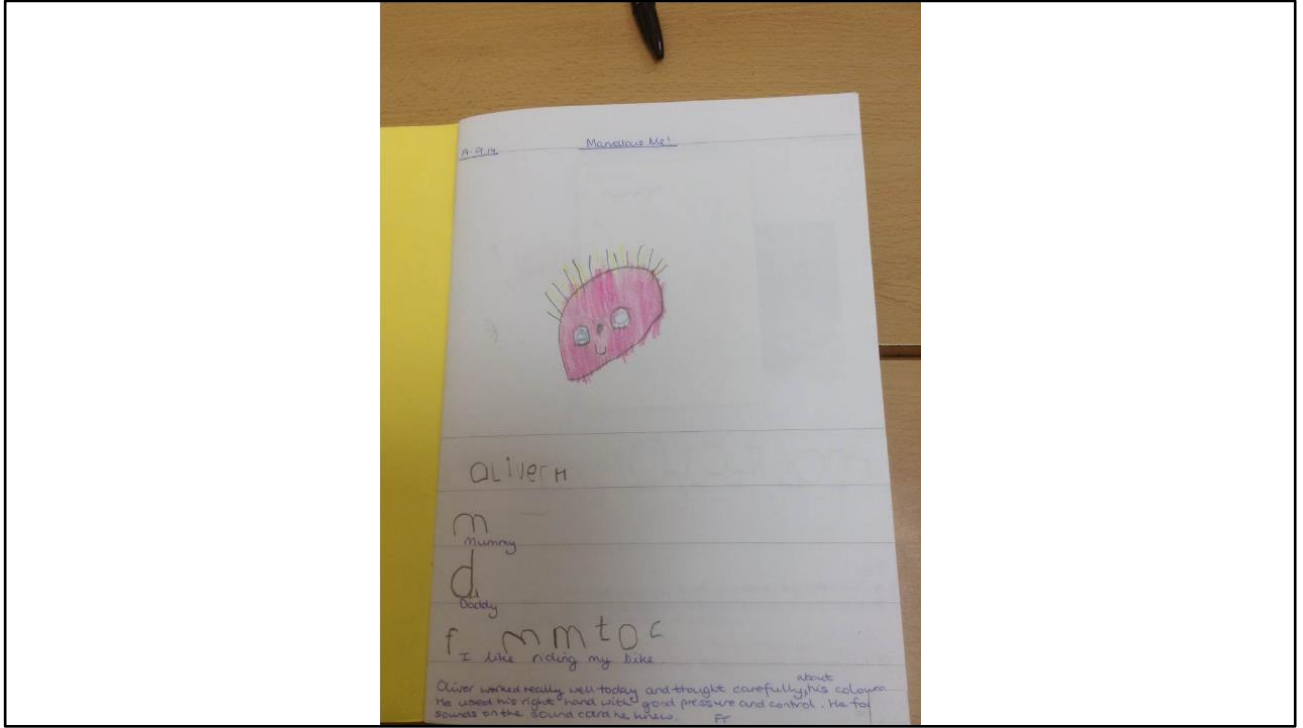


Your child may not be interested at all in writing yet, some of your children may be reluctantly writing a few letters and some of your children may be raring to go, know how to form lots of letters and are super keen!

We will take your child from whatever point they are at and build their skills from there.



Once we start introducing the RWI sounds they will be encouraged to use letter shapes they know in their emergent writing.



Then they will be encouraged to write the first sound of each word correctly.



This then builds up to writing end sounds, and then middle sounds finally.

And then they will be working on forming their own simple captions using their own ideas and spelling by themselves.

All writing children complete at school will be their own ideas. We don't get them to copy write at all so please try not to do this at home. If they are copying your writing, they may not know what they are writing, and they won't be using their phonics to think for themselves.

The Write Stuff



Separate to the children's daily phonics lessons when they will be learning how to spell words using Fred Talk, we teach four **Write Stuff** sessions a week.

We want to teach the children that writing is purposeful and can be enjoyed in the form of fiction and non-fiction books and poems. We focus on one text for a whole week and the children will be writing independently during every one of these sessions, recording their own ideas linked to the story. Each session we will focus on a different 'lens' and you can see these circular icons on the slide.

We may focus on a character's **FEELINGS** (red heart), what we **NOTICE** in an illustration (yellow eyes), or **CHECKING** what a character can hear (purple ear).

Following the same sequence I've just outlined, they may start the year just making marks to record their ideas, then move onto using initial sounds to record their ideas, then begin including middle and end sounds, then put their words into short sentences.

One of the main benefits of the 'The Write Stuff' approach is it focusses on developing the children's language so they can then use interesting word choices in their writing, such as 'petrified' instead of scared, 'gloomy' instead of 'sad' and 'ecstatic' instead of 'happy'. We have two more froggy friends, **Flick and Flippy** who generate these interesting word choices each day.

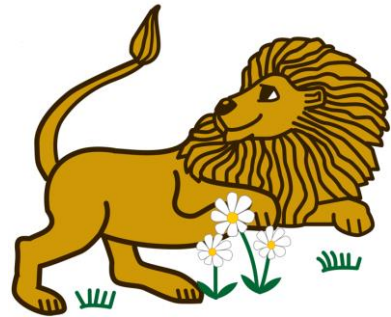
These sessions are taught whole class with the children all writing on their own clipboards



As well as these daily whole class taught sessions we will also encourage writing within the children's play as much as possible, without prompts. Lists, maps, notes to their friends, captions on pictures. It's really helpful if you can encourage this at home too.

Any questions?

Maths in Year R at St Mark's - becoming a Mathematician





Maths is everywhere in the world around the children.

The children will need to be able to use maths in everyday life.

Maths enables them to think logically and become good problem solvers.

It is so important that we lay secure foundations in early mathematical skills NOW while they're really young.



How do we do this?

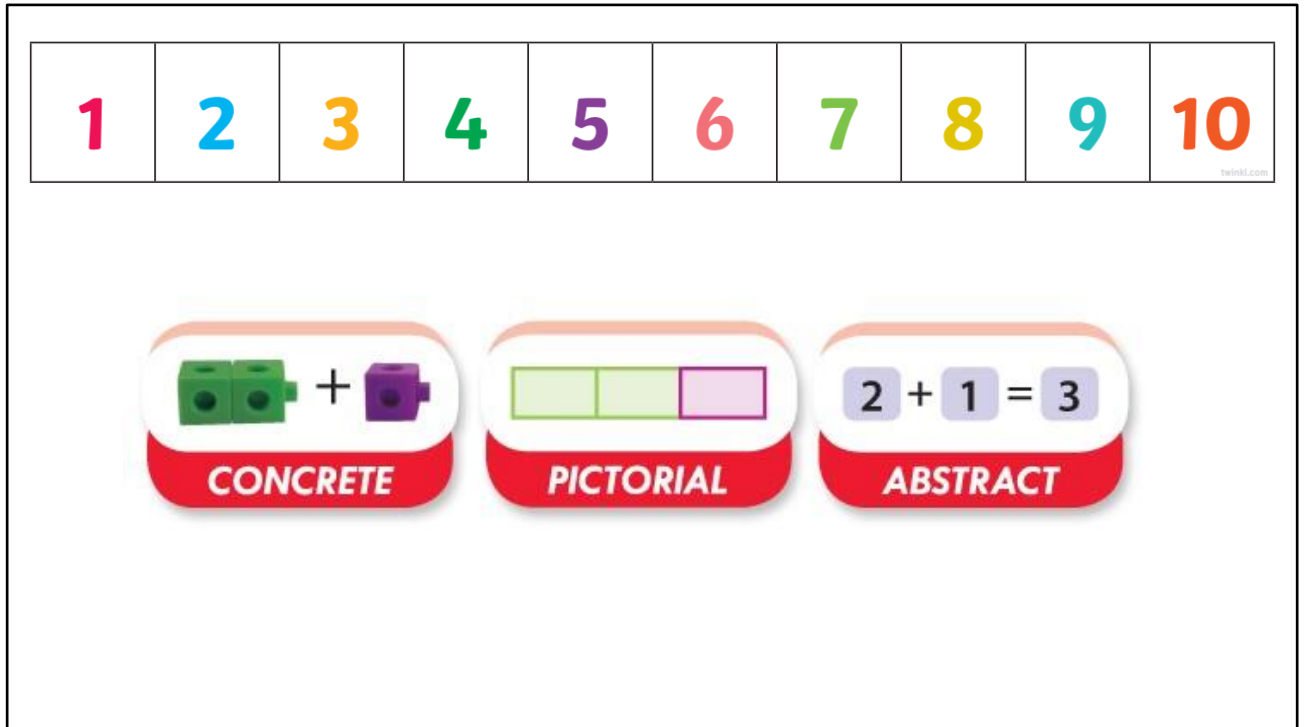
- By having a mathematically rich environment. So, both inside and out there are always lots of opportunities for them to play with number, to play with mathematical concepts and explore.
- By exploring new concepts and skills through Whole class teaching sessions which we have 4 times a week.
- By enhancing the provision we provide daily to encourage exploration of mathematical concepts & practise newly learnt language, skills and concepts.





We want to develop the children's ability to

- see patterns in numbers,
- make connections between numbers
- recognise relationships between numbers or concepts
- count, sort and match.



We use an approach called **‘Mastery Approach’** at St Marks.

This is a relatively new approach and is very different to a traditional approach to teaching maths which relied heavily on children learning number facts and processes from memory. The pitfalls of such an approach is that children didn’t always fully understand the value of each number they were using or how each process actually works.

Mastery Approach is a slow and steady approach. Although we will cover the numbers up to 20 over the course of the year, we will spend two full terms learning about numbers 1 to 10.

You may be thinking “my child can already count to 20 and is learning to count to 100.”

Mastery Approach develops a **deep understanding** of numbers which enables the children to use these numbers more confidently and competently for problem solving in the future, laying good, strong foundations in Maths. **It’s about breadth of learning, rather than racing through to bigger numbers.**

So, if your child is really confident with numbers at the moment we’ll be looking to give them breadth of experience through lots of problem solving, to push forward their mathematical thinking.



We also teach other Mathematical concepts like shapes, using money, measuring time, weight, height and capacity alongside our focus on numbers.

So, when we are learning about 4, we will learn about squares, rectangles and practise spending 4p in the role play shop!

When we are learning about 6 we will learn about hexagons, dice faces and facts related to 6 e.g. 6 is double 3.



We use the BBC programme 'Numberblocks' to support our whole class teaching.

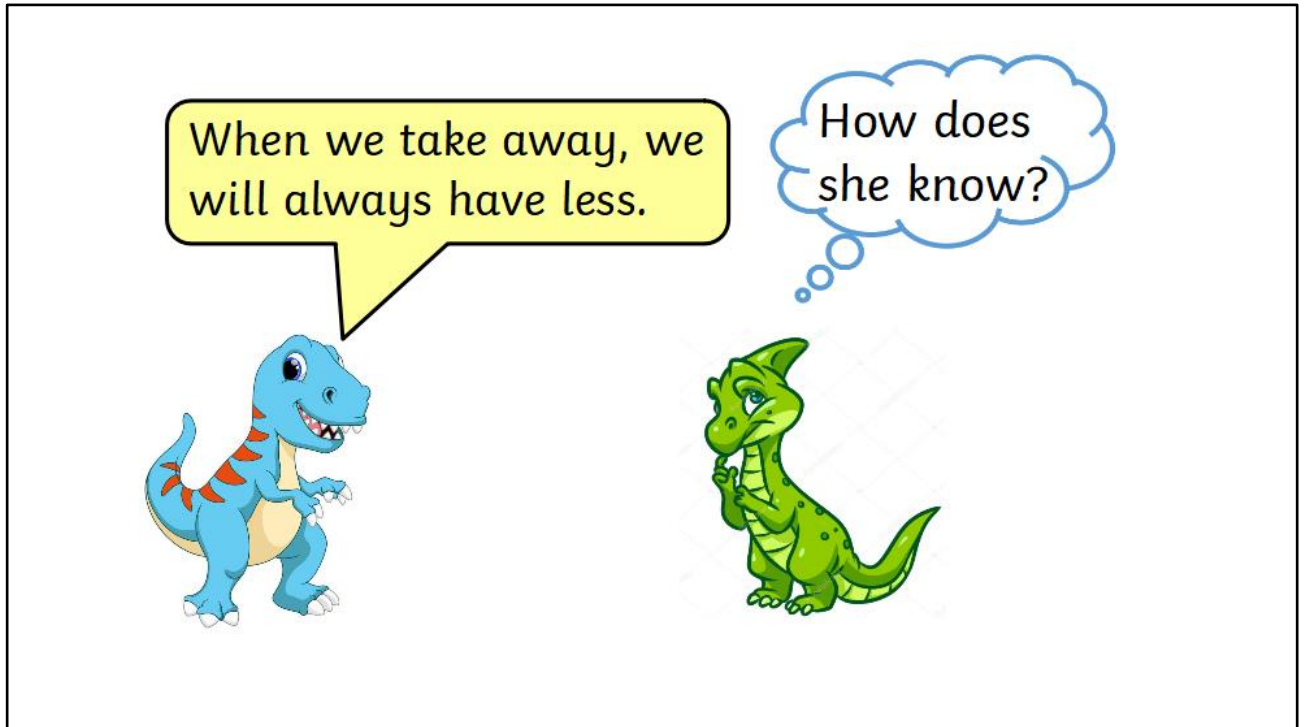
These episodes have been carefully planned to support the Mastery Approach that schools use.

The benefits of using Numberblocks is it is **really** engaging for the children as we introduce each number.

Each number is a character and we meet them in sequence throughout the year.

The children really enjoy watching these programmes with us and we use them as a little hook for our learning when we are doing our whole class teaching, just to get us

started with our mathematical teaching.



Reasoning and the development of mathematical language is at the heart of our teaching.

This means talking about and explaining their understanding of different numbers and various problems.

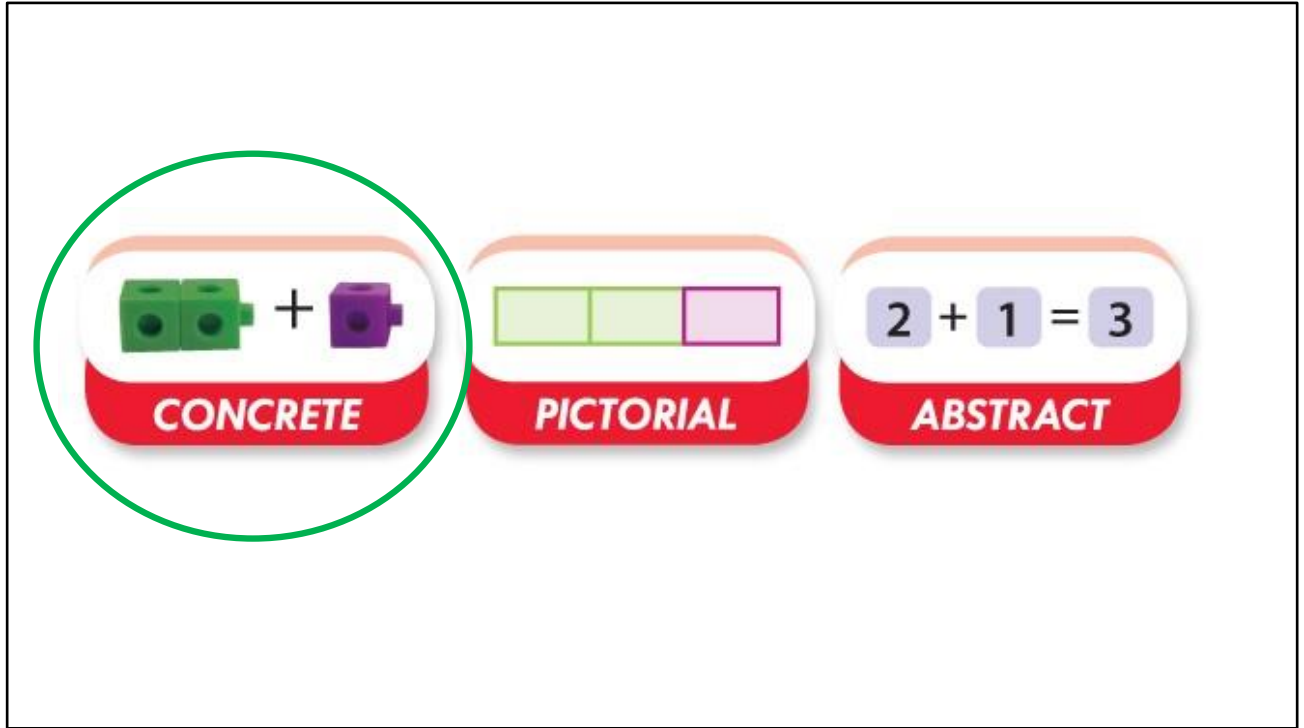
We develop their language through modelling it and teaching the children different phrases they can use to explain.

These phrases are called 'stem sentences' and they challenge the children's thinking and understanding of

an individual number, type of number or a process.

An example of a 'stem sentence' might be something like "When we take away we will always have less".

So, we would pose that to the children and then do lots of exploration that day working with numbers, practising taking away so that the children can come to their own conclusions.

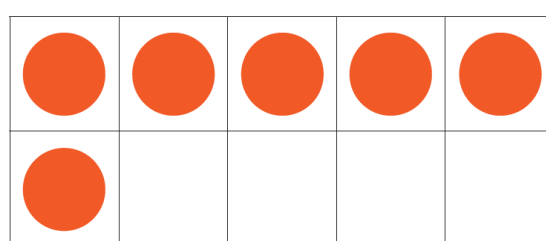
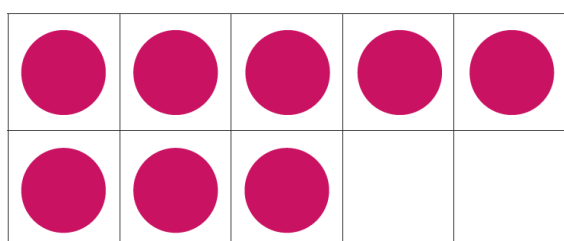
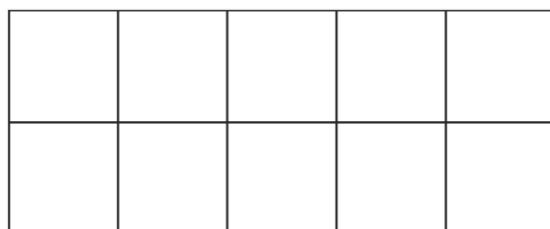


We focus heavily on representing numbers in different ways, using a variety of resources. This is the **concrete** stage of the children's Mastery Maths journey. Most of our teaching in Year R is focussing on using concrete resources.

Showing the children different ways to represent the same number helps to deepen their understanding.

You may hear the children coming home talking about 'tens frames', 'twenty frames', 'part part wholes' and Rekenrek. These are just some of the resources we use for representing and comparing numbers, and solving simple problems.

Tens frame

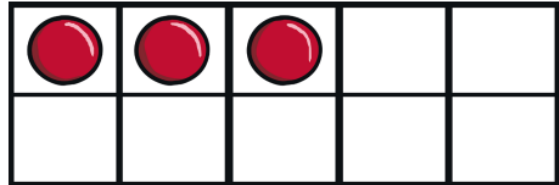
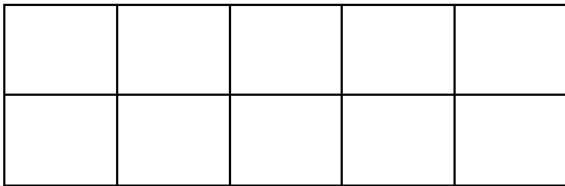
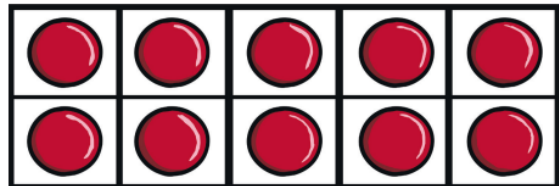
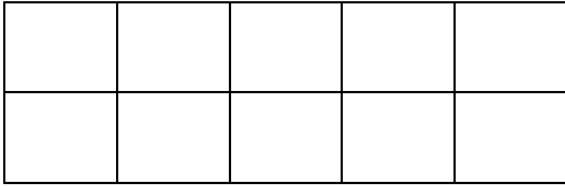


Firstly we have a **tens frame**. When working practically the children have a tens frame as a mat and they place counting objects onto it to represent a given number.

These are particularly good for the children to see a number in an organised way, and build their understanding of how it's related to other numbers e.g. if they fill it with 6 objects they will fill the top row of 5 and then add 1 more at the start of the next row. Therefore embedding the number fact of "6 is 1 more than 5".

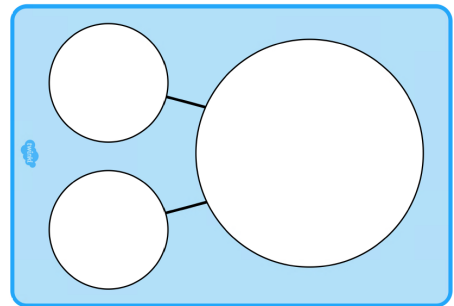
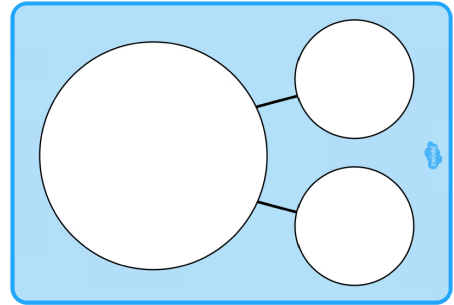
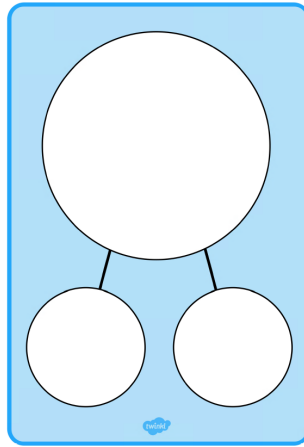
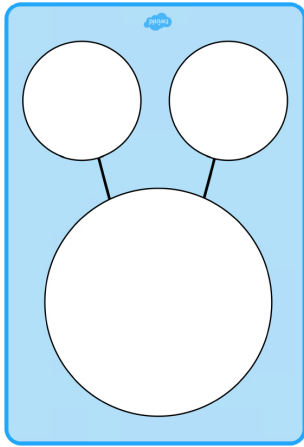
If they add 8 objects we can teach that 8 is 5 plus 3 etc.

Twenty frame

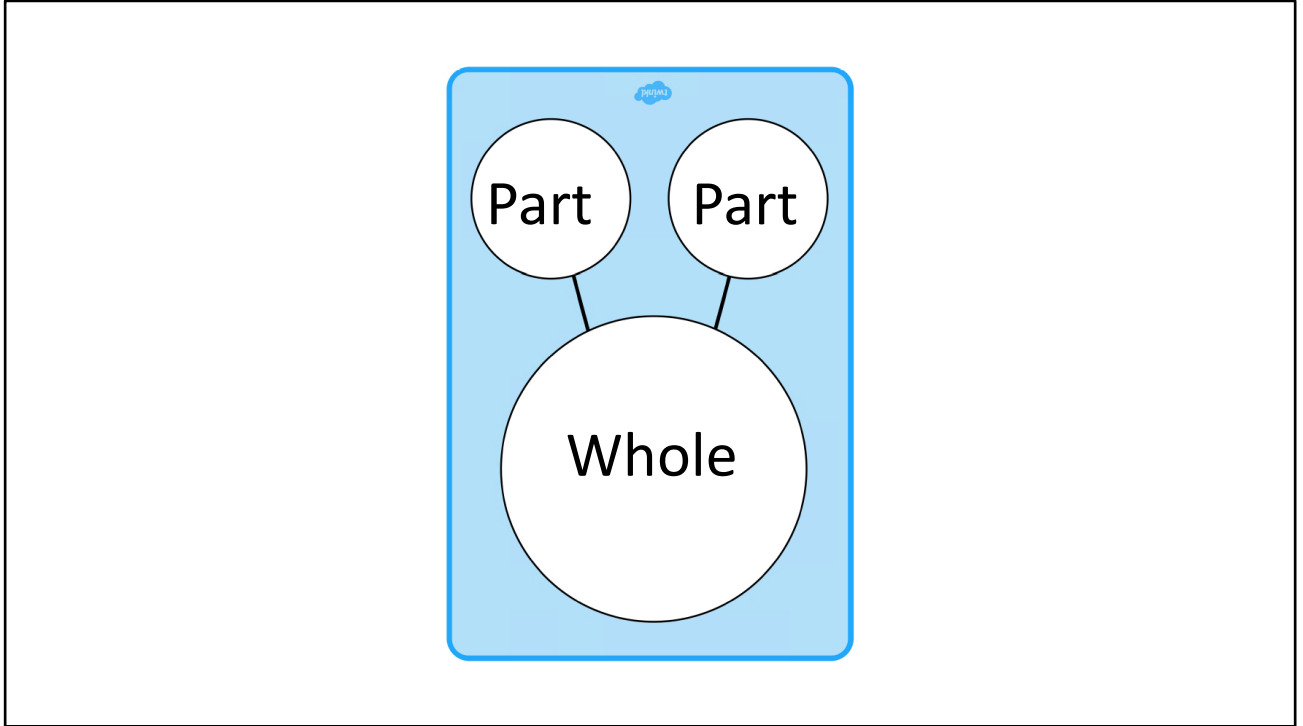


When we move beyond 10, we'll introduce a twenty frame which looks like this. We use it in exactly the same way as a tens frame.

Part Part Whole



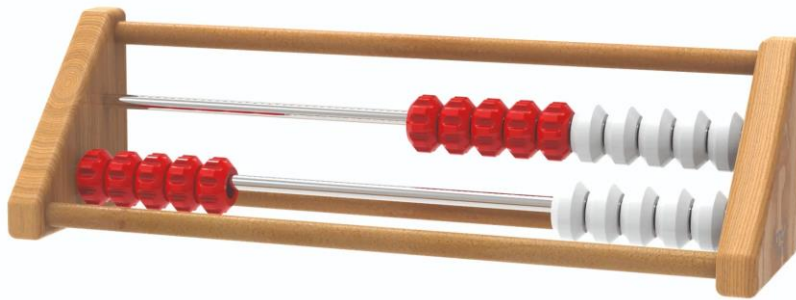
This a **Part Part Whole** and it can be orientated however we like ,although typically we orientate it vertically.



The important thing is to teach that any number can be represented in the whole, and each whole can be split into two parts.

We can use these for simply representing numbers in different ways, but also for addition problems, where we'd put the two amounts to be added in the two parts and then move both groups of objects into the whole, to be counted and find the total.

Rekenrek

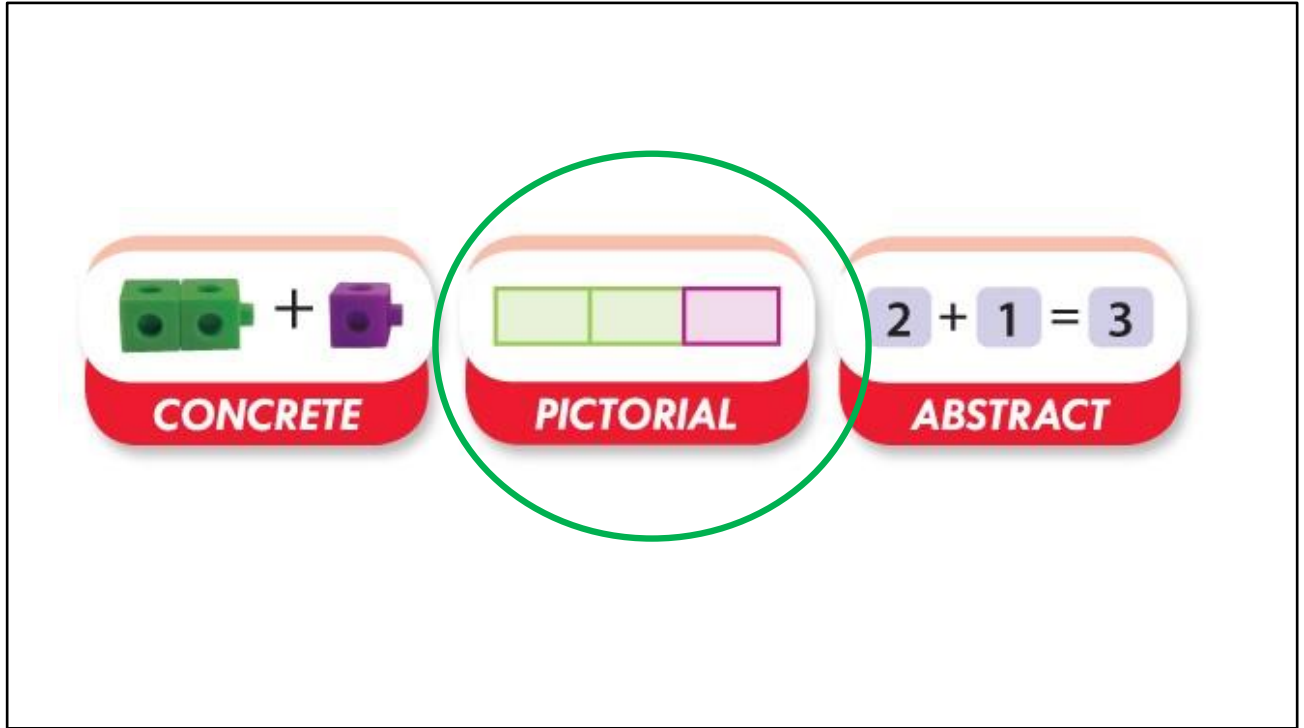


This is a new resource we're introducing and as you can see, it looks very much like a traditional abacus. The name Rekenrek means 'counting rack' in Dutch.

We use it similarly to an abacus, moving the beads along the rack, to represent numbers. This type of Rekenrek with 2 rows of 10 beads, is particularly good for representing numbers in alternative ways.

So, if we are learning about 8 the children can push 8 beads along the top row, OR they could represent it as 4 and 4, or as 5 and 3.

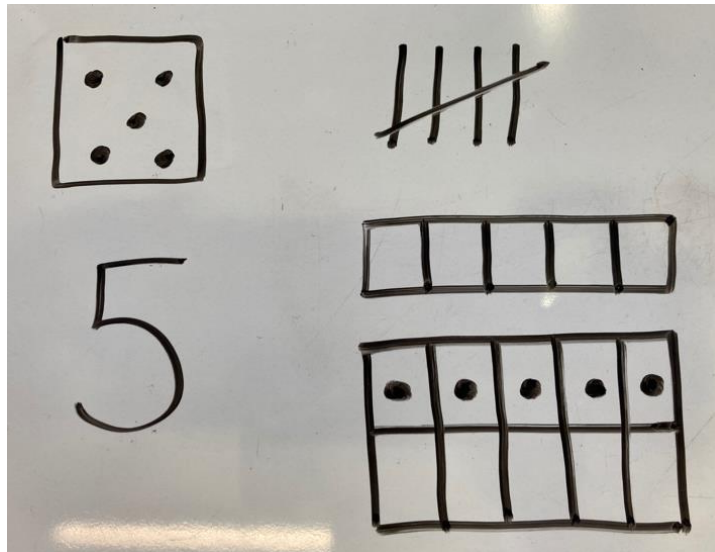
If we are learning about 12 the children can push all 10 beads along the top row, and then 2 from the bottom row to show they understand that 12 is 10 and 2 more. Or they could represent it as 6 and 6 if they know this doubling fact.



Once the children can represent a number confidently and in lots of different ways practically using real objects such as counters or cubes, we then move onto using pictures alongside numerals:

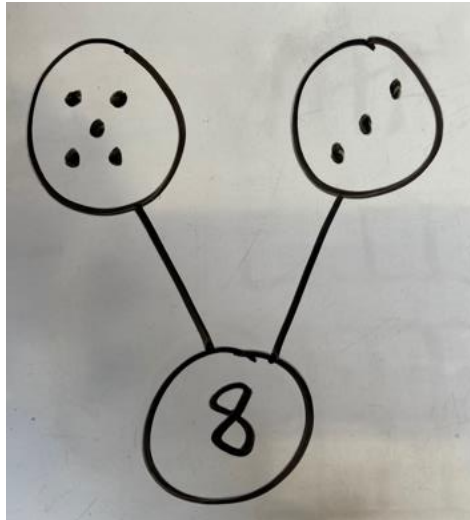
- Represent a number on a whiteboard
- Represent a problem on a whiteboard

Pictorial Representation



Here are several different ways a child can represent a number.

Pictorial Representation



Representation of 8. Child could have been asked to show a number bond for 8, or to show how many more to make 8 when you start with 5

Recording with numbers and symbols is not in our curriculum, so we don't teach the children to record in this way, although we do expose the children to number problems represented in this way.

Deep understanding of how each number is made



We're focussing more on representing numbers using real objects within their play so they have an in depth understanding of numbers 1 to 10.

It is through this in depth **Mastery Approach** where we are:

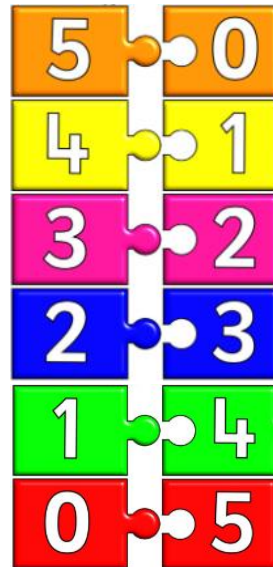
- meeting each number in turn 1-10
- learning how to represent them in different ways using concrete resources
- representing numbers pictorially in different ways

We aim for the children to have a deep understanding of the **composition of numbers 1 to 10** in preparation for the next stage of their Mathematical learning

journey.

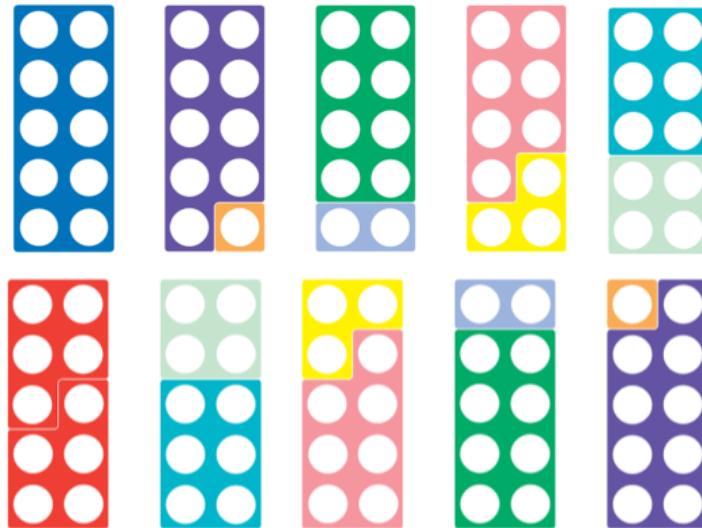
Any questions?

Number bonds for 5



One of our end of year goals for the children is that they know, from memory, all of the different ways that 5 is made. These are called 'number bonds'.

Number bonds for 10



Another of our end of year goals is that the children can recall **some** number bonds for 10 from memory.