

## Early Years Literacy

Learning to read is one of the most important things your son will learn at school. It is also one of the most complex. The human brain is naturally wired to speak, however, it is not naturally wired to read and write. Reading is a multifaceted skill, gradually acquired over years of instruction and practice. It requires two overarching abilities – correctly identifying words (decoding) and understanding their meaning (comprehension). An extensive body of research on reading instruction shows that there are five essential skills for reading:

1. **Phonemic Awareness:** The ability to identify and manipulate the distinct individual sounds in spoken words.
2. **Phonics:** The ability to decode words using knowledge of letter-sound relationships.
3. **Fluency:** Reading with accuracy, speed and expression.
4. **Vocabulary:** Knowing the meaning of a wide variety of words and the structure of written language.
5. **Comprehension:** Understanding the meaning and intent of the text.

At BGS, we provide a high-quality literacy program that includes all five components. We place an emphasis in Prep to Year 2 on phonemic awareness and phonics in order to build foundational word reading skills. Our explicit, systematic phonics approach teaches boys how to “crack the code”. They learn that words are made up of sounds which are represented by written symbols and that there are rules which help us to read or write words correctly.

If you would like to find out more about how children learn to read and how you can support your son in his reading journey at BGS, I will be presenting an **Early Years (P-2) Literacy Parent Workshop** on **Tuesday 20 February 9-10am** held in the GBR Hall in the Junior School.