

## ENGLISH AND LITERACY

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### ***In the spotlight this week: PHONICS***

Traditionally this is where formal schooling begins! In other words, a child comes to school and we teach phonics or teach students how to read and write. We still teach phonics from the first days of school but not in isolation. Rather, we target all areas of the 'Big 6' to ensure children develop the skills needed for deeper understanding of standard Australian English. Phonics is probably the best known of the six components of our comprehensive programs at LNPS, but is not to be confused as being the whole program.

#### *What is Phonics?*

The understanding that there is a predictable relationship between the sounds of spoken language (phonemes) and the letters that we write to represent those sounds (graphemes). Once children are aware of the fact that words can be broken up into a series of sounds, they need to learn the relationship between these individual sounds and letters. English is one of the most difficult languages to translate from sounds into written letters. The table below demonstrates the complexity of learning to spell the sounds of the English language.

Language	Number of sounds	Spelling variations
Italian	25	33
German	34	39
French	32	250
English	44	1200

Children need to be able to isolate these 44 individual sounds so they can begin the journey of learning the multitude of ways one can spell each sound. As a school we have chosen Jolly Phonics as our core program. It is a synthetics program designed to get children blending sounds into words as quickly as possible. It also guarantees that all children are explicitly taught the 44 sounds of English along with their most common spelling patterns.

#### *Why Phonics?*

Decades of research show that children taught phonics become better at reading, spelling and comprehension (understanding text). Teaching sounds along with the letters of the alphabet is important because it helps children to see the connections between letters and sounds and how phonemic awareness relates to their reading and writing.

*Keep an eye on your child's homework grid and our parent workshops for tips on how to help your child with phonics.*

