

# Phonics

## A guide for parents

### What is Phonics?

Phonics is a way of teaching children to read quickly and skilfully. Children are taught how to recognise the sounds each individual letter makes and to identify the sounds that different combinations of letters make such as 'sh' and 'oo'. Children are taught to read by breaking down words into separate sounds or 'phonemes'. They are then taught how to blend these sounds together to read the whole word.

### Why Phonics?

Research shows that when phonics is taught in a structured way, starting with the easiest sounds and progressing through to more complex sounds, it is an effective way of teaching children to read. It is particularly helpful for children aged 5-7

### Phonics terminology

- Grapheme – is a letter or a group of letters
- Phoneme – is the smallest unit of sound in a word.
- Digraph – two letters that make one sound e.g. ai as in rain
- Trigraph – three letters that make one sound e.g. igh as in light
- Spilt digraph – a digraph where two letters are not next to each other e.g. make **a-e**
- Blending – merging the individual phonemes together to read a word.
- Segmenting – consists of breaking words into phonemes to spell

### Phonics phases

There are 6 phases in the Letters and Sounds document that the children are taught from nursery to the end of Year 2 and into Year 3 and beyond where applicable.

#### Phase 1 (covered in nursery)

This looks at children listening to sounds in the environment, musical sounds and voice sounds. They also start orally blending and segmenting. This helps them to learn to read and spell.

#### Phase 2 (covered in reception)

Children are taught individual letters and the sounds that they make to read simple words.

- Set 1: s, a, t, p.
- Set 2: i, n, m, d.
- Set 3: g, o, c, k.
- Set 4: ck, e, u, r.
- Set 5: h, b, f, ff, l, ll, ss.

### Phase 3 (covered in reception)

This is where children start to look at digraphs and trigraphs

- Set 6: j, v, w, x.
- Set 7: y, z, zz, qu.
- Consonant digraphs: ch, sh, th, ng.
- Vowel digraphs: ai, ee, igh, oa, oo, ar, or, ur, ow, oi, ear, air, ure, er.

### Phase 4 (covered in reception)

In phase 4 no new digraphs or trigraphs are taught but children are taught to listen out for adjacent consonants in words to help them to read and spell accurately.

### Phase 5 (covered in Year 1 and Year 2)

In phase 5, new digraphs and trigraphs are taught, along with spilt digraphs.

<b>ay</b> day	<b>oy</b> boy	<b>wh</b> when	<b>a-e</b> make
<b>ou</b> out	<b>ir</b> girl	<b>ph</b> photo	<b>e-e</b> these
<b>ie</b> tie	<b>ue</b> blue	<b>ew</b> new	<b>i-e</b> like
<b>ea</b> eat	<b>aw</b> saw	<b>oe</b> toe	<b>o-e</b> home
		<b>au</b> Paul	<b>u-e</b> rule

Towards the end of phase 5 that is covered in Year 2, children look at alternative pronunciation of previously learnt digraphs. Children are becoming more secure with reading and spelling.

<b>i</b> fin, find	<b>ow</b> cow, blow	<b>y</b> yes, by, very
<b>o</b> hot, cold	<b>ie</b> tie, field	<b>ch</b> chin, school, chef
<b>c</b> cat, cent	<b>ea</b> eat, bread	<b>ou</b> out, shoulder, could, you
<b>g</b> got, giant	<b>er</b> farmer, her	
<b>u</b> but, put (south)	<b>a</b> hat, what	

### Phase 6 (covered in Year 2)

In Phase 6 children are taught about tense and spelling rules. When they come across unfamiliar words they will in many cases be able to decode them quickly and quietly using their well-developed sounding and blending skills. With more complex unfamiliar words they will often be able to decode them by sounding them out.

## Common exception words

Common exception words are the words commonly found in the English language that do not follow phonic rules that have been taught so far. Children should be able to read and spell all of these words by the end of Year Two.

Year 1 and 2 Common Exception Words						
Year 1			Year 2			
the	they	one	door	gold	plant	clothes
a	be	once	floor	hold	path	busy
do	he	ask	poor	told	bath	people
to	me	friend	because	every	hour	water
today	she	school	find	great	move	again
of	we	put	kind	break	prove	half
said	no	push	mind	steak	improve	money
says	go	pull	behind	pretty	sure	Mr
are	so	full	child	beautiful	sugar	Mrs
were	by	house	children	after	eye	parents
was	my	our	wild	fast	could	Christmas
is	here		climb	last	should	everybody
his	there		most	past	would	even
has	where		only	father	who	
I	love		bath	class	whole	
you	come		old	grass	any	
your	some		cold	pass	many	

## Phonics at home

You can support your child at home with their phonics by watching the videos to look to see which digraphs that they are learning and what phoneme they make. You can then read and write some words with them in.

Other things that can support is:

- Reading with your child and developing a love of books. Let your child see you read too.
- Read the phonics books bought home daily with your child and encourage them to sound out words. By the end of the week they should be reading the book with more fluency.
- Play games like 'I spy'
- Use the sounds (phonemes) the letters make, rather than their letter names.

Here are also some useful websites to look at -

- [www.phonicsplay.co.uk](http://www.phonicsplay.co.uk)
- [www.ictgames.co.uk](http://www.ictgames.co.uk)
- <http://www.communication4all.co.uk/http/PhonicsWeb.htm>
- <http://www.oxfordowl.co.uk/question/index/3>
- <http://www.letters-and-sounds.com/>

We hope you found this useful. If you have any further questions please come and see a member of staff.

Thank you  
Miss Drew  
Assistant Head Teacher