



Phonics for parents

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Did you know...?

The English language has:

- 26 letters

- 44 sounds

- over 100 ways to spell those sounds

The Jargon – A Quick Guide

phonics (also known as ‘synthetic phonics’) – The teaching of reading by developing awareness of the sounds in words and the corresponding letters used to represent those sounds.

phoneme - Any one of the 44 sounds which make up words in the English language.

grapheme – How a phoneme is written down. There can be more than one way to spell a phoneme. For example, the phoneme ‘ay’ is spelt differently in each of the words ‘way’, ‘make’, ‘fail’, ‘great’, ‘sleigh’ and ‘lady’.

blending – Putting together the sounds in a word in order to read it, e.g. ‘f – r – o – g, frog’

segmenting – Breaking a word into its constituent sounds in order to spell them, e.g. ‘frog, f – r – o – g’

What is phonics and why do we teach it?

- **Phonics is a method for teaching primarily reading but the skills are also used in writing.**
- **It develops phonemic awareness – children learn to hear and recognise the sounds within words and spell correctly.**
- **Children will also be taught other skills, such as whole-word recognition (see ‘tricky words’), comprehension skills, book skills and a love and enjoyment of reading. Phonics should not be taught in isolation.**
- **Phonics, taught in a structured way, is generally accepted to be an effective way to teach reading and writing, for most children.**
- **This assists with their confidence, accuracy and fluency.**



How is phonics taught?

- **As a school we follow the Rocket Phonics scheme.**
- **Daily sessions from Nursery to Year Two.**
- **Starts with listening skills (phase 1).**
- **Phonics screening check takes place in Year One.**
- **Skills are practised daily through reading and writing activities.**

How can parents help prepare children for phonics?

- ▶ Play I-spy using letter sounds.
- ▶ Sing lots of nursery rhymes and learn tongue twisters.
- ▶ Go on a listening walk.
- ▶ Make rhyming strings – which word is the odd one out?
- ▶ Play party games that require children to listen and react to music, such as musical statues.
- ▶ Use letter sounds rather than letter names (ABC).
- ▶ Play with words - sound them out or break them down into syllables.
- ▶ Wealth of online resources: twinkl, phonics play, you tube, phonics bloom (see learning resources on school website), mobile apps.



Reception

matching
sounds to
letters

- ▶ Children will learn the graphemes (letter shapes) which match each sound of the alphabet.
- ▶ Taught in the order of the most common sounds first (s a t p i n).
- ▶ Once children know these sounds they can begin to blend them together to read simple words in the early phonic reading books.
- ▶ Children learn that letters have a name and a sound.
- ▶ Children are taught 'pure sounds' rather than 'fuh' and 'nuh'
- ▶ [Phonics: How to pronounce pure sounds | Oxford Owl - YouTube](#)

How can parents help with phonics?

- ▶ Model the use of pure sounds when doing reading or writing activities.
- ▶ Find time to practise reading phonic books and flashcards.
- ▶ Encourage children to use letter sounds when writing or sounding out words.
- ▶ Look for sounds in the environment – food labels, sign posts, shop signs, car number plates.
- ▶ Distinguish between the names of letters and sounds they make.
- ▶ Foam letters, magnetic letters, phonic games.
- ▶ Writing letters and sounds – don't just use pen and paper. Fingers on a steamed up window, paint, drawing program on computers or tablets, shaving foam, mud, baking tray with rice/flour/sugar
- ▶ Practise tricky words and look out for them in reading books.
- ▶ Wealth of online resources: twinkl, phonics play, you tube, phonics bloom (see learning resources on school website)



Digraphs and Trigraphs

- ▶ Once children are confidently matching sounds to letters we begin to introduce digraphs (two letters one sound) and trigraphs (three letters one sound)
- ▶ Consonant digraphs: ch, sh, th, ng
- ▶ Vowel digraphs: ee, oo, oa
- ▶ Vowel trigraphs: air, ear
- ▶ Children learn to instantly recognise these sounds and blend or segment them to read or write.
- ▶ Two sounds per week introduced and practised repetitively.
- ▶ Stage where reading begins to sound fluent.
- ▶ Children confidently using and applying phase three sounds in their reading and writing generally meet the end of EYFS expectations for reading and writing at the end of Reception.

In Autumn the seed
bursts out the mantle
in winter the seed goes
to the soil. In spring the plant
starts to grow. In summer, the
plant grows into a clover.



Reading at home

Once children are able to recognise s a t p i n and can track print across the page we will begin to send home reading books which provide an opportunity for children to practise applying their phonics

These are for practice so your child should be able to sound out/read them quite confidently rather than being at an 'instructional' level.

Once children are confidently blending words to read simple sentences, we will introduce books which require children to develop other reading skills rather than becoming over-reliant on phonics. For example, contextual clues, looking at pictures, basic inference, predicting.

Reading a little and often is far more appropriate for young children – no need to read a full book in one sitting.

Read a book more than once.

Read a wide variety of books and give children opportunity to choose their own texts.



Writing at home

Encourage and support use of phonetic spelling (apart from known tricky words). Celebrate and praise writing which uses phonics. Initially children may only hear the first sounds in words.

Avoid copy writing.

Make it fun and purposeful – writing cards and notes to friends, integrate into play activities, favourite themed pens, word process.

Correct use of capital letters.

Ask children to read what they have written to you.

Practise letter formation – make as fun as possible.

Questions?

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