



# Phonics - Sound It Out!



Information for parents and carers about what phonics is, how we teach it and why it is important.

## What is phonics all about?

Children often use phonics to sound out words that they do not recognise.

### Phoneme

It is the smallest unit of sound that we can hear in a word.

### Grapheme

This is the way that a sound is written down.

### Digraph

This is when two or more letters come together to make a phoneme, e.g. the 'oa' sound in 'boat'.

### Blending

Blending is the process that is involved in bringing the sounds together to make a word and is how 'c-a-t' becomes 'cat'.

### Segmenting

Segmenting is when a word is broken down to find the individual sounds and is helpful for spelling. It is the opposite of blending.

### Split digraph

The children love to talk about these! It is where a digraph, such as 'ie', is split apart by another sound but does not change, e.g. 'lie' becomes 'like'. It used to be known as 'magic e'.

### Phase

We teach phonics in 'phases' depending on the year group that the children are working in. Children may revisit other phases depending on their reading ability.

### CVC words

These are words that contain a consonant, a vowel and a consonant, e.g. 'c-a-t'. A CVCC word could be 'w-i-n-g'. The V could also mean a digraph, so a CVC word could also be 'b-oa-t'.

## Letters and Sounds

This is the book that most schools use to plan their phonics teaching.

### Saying the sounds

When children see a word that they do not know straight away and we tell them to 'sound it out', it is very important that they say each sound correctly. If we imagine saying a word in slow motion, it gives a good idea of how to say each sound perfectly, e.g. for 'man', we would not say 'muh' 'ah' 'nuh' but 'mmm' 'a' 'nnn'. This is also important for spelling so that the children can make a good attempt at choosing the right sounds.

# Phase 1

Phase 1 of Letters and Sounds concentrates on developing children's speaking and listening skills and lays the foundations for the phonic work which starts in Phase 2. For most children, this phase takes place during Nursery or pre-school.

# Phase 2

In Phase 2, which takes place in Reception, letters and their sounds are introduced one at a time. Letters are taught in the following sequence:

**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

The children will begin to learn to blend and segment to begin reading and spelling. This will begin with simple words.

Alongside the phonemes, children are introduced to tricky words. These are the words that cannot be sounded out.

**The tricky words introduced in Phase 2 are:**

to	the	no	go	I
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# Phase 3

By the time they reach Phase 3, children should already be able to blend and segment words containing the 19 letters taught in Phase 2.

During Phase 3, which usually takes place in Reception but can be revised in Year 1, twenty-five new graphemes are introduced.

**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

**Tricky words:**

we	me	be	was	no	go
my	you	they	her	all	are

# Phase 4

By Phase 4 children should be able to represent each of 42 phonemes with a grapheme. They blend phonemes to read CVC words and segment CVC words for spelling. They should also read simple two-syllable words. They should be able to read all the tricky words learnt so far and will be able to spell some of them. Phase 4 usually begins in Reception and continues in Year 1.

This phase revisits everything that the children have learned so far.

### Tricky words:

said	so	she	he	have	like	what
some	come	were	there	little	one	my
they	all	are	do	when	out	her

By this point children should aim to read as many words as possible automatically. It is important that children are taught that blending is only used when they do not recognise the word straight away.

## Phase 5

In Phase 5 children are taught new graphemes and alternative pronunciations for these graphemes and graphemes they already know. They begin to learn to choose the appropriate grapheme when spelling.

### Tricky words:

oh	their	people	Mr	Mrs	looked
called	asked				
water	where	who	again	thought	through
work	mouse	many	laughed	because	different
any	eyes	friends	once	please	

### New graphemes for reading:

ay day	oy boy	wh when	a-e make
ou out	ir girl	ph photo	e-e these
ie tie	ue blue	ew new	i-e like

ea eat	aw saw	oe toe	o-e home
		au Paul	u-e rule

## Phase 6

In Phase 6, which usually takes place in Year 2, the focus is on learning spelling rules for word endings, or suffixes.

They learn how words change when you add certain letters. There are 12 different suffixes taught:

-s	-es	-ing	-ed
-er	-est	-y	-en
-ful	-ly	-ment	-ness

# Useful websites

[www.oxfordowl.co.uk](http://www.oxfordowl.co.uk)

Free ebooks and activities. Also contains information about the Year 1 Phonics Screening Check.

[www.phonicsplay.co.uk](http://www.phonicsplay.co.uk)

A range of games and activities using phonics.

Espresso home access

A resource that we use often in school. Has a wide range of activities and video clips for each of the sounds the children learn in school. Please ask your child's teacher for their login details.