



Welcome to our parent's  
workshop.

8<sup>th</sup> October 2014

Early Phonics in the  
Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1.

# What is phonics?

Phonics is a way of teaching children to read quickly and skilfully.

They are taught how to:

- recognise the sounds that each individual letter makes;
- identify the sounds that different combinations of letters go together to make - such as 'sh' or 'oo';
- blend all these sounds together from left to right to make a word.

Children can then use this knowledge to 'de-code' new words that they hear or see.

This is the one of the first important steps in learning to read.

# Why do we teach phonics?

- Research shows that when phonics is taught in a structured way – starting with the easiest sounds (phase 1 and 2) and progressing through to the most complex (phase 5) – it is the most effective way of teaching young children to read. It is particularly helpful for children aged 5 to 7.
- Almost all children who receive good teaching of phonics will learn the skills they need to tackle new words. They can then go on to read any kind of text fluently and confidently, and most importantly to read for enjoyment.
- Children who have been taught to use phonics first also tend to read more accurately than those taught using other methods.

# Some terms you might hear and what they mean!

- **blend** (verb) — to draw individual sounds together to pronounce a word, e.g. s-n-a-p, blended together, reads snap
- **cluster** — two (or three) letters making two (or three) sounds, e.g. the first three letters of 'straight' are a consonant cluster
- **digraph** — two letters making one sound, e.g. sh, ch, th, ph.
- **vowel digraphs** comprise of two vowels which, together, make one sound, e.g. ai, oo, ow
- **split digraph** — two letters, split, making one sound, e.g. a-e as in make or i-e in site
- **grapheme** — a letter or a group of letters representing one sound, e.g. sh, ch, igh, ough (as in 'though')
- **grapheme-phoneme correspondence (GPC)** — the relationship between sounds and the letters which represent those sounds; also known as 'letter-sound correspondences'
- **mnemonic** — a device for memorising and recalling something, such as a snake shaped like the letter 'S' or said – Sally Ann is Dangerous
- **phoneme** — the smallest single identifiable sound, e.g. the letters 'sh' represent just one sound, but 'sp' represents two (/s/ and /p/)
- **segment** (verb) — to split up a word into its individual phonemes in order to spell it, e.g. the word 'cat' has three phonemes: /c/, /a/, /t/

<http://www.literacytrust.org.uk>

# A typical Phonics session.

Lasts about 20 minutes and is taught to a smaller group.

Has five parts;

1. Review – we go over a selection of sounds and words the children already know and have learned previously.
2. Teach new – we teach a new sound and the spelling of any ‘tricky words’ the children need to learn.
3. Blending – we always practise blending using sound buttons.
4. Segmenting – using robot arms to spell.
5. Apply – where we apply what we have learned to a reading or writing task.

Is revisited and reinforced throughout the day in all areas of the curriculum as and when the opportunity arises.

Is very practical and hands on.

# Progression in the Phonic Phases

## Phase 1

Phase 1 develops children's abilities to listen to, make, explore and talk about sounds. This phase is split into 7 aspects that are explored and developed through play.

## Phase 2 (FS1 & FS2)

GPC's are introduced in a very systematic way.

**s a t p i n m d g o c k c k e u r h b f f l l s s s**

It is very important that we pronounce these phonemes clearly and correctly. If we don't, children may find it very difficult to blend them together.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MOW3pB2KwGA>

The Phonemes of the English Alphabet Code - Synthetic Phonics Mr Thorne.

When introducing GPCs, we introduce them with the sounds, pictures, actions and lots of practise for forming the letter. We form the letter with a finger in the air, on the palm of the hand, on the back of another child, on a rough surface like the floor. All these experiences need to come before trying to write the letter on a whiteboard or piece of paper.

## Phase 3 (FS2)

Phase 3 continues in the same way as Phase 2 and introduces more new GPCs.

By the end of Phase 3 (the end of Reception) the children will know one way of writing down each of the 44 phonemes in the English language.

**j v w x y z zz qu ch sh th ng**

**Vowel digraphs (and trigraphs)**

**ai ee igh oa oo ar or ur ow oi ear air ure er**

# Progression in the Phonic Phases

## Phase 4 (End of FS2 & beginning Y1)

This phase is to help children to blend and segment words with adjacent consonants e.g. **truck, help**. These adjacent consonant phonemes can both be heard when you say the word which makes them different from a digraph where there are two letters that make just one sound. No new phonemes are taught in this phase.

## Phase 5 (Y1)

**Split vowel digraphs**, They are **a-e, e-e, i-e, o-e, u-e**. These used to be taught as magic e but children learn to recognise these in the same way as other graphemes, explaining that in these particular graphemes the two letters work as a team but they aren't directly next to each other.

The concept that some **graphemes can be pronounced in more than one way**. E.g. the ch grapheme can be pronounced in each of these ways check, chef and school. This is a vital lesson for children to learn and they need to learn to apply it in their reading.

Learning that **some phonemes have more than one spelling** It is important that children try to discover some of these rules by themselves by playing investigative type games and looking for patterns.

## Phase 6 (Y2)

Phase 6 reinforces much of the learning from Phase 5 and helps children to develop greater automaticity in reading. It begins to explore spelling rules and conventions e.g. adding -ing and -ed. It helps children to prepare to move into KS2

# What is the phonics screening check?

- The phonics screening check is a quick and easy check of your child's phonics knowledge.
- It helps your school confirm whether your child has made the expected progress in their phonic development.
- It takes place when your child is in Year 1.

# How does the check work?

- Your child will sit with a teacher he or she knows and be asked to read 40 words aloud.
- Your child may have read some of the words before, while others will be completely new.
- The check normally takes just a few minutes to complete and there is no time limit. If your child is struggling, the teacher will stop the check. The check is carefully designed not to be stressful for your child.

# What are 'non-words'?

- The check will contain a mix of real words and 'non-words' ('nonsense words' sometimes called 'alien' words).
- Your child will be told before the check that there will be non-words that he or she will not have seen before.
- The children will be familiar with this because we already use 'non-words' when we teach phonics.
- Non-words are important to include because words such as 'vap' or 'jound' are new to **all** children.
- Children cannot read the non-words by using their memory or vocabulary; they have to use their decoding skills. This is a fair way to assess their ability to decode.

# After the check

- We will tell you about your child's progress in phonics and how he or she has done in the screening check in the last half-term of year 1. If your child has found the check difficult, we will also tell you what support we have put in place to help him or her improve.
- Children who have not met the standard in year 1 will retake the check in year 2.
- All children are individuals and develop at different rates. The screening check ensures we understand which children need extra help with phonic decoding.

# Helping your child with phonics

- Phonics works best when children are given plenty of encouragement and learn to enjoy reading and books.
- You as parents play a very important part in helping with this.

# Some simple steps to help your child learn to read through phonics:

- This workshop has told you about our school's approach to phonics and how you can reinforce this at home. For example, we will be able to tell you which letters and sounds the group is covering in their lessons each week.
- You can then highlight these sounds when you read with your child.
- With all books, encourage your child to 'sound out' unfamiliar words and then blend the sounds together from left to right rather than just looking at the pictures to guess. Once your child has read an unfamiliar word, talk about what it means and help them to follow the story.
- Try to make time to read, talk and sing with your child every day. Grandparents and older brothers or sisters can help with this too.
- Word games, silly songs and nursery rhymes are all an enjoyable way of exploring sounds and letters. You can also encourage your child to read words from their environment, like your shopping list or road signs, to practise their phonics.
- We use 'book bags' and a reading record, which is a great way for us to communicate about what and how your child has read and the things you have done at home. The reading record shows successes, both at home and school and also help highlight what your child needs to work on next.

# Now let's see some phonics in action!

- Please go round the groups and look at the activities the children are engaged in.
- They will be happy to answer any questions you may have.
- Do join in, experiment, play and have a go.