

Supporting Phonics, Reading &



Writing At Home

What is phonics?

How can I help my child at home?

Are there any simple games or activities we can play?

How can I find out more about phonics, reading and writing?

As your child is now in Key Stage 1 (Year 1 and Year 2) they have continued to take part in daily sessions on phonics. They will be learning that most sounds (*phonemes*) can be spelled in more than one way. For example, the **f** sound can be written as **f** as in *fan* or **ff** as in *puff* or **ph** as in *photo*.

This develops their knowledge of spelling choices. They will continue with this spelling work into Year 2 and beyond. They will learn that most letters and combinations of letters (*graphemes*) can represent more than one sound. For example, the grapheme **ea** can be read as /e/ as in *leaf* or /e/ as in *bread*.

This supports their reading development. Good phonics knowledge and skills help your child to read words fluently and spell words, but they need to understand what they are reading and understand the processes and purposes for writing too. Your help is vital here.

Letters and Sounds Card

So that you know exactly what we are teaching in phonics we are sending home a laminated copy of the Letters and Sounds card we are using in the classroom to help children with their spelling and writing.



Each box on the card contains examples of the different ways we can spell the sounds we use in writing. Sometimes there is only one way, but often there is a choice. The first way in each box is the most common and taught first. These choices are taught in school as part of our Phonics lessons.

Phonics Terminology

What do all those special terms mean?

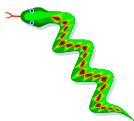
It is not essential to use these technical terms with your child. In school we do use them but always in association with more everyday language to help the children understand.

When we **read** we change graphemes into phonemes.
(i.e. the way we interpret letters into sounds)

When we **write** we change phonemes into graphemes.
(i.e. the way we write sounds down with letters)

phonemes	This is what we call the sounds in words
graphemes	This is the way we write sounds in words (i.e. the letters we use for the phonemes)
graph	ONE letter to represent ONE sound e.g. ...s...
digraph	TWO letters to represent ONE sound e.g. ...ee... or ...sh...
trigraph	THREE letters to represent ONE sound e.g. ...igh...

snake



s

tee



ee

shark



sh

light



igh

Phonics Phases

Phonics is taught in Phases. Your child will have met Phase 1 to 4 while in our Reception Classes. Some children will need to revisit this work while others are ready to move on.

Phase 2

In this phase children will be taught the phonemes (*sounds*) for a number of letters (*graphemes*), which phoneme is represented by which grapheme and that a phoneme can be represented by **more than one letter**, for example, /ll/ as in **b-e-ll**. We use pictures and hand movements to help them remember these (Jolly Phonics).

VC and CVC words

C and V are abbreviations for 'consonant' and 'vowel'. VC words are words consisting of a vowel then a consonant (e.g. *am, at, it*) and CVC words are words consisting of a consonant then a vowel then a consonant (e.g. *cat, rug, sun*). Words such as *tick* and *bell* also count as CVC words – although they have four letters, they have only three sounds. For example, in the word *bell*, **b** = consonant, **e** = vowel, **ll** = consonant.

Now the children will be *seeing* letters and words, as well as hearing them. They will be shown how to make whole words by pushing magnetic letters together, reading little words and breaking up words into individual sounds, which will help their spelling. These will be simple words made up of two phonemes, for example, *am, at, it*, or three phonemes, for example, *cat, rug, sun, tick, bell*.

Tricky words

They will also learn several tricky words: **the, to, I, go, no**. We call these our Buzz Words; these need to be learned off-by-heart as you can not always use phonics to sound them out.



Saying the sounds

Your child will be taught how to pronounce the sounds (*phonemes*) correctly to make blending easier. Sounds should be sustained where possible (e.g. *sss, fff, mmm*) and, where this is not possible, 'uh' sounds after consonants should be reduced as far as possible (e.g. try to avoid saying 'buh', 'cuh').

Phase 3

The purpose of this phase is to:

- teach more graphemes, most of which are made of two letters, for example, 'oa' as in **boat**
- practise blending and segmenting a wider set of CVC words, for example, **fizz, chip, sheep, light**
- learn all letter names and begin to form them correctly
- read more tricky (Buzz) words and begin to spell some of them
- read and write words in phrases and sentences.

CVC words containing graphemes made of two or more letters. Here are some examples of words your children will be reading:

tail, week, right, soap, food, park, burn, cord, town, soil

How to help at home:

- Sing an alphabet song together.
- Play 'I spy', using letter names as well as sounds.
- Continue to play with magnetic letters, using some of the two grapheme (*letter*) combinations:
 - r-ai-n = rain* blending for reading *rain = r-ai-n* – segmenting for spelling
 - b-oa-t = boat* blending for reading *boat = b-oa-t* – segmenting for spelling
 - h-ur-t = hurt* blending for reading *hurt = h-ur-t* – segmenting for spelling
- Praise your child for trying out words.
- Learn their Buzz Words with them: set a timer then call out one word at a time and get your child to spell it on a magic board or a small whiteboard, against the timer – remember, they can use magnetic letters.
- Play 'Pairs', turning over two words at a time trying to find a matching pair. This is especially helpful with the tricky words: **the the, to to, no no, go go, I I**
- Don't worry if they get some wrong! These are hard to remember – they need plenty of practice.

Phase 4

Children continue to practise previously learned graphemes and phonemes and learn how to read and write:

- **CVCC** words: **tent, damp, toast, chimp**

For example, in the word 'toast', **t = consonant**, **oa = vowel**, **s = consonant**, **t = consonant**.

- and **CCVC** words: **swim, plum, sport, cream, spoon**

For example, in the word 'cream', **c = consonant**, **r = consonant**, **ea = vowel**, **m = consonant**.

They will be learning more tricky words and continuing to read and write sentences together.

How to help at home:

- Practise reading and spelling some CVCC and CCVC words but continue to play around with CVC words. Children like reading and spelling words that they have previously worked with, as this makes them feel successful.
- Make up captions and phrases for your child to read and write, for example, *a silver star, clear the pond, crunch crisps*. Write some simple sentences and leave them around the house for your child to find and read. After they have found and read three, give them a treat!
- Look out for words in the environment, such as on food packaging, which your child will find easy to read, for example, *lunch, fresh milk, drink, fish and chips, jam*.
- Work on reading words together, for example, a street name such as *Park Road*, captions on buses and lorries, street signs such as *bus stop*.
- Carry on learning to read and spell their Buzz Words.



Phase 5

This is the phase when children are taught the alternative graphemes for the common phonemes they have already learned. This is where our Letters and Sounds Card can be very helpful as it shows all the graphemes that make the same sound (phoneme) in one simple box in alphabetical order to help the children find what they need.

How to help at home:

Secret Sound Game

This is to help familiarise the children with the Letters and Sounds Card and where to find spelling choices:

- Use the laminated card we sent home (it is also available to download from the school website).
- You choose a grapheme and write it down e.g. 'ow' as in cow but don't show your child.
- Your child now asks a question to establish if it is on the 'ant/vowel' side of the card or on the 'bat/consonant' side of the card.
- They then ask questions to find out the line/row it is on; to find the 'phoneme/sound box' it is in and finally to guess the grapheme you have chosen!

What Have You Learned Today?



Every day the children have a phonics lesson. Please take the time to ask your child to show you which grapheme they have been learning in school. Get them to show you where it is on your Letters and Sounds Card.

Now challenge them to try and remember some words that have this spelling pattern in them! How many can they find? You can also try and find correct spelling for these words in a children's dictionary.

How about making word collections that have the same spelling patterns and then you can use them to play Bingo or Pairs by making little cards with the words on.

Sound Buttons

Draw 'sound buttons' underneath the individual graphemes (letters that represent the sounds) in words e.g.

dog fish shop

(the dots are for each 'graph' and the dashes for digraphs or trigraphs)

The children will often know which phoneme (sound) they need, but be unsure which grapheme (letter/s) to use which is why we have Letters and Sounds cards available to help them make the right choices.

When you know what graphemes they have been learning, ask them to write down some simple words that contain the patterns they know.

Want to Know More About Phonics, Reading and Spelling?

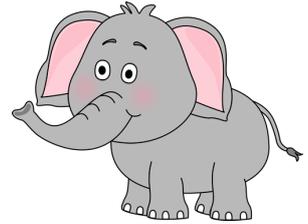
There is a very useful website call Oxford Owl that has loads of video clips, information for parents and free e-books that you can use with your child to help them improve their reading, writing, spelling and grammar.



Children's spoken language supports reading and writing

In order to make a good start in reading and writing, children need to have an adult listen to them and talk to them. Speaking and listening are the foundations for reading and writing. Even everyday activities such as preparing meals, tidying up, putting shopping away and getting ready to go out offer you the chance to talk to your child, explaining what you are doing. Through these activities, children hear the way language is put together into sentences for a purpose.

Don't forget that ERIC is looking out for good communication too!



- **Make time to listen to your child talking** – as you meet them from their setting or school, as you walk, or travel home by car, in the supermarket as you shop, at meal times, bath times, bedtimes – any time!
- **Switch off the TV, radio and mobile phones** – and really listen!
- **Show that you are interested in what they are talking about** – look at your child, smile, nod your head, ask a question or make a response to show that you really have been listening.
- **Make a collection of different toy creatures** – for example, a duck, a snake, an alien, say the sound it might make as you play together, for example, 'quack-quack', 'sssssss', 'yuk-yuk', and encourage your child to copy you.
- **Listen at home** – switch off the TV and listen to the sounds, both inside and outside the home. Can your child tell you what sounds they heard, in the order in which they heard them?
- **Play-a-tune** – and follow me! Make or buy some simple shakers, drums and beaters, then play a simple tune and ask your child to copy. Have fun!
- **Use puppets** and toys to make up stories or retell known ones. Record your child telling the story and play it back to them.

Useful Websites with Activities

www.phonicsplay.co.uk

Lots of phonics games for reading and spelling (used in school and interactive).

www.espresso.co.uk

Videos with letters, sounds and pictures. This is excellent for adults to see clearly the correct pronunciation and mouth shape for the phonemes (this one is not interactive).

N.B. you need your password to access the Espresso site from the bottom of your curriculum newsletters.

www.oxfordowl.co.uk

Very helpful advice about phonics, spelling, grammar and reading; lots of e-books to read and share together.

www.wordsforlife.org.uk

Advice on reading & activities for popular books

www.teachyourmonstertoread.com Phonics games

There are links to some of these sites on the school website:
hatfieldpeverelininfantschool.com

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to speak to your child's class teacher.