



30<sup>th</sup> September 2021

Many thanks for your support with the wordless picture books we have been sending home.

It has been great to see the children getting used to the process of sharing a book at home and also getting into the routine of bringing in their books and reading records for changing each week. Next week your child will be bringing home a set of Phonics resources for use at home in readiness for sending home decodable books to 'read' as your child starts to 'blend'.

Hopefully your child may have told you a little bit about our Phonics sessions and the sounds we have been learning so far; however, here is a little more information, should you wish to know more about Phonics in general.

If you have any queries or questions regarding Phonics or Early Reading, please do get in touch.

Kind Regards,

Tracey Elliott

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## What is Phonics?

Phonics is the beginning of reading. It is the systematic teaching of sounds. The aim is to teach your child two main skills - **blending** and **segmenting**.

**Blending** is when you put sounds together in order to read simple words e.g. say the following sounds slowly b-e-d, then speed up until you can hear the word 'bed'. That is blending.

**Segmenting** is the opposite process - start with the word 'cat', say it very slowly emphasizing each sound until you can hear them as separate sounds. Then say them as c-a-t so you know the order in which to write them down.

Phonics also has other technical terms:

**Phonemes** - these are the sounds that the letters make.

**Graphemes** - these are the symbols (e.g. 's') or what the letter actually looks like.

**Digraphs** - A digraph is two letters that combine together to correspond to one sound (e.g. 'ch')

**Trigraphs** - A trigraph is three letters that combine together to correspond to one sound (e.g. 'igh')

## How is phonics taught?

Phonics is taught through activities that encourage children to hear sounds, make sounds, write them in the air, find them using magnetic letters, play games that involve identifying sounds and finally writing them down.

The scheme we use currently is called Letters and Sounds. This scheme is broken up into phases. Phase 1 is generally taught in nursery or pre-school, phases 2, 3 and 4 in Reception. Year 1 carries on phases 4 and 5 and Year 2 completes the programme with phases 5 and 6. That does not mean that all children will learn at this rate. Some children will pick the sounds up quickly and others more slowly. The important thing to remember is that all children are individuals and learn at their own pace. It is vital that you do not put pressure on children to learn but make it a fun process, something that links you and what they do at school.

Phase 1 involves listening activities, stories, nursery rhymes and learning to hear words that rhyme. Your child should be able to hear different sounds and identify words that start with the same sound in phase 1. For example bat, ball, bed all start with b. At every opportunity you can encourage your child to put sounds together e.g. 'time for b-e-d' 'what shall we 'p-l-ay'. During their time at nursery or pre-school your child should have been learning these skills. This prepares them for phase 2.

Your child is learning Phase 2 in Reception. This is the phase that introduces all the letter sounds, letter names and the correct ways to write them. By the end of the phase many children should be able to read some two and three letter words and spell them either by using magnetic letters or by writing the letters on whiteboards. They will also learn to read some 'high frequency' (used most often) words that are readable by blending or are 'tricky words' such as 'no' where 'o' make an 'oh' sound.

Sounds are learnt in a particular order. The order is:

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

We will continue to revisit and practise Phase 2 sounds, but will also move onto phase 3.

Set 6: j v w x

Set 7: y z,zz qu

Set 8: ch sh th ng

Set 9: ai ee oo oa

Set 10: ar or igh ur

Set 11: ow oi ear er

Set 12: air ure

Every letter will be introduced slowly by showing a letter (grapheme) and then showing the children what sound it makes (phoneme).

### A very important tip!

The letter sounds all make noises for example 'n' is sounded 'nnnn' not 'nuh', 's' is 'ssss' not 'suh'. It is common to put the 'uh' sound on to the end but this does make it very difficult for the children to blend words.