

Helping your child achieve in Phonics Year 1

A booklet for parents



What is phonics?

Phonics is a way of teaching children to read by breaking up words into smaller chunks of sound.

For example we can break a simple word like 'cat' into the three sounds c-a-t.

To become successful readers children will learn the individual sounds for each letter or groups of letter. Some sounds in English are made up of more than one letter like the sound 'ea' in tea or team.

Once children know the sounds they will be able to 'decode' unfamiliar words by breaking the word into sounds then read the word by blending back together. For example sh-o-p - shop.

Why do we teach phonics?

Research shows that when phonics is taught in a structured way - starting with the easiest sounds, progressing through to the most complex - it's the most effective way of teaching young children to read. It's particularly helpful for children aged 5-6.

Almost all children who have 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 to read for enjoyment.

What is the phonics screening check?

The government require a check for Year 1 children and Year 2 children who did not meet the nationally expected level in Year 1. It is designed to give teachers and parents information about how the children are progressing in phonics.

Each child will sit with a teacher they know and will be asked to read 40 words aloud. Some of the words they may have read before and some words will be completely new to them. The test normally takes a few minutes to complete but there is no time limit. If your child is struggling, the teacher can easily stop the test. The test is carefully designed not to be stressful for your child.

The 40 words in the test are made up of real and non-words.

What are non-words?

Non-words or pseudo words are nonsense words made up of letter sounds. For example 'vam' or 'jound'. These words are included in the screening test so they are unfamiliar to the child and therefore test their ability to decode words using just phonics.

It will check your child can:

- Sound out and blend graphemes (see terminology glossary) in order to read simple words
- Read phonically decodable one-syllable and two-syllable words e.g. cat, windmill
- Read a selection of non-words

What should I do if my child is struggling to decode a word?

- Say each sound in the word from left to right
- Blend the sound by pointing to each letter eg b –in bat, or letter group eg igh –in sigh. As you say the sound run your finger under the whole word as you say it.
- Work at your child's pace
- Always be positive and give lots of praise and encouragement.

Terminology

Below is some of the terminology your child will learn during their phonics lessons and what they mean.

Phoneme

A phoneme is the smallest unit of sound in a word. It is generally accepted that most varieties of spoken English use about 42 phonemes.

Grapheme

A grapheme is a symbol of a phoneme. It is a letter or group of letters representing a sound.

Segmenting and blending

Segmenting consists of breaking words down into phonemes to spell. Blending consists of building words from phonemes to read. Both skills are important.

Digraph

This is when two letters come together to make a phoneme. For example, /oa/ makes the sound in 'boat' and is also known as a **vowel digraph**. There are also **consonant digraphs**, for example, /sh/ and /ch/.

Trigraph

This is when three letters come together to make one phoneme, for example /igh/.

Split digraph

A digraph in which the two letters are not adjacent –e.g. **make**

Abbreviations

VC, CVC and CCVC are the respective abbreviations for vowel-consonant, consonant vowel-consonant, consonant-consonant-vowel-consonant, and are used to describe the order of graphemes in words (e.g. *am* (VC), *Sam* (CVC), *slam* (CCVC), or *each* (VC), *beach* (CVC), *bleach* (CCVC).

Phase 5 Phonics

Children will be taught new graphemes and alternative pronunciations for these graphemes and graphemes they already know. They will begin to learn to choose the appropriate grapheme when spelling. The children will be automatically decoding a large number of words for reading by this point.

The tricky words introduced in phase 5 are:

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

New graphemes for reading:

ai - 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

By this phase children should be reading words fluently and no longer be blending and segmenting familiar words.

The real focus throughout the phase is to not only learn the new graphemes for reading but also to learn to read words with alternative pronunciations. Children also will need to learn alternative spellings for each phoneme.

The children will also be taught about prefixes and suffixes. This includes plural noun suffixes which have the suffix –s or –es and means more than one e.g dog-dogs, wish-wishes. They will be taught how to use the prefix –un e.g kind – unkind. They will also be taught how to use the suffixes –ing, --ed, -er, -est where no change is needed in the spelling of the root word e.g help-helping-helped-helper.

How can I help my child at home?

- Encourage your child to 'sound out' when reading or writing. Focusing particularly on spotting more unusual sound patterns
- Help your child to learn the phonic sounds and linked spellings that they bring home
- Children can practice their phonics by playing games online—see examples below.
- REMEMBER: Phonics is not the only thing needed to become a fluent reader
- Please continue to read with your child each night and encourage them to: sound out, re-read to check it makes sense, use pictures for clues and ask questions about the book.
- Most importantly, ENJOY READING!

Useful webpages

<http://www.letters-and-sounds.com>

<http://www.phonicsplay.co.uk>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/wordsandpictures>

http://www.ictgames.com/phonemeFlop_v4.html

<http://www.oxfordowl.co.uk/welcome/home/reading-owl/fun-ideas>

www.discoveryeducation.co.uk/espresso

How to access Discovery Education **Espresso** from home

- go to www.discoveryeducation.co.uk
- click the 'Login' button in the top right corner
- select 'Espresso'
- username: student4718 password: onetwo

How to access **Purple Mash** from home

- go to <https://www.purplemash.com/sch/purley>
- Username: Year3, Password: Year3 (or whichever year your child is in)

The link below provides a useful video clip showing the correct 'pure' pronunciation of phonemes and graphemes (units of sound)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BqhXUW_v-1s