



Phonics at Grove Park Primary School

We hope that this information sheet helps you support your child's learning at home. Please ask your child's teacher if you require further information.

What is phonics?

Phonics is matching letters and sounds and is useful for understanding the English language and how it can be read and written.

Phonics has been taught in schools for many years but has become more important in recent years because of the government's commitment to phonics as a primary foundation block in teaching reading.

Useful phonics vocabulary

Your child will learn and use this vocabulary at school - especially as they progress in their knowledge and understanding of phonics.

Phoneme – the smallest unit of sound

Grapheme - the sound written down

Blending - joining the sounds together to form a word

Segmenting - chopping the sounds up so it can be spelled

Grapheme – phoneme correspondence is matching sounds with the letters that represent them

Digraph - two letters that make one sound

Trigraph – three letters that make one sound

CVC word - a word made up of a consonant—vowel—consonant e.g cat

Letters and Sounds

Phases of phonics teaching and learning

In 2007 the government produced a phonics resource called Letters and Sounds. This is a systematic approach to teaching phonics in 6 overlapping phases. This is the structure that we use throughout Key Stage 1. A brief summary of each phase is given below.

Phase 1 - Activities are divided into seven aspects, including environmental sounds, instrumental sounds, body sounds, rhythm and rhyme, alliteration, voice sounds and finally children are introduced to oral blending and segmenting.

Phase 2 - Children learn 19 letters of the alphabet and one sound for each. They start to blend and segment sounds to make simple words.



Phase 3 - Children learn the remaining 7 letters of the alphabet with one sound for each. They also begin to learn graphemes that have 2 letters for each sound (e.g. th or ch) or 3 letters for each sound (e.g. igh or air).



Phase 4 - No new grapheme-phoneme correspondences are taught in this phase. Children learn to blend and segment longer words with adjacent consonants, e.g. **swim**, **clap**, **jump**

Phase 5 - Children learn more graphemes for the phonemes which they already know, plus different ways of pronouncing the graphemes they already know.



Phase 6 - Children continue to work on spelling, including prefixes and suffixes, doubling and dropping letters etc. As well as letters and sounds the children are introduced to tricky words – ones that do not follow phonic rules and to read and write words, captions and sentences. They also learn the order and names of the letters of the alphabet.

What do phonemes sound like?

One of the most important aspects of phonics is that the sounds are articulated correctly. Most sounds are much shorter than we imagine. The following links are to video clips showing the correct pronunciation of phonemes.

<http://www.phonicbooks.co.uk/teaching.php>

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

How is phonics taught in school?

Phonics is taught from nursery and can be seen in reading and writing activities across the curriculum. In addition, the following activities focus specifically on phonics:

Discrete phonics sessions - these are short 20 minute daily lessons which reinforce previous phonics learning, teach new graphemes/phonemes and help the children to apply their phonic knowledge in reading and writing.

Spellings - In year 1 children are introduced to learning spellings each week. The spellings they are given are linked to the work they have been doing in phonics e.g. if the children are learning the grapheme igh, the words might include light and sight. Sometimes the spellings will include tricky words - those words which cannot be decoded using phonics and just have to be learned - e.g. people.

Reading - Children are encouraged to use their phonic skills to decode words they are stuck on when reading. We have a large number of phonic based reading books which enable the children to practice recognising and using specific graphemes as they read.

How can I help my child at home?

Reading - As always we would encourage you to hear your child read as the first priority. However, when reading encourage your child to use their phonics to decode words they get stuck on.

Read to your child – especially rhymes and poetry which help children learn the sounds of the language.

Spellings (Year 1 upwards) – These are linked to the phonemes/graphemes your child has been working on during the week. Encourage them to sound out their spellings as they write them. Can they find other words with the same sounds?

Use the internet - There are a number of free interactive websites that have phonics games which reinforce learning at school.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eiOiFs5uF6w> – listen to the Jolly Phonics songs.

http://www.familylearning.org.uk/phonics_games.html - variety of phonics games.

<http://www.phonicsplay.co.uk> - these are separated into the Letter and Sounds phases.

<http://www.busythings.co.uk> – the activities are separated by age.

<http://www.jollylearning.co.uk> – a great website to help with pronunciation.

<http://www.mrthorne.com> – his tricky word videos are brilliant!

Apps – There are lots of great apps for iPads and tablets: Twinkl phonics, Hairy letters, Mr Thorne & Oxford Owl- 250 free e-books.