

## Phonics Teaching

At St John the Baptist Primary School we know how important it is for teachers and parents to work together to give your child the best start. Reading together at home is one of the easiest but most important ways in which you can help your child. To support your child in becoming an effective and confident reader we hope to work with you to develop their knowledge of phonics (letter sounds) to enable them to decode different words they may come across. At St John the Baptist Primary School we follow a phonics scheme called Letters and Sounds. Every child in Reception and years 1 and 2 has a daily phonics teaching session. In this document we hope to give you an overview of phonics and some ideas for how you can support your child at home.

## Letters and Sounds – A Summary

Letters and Sounds is a phonics resource published by the Department for Education and Skills in 2007. It aims to build children's speaking and listening skills in their own right as well as to prepare children for learning to read by developing their phonic knowledge and skills. It sets out a detailed and systematic programme for teaching phonic skills for children starting by the age of five, with the aim of them becoming fluent readers by age seven. "By the end of Year 2 children should have completed phase 6. Which phase the children should be working on is assessed by the teacher, and appropriate teaching is planned for. Below is information about the 6 phases and the progression between them.

## Introduction

### A definition of Phoneme and Grapheme.

Letter shape=grapheme. Use lower case letters for all writing. Only use capital letters for names, and when children are ready at the beginning of sentences.

Letter sound=phoneme. A letter consists of; a sound, a shape and it has a capital form and a lower case form. The letter sound is the first thing that children need to recognise.

### Phase One (Nursery/Reception)

Children explore and experiment with sounds, differentiate between sounds and become familiar with rhyme, rhythm and alliteration.

Activities are divided into seven aspects, including environmental sounds, instrumental sounds, body sounds, rhythm and rhyme, alliteration, voice sounds and finally oral blending and segmenting.

### Phase Two (Reception) up to 6 weeks

- Learning 19 letters of the alphabet and one sound for each.
- Blending sounds together to make words.
- Segmenting words into their separate sounds. Beginning to read simple captions.
- To introduce grapheme/phoneme (letter/sound) correspondence (beginning of Reception). Children know that words are constructed from phonemes and that phonemes are represented by graphemes. They have a knowledge of a small selection of common

consonants and vowels (which usually begin with s, a, t, p, i, n) and begin to put them together to read and spell CVC words.

#### Phase Three (Reception) up to 12 weeks

- The remaining 7 letters of the alphabet, one sound for each.
- Graphemes such as ch, oo, th representing the remaining phonemes not covered by single letters.
- Reading captions, sentences and questions.
- On completion of this phase, children will have learnt the "simple code", i.e. one grapheme for each phoneme in the English language. (44)
- They will be able to spell simple regular words.
- Children link sounds to letters, naming and sounding the letters of the alphabet.
- They hear and say sounds in the order they occur in the word and read simple words by blending the phonemes from left to right.
- They recognise common digraphs e.g. 'th' and read some high frequency words

#### Phase Four (Reception) 4 to 6 weeks

- 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.
- Children will be able to blend and segment adjacent consonants in words and apply this skill when reading and spelling.
- Children will move from CVC words (pot) to CVCC words (pots) and CCVC words (spot) and then CCVCC words (spots)

#### Phase Five (Throughout Year 1)

- Now we move on to the "complex code". Children learn more graphemes for the phonemes which they already know, plus different ways of pronouncing the graphemes they already know.
- Teaching children to recognise and use alternative ways of pronouncing the graphemes and spelling the phonemes already taught.
- Children will use alternative ways of pronouncing the graphemes (e.g. the 'c' in coat and city).
- Recognise an increasing number of high frequency words automatically.
- Knowledge and skills of phonics will be the prime approach to reading and spelling.

#### Phase Six (Throughout Year 2 and beyond)

- Working on spelling, including prefixes and suffixes, doubling and dropping letters etc.

Your Child's class teacher will be able to inform you which stage they are working on. But remember to also ask your children what phonemes (sounds) they have been doing each day in class!

Children should learn each letter by its sound, not its name. For example, the letter 'a' should be called 'a' (as in ant) not ai (as in aim). Similarly, the letter 'n' should be nn (as in net), not en. These

are termed pure sounds. **To hear pure sounds, click on kids zone and the link in the reception column of our school website.** This will help in blending. The names of each letter can follow later.

The letters are not introduced in alphabetical order. The first group (s, a, t, i, p, n) has been chosen because they make more simple three-letter words than any other six letters. The letters 'b' and 'd' are introduced in different groups to avoid confusion. Sounds that have more than one way of being written are initially taught in one form only. For example, the sound ai (rain) is taught first, and then alternatives a-e (gate) and ay (day) follow later.

### Blending

Blending is the process of saying the individual sounds in a word and then running them together to make the word. For example, sounding out d- o- g and making dog. It is a technique every child will need to learn, and it improves with practice. To start with you should sound out the word and see if a child can hear it, giving the answer if necessary. Some children take longer than others to hear this. The sounds must be said quickly to hear the word. It is easier if the first sound is said slightly louder. Remember that some sounds (digraphs) are represented by two letters, such as sh. Children should sound out the digraph (sh), not the individual letters ( s - h ). With practice they will be able to blend the digraph as one sound in a word. So, a word like rain should be sounded out r-ai-n, and feet as f-ee-t. This is difficult to begin with and takes practice. You will find it helpful to be able to distinguish between a blend (such as st) and a digraph(such as sh). In a blend the two sounds, 's' and 't' can each be heard. In a digraph this is not so. When sounding out a blend, encourage children to say the two sounds as one unit, so fl-a-g not f-l-a-g. This will lead to greater fluency when reading.

### Tricky Words

Some words in English have an irregular spelling and cannot be read by blending, such as said, was and one. Unfortunately, many of these are common words. The irregular parts have to be remembered. These are called the 'tricky words'.

### Identifying Sounds in Words

The easiest way to know how to spell a word is to listen for the sounds in that word. Even with the tricky words an understanding of letter sounds can help. Start by having your child listen for the first sound in a word. Games like I-Spy are ideal for this. Next try listening for the end sounds, as the middle sound of a word is the hardest to hear. Begin with simple three-letter words such as cat or hot. A good idea is to say a word and tap out the sounds. Three taps means three sounds. Say each sound as you tap. Take care with digraphs. The word fish, for example, has four letters but only three sounds, f-i-sh. Rhyming games and poems also help tune the ears to the sounds in words. Other games to play are: a) Add a sound: what do I get if I add a p to the beginning of i n k? Answer: pink. Other examples are m-ice, b-us, etc. b) Take away a sound: what do I get if I take away p from pink? Answer: ink. Other examples as above, and f-lap, s-lip, c-rib, drag, p-ant, m-end, s-top, b-end, s-t-rip, etc. Spelling the tricky words There are several ways of learning tricky

### Spellings:

1) Look, Cover, Write and Check. Look at the word to see which bit is tricky. Ask the child to try writing the word in the air saying the letters. Cover the word over and see if the child can write it correctly. Check to make sure.

2) Say it as it sounds. Say the word so each sound is heard. For example, the word 'was' is said as 'wass', to rhyme with mass, the word Monday is said as 'M-on-day'.

3) Mnemonics. The initial letter of each word in a saying gives the correct spelling of a word. For example, laugh – Laugh At Ugly Goat's Hair.

4) Using joined-up writing also improves spelling.

### Letters and Sounds: High Frequency Words Checklist

The Tricky Words are in bold .

#### Phase 2

a an as at if in is it of off on can dad had back and get big him his not got up mum but **the to I no go into**

#### Phase 3

will that this then them with see for now down look too he she we me **be was you they all are my her**

#### Phase 4

went It's from children just help **said have like so do some come were there little one when out what**

#### Phase 5

don't old I'm by time house about your day made came make here saw very put **oh their people Mr Mrs looked called asked could**

### The Next 200 High Frequency Words

Water away good want over how did man going where would or took school think home who didn't ran know bear can't again cat long things new after wanted eat everyone our two has yes play take thought dog well find more I'll round tree magic shouted us other food fox through way been stop must red door right sea these began boy animals never next first work lots need that's baby fish gave mouse something bed may still found live say soon night narrator small car couldn't three head king town I've around every garden fast only many laughed let's much suddenly told another great why cried keep room last jumped because even am before gran clothes tell key fun place mother sat boat window sleep feet morning queen each book its green different let girl which inside run any under hat snow air trees bad tea top eyes fell friends box dark granddad there's looking end than best better hot sun across gone hard floppy really wind wish eggs once please thing stopped ever miss

most cold park lived birds duck horse rabbit white coming he's river liked giant looks use along  
plants dragon pulled We're fly grow

## Phonics Games That Can Be Played At Home

### 1. Mood Sounds

Say a letter sound and ask the children to repeat it. Ask the children to say the sound as if they were angry, happy, frightened etc.

### 2. Gobbler/Muncher Game

Use a cereal box to make a person. E.g. Gordon the gobbler. Have a large hole for the mouth. Collect a variety of objects beginning with 2 different sounds. Ask your child to select an object from your tray that begins with a certain sound. Children feed the object to the gobbler with replies with an mmmm sound if they are correct.

### 3. Hoop Game

Get 2 hoops, trays or plates and place a letter card on each of them e.g. s and a. Have a variety of objects beginning with these 2 sounds. Ask your child to select an object and say the name of it. Repeat it several times and then ask your child to place it on the correct letter tray.

### 4. Croaker

Introduce a puppet to your child. Explain that it is finding it hard to say some words. Ask your child to select an object out of a bag. The puppet pronounces it incorrectly – maybe missing off the initial or end sound. The children help the puppet say the word correctly emphasising the part of the word that was missing. E.g. The puppet says 'encil' the child can say the word correctly 'pencil' and then the adult can emphasise the 'p' sound that was missing.

### 5. Rogue Sound Game

Show a variety of objects to your child. All of the objects to have the same initial sound except for one item. Children to identify which is the rogue item, e.g. sun, sausages, cup, scissors.

### 6. Bingo

Bingo boards can easily be made to suit the ability of your child. You can use them in a variety of different ways to help your child learn the letters of the alphabet. Make a board containing 6 letters of the alphabet. Then make a set of 6 letter cards that match the board. You can make 2 boards to play a matching game with your child or one of you could be the bingo caller and say the letter on the cards and the other person finds the letter on their board and puts a counter or toy on it.

You can just match the letters or you could have some objects to match to the letter boards. Your child can then pick an object and place it on the correct letter to show what sound the object begins with. When choosing objects around the house to use for sound games ensure that they begin with the single sound that you are working on. For example: tiger train pencil present goat grass.