

# Phonics at Corpus Christi



## What is Phonics?

Phonics as we call it, is a way of teaching children the sounds they need to know when saying, spelling or reading **most** words. This is called **decoding**. At Corpus Christi we follow a government scheme called Letters and Sounds to help us teach phonics.



## What are PHONEMES? (foe-neems)

In spoken English there are approximately 44 different sounds. These are called **phonemes**. If the children can say these then they will be able to read and spell most words.

s sat	t tap	p pan	n nose	m mat	a ant	e egg	i ink	o otter
g goat	d dog	ck click	r run	h hat	u up	ai rain	ee knee	igh light
b bus	f farm	l lolly	j jam	v van	oa boat	oo cook	oo boot	ar star
w wish	x axe	y yell	z zap	qu quill	or fork	ur burn	ow now	oi boil
ch chin	sh ship	th think	th the	ng sing	ear near	air stair	ure sure	er writer

## What are GRAPHEMES? (grafeems)

All of the 44 sounds will be written down in words. The same sound can sometimes be written in different ways. The way a sound is written down is called a **GRAPHEME**.

For example -the phoneme (sound) 'ee' is in all of the following words but each word has a different GRAPHEME (way of writing the sound)

sweet, heet, thief, these

## Vowels and Consonants

There are 26 letters in the alphabet (a-z). Five of these are vowels - a e i o u - the other letters are consonants. We use these words when we teach the children phonics.

**vc** is a vowel/ consonant word

it is an up

**cvc** is a consonant/ vowel/ consonant word

cat peg tap

## Segmenting and Blending

Children need to be able to **split** words up into their phonemes. This is called **segmenting**. In writing, this will help them have a go at spelling words.

The children also have to be able to **put sounds in words together**. This is called **blending**. This will help them have a go at reading words.

Segmenting and blending are really important and are often practised together

c / a / t → cat

First children segment the sounds, then they blend them together to read the word.

To help children make a physical connection and check their understanding, we use **sound buttons**. These are used when a child writes a word to check the phonemes.



cat (3 phonemes)

back (still 3 phonemes but one is made up of two letters so it gets a line, not a button.)

## Year 1 Phonics Screening Check

The Government has introduced a test which they require all children in Year 1 to do. All children across the country will do this test in the same week in June. The children will have to read a variety of real and pseudo words to assess their phonic knowledge. The children do not realise they are doing a 'test' as we do it in a relaxed way with a member of staff the children are familiar with.

### Pseudo words

Using pseudo words in school may seem strange because they are nonsense words and mean nothing!



However, they are really important to our phonics work. They help us to know that children really do know their phonemes (sounds) and are not just memorising words. Some of the games or activities we do involve the children reading or writing words like 'zep' or 'gub'.

### Tricky words

Even though phonics works really well for so many words, some words just won't sound out! We call these tricky words and the children just have to know how to read and spell them. These are some tricky words:

**I        said        was        you        the**

## How can you help?

Parents are a really important part of how well your children are able to learn. If you can work with your child for a few minutes a day on their sounds, that would be FANTASTIC!

Here are some ideas that you could use-

- Practise reading and writing children's spellings when they are sent home
- Read your child's reading book every day
- Play games using the phonemes or words  
For example - eye spy, snap or bingo
- Play online phonics games, if you have the internet.

[www.phonicsplay.co.uk](http://www.phonicsplay.co.uk) is a great site with some free games.

## Articulation of Phonemes

Here is a link to a You tube clip to listen to if you are unsure how to say any of the phonemes/sounds. It is important that we say the phonemes/sounds properly to give children the best chance of reading and writing words correctly.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mWLpffbMNXo>