

A Guide to Phonics



What is phonics?

Phonics is a way of teaching children to read quickly and skillfully. They are taught how to recognise the sounds that each individual letter makes; identify the sounds that different combinations of letters make - such as 'sh' or 'oo'; and blend these sounds together from left to right to make a word. Children can then use this knowledge to 'decode' new words that they hear or see. This is the first important step in learning to read.

Why phonics?

Research shows that when phonics is taught in a structured way – starting with the easiest sounds and progressing through to the most complex – it is the most effective way of teaching young children to read. It is particularly helpful for children aged 5 to 7. Almost all children who receive 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. Children who have been taught phonics also tend to read more accurately than those taught using other methods, such as 'look and say'.

Useful vocabulary

Phoneme: the smallest unit of sound in a word.

Grapheme: the letter or group of letters that represent a sound i.e. what the sound looks like written down.

Diagraph: two letters that work together to make one sound (ee).

Trigraph: three letters that work together to make one sound (igh).

Segmenting: breaking a word into individual sounds.

Blending: putting the sounds together to make words.

Decode: apply your knowledge of letter-sound relationships, including knowledge of letter patterns, to correctly pronounce written words.

Tricky words (common exception words): words that are not decodable at the child's current phonic level of understanding. The only way these words can be read and spelt correctly is by learning them and having plenty of practise.

Decodable words: Words which can be read by using phonemes and blending.

Pronunciation

For quite a lot of letters, there is the temptation to put an "er" on the end; "h", "j", "t" being a few examples. It's really important that you keep the sounds really short, because when children are blending (which means putting the sounds together to make words), it won't work if all the letters end with an "er" sound. For example: "cat", if pronounced with an "er" sound would be "ceratter", whereas with the short whispered sounds it's far easier to blend the letters.

The vowel sounds (a, e, i, o and u) can be taught as you normally say them (a as in apple, e as in elephant, i as in igloo, u as in under, o as in orange), however there are some exceptions (e.g. child) but these will be addressed in school later on. There is also a list of tricky words that do not follow the normal pronunciation of other words.

How do we teach phonics at Parkfield?

We are currently following the 'Twinkl Phonics' scheme in EYFS and KS1. This scheme is based on the original 'Letters and Sounds' programme.

Letters are split up into the following phases. This is to help teachers assess where children are with their phonics.

Phase 1

- 1) Tuning in to sounds
- 2) Listening and remembering sounds
- 3) Talking about sounds (so basically being aware that words are made of graphemes and phonemes).
- 4) Orally sounding out words to identify and spell them.
- 5) Hearing words that start and end with the same sounds.

Phase 2

Learning which letter makes which sound (one set taught per week):

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

Phase 3

Set 6: j v w x

Set 7: y z, zz qu

Set 8: sh th ng

Set 9: ai ee igh oa

Set 10: oo (short- book) oo (long - moon) ar or

Set 11: ur ow (brown) oi ear

Set 12: air ure er

Phase 4

No new graphemes

Practising all the graphemes taught so far and blending them together to make words.

This phase focuses on consonant blends and learning to read and spell polysyllabic words

Phase 5

Weeks 1-10

New graphemes: ay (day) oy (toy) ie (tie) ea (sea) ou (out)

Split digraphs (where the sound is split by another letter): a-e (make) e-e (these) i-e (like) o-e (home) u-e (rule)

New pronunciations for known letters: o (cold) i (kind) ch (school, chef)

Weeks 11-20

New graphemes: ir (girl) ue (blue) ew (new, chew) y (sunny) aw (saw) au (Paul) oe (toe) wh (when) ph (photo)

New pronunciations for known letters: ow (slow) c (city) g (giant) ea (head)

Weeks 21-30

New graphemes: tch (catch) ve (leave) ore (more)

New pronunciations for known letters: ie (field) are (hare) ear (bear)

Suffixes: -ed, -ing, -s, -es

Prefixes: un-

Phase 6:

Weeks 1-10

New graphemes: dge (edge) gn (gnome) kn (knot) wr (wrong) le (bubble) el (camel)

New pronunciations for known letters: y (by)

Suffixes: -es to verbs ending in y, -ed -ing -er -est to words ending in y

Weeks 11-20

New graphemes: al (festival) il (pencil) eer (career) ture (nature) mb (lamb) ey (monkey)

New pronunciations for known letters: al (all) o (son)

Suffixes: -ed -er -est -y to words ending in e, -ing -ed to CCVC words

Weeks 21-30:

New graphemes: war (warm) wor (work) wa (want) qua (quality) tion (action)

New pronunciations for known letters: s (casual)

Suffixes: -er -est and -y to CCVC words, -ment -ness -ful -less -ly

Prefixes: dis-

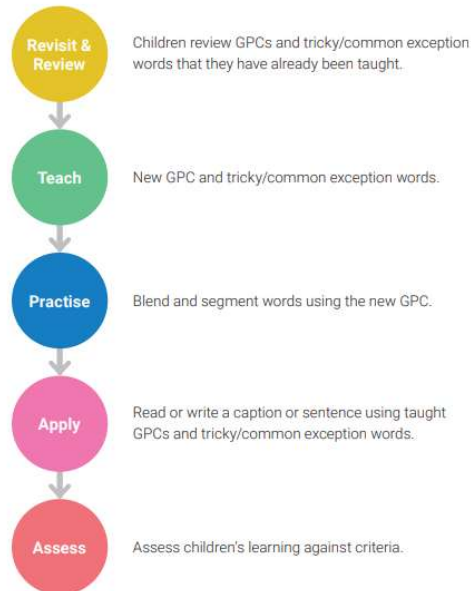
Contractions

Homophones and near homophones- such as there, their they're

All Taught Common Exception Words for Reading

Level 2	to, the, no, go, I
Level 3	he, she, we, me, be, was, my, you, they, here, all, are
Level 4	said, so, have, like, come, some, were, there, little, one, do, when, out, what
Level 5 Weeks 1-10	could, should, would, want, oh, their, Mr, Mrs, love, your, people, looked, called, asked, water, where, who, why, thought, through
Level 5 Weeks 11-20	work, house, many, laughed, because, different, any, eye, friend, also, once, please, live, coming, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, brother, more, before
Level 5 Weeks 21-30	January, February, April, July, scissors, castle, beautiful, treasure, door, floor, bought, favourite, autumn, gone, know, colour, other, does, talk, two

The structure of every phonics lesson follows this five-part pattern to ensure that the four cornerstones of phonics are covered:



What is the phonics screening check?

In Year 1, each child will do the phonics screening check, which is a quick and easy check of your child's phonics knowledge. It helps your school confirm whether your child has made the expected progress.

How does the check work?

Your child will sit with a teacher he or she knows and be asked to read 40 words aloud. Your child may have read some of the words before, while others will be completely new. The check normally takes just a few minutes to complete and there is no time limit. If your child is struggling, the teacher will stop the check. The check is carefully designed not to be stressful for your child.

What are 'non-words'?

The check will contain a mix of real words and 'non-words' (or 'nonsense words'). Your child will be told before the check that there will be non-words that he or she will not have seen before. The children will be familiar with this because we already use 'non-words' when we teach phonics. Non-words are important to include because words such as 'vap' or 'jound' are new to all children. Children cannot read the non-words by using their memory or vocabulary; they have to use their decoding skills. This is a fair way to assess their ability to decode. After the check we will inform you about your child's progress in phonics and how he or she has done in the screening check in the last half-term of year 1. Children who have not met the standard in year 1 will retake the check in year 2. All children are individuals and develop at different rates. The screening check ensures that teachers understand which children need extra help with phonic decoding.

Helping your child with phonics

Phonics works best when children are given plenty of encouragement and learn to enjoy reading and books. Here are some simple steps to help your child learn to read through phonics:

- Reinforce the letters and sounds taught at home. For example, you can highlight these sounds when you read with your child.
- Teaching how sounds match with letters is likely to start with individual letters such as 's', 'a' and 't' and then will move on to two-letter sounds such as 'ee', 'ch' and 'ck'.
- With all books, encourage your child to 'sound out' unfamiliar words and then blend the sounds together from left to right rather than looking at the pictures to guess.
- Try to make time to read with your child every day. Grandparents and older brothers or sisters can help too. Encourage your child to blend the sounds all the way through a word.
- Word games like 'I-spy' can also be an enjoyable way of teaching children about sounds and letters. You can also encourage your child to read words from your shopping list or road signs to practise phonics.

The Parent Quick Start Guide has lots of useful support for parents and carers, including:

- information on how to use the minibooks to support their child's phonics learning at home;
- resource suggestions that can be downloaded and used alongside the minibooks;
- video links to help with phoneme pronunciation and the process of blending for reading.



Parents Quick Start
Guide to Twinkl
Phonics Minibooks