

## Phonics overview

Phonics is a method of teaching reading and writing of the English language by developing learners' phonemic awareness- the ability to hear, identify and manipulate phonemes- in order to teach the correspondence between these sounds and the spelling patterns (graphemes) that present them. At St Gregory's Primary School we use a systematic phonics programme called Letters and Sounds, alongside Oxford Reading Tree 'Floppy Phonics' reading scheme.

Letters and Sounds is divided into six phases, with each phase building on the skills and knowledge of previous learning. Children have time to practice and expand their ability to read and spell words. They are also taught to read and spell 'tricky words', which are words with spellings that are unusual or that children have not yet been taught.

### Some terminology explained:

Phoneme- smallest unit of sound

Grapheme- a letter or sequence of letters that represent a phoneme

1	2	3
d	o	g
h	ur	t
sh	ir	t

These words each have three phonemes (separate sounds). Each of these phonemes is represented by a grapheme. A grapheme may consist of one, two, three or four letters.

These are sometimes referred to as sound buttons e.g.    c            ur            igh  
                         ●                    ─                    ─

Segmenting- breaking words down into their phonemes to spell e.g. d/o/g

Blending- this is the reverse of segmenting. When you build up words from their phonemes to read.

Digraph- two letters that work together to make the same sound

Trigraph - Three letters that work together to make the same sound

Split digraph - Two letters that work together to make the same sound, separated by another letter.

m a k e  
•      •  
          ⌒

Phase break down:

### **Phase 1**

Children will begin to:

1. Turn into sounds
2. Listen and remember sounds
3. Talk about sounds and be aware that words are made of graphemes and phonemes.
4. Orally sound out words to identify and spell them.
5. Hear words that start and end with the same sound.

### **Phase 2**

Children will learn which letter makes which sound:

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 ch sh th ng ai ee igh oa oo ar or ur ow oi ear  
ure er

### **Phase 4**

In this phase no new graphemes are taught.

Children practice all the graphemes and how to blend them together to make words.

Children are taught how phonemes can make clusters.

This phase includes learning to read and spell longer words.

### Phase 5

New graphemes are taught:

ay (day) ou (out) ie (tie) ea (east) oy (boy) ir (girl) ue (blue) aw (saw)

wh(when) ph (photo) ew (new) oe (toe) au (Paul)

Split digraphs are also taught. This is where the sound is split by another letter.

a-e (make), e-e (these), i-e (like), o-e (home), u-e (rule).

New pronunciation for letters are also taught:

i (fin, find), o (hot, cold), c (cat, cent), g (got, giant), u (but, put), ow (cow, blow), ie

(tie, field), ea (eat, bread), er (farmer, her), a (hat, what), y (yes, by, very), ch (chin,

school, chef), ou (out, shoulder, could, you).

### Phase 6

Children will have already learnt the most frequently occurring grapheme- phoneme correspondences. During this phase children will learn to become more fluent readers and more accurate spellers.

### How you can help at home

- Reading daily will help your child to progress in their phonics abilities. Your child's reading book is leveled according to their phonics level and reading the same book a few times will develop their fluency.
- Let your child choose what they would like to read – books, comics, catalogues.
- Read to your child. Show you like the book. Bring stories to life by using loud/soft/scary voices.
- Sing an alphabet song together.
- Play 'I spy', using letter names as well as sounds.
- Have magnetic letters on the fridge or tin tray and use ask your child to spell out words or leave messages for your child and encourage them to respond to them.

- Praise your child for trying out words.
- Set a timer. Call out one word at a time and get your child to spell it on a magic board or a small whiteboard, against the timer – remember, they can use magnetic letters.
- Play 'Pairs', turning over two words at a time trying to find a matching pair. This is especially helpful with the tricky words: the the, to to, no no, go go, I I
- Talk about the words they see in everyday life – food packaging, signs in the supermarkets, captions on buses and lorries, messages on birthday cards and invitations.
- Write a shopping list together.
- Send an email to a family member or a friend.
- Provide your child with a shoe box full of things to write with – writing tools of various sizes and thicknesses: gel pens, crayons, glitter pens, rainbow pencils, old birthday cards, coloured paper, sticky tape to make little books. Rolls of wallpaper can be attached to a table to provide a large canvas for their writing and drawing.
- Make up a story together about their favourite toy or buy stickers of a favourite film or TV programme and make a book about it.