



Collingwood
Primary
School

Phonics

Wednesday 2nd December 2015

What is phonics?

Phonics is a way of teaching reading. Children are taught to read letters or groups of letters by saying the sound(s) they represent - so, they are taught that the letter 'm' sounds like 'mmm' when we say it.

Children can then start to read words by blending (synthesising) the sounds together to make a word.

For example, when taught the sounds for the letters *t*, *p*, *a* and *s*, one can build up the words "tap", "pat", "pats", "taps" and "sat".

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'. This includes children who find learning to read difficult, for example those who have dyslexia.

Glossary

Blending - to draw individual sounds together to pronounce a word, e.g. s-n-a-p, blended together, reads snap.

Oral Segmenting - This is the act hearing a whole word and then splitting it up into the phonemes that make it. Children need to develop this skill before they will be able to segment words to spell them.

Segmenting - This involves hearing a word, splitting it up into the phonemes that make it, using knowledge of GPCs to work out which graphemes represent those phonemes and then writing those graphemes down in the right order. This is the basis of spelling.

Phoneme — the smallest single identifiable sound, e.g. the letters 'sh' represent just one sound, but 'sp' represents two (/s/ and /p/)

Grapheme — a letter or a group of letters representing one sound, e.g. sh, ch, igh, ough (as in 'though')

Glossary

Grapheme-phoneme correspondence (GPC) — the relationship between sounds and the letters which represent those sounds; also known as 'letter-sound correspondences'.

Digraph — two letters making one sound, e.g. sh, ch, th, ph.

Vowel digraphs comprise of two vowels which, together, make one sound, e.g. ai, oo, ow


Split digraph — two letters, split, making one sound, e.g. a-e as in make or i-e in site

Trigraph - A grapheme containing three letters that makes just one sound (phoneme).
(air)

VC, CVC, CCVC — the abbreviations for vowel-consonant, consonant-vowel-consonant, consonant-consonant-vowel-consonant, which are used to describe the order of letters in words, e.g. am, ham, slam.



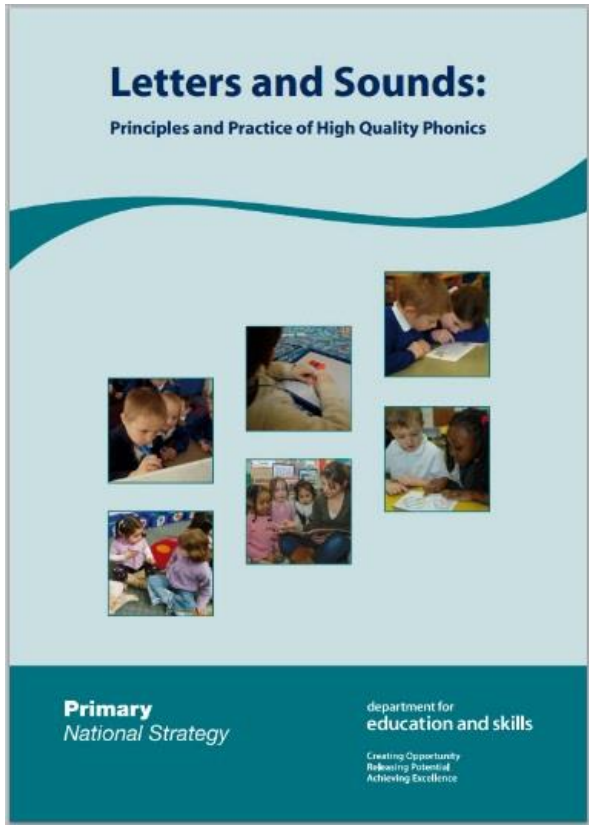
Letters and Sounds:
Principles and Practice of High Quality Phonics



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Phase 1 -

Phase 1 is absolutely vital. It is the one phase that shouldn't come to an end.

These skills should continue to be developed throughout KS1 and KS2.

Phase 1 develops children's abilities to listen to, make, explore and talk about sounds.

This phase is split into 7 aspects that are explored and developed through games.

- 1 - General sound discrimination - environmental sounds.
- 2 - General sound discrimination - instrumental sounds.
- 3 - General sound discrimination - body percussion.
- 4 - Rhythm and rhyme.
- 5 - Alliteration,
- 6 - Voice sounds.
- 7 - Oral blending and segmenting.

Phase 2 -

GPCs need to be introduced in systematic way.

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 s ss

It is very important that you pronounce these phonemes clearly and correctly. If you don't, children may find it very difficult to blend them together.

When introducing GPCs, ensure you introduce them with the sounds, pictures, actions and lots of practise for forming the letter. You can form the letter with a finger in the air, on the palm of the hand, on the back of another child, on a rough surface like the floor. All these experiences will need to come before trying to write the letter on a whiteboard or piece of paper.

Phase 3 -

Phase 3 continues in the same way as Phase 2 and introduces more new GPCs. By the end of Phase 3 the children will know one way of writing down each of the 44 phonemes.

Set 6 - j v w x

Set 7 - y z zz qu

Consonant digraphs - ch sh th ng

**Vowel digraphs (and trigraphs) ai ee igh oa oo ar or ur ow oi ear
air ure er**

Make sure that you are very confident about what the term *CVC* means. It refers to words with a consonant phoneme, a vowel phoneme and then a consonant phoneme - it is not referring to letters.

Therefore **hot**, **bed**, **boat** and **ship** are all *CVC* words but **cow** and **toy** are not.

Phase 4 -

The main challenge in this phase is to help children to blend and segment words with adjacent consonants e.g. **truck**, **help**. These adjacent consonant phonemes can both be heard when you say the word which makes them different from a digraph where there are two letters that make just one sound. Be careful, lots of people get these confused, including some published materials.

Children with speech and language difficulties can find Phase 4 very tricky. If children struggle to hear all the sounds in a word encourage them to think about the movements that their mouths are making. Looking in mirrors can help with this.

Phase 5a (Weeks 1-4) -

These 4 weeks introduce some new GPCs in the same way as in previous phases. Five of these GPCs are known as split digraphs. They are **a_e**, **e_e**, **i_e**, **o_e**, **u_e**. These used to be taught as magic e but now it is recommended that children learn to recognise these in the same way as other graphemes but simply explaining that in these particular graphemes the two letters work as a team but they aren't directly next to each other.

Phase 5b (Weeks 4-7) -

These 3 weeks introduce the idea that some graphemes can be pronounced in more than one way. E.g. the ch grapheme can be pronounced in each of these ways check, chef and school. This is a vital lesson for children to learn and they need to learn to apply it in their reading. Make sure you model trying to read a word by sounding out the most obvious phonemes then blending it together. If it doesn't make sense model looking at each grapheme and seeing whether there are alternative pronunciations. Try sounding out the word with the alternative pronunciation and blending it together. Does it make sense now? This can be quite a jump for some children to make as they have to realise that English isn't quite as straightforward as it once seemed. However, it can also be quite empowering to know that just because a word doesn't make sense first time, it doesn't mean that they can't go back and figure it out for themselves.

Phase 5c (Weeks 8-30)

This part of Phase 5 is all about learning that some phonemes have more than one spelling (in fact some of the really awkward ones have loads of different spellings). In the past, some people have thrown in the towel with phonics at this point and decided that there is no point in teaching it as there is no rhyme and reason to how these phonemes are spelled. The fact is that there is much more rhyme and reason to which spelling we use for these phonemes than most people are aware of. It is important that children try to discover these rules by themselves by playing investigative type games and looking for patterns.

Phase 6 -

Phase 6 reinforces much of the learning from Phase 5, helps children to develop greater automaticity in reading, and begins to explore spelling rules and conventions e.g. adding -ing and -ed.

Year 1 Phonics Screening Check

The phonics screening check is a quick and easy check of children's phonics knowledge.

How does the check work?

- The child will sit with a teacher he or she knows and be asked to read 40 words aloud.
- The 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 the child is struggling, the teacher will stop the check.

The check will contain a mix of real words and 'non-words' (or 'nonsense words'). The child will be told before the check that there will be non-words that he or she will not have seen before. Many children will be familiar with this because many schools already use 'non-words' when they 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.

Practice sheet: Real words

in

at

beg

sum

Practice sheet: Pseudo words

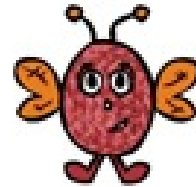
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vap



osk



ect



Check 1

Section 1

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thand



How to help your child with phonics - A parents guide.

Phonics works best when children are given plenty of encouragement and learn to enjoy reading and books. Parents and carers play a very important part in helping with this. Some simple steps to help your child learn to read through phonics:

- Ask your child's class teacher about the school's approach to phonics and how you can reinforce this at home. For example, the teacher will be able to tell you which letters and sounds the class is covering in lessons each week.
- You can then 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. Once your child has read an unfamiliar word you can talk about what it means and help him or her to follow the story.

How to help your child with phonics - A parents guide (cont).

- Your child's teacher will also be able to suggest books with the right level of phonics for your child. These books are often called 'decodable readers' because the story is written with words made up of the letters your child has learnt. Your child will be able to work out new words from their letters and sounds, rather than just guessing.
- 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.
- Most schools use 'book bags' and a reading record, which is a great way for teachers and parents to communicate about what children have read. The reading record can tell you whether your child has enjoyed a particular book and shows problems or successes he or she has had, either at home or at school.

How does phonics fit into the big picture of teaching reading?

Phonics is simply the code that turns written language into spoken language and vice versa. It is the vital initial step in teaching children to read but it is far from the whole picture.

Phonics will only work in an environment where **Speaking and Listening Skills** are promoted and developed.

Children should also be regularly exposed to a wide range of quality texts. They should be regularly read aloud to. Regular, well planned **Guided Reading** sessions are essential and reading skills should also be explicitly taught in **Shared Reading** sessions within literacy lessons.

Once children reach Phase 6, we work on helping them to move away from blending and segmenting and develop automaticity in their reading. We can then devote even more of our attentions to developing all the other areas of reading that need to teach.

Useful websites

- <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/phonics>
- http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/resources/practical_resources_info/1030_phonics-a_definition
- <http://www.phonicsplay.co.uk/>
- <http://mrthorne.com/>
- <http://www.teachyourmonstertoread.com/?gclid=CLKynbS6vckCFasBwwodsWQLvA>
- <http://jollylearning.co.uk/>