



Phonics in Key Stage One

A Guide for Parents and Carers



What is Phonics?

Phonics is the way that we teach children to read and write. At Oughtibridge Primary School we use 'Letters and Sounds' which is split in to 6 phases. This guide aims to give parents an overview of the way that phonics is taught at Oughtibridge Primary School.

Phonics Teaching

In Key Stage 1 Phonics lessons are taught daily, in short interactive sessions. Children are assessed when they enter a new class and grouped according to the phase that they are on. Phonics groups are led by teachers and teaching assistants and are fast paced and fun.

Phonics Phases

The 'Letters and Sounds' scheme is split into phases, with each phase building on previous learning.

Some Terminology

Phoneme: the sound that you hear in a word is a phoneme

Grapheme: the written representation of the sound.

Grapheme-phoneme correspondence: the link between the written letters and the sound that these make e.g. **c** as in 'cat', **ll** as in 'fell', **ee** as in 'sheep'

Digraph: a sound made up of 2 letters e.g. **oa** as in 'goat', **ow** as in 'brown'

Trigraph: a sound made up of 3 letters e.g. **igh** as in 'night'

Split-digraph: This is when 2 letters are working together to make a sound but are separated by another letter. For example **oe** as in 'toe' can be split by an **n** to make 'tone'. This replaces the 'magic e' method of teaching these sounds.

Tricky words: words that cannot be decoded in that phonics phase and so have to be taught as 'sight words'.

CVC words: **C** and **V** are abbreviations for 'consonant' and 'vowel' so examples of CVC words would be 'cat', 'rug', 'sun'.

Blending: to read, the children are taught to say the sounds of the letters in the word and then put them together.

Segmenting: To spell, the children are taught to say the word, split the word in to sounds and then write the letter(s) for each sound.

Phase 1

This phase paves the way for learning to read and write and usually starts in nursery or playgroup. Teachers plan activities that support children in enlarging their vocabulary, becoming attentive listeners, and confident speakers. Through these activities children will learn to hear and say the phonemes in words.

Phase 2

In this phase children learn that spoken words are made up of different sounds (phonemes) and these sounds can be linked to written letters (graphemes).

Phonemes can be made up of more than one letter.

E.g. 'b' as in bat 'oa' as in goat 'igh' as in light

In Phase 2 the children will learn the following letters and sounds:

s a t p i n m d g o c k ck e u r h b f ff ll ss

They learn to apply the skills of blending for reading, and segmenting for spelling with these sounds. They are taught in this order so the children can learn and apply the skills of blending and segmenting from the start.

e.g. 'sat' 'pin' 'pat' 'tin'

Children are taught to pronounce the sounds correctly so they can be blended together easily. Sounds should be sustained where possible (sss, fff, mmm) and, where this is not possible, 'uh' sounds after consonants should be reduced as far as possible (e.g. try to avoid saying 'buh', 'cuh')

The tricky words for this phase are: the, to, I, go, no



Phase 3

In this phase children will be taught another 25 graphemes, many of which comprise of 2 letters (digraph).

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

Some have 3 letters (trigraph).

igh ear air ure

They are not taught alternatives for making these sounds at this stage so many children will make spelling errors that are phonetically correct e.g. 'plai' instead of 'play', 'boi' instead of 'boy'. It is considered acceptable for children who are working in phase 3 to make errors like this as they are simply applying their phonics knowledge.

Tricky words for this phase:

she the was me be you her they all

Children will also be reading and writing phrases and sentences using these words.



Phase 4

Phase 4 aims to consolidate the learning from phases 2 and 3, and introduce 2 syllable words. They do not learn any new phoneme-grapheme correspondences but instead try to extend their reading and writing to longer words with adjacent consonants e.g. toast, swim, chimp. They will also be taught to recognise syllables in longer words and split words up to sound them out, e.g. wind/mill, chimp/an/zee.

Tricky words for this phase: said, so, do, have, like, some, come, were, there, little, one, when, out.



Phase 5

During Phase 5 children will broaden their knowledge and learn that there are in fact many ways to say a grapheme, and also many different ways to spell a phoneme.

Alternative pronunciations for graphemes: Words that contain the same letter but it is pronounced in a different way.

E.g. 'a' as in *hat* and *acorn*, 'e' as in *he* and *bed*, 'i' as in *mind* and *tin* etc.

Alternative spellings of phonemes: these are often thought of as 'sound families'

E.g. 'ai' - ay, ey, a

Phase 5 can be a stumbling block for some children as they leave the 'security' of phase 3 and 4 and are faced with lots of options. There isn't always a clear rule to help children to choose the correct spellings and so many just have to be learned.

Phase 6

During this phase children become fluent readers and increasingly accurate spellers. They will be given the opportunity to read longer and less-familiar texts. They will be encouraged to read with phrasing and fluency, taking account of punctuation.

Children will be taught about past and present tenses and then investigate the rules for changing the endings of words.

E.g. I looked, I was looking

Suffixes (Letters that are added at the end of words to change the meaning) will be introduced and the rules for changing the base word before adding the ending will be investigated.

Suffixes: -ing, -ed, -s, -er, -est, -y, -en, -ment, -ness

E.g.

bake - bak(e)ed - baked

carry - carr(y)ed - carried

stop - stoping - stopping

hike - hik(e)ing - hiking

Children will be encouraged to develop strategies for remembering spellings, especially for words that cannot be decoded

E.g.

Finding the difficult bits in words and practising them, using mnemonics (a sentences or rhyme that helps you remember spellings), identifying other words that sound similar and use what you know about how these words are spelled, splitting longer words into syllables and sounding out each part.

Phonics at Home

Here are a few ideas to try at home.

- Play spelling games such as 'Scrabble' together.
- 'I Spy' using letter names and sounds.
- 'Pairs' - turn over two cards at a time and try to find the cards with the matching sounds e.g. 'rain' and 'play'.
- 'Rhyming Strings' - how many words can you think of that rhyme with the starting word?
- Encourage children to read labels and signs that they come across in the environment.
- 'Listening Walk' - Encourage children to listen for different sounds either indoors or outdoors. Introduce new vocabulary to describe objects e.g. crunchy, rustling autumn leaves are floating down from the trees.
- 'Phoneme Hunt' - Look for letters and/or sounds on food packets, road signs or car registration plates.
- Useful websites:
<http://www.phonicsplay.co.uk/>
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/ks1/literacy/>