



Approaches to phonics teaching-an information leaflet for parents

Systematic Phonics teaching...

Phonics is a means to an end, the goal of reading being comprehension. During Foundation and Key Stage One the aims of our teaching include securing accurate word reading and an enjoyment of texts. Children understand a great deal of spoken language long before they start learning to read. In order to understand text children need to be able to recognise words on a page (decode text). Once this is mastered they can use the same process of making sense of written language as with spoken language.

Phonics teaching enables children to see the relationship between reading and spelling from an early stage, decoding (reading) and encoding (spelling) are treated as reversible. Generally reading is secured before accuracy in spelling. Therefore teaching of spelling continues into Key Stage Two.

For us in school, the order of teaching and pace in which phonics are taught are key to success.

Reading by 6

This is a phonics screening check of all children in Year One completed towards the end of the summer term. The purpose is to confirm whether individuals have learnt phonic decoding to an appropriate level. The check complements our own ongoing assessments.

Children are given a list of words by a teacher they know well. Half the words are real and the other half are non-words. Children who can read non-words should have the skills to decode any unfamiliar word. Non-words are new to all children, they do not favour children with a good vocabulary or large visual memory of words.

Terminology

Using accurate and precise terminology with children aids their learning. In the same way we describe a shape as a 'sphere' rather than a 'ball'. Children have no difficulty using phonic language, we're just not used to it!

- **Phonics** a broad term for the knowledge and understanding used in reading and writing

- **Phoneme** the smallest unit of sound c-a-t *the importance of enunciation is vital to accurate reading and spelling. 'c' not 'cu'.*
- **Grapheme** the symbol of a phoneme. This can be a letter or group of letters e.g m, ai, igh. There are always the same number of graphemes as phonemes in a word. The 26 letters of the alphabet are used to make all the graphemes that represent phonemes in English.
- **Digraph** 2 letter graphemes (2 letters making 1 phoneme eg sh ea
- **Trigraph** 3 letter graphemes (3 letters making 1 phoneme eg igh
- **Split digraph** a letter has come between a 2 letter digraph eg cake
- **Segmenting** breaking words into phonemes (to spell)
- **Blending** building words from phonemes (to read)

Teaching sequence

Phase One- environmental sounds, rhythm and rhyme, oral blending and segmenting. Should continue through all stages.

Phase Two- introduce grapheme-phoneme correspondence (Foundation Stage) Introduces 19 g-p. Oral blending and segmenting VC and CVC words

Phase Three- teach one of each 44 phonemes in order to read and spell regular words. *Some digraphs*

Phase Four teach children to read and spell words containing adjacent consonants. Applying skills in reading unfamiliar text and in spelling

Phase Five teaching children to recognise and use alternative ways of pronouncing graphemes and spelling phonemes (throughout Year One)

Phase six teaching children to develop their skills in reading and spelling moving towards ability to read for meaning.

Teaching approaches

We believe strongly that all children need to make a good start to become skilled readers and writers. The approach we take in school supports this with daily phonic sessions for all children in

Foundation and Key Stage One. We use a multi-sensory approach, NOT WORKSHEETS, as the following activities demonstrate.

- **Fishing for phonemes** using a water tray and ping pong balls with graphemes written on. A great game for blending and grapheme-phoneme correspondence.
- **Hopscotch phonics** children use a hopscotch grid with graphemes in the spaces. They throw a marker on to a space and then draw an object (or write a word) which contains that phoneme.
- **Noisy letters** each child has a grapheme card. They have to find their partner by making the phoneme.
- **Cube game** with 3 dice marked with graphemes, children roll dice and try to make a 3 phoneme word.
- **Bingo**
- **Loop card games**
- **Phonic gym** can you stand u-p. Put your hand on your kn-ee etc. Good game to develop oral blending
- **Robot talk** adult segments a word for the child to blend. C-a-t child says cat. This game can be played with the adult or child being the robot.
- **Use of websites**

www.phonicsplay.co.uk

www.ictgames.com

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/>

Further information

Please do speak to your child's teacher if you would like any further information about our approach to phonic teaching. A partnership between school and home is hugely beneficial when helping your child learn.

September 2015