

Phonics at Cliftonville Primary School

What is phonics?

Phonics is a systematic method of teaching children to identify the individual sounds (phonemes) in words and connect the letters of the alphabet (graphemes) to the sounds that they make and blend them for reading. This also allows them to segment words for accurate spelling.

What are the sounds?

In English, speech sounds are represented by the 26 letters of the alphabet. These letters and combinations of these letters make 44 sounds. There are about 144 different ways to spell these sounds.

Speech sounds are called **phonemes** and are the smallest units of sounds within words. The letters, or groups of letters which represent phonemes, are called **graphemes**. Phonemes can be represented by graphemes of one, two or three letters:

t sh (**digraph**) igh (**trigraph**).

Consonant digraphs are made up of two consonants that make one sound:

sh ch th ck ng ll ss ff wr wh kn gn

Vowel digraphs are made up of two vowels or a vowel and a consonant that makes one sound:

oo ee oa ow ou or ar er ue oi ai

Vowel trigraphs are made up of vowels and consonants that make one sound:

igh air ear

Vowel phonemes

Vowel phonemes	Examples and alternative spellings	Vowels phonemes	Examples and alternative spellings
/a/	cat	/oo/	look would put
/e/	peg bread	/ar/	cart fast (regional)
/i/	pig wanted	/ur/	burn first term heard work
/o/	log want	/or/	torn door warn haul law call
/u/	plug love	/er/	wooden circus sister
/ai/	pain day gate station	/ow/	down shout
/ee/	sweet heat thief these	/oi/	coin boy
/igh/	tried light my shine mind	/air/	stairs bear hare
/oa/	road blow bone cold	/ear/	fear beer here
/oo/			moon blue grew tune

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Consonant phonemes

Consonant phonemes	Examples and alternative spellings	Consonant phonemes	Examples and alternative spellings
/b/	baby	/s/	sun mouse city science
/d/	dog	/t/	tap hat
/f/	field photo telegraph	/v/	van
/g/	game	/w/	was
/h/	hat	/wh/	where (regional)
/j/	judge giant barge	/y/	yes
/k/	cook quick mix Chris	/z/	zebra please is
/l/	lamb	/th/	then weather
/m/	monkey comb	/th/	thin
/n/	nut knife gnat	/ch/	chip watch
/p/	paper	/sh/	ship mission chef
/r/	rabbit wrong	/zh/	treasure
/ng/			
		ring sink	

It is very important that these phonemes are articulated precisely and accurately. Phonemes should be said as a pure, clean sound. The following link will take you to an excellent example of how to pronounce the sounds correctly:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lwJx1NSineE>.

What processes are involved?

Segmenting and **blending** are reversible key phonic skills.

Segmenting ('chopping', 'robot arms') consists of breaking words down into their separate phonemes to spell: s p e ll.

Blending consists of building words from their separate phonemes s p e ll spell.

Decoding is the process of **blending** each **phoneme** in a word, in order to read the whole word.

c a t
.
ch ea p
.

How do we teach phonics?

We teach phonics using the Letters and Sounds programme. There is a phonics lesson in every Key Stage 1 class every day. Opportunities to extend their new knowledge is incorporated into planning for all other areas of learning. In all years, the children are taught according to their prior knowledge in sets across the year groups (Reception begin in their classes but move to sets at the start of Term 3). This ensures that everyone makes good progress. Lessons are kinaesthetic and we use a number of resources and activities to help engage and motivate the children.

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The Letters and Sounds programme is split up into 5 phases:

Phase 1	Activities are divided into seven aspects, including environmental sounds, instrumental sounds, body sounds, rhythm and rhyme, alliteration, voice sounds and finally oral blending and segmenting.
Phase 2	Learning 19 letters of the alphabet and one sound for each. Blending sounds together to make words. Segmenting words into their separate sounds. Beginning to read simple captions.
Phase 3	The remaining 7 letters of the alphabet, one sound for each. Graphemes such as ch, oo, th representing the remaining phonemes not covered by single letters. Reading captions, sentences and questions. On completion of this phase, children will have learnt the "simple code", i.e. one grapheme for each phoneme in the English language.
Phase 4	No new grapheme-phoneme correspondences are taught in this phase. Children learn to blend and segment longer words with adjacent consonants, e.g. swim, clap, jump.
Phase 5	Now we move on to the "complex code". Children learn more graphemes for the phonemes which they already know, plus different ways of pronouncing the graphemes they already know.
Phase 6	Working on spelling, including prefixes and suffixes, doubling and dropping letters etc.

These phases are broken down further into sets which are groups of sounds. The order that we teach the sounds is:

Phase 2	
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	/ch/ /sh/ th/ /ng/
Set 9	/ai/ /ee/ /igh/ /oa/
Set 10	/oo/ /ar/ /or/ /ur/
Set 11	/ow/ /oi/ /ear/ /air/ /ure/ /er/
Phase 4	
Adjacent consonants with short and long vowel sounds and CVC, CVCC and CCVC words.	
Phase 5	
/ay/ /a-e/ /ou/ /oy/ /ea/ /ie/ /i-e/ /ir/ /aw/ /ew/ /ue/ /u-e/ /ph/ /wh/ /e-e/ /oe/ /o-e/ /au/ /ey/	

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Alongside learning the sounds of the English language, children are also taught to read and spell common exception words (tricky words). These are introduced gradually. The order we introduce these words is:

Phase 1	N/A
Phase 2	the, to, I, go, no, into
Phase 3	he, she, we, me, be, was, my, you, they, her, all, are
Phase 4	said, so, have, like, some, come, were, there, little, one, do, when, out, what
Phase 5	oh, there, people, Mr, Mrs, looked, called, asked, would, should, could
Phase 6	Spelling patterns and rules

Children who attend our pre-school cover the earliest phase of the phonics scheme through rhymes, songs, iPad games, etc. The progression of children in each phonics set after this is as follows:

Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4	Phase 5	Phase 6
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Reception

	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4	Term 5	Term 6
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						

Year 1

	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4	Term 5	Term 6
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						

Year 2

	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4	Term 5	Term 6
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						

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In Key Stage 2, there are sometimes children who still need to work on their recognition and use of pure sounds. In this case, time is spent with both individual and groups of children continuing to follow the Letters and Sounds programme and progression of sounds.

As well as using phonics to teach reading, dedicated time is allocated for teaching and investigating spelling weekly within literacy lessons as well as word level work linking to a related text in the main literacy session. We teach children to be able to:

- attempt words for themselves using a range of strategies
- write an increasing range of words from memory
- use a variety of resources to help with spelling eg: dictionaries, word banks, classroom environment, computer spell-checks.
- develop an understanding of spelling patterns through investigations and identifying the exceptions to those rules.
- understand that some prefixes and suffixes can change the meaning of the words.
- use a range of strategies to learn spellings, especially those misspelt in their own work.

The children's phonic knowledge is regularly assessed and detailed information recorded about progress and next steps.