



Essential  
Letters and  
Sounds

Getting all children to  
read well, quickly.



We follow the Essential Letters and Sounds (ELS). This ensures **all teachers are teaching phonics in the same way**, using the same resources – this means children are **familiar with the routines** of our daily sessions.

Children experience a **love of books and language** whilst **rapidly acquiring the skills** they need to become **fluent independent readers and writers**.

# Phonics and Early Reading Meeting

- What is phonics?
- Phonic terms explained
- Letter sounds and their pronunciation
- How Phonics is taught in school
- Reading Books
- How children are supported in school
- How to support children at home

# Phonics...



- **Children develop awareness of different sounds in spoken language from a very early age.**
- **Spoken words are made up of different sounds. They learn to match these sounds to letters.**
- **Phonics is about children knowing how letters link to sounds.**
- **The children then use this when they are reading and writing.**

**An approach to teaching reading and writing - vital skills for all children which will pave the way for an enjoyable and successful school experience... and future life.**

# Phonics...

The English language has 26 letters and 44 sounds.

- Each of the 44 sounds (phonemes) is represented by a grapheme (the written representation of a sound).
- There are over 100 ways to spell those sounds!

# How do we teach phonics?

- Simple, consistent approach to teaching phonics.
- Pictures, mnemonics and rhymes to support learning and recall.
- Taught EVERY day - routines and resources are consistent, meaning children know what to expect every day.
- Assess each child every 5 weeks. Parents/carers are informed of any sounds children don't know so they can be supported both at school and home.

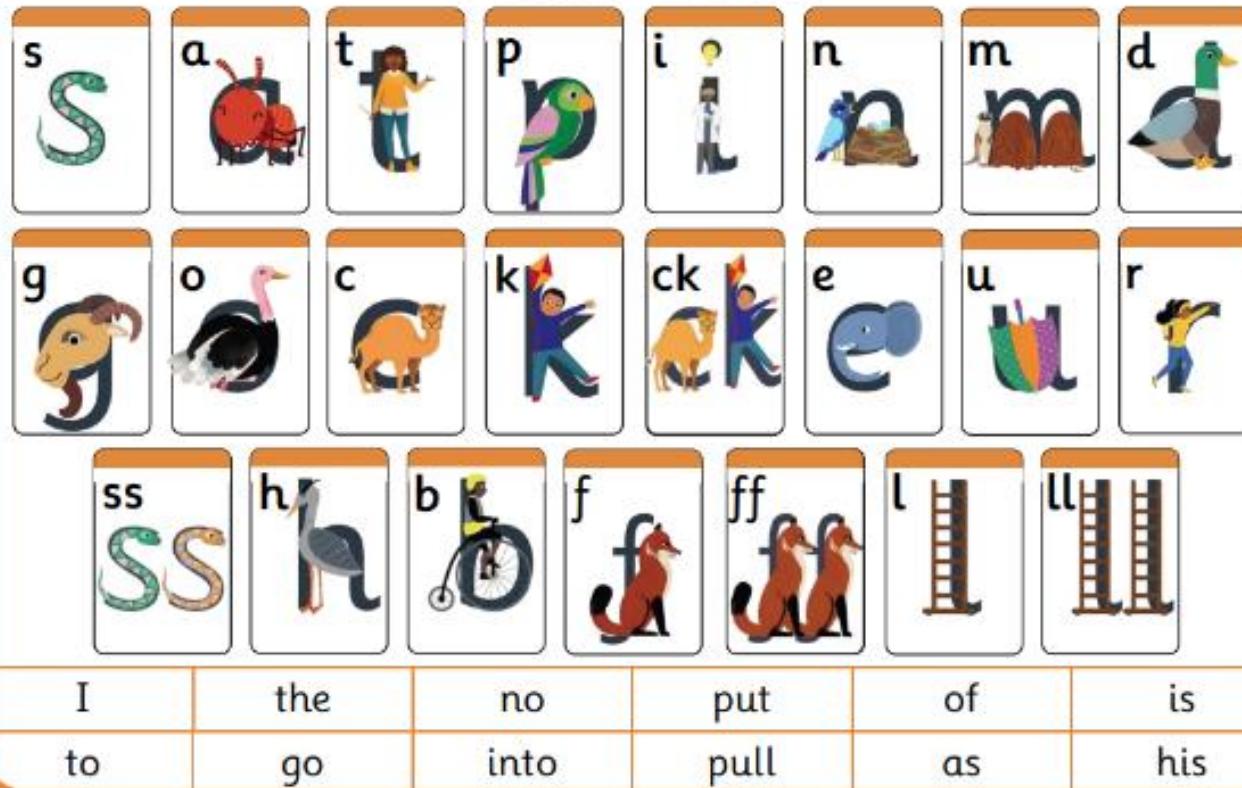


# How do we teach phonics?

- Continuous practice of sounds & graphemes taught
- Daily oral blending eg /c/ /oa/ /t/
- Decoding words - say each of the written sounds in a word before blending them together to read the word. **This is a challenging process for children to learn and takes time to master.**
- Sounds taught in a specific order, starting in Reception, so they can practice reading and writing words very quickly.
- The order of lessons is designed to enable children to progress to reading fluently as quickly as possible. Ideally, this will be by the end of Year 1.

# What is Taught in a Phonics Lesson?

Fast paced - 4 new sounds are taught per week along with new tricky words each day



Each lesson includes

- Revision of sounds learned and practice of **reading and saying new sounds**
- Oral blending and segmenting
- **Reading**, captions and sentences
- **Writing** sounds, words and sentences

Review sessions and weeks are added in – no new sounds are taught, but children focus on saying, reading and writing those sounds learned already.

# How do we teach phonics?

Each new sound is taught in the same way, with a picture and using a rhyme to help formation with single letter sounds, and a mnemonic to help remember the diaraphs and trigraphs – eg **aw – fawn on the lawn**.

We use *robot arms* to sound out a word – we do this before the children have learned any sounds, as being able to blend orally is an essential skill.

Children learn to move their arms up and down like a robot as they say each sound they can hear in a word. After they have said all of the sounds, they swipe one hand along the other and say the whole word.

We *s-t-r-e-t-c-h* a word to help to hear the sounds

Children read every day both individually and as a group as part of their phonics sessions



# Terminology

**Phoneme:** the smallest single identifiable sound in a word.

For example, in the word 'cat' there are three phonemes c/a/t.

**Grapheme:** the written representation of a sound.

**Digraph:** two letters making one sound. Eg sh in '**shop**'.

**Trigraph:** three letters making one sound. Eg igh in '**night**'.

**Split digraph:** two vowel letters split by a consonant. Eg a-e in '**cake**'.

**Blend:** Merging phonemes to read a word

**Segment:** Breaking down a word into phonemes to sound it out or write it down.

# ELS Progression

Phase 1*	Phase 2	Phase 3**
<p><i>Nursery/Pre-School</i></p> <p>Seven aspects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Environmental sounds</li><li>• Instrumental sounds</li><li>• Body percussion</li><li>• Rhythm and rhyme</li><li>• Alliteration</li><li>• Voice sounds</li><li>• Oral blending</li></ul>	<p><i>Reception Autumn 1</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Oral blending</li><li>• Sounding out and blending with 23 new grapheme-phoneme correspondences (GPCs)</li><li>• 12 new harder to read and spell (HRS) words</li></ul>	<p><i>Reception Autumn 2, Spring 1 and Spring 2</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Oral blending</li><li>• Sounding out and blending with 29 new GPCs</li><li>• 32 new HRS words</li><li>• Revision of Phase 2</li></ul>

# ELS Progression

Phase 4**	Phase 5 including alternatives and lesser-known GPCs	Beyond Phase 5
<p><i>Reception Summer 1</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oral blending</li> <li>• No new GPCs</li> <li>• No new HRS words</li> <li>• Word structures – cvcc, ccvc, cvcc, cccvc, cccvcc</li> <li>• Suffixes</li> <li>• Revision of Phase 2 and Phase 3</li> </ul>	<p><i>Reception Summer 2</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction to Phase 5 for reading</li> <li>• 20 new GPCs</li> <li>• 16 new HRS words</li> </ul> <p><i>Year 1 Autumn 1 and 2</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revision of previously taught Phase 5 GPCs</li> <li>• 2 new GPCs</li> <li>• 9 new HRS words</li> </ul> <p><i>Year 1 Spring 1 and 2</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alternative spellings for previously taught sounds</li> <li>• 49 new GPCs</li> <li>• 4 new HRS words</li> <li>• Oral blending</li> <li>• Revision of Phase 2, Phase 3 and Phase 4</li> </ul>	<p><i>Year 1 Summer, Year 2 and Key Stage 2</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• With ELS, phonics teaching does not stop at the end of Year 1, but continues as children move through the school, with links being made between their GPC knowledge and spelling</li> <li>• Revision of all previously taught GPCs for reading and spelling</li> <li>• Wider reading, spelling and writing curriculum</li> </ul>

Following this teaching progression, children develop skills to be able to identify, read and spell words which include a wide range of alternative spellings.

Eg, by the end of Year 1 it is expected that children can read, write and recognise all of the different ways to write **sh**

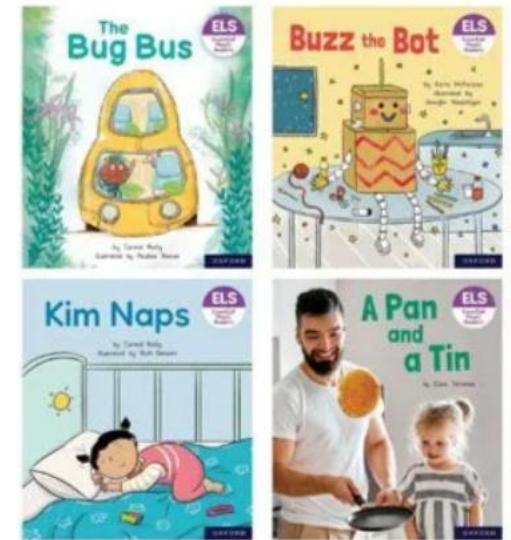
shell  
chef  
special

caption  
mansion  
passion

# Reading in School

There are many opportunities to read in school:

- **As a class:** reading words, captions and then sentences every day in phonics
- **Individually:** every day in phonics and more frequently when required
- **Paired:** at least once per week in the Friday phonics session plus every day during phonics sessions in review weeks



# Reading a Book at the Right Level

When children bring home a reading book from school they will:

- Have been taught all the sounds and tricky words in their phonics book so they know them well
- Be able to read many of the words by blending (eventually doing this in their head)
- Only be reading books with words which are entirely decodable or are tricky words they have been taught.
- Be able to read their book confidently
- Aim to read their book **4 times** across the week working on these skills:
  - decode
  - fluency
  - expression

# How Children Read Books in School

Sid pats Nim.

Nim naps.



Do you see any sounds/tricky words you know?

Start at the first word and point to each word as you read.

Magic word? Look at the graphemes carefully. Say each sound and blend them together to read it.

Tricky word? Recognise it and say it.

Read the sentence 3 times:

First time – blending/ decoding slowly

Second time – read it a bit quicker

Third time – read it with expression

Talk about what you've read – use the pictures to help when stories are limited!

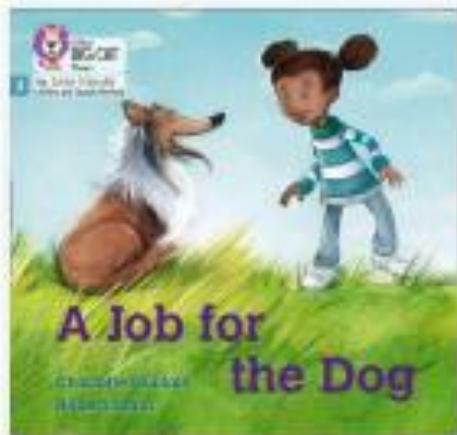
# Listening to Your Child Read their School Reading Book

- Your child should be able to read their book with little or no help from you.
- If they can't read a word, sound it out for them or read it for them and ask them to repeat it/read it to you several times.
- Encourage your child to read each sentence 3 times – decode, quicker, expression.
- Talk about the book and of course, celebrate their success!
- Reading should be enjoyable – if you have any concerns, come and see us.

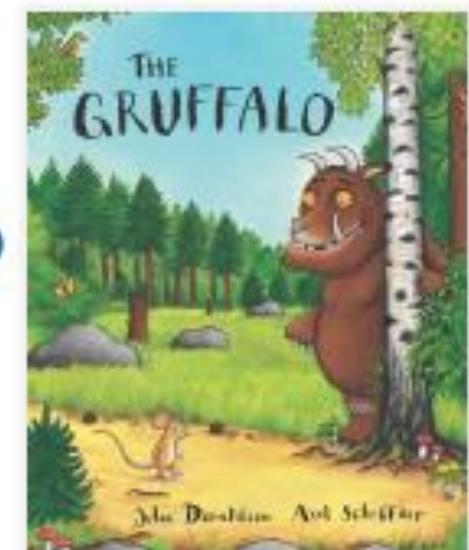


# Books Coming Home Each Week

Reading book for  
your child to read to  
you



Library book for  
you to read to  
your child



# The Importance of Reading to Children

We want our children to develop a love of reading.

Research shows that reading a book and chatting about enables children to:

- Understand words and sentences
- Use and understand a wide range of vocabulary
- Develop listening and comprehension skills



# The Importance of Reading to Children

- There is no need to buy lots of expensive books - join the library
- Explore a range of fiction and non-fiction books.
- Encourage interest in a range of books.

When reading to your child:

- Make the story sound as exciting as you can by changing your voice.
- Talk with your child as much as you can:

Introduce new and exciting language

Encourage your child to use new vocabulary

Make up sentences together

Find different words to use

Describe things you see

Talk about the illustrations in the book

Reading a bedtime story as often as possible to your child improves their outcomes later in school.

If you read just **one** book a day to your child, they will have been read **1825** books by their 5th birthday.



# Pronouncing pure sounds

Children need to use pure sounds when we are pronouncing the sounds and supporting children in reading words.

c a t

not

cuh a tuh

If we mispronounce these sounds it makes reading much harder for our children.

There are videos of the pronunciation of pure sounds on the phonics page of our school website where you can hear the correct pronunciation of the sounds.

# Supporting your child with reading at home

Listen for initial sounds and then sounds within words.

Look for familiar sounds and words in the world around you.

Practise segmenting and blending.

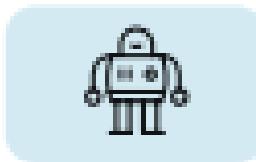
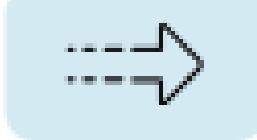
Play word games eg I spy, rhyming words, robot talk games

Practise hearing, saying and writing new sounds we learn in school.

Practise taught sounds and read school books as many times as you can – over learning will mean children become fluent readers quicker

# Supporting your child with writing at home

Say the word – warm it up – stretch the word – robot talk the word – blend the word – count the sounds within the word – say the word



For captions and sentences, if there are any tricky words, encourage them to find the word on their mat and say the letters to help remember how to spell it.

For all other words, we encourage children to use the stretching strategies to sound the words out. So, for The lady rode her bike to the office, we would expect something like:

*The laidee road her bighk to the ofis.*

# Thank you for supporting your child at home

In Summary:

- Phonics is taught daily in Reception and Year 1
- Phonics is a way of teaching children to hear, say and recognise the sounds in words
- Each sound is introduced with a rhyme and a picture to help children learn and remember them – we appreciate you helping your child to practise hearing, saying, reading and writing these sounds at home
- New reading books are sent home on Fridays and will include sounds and tricky words that the children have previously learned
- Ideally the reading book should be read at home 4 times, but once books get longer we understand that this isn't always easy to manage.
- We are aiming for fluency when children read – in school we sound out first, then read quicker, then say 'make it sound exciting'
- Please comment next to the title of the book in the reading record to let us know how your child has got on with their book at home
- Magic words can be sounded out
- Tricky words can not be sounded out – we just need to learn and remember them

