



St. Joseph's RC Primary School

Phonics

Parent/Carer Guide

December 2019

What is phonics?

Phonics is a method of teaching people to read by learning the sounds of letters and groups of letters. When your child learns that the letter B has the sound of /b/ and that “tion” sounds like /shun/, they are learning phonics.



Why is phonics important?

Learning phonics will help your child learn to read and spell. Written language can be compared to a code, so knowing the sounds of letters and letter combinations will help your child decode words as they read. Knowing phonics will also help your child know which letters to use as they write words.

When is phonics taught?

At St Joseph’s, children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 participate in a daily phonics lesson focusing on reading and spelling. Children in KS2 receive phonics teaching if required and this may be taught to the whole class, in small groups or one to one work.

Which phonics programme do we use?

At St Joseph’s we follow the ‘Letters and Sounds’ programme which was produced by the Department for Education, this is complimented by rhymes and ditties to support retention of sounds, through a multi-sensory approach. More information about this programme can be found online at: [https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ letters-and-sounds](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/letters-and-sounds)

How does the programme work?

Phase One

This phase focuses on listening skills and begins in Nursery. Children have the opportunity to listen to and identify a range of sounds including environmental, instrumental and body percussion. They also have the opportunity to investigate rhythm and rhyme and begin oral blending and segmenting.

Phase Two and Three

During these phases children focus on learning sounds including digraphs and trigraphs and how these are written. They learn how to blend the sounds for reading and segment them for spelling. They also begin to read tricky words. When they are secure in reading and spelling words in this phase, they begin to read and write captions and instructions.

Phase Four

As children now know all 44 phonemes and their corresponding graphemes, they now begin to read longer words known as CVCC and CCVC words. They continue to learn to read and spell decodable and tricky words.

Phase Five

During phase 5 children learn alternative graphemes for the phonemes they have learnt or, put simply, that sounds can be written in different ways. For example: /ay/ as in the word 'hay', /ai/ as in the word 'rain' and using the split digraph /a_e/ as in the word 'shake'. They also continue to learn to read and spell tricky words and read and write sentences and questions.

Phase Six

Phase six allows children the time to fully consolidate their phonic skills. They continue to learn to read and spell both decodable and tricky words as well as learning the new skill of adding a suffix to words such as adding -ing (singing), -ness (happiness) or -est (greatest).

Generally, children complete Phases 2 and 3 during Reception and begin working in Phase 4. They complete Phases 4 and 5 during Year One before consolidating Phase 5 and completing Phase 6 in Year 2. During Year 1 children participate in a phonics screening check to assess their knowledge of phonics to the end of Phase 5. If they do not meet the benchmark, their knowledge will be reassessed at the end of Year 2. However, it is important to remember that children progress at different rates and children work within the phase which is appropriate to their level of development.

Terminology

Phonics

Phonics is a method for teaching reading by learning the sounds of letters and groups of letters.
Phoneme The official term for a unit of sound.

Grapheme

The official term for how the oral sound is written.

Blending

This involves hearing sounds and being able to merge them together to make a word.

Segmenting

This involves hearing a word and splitting it up into the separate units of sound. This is sometimes called sound talking.

Digraph

When two letters make one sound this is called a digraph. For example: /sh/ as in 'shell'.

Trigraph

When three letters make one sound this is called a trigraph. For example: /igh/ as in light.

Decodable words

These are words that can be sounded out and blended together. For example: the sounds /h/, /a/, /t/ combine to make the word hat.

Tricky words

These words are sometimes called sight words and are not decodable. Children need to recognise these words by sight. For example: he, said, have and when.

Consonant

The letters: b, c, d, f, g, h, j, k, l, m, n, p, q, r, s, t, v, w, x, y, z are known as consonants.

Vowel

The letters: a, e, i, o, u are known as vowels.

CVCC

Words made up of consonant, vowel, consonant and consonant are known as CVCC words. For example: cart/ sand/ milk These words may also include digraphs. For example 'shells' is a CVCC word. CCVC Words made up of consonant, consonant, vowel and consonant are known as CCVC words. For example: stop/ trim/ flick These words may also include digraphs. For example 'stash' is a CCVC word.

Split digraph

A split digraph is where another letter comes in between the two vowel letters of the grapheme. For example: a_e as in the word sale/ o_e as in the word role/ i_e as in the word pile.

Suffix

A letter or a group of letters added to the end of a word to make a new word. For example: joy becomes joyful by adding the suffix -ful

Phonemes 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

Phase 3

Set 6: j v w x

Set 7: y z zz qu

Digraphs, Trigraphs and example words

ch-chip	lgh-night	Ow-cow
sh-shop	Oa=boat	Oi-coin
Th-thin	Oo=boot	Ear-dear
Th-then	oo-look	Air-fair
Ng-ring	Ar-farm	Ure-sure
Ai-rain	Or-for	Er-corner
ee-feet	Ur=hurt	

Tricky Words	
He	You
She	They
We	All
Be	Are
Me	My
Was	her

Phase 4

There are no new phonemes taught in this phase as children now learn to use their existing knowledge to read and spell more complex words including CVCC and CCVC words.

Tricky Words	
said	come
have	where
like	there
so	little
do	one
some	when
out	what

Phase 5 Alternative graphemes have been grouped together

ai-rain ay-crayon a_e cake

ee- leek ea-bead e_e theme

ey- key igh- night ie- tie i_e- time

a - boat oe - toe o_e - tone

oo - boot ue - blue or cue (2 different ways of pronunciation)

u_e - tune ew - few

or -pork aw - saw au - Paul

ow - cow ou - out

oi - coin oy - boy

ur - hurt er – summer

ir - firm

wh - when

ph – phone

Tricky words	
oh	could
their	called
people	
Mr	
Mrs	
looked	
asked	

Phase 6- Suffixes

s cat becomes cats	-es bush becomes bushes
-y fun becomes funny	-en sharp becomes sharpen
-ing jump becomes jumping	-er slow becomes slower
-ful care becomes careful	-ment pay becomes payment
-ed play becomes played	- est big becomes biggest
-ly sad becomes sadly	-ness dark becomes darkness