

How does phonics progress?

Phonics is taught systematically, with children progressing through 'phases' depending on their knowledge and their application. As a rough guide, this table helps to break that down for you, phase by phase.

Phase	Content
2	Children begin to learn that letters make sounds, starting with single letter sounds and then 2-letter sounds. By the end of Phase 2 children should be reading some vowel-consonant (VC) and consonant-vowel-consonant (CVC) words.
3	The remaining sounds are learnt (mainly 2-letter sounds). Tricky words (common exception words) like 'was' are also learnt. By the end of Phase 3 children should be able to say the sounds of all Phase 2 and 3 graphemes.
4	This Phase is about building confidence, consolidation and refinement.
5	Phase 5 is where alternative spellings for sounds are taught and alternative sounds for graphemes. Children should be blending most words fluently and sounding out silently, where necessary.
6	Children should be fluent readers now. In Phase 6 they develop their understanding of spelling, including prefixes and suffixes.

Top tips to remember...

- ✓ When your child is reading let them try to decode the words themselves.
- ✓ If they get stuck with a word encourage them to say the sounds and read the word. Ask them to say the first sound initially and then the next sound and so on. Once they have done that they then need to try to blend those sounds together.
- ✓ If they don't know a sound or have forgotten it, give it to them.
- ✓ If the word they are trying to decode is tricky, give it to them. It's important that they develop some fluency, even if this, at times, is supported by you.



Phonics

*Supporting children with phonics:
a guide for parents and carers.*



Introduction

Phonics is the term we use to describe the method for teaching children to be able to read. Children learn that words are made up of sounds and that these sounds, when blended together, make those words. Most words in the English language can be read in this way, with just small percentage of tricky words that can't and have to be learnt in a different way. It's quite remarkable really as children who know just a few sounds are able to read 100's of words. And quite simply, the more sounds they know, the more words they'll be able to read.



Cracking the code...

Children start by learning the alphabet. They learn that the letters in the alphabet have names and that there are 26 of them. They then learn that these letters make sounds and that along with these initial 26 sounds, they make many others, 44 in total. It's like learning a code and once they've cracked the code, knowing which letters make which sounds, they are then able to read words, sentences, and in time, whole books. This code knowledge unlocks the enlightening world of reading for them and is the key to children's early primary education.



Did you say that right?



Us grown-ups were probably never taught phonics so we're almost certainly a little rusty when it comes to articulating the sounds correctly. Children are obviously taught the correct pronunciation of the sounds in school but in order to support them with this further at home it's vital that you are modelling and error correcting with the correct pronunciation of all the sounds. There are lots of guides out there to help with this. This one from Oxford Owl is really useful:

https://cdn.oxfordowl.co.uk/2016/05/05/20/22/32/561/20097_content

Phonics terminology...

You'll hear your child use some really technical vocabulary when it comes to phonics. It's amazing how receptive they are to the terminology and they remember it brilliantly. Here are some of the common terms used:

Phoneme	<i>the sounds</i>
Grapheme	<i>the letters that represent phonemes</i>
Segmenting	<i>splitting up a word into its phonemes in order to decode (read) it</i>
Blending	<i>joining the sounds together to say the word</i>
Digraph	<i>a sound made up of 2 letters (e.g. /ou/ in scout)</i>
Trigraph	<i>a sound made up of 3 letters (e.g. /igh/ in night)</i>
Split vowel digraph	<i>like a digraph but the 2 letters are split in the middle by another letter (e.g. /i-e/ in time)</i>