Phonics and Learning to Read

We passionately believe that teaching children to read and write independently is one of the core purposes of a primary school. These fundamental skills not only hold the key to the rest of the curriculum but also have a huge impact on children's self-esteem and future life chances.

Learning to read begins with a systematic approach to the teaching of phonics. This begins at the beginning of Early Years, and continues through Year 1 and Year 2 and , if necessary beyond. In Early Years and Key stage 1 year one pupils have a daily 20 minute phonics session, which we teach using the 'Letters & Sounds' scheme. There are 6 phases of phonics taught over the course of Early Years and Key Stage 1.
In year two the when the children reach phase 6 they have spelling lessons.

Phase 1

In Phase 1 phonics, children are taught about:

- Environmental sounds
- Instrumental sounds
- Body percussion (e.g. clapping and stamping)
- Rhythm and rhyme
- Alliteration
- Voice sounds
- Oral blending and segmenting (e.g. hearing that d-o-g makes 'dog')

Typical activities for teaching Phase 1 phonics include **'listening' walks, playing and identifying instruments, action songs, learning rhymes and playing games like I Spy**.
This phase is intended to develop children's listening, vocabulary and speaking skills.

Phase 2

In Phase 2, children begin to learn the sounds that letters make (phonemes). There are 44 sounds in all. Some are made with two letters, but **in Phase 2, children focus on learning the 19 most common single letter sounds**.

Children learn the most commonly used phonemes first, starting with: **/s/, /a/, /t/, /p/, /i/, /n/.**

By the end of Phase 2 children should be able to read some vowel-consonant (VC) and consonant-vowel-consonant (CVC) words, and to spell them out. They also learn some high frequency 'tricky words' like 'the' and 'go.' This phase usually lasts about six weeks.

Phase 3

Phase 3 introduces children to the remaining, more difficult and/or less commonly used phonemes. There are around 25 of these, depending on which scheme is followed, mainly made up of two letters such as /ch/, /ar/, /ow/ and /ee/.

Alongside this, **children are taught to recognise more tricky words, including 'me,' 'was,' 'my,' 'you' and 'they'.** They learn the names of the letters, as well as the sounds they make. Activities might include learning mnemonics (memory aids) for tricky words, practising writing letters on mini whiteboards, using word cards and singing songs like the Alphabet Song.

Phase 3 takes most children around 12 weeks. By the end, they should be able to say the sound made by most, or all, Phase 2 and 3 graphemes, blend and read CVC words made from these graphemes, read 12 new tricky words and write letters correctly when given an example to copy.

Phase 4

By now, children should be confident with each phoneme. From here on, phonics teaching is about consolidating and refining their knowledge, introducing more spelling patterns and tricky words, and increasing vocabulary.

In Phase 4 phonics, children will, among other things:

- Practise reading and spelling CVCC words (‘bump', 'nest', ‘belt,’ ‘milk’, etc)
- Practise reading and spelling high frequency words
- Practise reading and writing sentences
- Learn more tricky words, including ‘have,’ ‘like,’ ‘some,’ ‘little’

Children should now be blending confidently to work out new words. They should be starting to be able to read words straight off, rather than having to sound them out. They should also be able to write every letter, mostly correctly. This phase usually takes four to six weeks, and most children will complete it around the end of Reception.

Phase 5

Phase 5 generally takes children the whole of Year 1. Here, we start introducing alternative spellings for sounds, like 'igh'. Children master these in reading first, and as their fluency develops, we begin to see them using them correctly in spelling.

Children learn new graphemes (different ways of spelling each sound) and alternative pronunciations for these: for example, learning that the grapheme ‘ow’ makes a different sound in ‘snow’ and ‘cow’.

They should become quicker at blending, and start to do it silently.

They learn about split digraphs such as the a-e in ‘name.’

They’ll start to choose the right graphemes when spelling, and will learn more tricky words, including ‘people,’ ‘water’ and ‘friend’. They also learn one new phoneme: /zh/, as in ‘treasure.’

By the end of Year 1, children should be able to:

- Say the sound for any grapheme they are shown
- Write the common graphemes for any given sound (e.g. ‘e,’ ‘ee,’ ‘y,’ ‘ea’)
- Use their phonics knowledge to read and spell unfamiliar words of up to three syllables
- Read all of the 100 high frequency words, and be able to spell most of them
- Form letters correctly.

Phase 6

Phase 6 phonics takes place throughout Year 2, with the aim of children becoming fluent readers and accurate spellers.

By Phase 6, children should be able to read hundreds of words using one of three strategies:

- Reading them automatically
- Decoding them quickly and silently
- Decoding them aloud

Children should now be spelling most words accurately (this is known as 'encoding'), although this usually lags behind reading. They will also learn, among other things:

- Prefixes and suffixes, e.g. ‘un-’ and ‘-ed’
- The past tense
- Memory strategies for high frequency or topic words
- Proof-reading
- How to use a dictionary
- Where to put the apostrophe in words like ‘I’m’
- Spelling rules

Although formal phonics teaching is usually complete by the end of Year 2, children continue to use their knowledge as they move up the school. The whole aim of phonics teaching is not just to learn the sounds, but to use them as a tool for reading and spelling. Everything leads on to independent reading and writing.

Phonics Assessment

Children’s progress is continually reviewed to allow for the teacher to support the learning of each individual.

The national Phonics screening check is performed in June of Year 1. The purpose of the screening check is to confirm that children have learned phonic decoding to an age-appropriate standard. The children who did not meet the required standard for the check in year 1 enter again in year 2 with additional support. As children enter KS2 provision is made for those children still requiring daily phonics.

We hold a phonics workshop for parents each Autumn to guide them in ways to support their children at home. when their child joins our reception class.

OxfordOWL Help your child learn

https://www.oxfordowl.co.uk/for-home/advice-for-parents/phonics-videos/

Phonics support

Audio guide: How to say the phonic sounds

Phonics audio guide

There are 26 letters of the alphabet but they make 44 sounds. Use our audio guide to hear all 44 phonic sounds, on their own and in example words.

a–e | f–n | o–s | t–z | Making sounds into words

https://cdn.oxfordowl.co.uk/2016/05/05/20/22/32/561/20097_content/index.html?id=ae