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**Supporting your child with**

**PHONICS**

What is Phonics?

At Thrapston Primary School, children in KS1 have daily phonics lessons in ability sets. We follow the structure set out by ‘Letters and Sounds’ to develop the children’s reading skills. Letters and Sounds is a phonics resource published by the Department for Education and Skills. It aims to build children's speaking and listening skills in their own right as well as to prepare children for learning to read by developing their phonic knowledge and skills. It sets out a systematic programme for teaching phonic skills for children starting by the age of five, with the aim of them becoming fluent readers by age seven.

They are taught to read by breaking down words into separate sounds or ‘phonemes’. They are then taught how to blend these sounds together to read the whole word.

What is the Year 1 Phonics Challenge?

Since 2012, Year 1 children across the country take part in a statutory phonics screening check in June. The check is very similar to tasks the children already complete during phonics lessons. The focus of the check is to provide evidence of children’s decoding and blending skills, not to test their vocabulary. They will be asked to ‘sound out’ a word and blend the sounds together. e.g. d-o-g – dog.

The check will consist of 40 words and non-words using sounds learnt in phases 1 to 5 (see below). Children will be told if the word is a real or ‘alien’ (nonsense) word, with a corresponding alien image. Teachers will conduct all of the screening checks with the children one to one, in a quiet area of the school.

And the results...?

Children will be scored against a national standard and we will inform you of whether they fall below or within this standard. If your child’s score falls below the national standard they will receive extra support and they can re-take the Phonics Screening Check in Year 2.

The Terminology

**Phoneme** - A phoneme is the smallest unit of sound in a word. It is generally accepted that most varieties of spoken English use about 44 phonemes.

# Graphemes - A grapheme is a symbol of a phoneme. It is a letter or group of letters representing a sound.

**Segmenting and blending** - Segmenting consists of breaking words down into phonemes to spell. Blending consists of building words from phonemes to read. Both skills are important.

**Digraph** - This is when two letters come together to make a phoneme. For example, /oa/ makes the sound in ‘boat’ and is also known as a vowel digraph. There are also consonant digraphs, for example, /sh/ and /ch/.

**Trigraph** - This is when three letters come together to make one phoneme, for example /igh/.

**Split digraph** - A digraph in which the two letters are not adjacent – e.g. make

Phase 1

This paves the way for systematic learning of phonics and usually starts in nursery. Children learn to listen attentively to sounds around them, such as the sounds of their toys and to sounds in spoken language. Teachers teach a wide range of nursery rhymes and songs. They read books to and with the children. This helps to increase the number of words they know – their *vocabulary* – and helps them talk confidently about books.

## Learning how to *‘sound-talk’*

The teacher shows children how to do this – c-a-t = cat. The separate sounds (*phonemes*) are spoken aloud, in order, all through the word, and are then merged together into the whole word. The merging together is called *blending* and is a vital skill for reading.

Children will also learn to do this the other way around – cat = c-a-t. The whole word is spoken aloud and then broken up into its sounds (*phonemes*) in order, all through the word. This is called *segmenting* and is a vital skill for spelling.

This is all oral (*spoken*). Your child will not be expected to match the letter to the sound at this stage.

# Phase 2

In this phase, often during their reception year, children will continue practising what they have learned from phase 1, including ‘sound-talk’. They will also be taught the phonemes (*sounds*) for a number of letters (*graphemes*), which phoneme is represented by which grapheme and that a phoneme can be represented by more than one letter, for example, /ll/ as in b-e-ll. Now the children will be *seeing* letters and words, as well as hearing them.

# Phase 3

At the start of Year 1, most children are beginning to work within Phase 3. The purpose of this phase is to:

* teach more graphemes, most of which are made of two letters, for example, ‘oa’ as in boat.
* practise blending and segmenting a wider set of CVC words, for example, fizz, chip, sheep, light.
* learn all letter names and begin to form them correctly.
* read more tricky words and begin to spell some of them.
* read and write words in phrases and sentences.

By the time children reach Phase 3, they will already be able to blend and segment words

containing the 19 letters of the alphabet taught in Phase 2. They will then begin to learn the following sounds;

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Sounds | Word example |  | y | yes |
| j | jam |  | z | zip |
| v | vet |  | zz | buzz |
| w | win |  | qu | quick |
| x | box |  | ch | chop |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Sounds** | **Word example** |
| **sh** | shin |
| **th** | thick |
| **ng** | song |
| **ai** | train |
| **igh** | sight |
| **oa** | boat |
| **oi** | coil |
| **oo (long)** | boot |
| **ee** | tree |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Sounds** | **Word example** |
| **oo (short)** | cook |
| **ow** | now |
| **ar** | star |
| **air** | hair |
| **ear** | hear |
| **er** | term |
| **ur** | curl |
| **or** | fork |
| **ure** | pure |

Tricky words:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| we | me | be | was | no | go |
| my | you | they | her | all | are |

Phase 4

Children continue to practise previously learned graphemes and phonemes and learn how to read and write: CVCC words. For example, in the word ‘toast’, t = consonant, oa = vowel, s = consonant, t = consonant. They will be learning more tricky words and continuing to read and write sentences together.

## Tricky words

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| said | so | she | he | have | like |
| some | come | were | there | little | one |
| they | all | are | do | when | out |
| what | my | her |  |  |  |

Phase 5

Children will be taught new graphemes and alternative pronunciations for these graphemes, as well as graphemes they already know. They will begin to learn to choose the appropriate grapheme when spelling.

New graphemes for reading:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Sound | Word example |  | Sound | Word example |  | Sound | Word example |  | Sound | Word example |
| ay | day |  | oy | boy |  | wh | when |  | a\_e | make |
| ou | out |  | ir | girl |  | ph | photo |  | e\_e | these |
| ie | tie |  | ue | blue |  | ew | new |  | i\_e | like |
| ea | eat |  | aw | saw |  | oe | toe |  | o\_e | home |
|  | | | | | | au | Paul |  | u\_e | rule |

Tricky words:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| oh | their | people | Mr | Mrs | looked |
| called | asked | water | where | who | again |
| thought | through | work | mouse | many | laughed |
| because | different | any | eyes | friends | once |
| please |  |  |  |  |  |

Phase 6

Most children move on to phase during Year 2 and the focus is on learning spelling rules for word endings (these are known as suffixes). The children will learn how words change when you add certain letters. There are 12 different suffixes taught:

-s -es -ing -ed

-er -est -y -en

-ful -ly -ment -ness

Phonics at home

MCj03791750000[1]Ways you can support your child at home

Useful webpages

<http://www.phonicsplay.co.uk>

[www.teachyourmonstertoread.com](http://www.teachyourmonstertoread.com)

In Year 1, your child will be given a wallet of sound cards to keep in their book bag. New cards will be added each week based on the sounds that have been taught at school. If you are able to regularly spend a few minutes at home looking at these cards, matching them to the pictures or saying the sounds as quickly as possible, it will help your child to retain the sounds they have learnt so far.

REMEMBER: Phonics is not the only way you become a good reader. Continue to read with your child each night and encourage them to:

Sound out, re-read to check it makes sense, and use pictures for clues.

Ask questions about the book;

And most importantly ENJOY READING!



If you need clarification or would like to know more about our phonics teaching or which phase your child is currently working in, please speak to your child’s teacher.