

Phonics and Early Reading

At

Outwood Primary Academy Ledger Lane



Guide for Parents and Carers

At Outwood Primary Academy Ledger Lane, your child is learning to read with Read Write Inc. Phonics, a very popular and successful early reading programme.

Your child will learn to read in a very simple way. He or she will learn to:

1. Read letters by their 'sounds'
2. Blend these sounds into words
3. Read the words in a story.

What is phonics?

Phonics is a way of teaching children to read quickly and skilfully.

They are taught how to:

- Recognise the sounds that each individual letter makes;
- Identify the sounds that different combinations of letters make – such as 'sh' or 'oo'; and
- Blend these sounds together from left to right to make a word.

Children can then use this knowledge to 'de-code' new words that they hear or see. This is the first important step in learning to read.

Key Vocabulary

Blending

Blending involves merging the sounds in a word together in order to pronounce it. This is important for reading. For example, j-a-m blended together reads the word jam.

Consonant

The letters of the alphabet (apart from the vowels a, e, i, o and u).

CVC words

An abbreviation for consonant-vowel-consonant. This is a simple way of indicating the order of the graphemes in words. For example, it (VC), cat (CVC), bench (CVCC).

Digraph

A grapheme made up of two letters that makes one sound (sh in fish).

Grapheme

A grapheme is simply a way of writing down a phoneme. A grapheme can be one letter (s), two letters (ir), three letters (igh) or four letters in length (ough).

Grapheme-phoneme correspondences (GPCs)

Knowing your GPCs means being able to hear a phoneme and knowing what grapheme to use to represent it. This is helpful for spelling. Conversely, it also means seeing a grapheme and knowing the phoneme that relates to it, which is important for reading.

Phoneme

The smallest unit of sound in a word. There are around 44 phonemes in English and they are represented by graphemes in writing. Phonemes are usually shown as symbols between two forward slashes. For example, /b/ or /ch/.

Segmenting

Segmenting involves breaking up a word that you hear into its sounds. This helps with spelling because if you know what graphemes represent the sounds in the word, you can write it! For example, the word jam is segmented into the sounds j-a-m.

Split digraph

A digraph that is split between a consonant (a-e in make). A split digraph usually changes the sound of the first vowel. For example, compare the pronunciation between hug and huge.

Red words

Words that are commonly used in English, but they have complex spelling patterns which make them difficult to read and write. For example: said, of and was.

Trigraph

A grapheme made up of three letters that makes one sound (igh in high).

Vowel

The letters a, e, i, o and u.

First, your child will learn to read:

- Set 1 Speed Sounds: these are sounds written with one letter:

m a s d t i n p g o c k u b f e l h r j v

- **y w z** and sounds written with two letters

(your child will call these 'special friends'): **sh th ch**

qu ng nk ck

- Words containing these sounds, by sound-blending.
e.g. **m-a-t mat, c-a-t cat, g-o-t got, f-i-sh fish,**
s-p-o-t spot, b-e-s-t best, s-p-l-a-sh splash
- Blending Books and Red, Green and Purple Storybooks.

Second, he or she will learn to read:

- Set 2 Speed Sounds: **ay ee igh ow oo or ar or**

air ir ou oy

- Words containing these sounds
- Pink, Orange and Yellow Storybooks.

Third, he or she will learn to read:

- Set 3 Speed Sounds: **ea oi a-e i-e o-e u-e aw**

are ur er ow ai oa ew ire ear ure

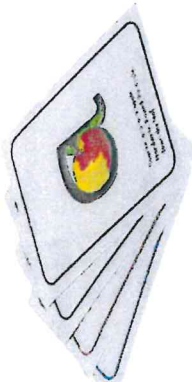
- Words containing these sounds
- Blue and Grey Storybooks.

Once your child can read Set 1 Speed Sounds confidently, he or she can learn to read words. First, your child is introduced to a toy frog called Fred. Fred can *only* say the sounds in a word and needs your child to help him read the word. So, when you hear your child say 'Fred Talk', you'll know this means sounding out the word.

You can help your child to read words by following these steps.



Fred says the sounds and children work out the word.

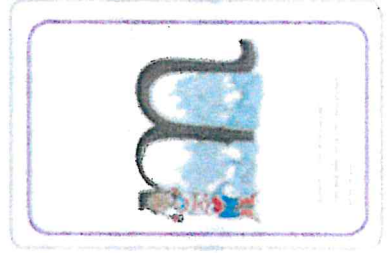
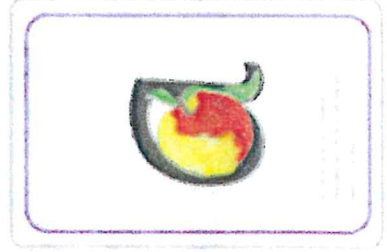
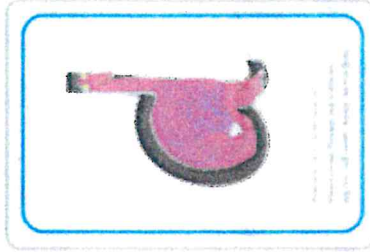
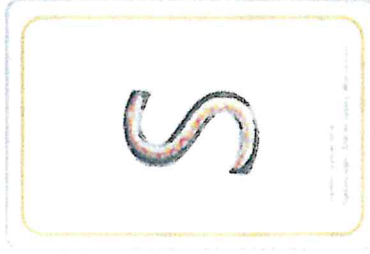


or

Set 1

You'll see that each sound is drawn in the shape of a picture. For example:

- 's' is in the shape of a snake
- 'd' is in the shape of a dinosaur
- 'a' is in the shape of an apple
- 'm' is in the shape of two mountains.



Set 2 and 3

Each sound has a picture and phrase to help your child remember the sound. For example:

- the sound 'ay' has the phrase 'May I play?' with a picture of children playing together
- the sound 'ee' has the phrase 'What can you see?' with a picture of two boys in a tree.



Children will learn a new sound at the start of each session and practice this new sound in 'green words' (first with dots and dashes, and then without) and in 'alien words'.

Dots and dashes show the sounds within a word.

Dot = 1 letter, 1 sound.

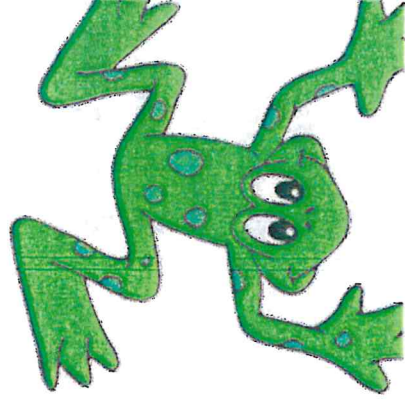
Dash = 2/3 letters, 1 sound.

green
:.-.

play day
way may
spray say

tay shay
zay vray

Children will then apply their sound knowledge by spelling some words containing their focus sound.



The children are asked to count the sounds they can hear, pinch the sounds on to their 'Fred' fingers and then write the word into their book.

To finish the session, children put their reading skills into practice by reading with a partner.

They will read an appropriate staged book, depending on **half termly** sound and word reading assessments.

Before they read the story, they sound out and read new green words, practise reading any of the red words, discuss any new vocabulary and listen to a thought-provoking introduction to get them excited about the story.

Then, over the week, children read the story three times with their partner. The first to focus on reading the words carefully; the second to help them read the story fluently; and on the third, we talk about the story together: for example, how characters might be feeling and why. We finish by answering retrieval and inference questions about the story.



Children practice reading every day through partner reading and they will be heard by an adult during the session.

Home Reading

To ensure that our home reading books match closely to our phonics sessions, we are relaunching our home reading.

Whichever stage (colour) book your child reads in their phonics session will be the stage they bring home. **These are different colours to the current system.** This will ensure they are able to read it independently. There are prompts in the books to help you support your child with their reading practice. These books are brand new so, as with all books your child brings home, please treat them carefully and encourage the same from your child.

Your child will also take home a 'book to share' which they will select themselves from our library. This book will not necessarily match your child's reading ability so it is likely they will need support to read. This is a perfect opportunity for shared reading at home.

Reading books will be sent home every week, to be returned the following week.

New books will not be given until the previous weeks' have been returned.

Phonics Screening Check

The phonics screening check will be taken individually by all children in Year 1, in England, from June 2012. It is designed to give teachers and parents, information on how your son/daughter is progressing in phonics.

What is the phonic screening check?

There will be two sections in this 40-word check and it will assess phonics skills and knowledge learnt through Reception and Year 1.

What will it check?

It will check that your son/daughter can:

- Sound out and blend sounds in order to read simple words.
- Read phonically decodable one-syllable and two-syllable words, e.g. cat, sand, windmill.
- Read a selection of nonsense words which are referred to as pseudo words.

What are nonsense or pseudo words and why are they included?

These are words that are phonically decodable but are not actual words with an associated meaning e.g. brip, snorb. Pseudo words are included in the check specifically to assess whether your son/daughter can decode a word using phonics skills and not their memory. The pseudo words will be shown to your son/daughter with a picture of a monster and they will be asked to tell their teacher what sort of monster it is by reading the word. This not only makes the check a bit more fun, but provides the children with a context for the nonsense word which is independent from any existing vocabulary they may have. Crucially, it does not provide any clues, so your son/daughter just has to be able to decode it.

Is there a pass mark?

The check is not about passing or failing but checking appropriate progress is being made. Children progress at different speeds so not reaching the threshold score does not necessarily mean there is a serious problem. Your son/daughter will re-sit the check the following summer term. The pass mark has been at 32 on the last few checks.

What happens to the results?

The school will report your son's/daughter's results to you by the end of the summer term as well as to the local authority. If you have any concerns, do talk to your teacher about this in a parents' meeting or after school.

Ten top tips for reading stories to your child

- 1 Make reading to your child feel like a treat. Introduce each new book with excitement.
- 2 Make it a special quiet time and cuddle up so both of you can see the book.
- 3 Show curiosity in what you're going to read:
Oh no! I think Arthur is going to get even angrier now.
- 4 Read the whole story the first time through without stopping too much. If you think your child might not understand something, model an explanation:
Oh I think what's happening here is that...
- 5 Chat about the story:
I wonder why he did that?
Oh no, I hope she's not going to...
I wouldn't have done that, would you?
- 6 Avoid asking questions to test what your child remembers.
- 7 Link stories to your own experiences (e.g. *This reminds me of...*)
- 8 Read favourite stories over and over again.
Get your child to join in with the bits they know.
- 9 Read with enthusiasm. Don't be embarrassed to try out different voices. Your child will love it.
- 10 Read with enjoyment.
If you're not enjoying it, your child won't.

