

Phonics at Lapford Community Primary School



What is Phonics?

Phonics is a method for teaching the sounds and spelling patterns of the English language; is taught every day, and throughout the day, at school.

- It is the knowledge of letters and the sounds we make.
- It gives us the skills of blending these sounds together to read words.
- Through phonics, we learn the skills of segmenting the sounds in a word and choosing the correct letters or groups of letters needed to spell it.
- Phonics is the first step to word recognition.
- The ultimate goal for all our children is to be able to automatically read all words, both decodable (words that can be sounded out phonic skills) and common exception words ('tricky' words that do not always follow phonic rules).

How is Phonics taught?

We have a systematic approach to the teaching of phonics at Lapford Community Primary School, which engages children in a fun and interactive manner. We use a DfE resource called Letters and Sounds, which provides the basis for clear, systematic teaching of the sounds (phonemes) and spelling patterns (graphemes) to support the children's development in phonics. This is introduced to our children in Pre-School with Phase 1 (listening skills and oral blending skills) and is then consistently built upon throughout EYFS (Early Years Foundation stage) and Year 1. From year 2, children who have met age related expectations and finished the phonics programme will be taught using a programme called Decision Spelling, a dyslexia friendly spelling approach that further builds on their knowledge of spelling and grammar. Children who are still working within the phonics programme will receive extra support to complete their phonics education. Children are assessed regularly and groupings are altered accordingly if necessary.

The 6 Phonic Phases

There are 44 phonemes (sounds) that the children learn throughout the Letters and Sounds programme.

Correct pronunciation of phonemes is very important in helping children read and spell correctly. At Lapford Community Primary School, we hold parent information sessions at the start of the Reception year to ensure that parents are aware and are using this correct pronunciation. We are also happy to offer support at other times - please just ask!

The pronunciation of the consonant phonemes can be grouped:

1. **f l m n r s z v sh th** ('stretchy' sounds)
2. **c p t ch h b d g w qu y j** (clipped 'bouncy' sounds - with no 'uh' at the end).

As the 44 phonemes can have different spellings (eg. ai, ay and a-e) the children are gradually introduced to more alternative spellings as they progress through the Letters and Sounds programme.

High Frequency Words (HFWs)

These are common words that are useful for children to learn to read and spell. As children progress through the phases of Letters and Sounds, they are introduced to sets of HFWs. These are sent home on flashcards for children to practise.

Some words are **decodable** which children can blend to read eg. **then, with**.

Some are **tricky words** eg. **said**, which are not phonically decodable and are learned by sight. However, some tricky words do become decodable as children move through the programme eg. **when, what**.

Phase 1

Children explore sounds and words and develop an awareness of rhyme, rhythm and alliteration.

These are on-going skills and it is very important that children are exposed to a rich variety of language from an early age. This can be through conversation, nursery rhymes, stories, and games.

In Preschool, the children can take home a nursery rhyme a week with resources to help them act out and remember the rhyme.

Phase 2

Children are introduced to at least 19 letters and corresponding sounds.

- 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 ss**

They begin to read and spell simple three-letter consonant-vowel-consonant (CVC) words eg. **sat**, **pin**, **duck**. They also begin to read high frequency words eg. **to**, **go** and **the**.

Phase 3

Children learn one grapheme (how a phoneme is written) for a further 25 phonemes. These include consonant and vowel digraphs (two letters making one sound eg. **ch**, **ng**, **ai**, **oa**) and trigraphs (three letters making one sound eg. **igh**, **air**). They read and spell HFWs.

Throughout Phases 3, 4 and 5 children will also be using pseudo or 'alien' words; this is good practise for segmenting and blending sounds, and preparing Year 1 children for the phonics screening.

- Set 6: **j v w x**
- Set 7: **y z zz qu**
- Consonant digraphs: **ch sh th ng**
- Vowel digraphs: **ai ee igh oa oo ar or ur ow oi ear air ure er**

Phase 4

Children read and spell words containing consonant clusters. These are not digraphs, but instances where two or more consonants, when put together, can each be heard as individual phonemes eg. **cl**, **dr**, **sk**, **mp** and **nd**. Words containing these are known as CCVC and CVCC words. eg. **black**, **strip**, **chest**.

Towards the end of Phase 4, they will also begin to work with compound words such as **lunchbox**, **pondweed** and **handstand**.

Phase 5

Children entering Phase 5 will already be able to read and spell words with adjacent consonants, such as **trap**, **string** and **flask**. They will also be able to read and spell some polysyllabic words (words with more than one syllable).

The purpose of this phase is for children to broaden their knowledge of graphemes and phonemes for use in reading and spelling.

In Phase 5, children will learn alternative graphemes and phonemes. For example, they already know **ai** as in **rain**, but now they will be introduced to **ay** as in **day** and **a-e** as in **make**.

Alternative pronunciations for graphemes will also be introduced, eg. **ea** in **sea**, **bread** and **break**.

Graphemes: **ay ou ie ea oy ir ue aw wh ph ew oe au a-
e e-e i-e o-e u-e**

Alternative graphemes for: **i o c g u ow ie ea er a y ch ou**

Phase 6 and Beyond

Children should now be able to read hundreds of words, doing this in four ways:

- Reading the words automatically if they are very familiar;
- Decoding them quickly and silently because their sounding and blending routine is now well established;
- Decoding them aloud;
- The shift from **learning to read** to **reading to learn** takes place and children read for information and for pleasure.

Strategies for learning spellings

- Syllables - break it into smaller bits to remember eg. Sep-tem-ber
- Root words - find its base word eg. Smiling = smile +ing
- Analogy - Use words that I already know to help (eg. could, would, should)
- Mnemonics - make up a sentence to help remember it (eg. could – O U Lucky Duck; people – people eat oranges, penguins lay eggs).

Phonics reading books

Please see the reading policy for information regarding home reading.