

# **Parents' Guide to Phonics and Spelling November 2016**



**Mickleover Primary School**

**A guide to how phonics and spelling strategies will help your child to read and spell.**

## **What is synthetic phonics?**

It is a technical name and nothing to do with being artificial. The synthetic part refers to synthesizing or blending sounds to make a word. Phonics is a method of teaching children how spoken words are composed of sounds called phonemes and how the letters in words correspond to those phonemes. The process of reading involves decoding or 'breaking' words into separate phonemes, so that meaning can be gained. On the other hand, the process of spelling requires the writer to identify all the phonemes in a word and then use their knowledge of the phonemic code to write or 'make' the word.

English is essentially a code that can be encoded (written) and decoded (read). We need to teach children this code with as much emphasis as possible on the rules and regularities of the written language.

Children are taught that we can make a word from the sounds and then break it apart again when we want to spell it.

Spelling and reading are taught together but children's may be better at reading before spelling or vice versa.

Written English is recognised as being a complex language. We have 26 letters but 44 phonemes in the spoken language (a phoneme is the technical name for the smallest unit of sound). There are a huge number of letter combinations needed to make these 44 phonemes.

## **Letters and Sounds**

Letters and Sounds is a government produced synthetic phonic teaching programme which we use daily with our Reception to Year 2 children. Throughout the six phases children will be taught the 44 phonemes. It is important to remember that there are alternative spellings to these phonemes.

There are six phases in which the children are introduced to all 44 phonemes and corresponding graphemes starting with the most

familiar grapheme for each phoneme first (A grapheme is a letter or a number of letters that represent a sound (phoneme) in a word.).

Synthetic phonics starts with 'phonemic awareness' which is hearing the different sounds in a word and the matching of these phonemes to single letters. At the same time it shows how these phonemes (sounds) can be 'blended' to produce words and the words can be 'segmented' to write.

Your child will learn simple letter to sound correspondence. This is when a phoneme is represented by a single letter as in the word /c/ /a/ /t/. When that's mastered your child will learn that sometimes one phoneme is represented by two letters (digraph); as in the word /ch/ /o/ /p/ ; where /ch/ is only one phoneme (sound). Then after that, even though at first it may sound confusing, your child will learn that sometimes a single phoneme can be represented many different ways. Like the sound /ay/ in play.

Your child will eventually learn that this phoneme can be written; /ay/ as in the word play /a-e/ as in the word spade /ea/ as in the word break /ey/ as in the word hey /eigh/ as in the word eight /a/ as in the word later /ei/ as in the word vein

Finally your child will learn that sometimes a single (or more) letter may represent more than one phoneme; for example, the 'o' in /most/ and the 'o' in /hot/ or the 'ow' in /wow/ and the 'ow' in /tow/.

This can be confusing but with the structure and regularity of letters and sounds almost all children will pick this up.

## **No Nonsense Spelling**

A spelling pathway to use with Year 2 – Year 6 children.

It focuses on teaching strategies to support spelling and includes the statutory spelling words for year groups 3-6. This is being trialled in Years 2 and 3 over the next twelve months, with the view that it will be used in the whole of Key Stage 2 from September 2017.

## What do all these technical words mean?

### What is a phoneme?

It is the smallest unit of sound and a piece of terminology that children like to use and should be taught. At first it will equate with a letter sound but later on will include the digraphs.

### What is a digraph?

This is when two or more letters come together to make phoneme. /oa/ makes the sound in boat.

### What is blending?

Blending is the process that is involved in bringing the sounds together to make a word or a syllable and is how /c/ /a/ /t / becomes cat.

### What is a consonant blend?

Previously, consonant blends were taught as if there was something special about them. Children were taught that /st/ was one phoneme, when actually it is two, /s/ and /t/. Think about it. Why teach /st/ when children already know /s/ and /t/, it just wastes time and clogs up children's memory. But note that sh is a digraph. It cannot be made by a process of blending the two letter sounds of /s/ and /h/ together.

We need to teach the digraphs not the blends.

At a glance:

- It is not important to know all the jargon. It is important to try to use the same words your child is being taught at school.
- It is important to know how to pronounce each of the phonemes correctly.
- Remember that teaching the old consonant blends just wastes time and energy with something your child already knows; it can also lead to confusion.

## Reception – Year 2 Using Letters and Sounds

### Phase 1

Phase 1 of Letters and Sounds concentrates on developing children's speaking and listening skills and lays the foundations for the phonic work which starts in Phase 2. The emphasis during Phase 1 is to get children attuned to the sounds around them and ready to begin developing oral blending and segmenting skills.

Phase 1 is divided into seven aspects. Each aspect contains three strands:

- **Tuning in to sounds** (auditory discrimination),
- **Listening and remembering sounds** (auditory memory and sequencing),
- **Talking about sounds** (developing vocabulary and language comprehension).

Useful website for phase 1 games:

<http://www.letters-and-sounds.com/phase-1-games.html>

[www.oxfordowl.co.uk](http://www.oxfordowl.co.uk)

### Phase 2

In Phase 2, letters and their sounds are introduced one at a time. A set of letters is taught each week, in the following sequence:

**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

The children will begin to learn to blend and segment to begin reading and spelling. This will begin with simple words.

### Words using set 1

at	sat	pat	tap	sap
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### Words using set 1 and 2

(+i)	(+n)	(+m)	(+d)
it	an	am	dad
is	in	man	sad
sit	nip	mat	dim
sat	pan	map	din
pit	pin	Pam	did
pip	tan	Tim	Sid
sip	nap	Sam	and
tip	tin		dip

### Words using sets 1-3

(+g)	(+o)	(+c)	(+k)
tag	got	can	kid
gag	on	cot	kit
gig	not	cop	Kim
gap	pot	cap	Ken
nag	top	cat	
sag	dog	cod	
gas	pop		
pig	God		
dig	Mog		

## Words using set 1-4

(+ck)	(+e)	(+u)	(+r)
kick	get	up	rim
sock	pet	mum	rip
sack	ten	run	ram
dock	net	mug	rat
pick	pen	cup	rag
sick	peg	sun	rug
pack	met	tuck	rot
ticket	men	mud	rocket
pocket	neck	sunset	carrot

## Words using set 1-5

(+h)	(+b)	(+f and ff)	(+l and ll)	(+ss)
had	but	of	lap	miss
him	big	if	let	less
his	back	off	leg	hiss
hot	bet	fit	lot	mass
hut	bad	fin	lit	mess
hop	bag	fun	bell	boss
hum	bed	fig	fill	fuss
hit	bud	fog	doll	hiss
hat	beg	puff	tell	pass
has	bug	huff	sell	kiss
hack	bun	cuff	Bill	Tess
hug	bus	fan	Nell	fusspot
	Ben	fat	dull	
	bat		laptop	
	bit			
	bucket			
	beckon			
	rabbit			

Alongside this children are introduced to tricky words. These are the words that are irregular words. That means that phonics cannot be applied to the reading and spelling of these words.

**The tricky words introduced in phase 2 are:**

to	the	no	go	l
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Useful websites for phase 2 onwards:

<http://www.letters-and-sounds.com/phase-2.html>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/wordsandpictures/>

### Phase 3

By the time they reach Phase 3, children will already be able to blend and segment words containing the 19 letters taught in Phase 2.

Over the twelve weeks which Phase 3 is expected to last, twenty-five new graphemes are introduced (one at a time).

**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

**Tricky words:**

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

## Phase 4

By Phase 4 children will be able to represent each of 42 phonemes with a grapheme. They will blend phonemes to read CVC words and segment CVC words for spelling. They will also be able to read two syllable words that are simple. They will be able to read all the tricky words learnt so far and will be able to spell some of them.

This phase consolidates all the children have learnt in the previous phases.

### Tricky words:

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

By this point children would be expected to be reading CVC words at speed along with the tricky words from the previous phases. It is important that children are taught that blending is only used when a word is unfamiliar.

## Phase 5

Children will be taught new graphemes and alternative pronunciations for these graphemes and graphemes they already know. They will begin to learn to choose the appropriate grapheme when spelling. The children will be automatically decoding a large number of words for reading by this point.

### 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					

## New graphemes for reading:

<b>ay</b> day	<b>oy</b> boy	<b>wh</b> when	<b>a-e</b> make
<b>ou</b> out	<b>ir</b> girl	<b>ph</b> photo	<b>e-e</b> these
<b>ie</b> tie	<b>ue</b> blue	<b>ew</b> new	<b>i-e</b> like
<b>ea</b> eat	<b>aw</b> saw	<b>oe</b> toe	<b>o-e</b> home
		<b>au</b> Paul	<b>u-e</b> rule

By this phase children should be reading words fluently and no longer be blending and segmenting familiar words.

The real focus throughout the phase is to not only learn the new graphemes for reading but also to learn to read words with alternative pronunciations. Children also will need to learn alternative spellings for each phoneme.

## Phase 6

In phase 6 children will be reading longer and less familiar texts independently and fluently. It is crucial that at this point children are now reading to learn and reading for **pleasure**.

Children should be able to read the 300 high frequency words. At this point it is important that comprehension strategies are developed so that children clarify meaning, ask and answer questions about the texts they are reading, construct mental images during reading and summarise what they have read.

In spelling children are introduced to the adding of suffixes and how to spell longer words. Throughout the phase children are encouraged to develop strategies for learning spellings.

Strategy	Explanation
Syllables	To learn a word by listening to how many syllables there are so it can be broken into smaller bits. (e.g. Sep-tem-ber)
Base Words	To learn a word by finding its base word. (e.g. jumping- base word jump +ing)
Analogy	To learn a word use a word that is already learnt. (e.g. could, would, should)
Mnemonics	To learn a word by making up a sentence to help remember them. (e.g. could – OU Lucky Duck; people eat orange peel like elephants)

## **Year 2 and Year 3 Using No Nonsense Spelling**

The spelling strategies taught in Year 2 and Year 3:

### **Look, say, cover, write, check**

This is probably the most common strategy used to learn spellings.

**Look:** first look at the whole word carefully and if there is one part of the word that is difficult, look at that part in more detail.

**Say:** say the word as you look at it, using different ways of pronouncing it if that will make it more memorable.

**Cover:** cover the word.

**Write:** write the word from memory, saying the word as you do so.

**Check:** Have you got it right? If yes, try writing it again and again! If not, start again – look, say, cover, write, check.

### **Trace, copy and replicate (and then check)**

This is a similar learning process to 'look, say, cover, write, check' but is about developing automaticity and muscle memory.

Write the word out on a sheet of paper ensuring that it is spelt correctly and it is large enough to trace over. Trace over the word and say it at the same time. Move next to the word you have just written and write it out as you say it. Turn the page over and write the word as you say it, and then check that you have spelt it correctly.

If this is easy, do the same process for two different words at the same time. Once you have written all your words this way and feel confident, miss out the tracing and copying or the tracing alone and just write the words.

### **Segmentation strategy**

The splitting of a word into its constituent phonemes in the correct order to support spelling.

### **Quickwrite**

Writing the words linked to the teaching focus with speed and fluency. The aim is to write as many words as possible within a time constraint. Pupils can write words provided by the teacher or generate their own examples. For example, in two minutes write as many words as possible with the /i:/ phoneme. This can be turned into a variety of competitive games including working in teams and developing relay race approaches.

### **Drawing around the word to show the shape**

Draw around the words making a clear distinction in size where there are ascenders and descenders. Look carefully at the shape of the word and the letters in each box. Now try to write the word making sure that you get the same shape.

## Drawing an image around the word

This strategy is all about making a word memorable. It links to meaning in order to try to make the spelling noticeable.



You can't use this method as your main method of learning spellings, but it might work on those that are just a little more difficult to remember.

## Words without vowels

This strategy is useful where the vowel choices are the challenge in the words. Write the words without the vowels and pupils have to choose the correct grapheme to put in the space. For example, for the word *field*:

f \_\_\_\_\_ ld

## Pyramid words

This method of learning words forces you to think of each letter separately.

p  
py  
pyr  
pyra  
pyram  
pyrami  
pyramid

You can then reverse the process so that you end up with a diamond

## Other strategies.

Other methods can include:

- Rainbow writing. Using coloured pencils in different ways can help to make parts of words memorable. You could highlight the tricky part s of the word or write the tricky part in a different colour. You could also write each letter in a different colour, or write the word in red, then overlay in orange, yellow and so on.
- Making up memorable 'silly sentences' containing the word
- Saying the word in a funny way – for example, pronouncing the 'silent' letters in a word or clapping and counting to identify the syllables in a word.

### **Year 3/4 Statutory Words**

accident(ally) actual(ly) address answer appear arrive believe bicycle  
breath breathe build busy/business calendar caught centre century certain  
circle complete consider continue decide describe different difficult  
disappear early earth eight/eighth enough exercise experience experiment  
extreme famous favourite February forward(s) fruit grammar group guard  
guide heard heart height history imagine increase important interest island  
knowledge learn length library material medicine mention minute natural  
naughty notice occasion(ally) often opposite ordinary particular peculiar  
perhaps popular position possess(ion) possible potatoes pressure probably  
promise purpose quarter question recent regular reign remember sentence  
separate special straight strange strength suppose surprise therefore  
though/although thought through various weight woman/women

### **Year 5/6 Statutory Words**

accommodate accompany according achieve aggressive amateur ancient  
apparent appreciate attached available average awkward bargain bruise  
category cemetery committee communicate community competition  
conscience\* conscious\* controversy convenience correspond criticise (critic  
+ ise) curiosity definite desperate determined develop dictionary disastrous  
embarrass environment equip (-ped, -ment) especially exaggerate excellent  
existence explanation familiar foreign forty frequently government guarantee  
harass hindrance identity immediate(ly) individual interfere interrupt  
language leisure lightning marvellous mischievous muscle necessary  
neighbour nuisance occupy occur opportunity parliament persuade physical  
prejudice privilege profession programme pronunciation queue recognise  
recommend relevant restaurant rhyme rhythm sacrifice secretary shoulder  
signature sincere(ly) soldier stomach sufficient suggest symbol system  
temperature thorough twelfth variety vegetable vehicle yacht