**Phonics Information for Parents**

Phonics is recommended as the first strategy that children should be taught in helping them learn to read.  Phonics runs alongside other teaching methods to help children develop vital reading skills and give them a real love of reading – hopefully for life.

At Stockham School, we follow the Letters and Sounds programme for the teaching of phonics. Letters and Sounds is a resource published by the Department for Education which consists of six phases. In our Foundation Class, this programme is also supplemented by the Jolly Phonics scheme which uses actions to support the children in remembering each phoneme.

**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. m**a**k**e**

## Abbreviations

VC, CVC, and CCVC are the respective abbreviations for vowel-consonant, consonant-vowel-consonant, consonant-consonant-vowel-consonant, and are used to describe the order of graphemes in words (e.g. *am* (VC), *Sam* (CVC), *slam* (CCVC), or *each* (VC), *beach* (CVC), *bleach* (CCVC).

**Letters and Sounds**

**Phase 1**

Phase One 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)

**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 help begin reading and spelling. This will begin with simple words.

Alongside this, children are introduced to tricky words. These are the words that are irregular. This 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 | I |

**Phase 3**

By the time children reach Phase 3, they 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 the 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 |
| 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**

In phase 6, 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 School**

At Stockham all the children have a discrete daily phonics lesson.  We teach phonics at the very start of the day in Foundation and Key Stage One so it essential that your child arrives on time to start Phonics promptly. Most children at Stockham move through the 6 phases of Letters and Sounds in the following way:

In our Foundation Stage the children begin with Phase 1 before moving onto Phase 2, but continue to enjoy Phase 1 activities during the school day. Children are introduced to phonemes (sounds) linked to the letters of the alphabet, as well as one way of spelling each of the additional 16 phonemes used in the English language, such as 'igh' and 'ch'. Children are taught to blend or sound out phonics to read a variety of words and segment or break down the sounds in simple words for spelling. By the end of Foundation, children have usually completed Phase 4. Twinkl Phonics gives children a picture, an action and a song mnemonic for each sound, which supports children who learn in an active way and helps to assist their recall of the sounds.

In Year 1, children learn more about the variety of ways in which each phoneme can be spelt and they also learn about the different pronunciations made by different letters or groups of letters, such as 'a' in 'ant' and 'was'. Phase 5 is the main focus in Year 1 and is the largest phase of them all. At the end of Year 1, children will be tested on their phonics knowledge, using a national test featuring 20 real words and 20 pseudo-words.

**Year 1 Phonics Screening Check**

The statutory Year 1 Phonics Screening Check which will take place during the month of June. Please ensure that your child is in school during this time.

The check is a list of 40 words which children will read one-to-one with their class teacher.  It will assess phonics skills and knowledge learned through Foundation and Year 1.

It will check that your child can:

* Sound out and blend graphemesin order to read simple words e.g. n-igh-t
* 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’.

For the Department for Education Parents and Carers Information on the Year One phonics screening please see the DfE website.

From Year 2 onwards, children consolidate their phonics knowledge, learning when to apply different spelling rules as well as how to spell plurals and different verb tenses. In Year 2 Phase 5 is consolidated and Phase 6 is introduced.

**Phonics at home**

**Tips for teaching your child the sounds:**

* It is important for a child to learn lower case or small letters rather than capital letters at first. Most early books and games use lower case letters and your child will learn these first at school. Obviously you should use a capital letter when required, such as at the beginning of the child's name, eg. **Paul**.
* When you talk about letters to your child, remember to use the letter sounds. The reason for this is that sounding out words is practically impossible if you use the alphabet names. Videos of the correct pronunciation of each phoneme can be found online. We recommend the one from Oxford Owl linked in our phonics workshop presentation (click on the picture).
* If you would like any further information on phonics at Stockham School, please do not hesitate to talk to your child’s class teacher.

**Useful webpages**

<https://www.twinkl.co.uk/blog/what-is-phonics-a-guide-for-parents>

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