



Phonics

At Hunwick Primary school, we follow the 'Letters and Sounds' programme. 'Letters and Sounds' is a phonics resource published by the Department for Education and Skills which consists of six phases.

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.

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

Abbreviations

VC, CVC, and CCVC are the respective abbreviations for vowel-consonant, consonantvowel-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).

How do children progress in phonics?

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. Children at this phase do not necessarily need to be able to recognise written print. Rather this phase children begin to blend phonemes together orally to make words. During this phase children also develop understanding of other literacy skills such as syllables, compounds, rhyming and alliteration.

Phase 2

In Phase 2, letters and their sounds are introduced one at a time. The children will begin to learn to blend and segment to help begin reading and spelling. This will begin with simple words such as 'on' and 'at', and progress to CVC words such as 'cat', 'rat' and 'sack'.

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 like to, the, no, go and I.



Phase 3

By the time children reach Phase 3, they will already be able to blend and segment words containing the letters taught in Phase 2. This phase completes the sounds of the alphabet and introduces long vowel digraphs and consonant digraphs.

- **Consonant digraphs:** ch, sh, th, ng
- **Vowel digraphs:** ai, ee, igh, oa, oo, ar, or, ur, ow, oi, ear, air, ure, er

Phase 4

This phase consolidates all the children have learnt in the previous phases and focuses on blends (CVCC such as h-a-n-d and CCVC words such as t-r ai-n).

Phase 5

In this phase, children are introduced to new graphemes and alternative pronunciations for these graphemes (ie: ay-ai-a__e), as well as graphemes they already know. They will begin to learn to choose the appropriate grapheme when spelling.

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 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: **a buh cuh duh e ...** rather than the alphabet names of the letters: **ay bee see dee ee** . The reason for this is that sounding out words is practically impossible if you use the alphabet names. **eg. cat, would sound like: see ay tee**
- ◆ When saying the sounds of **b, d, g, j** and **w** you will notice the 'uh' sound which follows each, for example buh, duh... You cannot say the sound without it, however, try to emphasise the main letter sound.

Useful webpages

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

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