


Information on Phonics Teaching For Parents and Carers

Introduction

The ability to read and write well is a vital skill for all children, paving the way for an enjoyable and successful school experience. Many of the precursor skills are practised at home in the form of nursery rhymes, making and listening to music, talking with others, sharing books, role play, experimenting with writing and drawing, and using puppets to retell and make up stories. These activities provide the child with plenty of speaking and listening experiences which are the foundations for reading and writing. Everyday activities such as shopping, tidying up, cooking, etc., provide you with opportunities to talk to your child, explaining and discussing what you are doing together. This allows your child to hear how language is put together into sentences for a purpose.



Where you see this symbol  you will find some suggested activities that will support your child in their learning.



- Make time to talk and listen to your child – in the car, shopping, meal and bath times, walking home.
- Switch off televisions, radios and mobile phones and have a conversation.
- Listen to sounds in the environment – what can your child hear?
- Using drums and homemade shakers, play a simple tune and ask your child to copy you.
- Use puppets or toys to make up stories or retell known tales. Record your child telling the story and play it back to him.
- Reading and sharing a book is an excellent way of developing language skills and introducing your child to vocabulary you wouldn't normally use in everyday conversations.
- Ask your child to find objects which start with a particular sound e.g. b b b b – box, c c c c – car or ch ch ch ch – chip.
- Alliteration games – a tall tin of tomatoes – can your child hear the sound that comes at the beginning of each word?

The Beginning of Phonics

At Charlbury School phonics is taught through a high-quality, structured scheme called Letters and Sounds, which every child will encounter on entry to the Foundation Stage. Daily phonics teaching involves lots of speaking, listening and games where the emphasis is on active participation. There are many ways you can support your child in learning phonics throughout Foundation Stage, Year 1 and Year 2. Letters and Sounds is divided into six phases, with each phase building on the skills and knowledge of previous learning.

Phase 1:

This phase starts in pre-school and encompasses the development of the speaking and listening skills mentioned above. Children then move on to orally blending and segmenting sounds.

Blending – the separate sounds (phonemes) in a word are spoken aloud (e.g. c - a - t) and then blended smoothly together so the child can hear the whole word (cat). Blending is a vital skill for reading.

Segmenting – the whole word (e.g. cat) is spoken aloud and then broken up into its constituent sounds (c-a-t). Segmenting is a vital skill for spelling.

At this stage children will not be expected to match the written letters to the sounds. The emphasis is on helping children to blend and segment ORALLY.



- Sound talk together leaving a short gap between each sound (phoneme): e.g. Where's your s-o-ck? Let's tidy up the r-oo-m.
- Play I Spy or Simon Says using sound talk: I spy a p-e-g; Simon Says touch your h-ea-d. Take turns so your child gets a chance to blend and segment.
- Read or recite nursery rhymes and ask your child to say two words that rhyme. Can she segment the rhyming word (eg brick) into the stem (br) and the rhyming segment (-ick). Can he generate a string of rhyming words such as sick, thick, tick, lick.

Phase 2:

In this phase children begin to match a particular set of sounds (phonemes) to the written letters (graphemes). They also learn that some phonemes can be represented by more than one letter, e.g. ff as in c-u-ff; ck as in s-a-ck. They begin by learning the graphemes for four phonemes and start to make whole words with them by pushing laminated letters together to make VC (vowel/consonant) words such as *at*, *it*, *an* and CVC (consonant/vowel/consonant) words such as *sat*, *pin*, *dip*. Words such as *bell* or *tick* also count as CVC words as they have only three phonemes (e.g. b- e-ll or t-i-ck).

It is extremely important for children (and parents) to pronounce the sounds correctly to make blending for reading easier. Phonemes should be sustained if possible (e.g. sss, fff, mmm, etc.) For phonemes that are short (e.g. b, d, t) try to refrain from saying the 'uh' sound at the end (e.g. buh, duh and tuh) as this makes the sounds 'impure' and will interfere with hearing the whole word and later with spelling. Visit <http://www.mrthorne.com/44phonemes> to hear the correct pronunciation of each of the 44 phonemes of the English language in the order they are encountered in Letters and Sounds. Children need plenty of practice at blending and segmenting every day.



- Buy a set of magnetic letters. Check with your child's teacher which letter/sounds have been taught and use these to make little words, (eg it, am, and, top) saying the sounds aloud as you bring the letters together.
- Now do the opposite – read the word aloud, then say the sounds as you break it up and move the letters away.
- Both these activities will help your child to see that reading and spelling are reversible processes.
- Make or buy an alphabet poster.
- Praise all attempts at spelling. It is much harder than reading and takes much longer to pick up the unusual spelling patterns which will be taught later on in school.

High Frequency (Tricky) Words:

In Phase 2 we will begin to give your child some words to learn that are very common in the English language, many of which cannot be sounded out using phonic knowledge, (e.g. the, said, that, are). It is essential that children know these words by sight for fluent reading. See Appendix 1 for the full list of words as they appear in each phase.

Getting Ready to Write:

At Charlbury School we teach cursive (joined) handwriting from the start of Foundation Stage. Teachers model how to form letters (graphemes) correctly so that your child acquires a fluent and legible handwriting style. Writing skills develop over a long period of time and the ability to form letters correctly is a separate skill from phonics. Holding a pencil needs considerable co-ordination and practise in making small movements with hands and fingers. In the early stages of learning phonics children demonstrate their phonic knowledge by using laminated or plastic letters.



- Encourage your child to write his or her name correctly, starting with a capital letter followed by lower case letters. See Appendix 2 for cursive letter formation.
- Write in lower case letters at home.
- Develop control for handwriting with games that involve good co-ordination e.g. throwing and bouncing balls, skipping, finger action rhymes, using playdough, toolkits and doing cookery.
- Develop hand-eye co-ordination for handwriting with cutting, sticking, tracing, threading beads, puzzles, etc.
- Develop the correct 'pincer grip' for holding a pencil by using tongs or tweezers to pick up small objects such as beads or rice, pegging objects on a line, etc.
- Help your child to use the correct grip by placing fingers in the correct position on a pencil to colour or write.

Phase 3:

The purpose of this phase is to:

- learn more graphemes, most of which are made of two letters, e.g. /oa/ as in boat.
- practise blending and segmenting a wider set of CVC words, e.g. fizz, chip, sheep, light.
- learn all letter names (as opposed to their sounds) and begin to form them correctly in writing.
- continue learning the high frequency words and begin to spell some of them.
- read and write words in phrases and sentences.



- Sing an alphabet song together.
- Start playing I Spy using letter names rather than sounds.
- Continue to make words and practise segmenting them with plastic letters using some of the two grapheme combinations (e.g. rain, boat, hurt).
- Practise reading the high frequency words.
- Make a pairs game on paper to do matching of high frequency words.
- Make high frequency words with plastic letters.

Phase 4:

In this phase consolidation of previously learned graphemes and phonemes is carried out.

Children learn to read and write CVCC words (e.g. tent, damp, toast, chimp). For example, in the word 'toast' t = consonant, oa = vowel, s = consonant, t = consonant. They also are introduced to CCVC words (e.g. swim, plum, sport, cream, spoon). For example, in the word cream c = consonant, r = consonant, ea = vowel, m = consonant.

More high frequency words are added in this phase and children are encouraged to read and write sentences together.



- Introduce CVCC and CCVC words into reading and spelling games.
- Continue to practise CVCs as this builds confidence and will help your child to feel successful.
- Make up captions or phrases for your child to read or write using the words already learned.
- Write little notes to your child.
- Look out for words in the environment and on packaging that your child can sound out.
- Work on reading words together such as street names, etc. Sounding out to read takes a lot of effort and requires a great deal of practice and patience before it becomes second nature.

Phases 5 and 6:

Children continue daily phonics sessions throughout Year 1, revising aspects of Phase 4 in the first instance. Then they learn that most phonemes can be spelled in more than one way (e.g. /f/ can also be written as /ff/ or /ph/). They also learn that many letters or combination of letters can represent more than one sound. For example, /ea/ can be read as /ee/ in leaf or /e/ as in bread. They will continue with this spelling work into Year 2 and beyond.



Supporting Your Child At Home – Reading Together

- Teach lots of nursery rhymes.
- Enjoy and share books together.
- Ensure your child reads his or her reading scheme book every day. Encourage sounding out and blending all through any words they find tricky. This is the first and most important strategy. If this fails then encourage your child to use the story context, pictures or grammar to give them clues.
- Discuss the book, ask questions about characters, events and feelings. Explain any words they do not understand. Encourage reading with expression as this helps comprehension.
- Practice reading high frequency words daily.
- Listen to story tapes.
- Read favourite books over and over again.
- Let your child choose what he or she would like to read – books, comics, catalogues.
- Read to your child even after they have become an independent reader and model bringing stories to life with different voices.
- Make sure your child sees you reading.



Supporting Your Child At Home – Writing Together

- Write lists, birthday messages, notes, emails, etc., together. Think out loud so your child can hear your thoughts as you write and understand that writing is for a purpose.
- Provide lots of attractive writing materials, pens, pencils, etc.
- Praise your child for ‘mark making’. Those early marks show that your child is beginning to understand the purpose of writing.
- Encourage your child to segment any tricky words, listening carefully to all the sounds they can hear as they say the word out loud before writing.
- Make books, keep a diary, write stories, draw pictures with captions or explanations.
- Make sure your child sees you writing, emailing, etc.

Appendix 1:

High Frequency Words

Phase 2:

Decodable Words	Decodable Words	Tricky Words
a	had	the
an	back	to
as	and	I
at	get	no
if	big	go
in	him	into
is	his	
it	not	
of	got	
off	up	
on	Mum	
can	but	
Dad	put	

Phase 3:

Decodable Words	Decodable Words	Tricky Words
will	see	he
that	for	she
this	now	we
then	down	me
them	look	be
with	too	was
		you
		they
		all
		are
		my
		her

Phase 4:

Decodable Words	Tricky Words
went	said
it's	have
from	like
children	so
just	do
help	some
	come
	were
	there
	little
	one
	when
	out
	what

Phase 5:

Tricky Words	Tricky Words
old	saw
about	very
don't	oh
I'm	their
by	people
time	Mr
house	Mrs
your	looked
day	called
made	asked
came	could
make	
here	

Next 200 High Frequency Words:

water	find	live	fun	better
away	more	say	place	hot
good	I'll	soon	mother	sun
want	round	night	sat	across
over	tree	narrator	boat	gone
how	magic	small	window	hard
did	shouted	car	sleep	Floppy
man	us	couldn't	feet	really
going	other	three	morning	wind
where	food	head	queen	wish
would	fox	king	each	eggs
all	through	town	book	once
took	way	I've	its	please
school	been	around	green	thing
think	stop	every	different	stopped
home	must	garden	let	ever
who	read	fast	girl	miss
didn't	door	only	which	most
ran	right	many	inside	cold
know	sea	laugh	run	park
bear	these	let's	any	lived
can't	began	much	under	birds
again	boy	suddenly	hat	duck
cat	animals	told	snow	horse
long	never	another	air	rabbit
things	next	great	trees	white
new	first	why	bad	coming
after	work	cried	tea	he's
wanted	lots	keep	top	river
eat	need	room	eyes	liked
everyone	that's	last	fell	giant
our	baby	jumped	friends	looks
two	fish	because	box	use
has	gave	even	dark	along
yes	mouse	am	Grandad	plants
play	something	before	there's	dragon
take	bed	Gran	looking	pulled
thought	may	clothes	end	we're
dog	still	tell	than	fly
well	found	key	best	grow

Appendix 2:

Cursive Letter Formation

Note:

All letters start on the line. All letters have a 'lead in' stroke at the left and most have a 'lead out' stroke to the right, which are important to include, to ensure that joins are made correctly. Once started each letter should be finished without the pencil leaving the paper (except to cross the 't' and dot the 'i' and 'j').

