

Phonics at Borough Green Primary School

Phonics is the term used to describe the relationship between letters and sounds (phonemes) in order to decode words for reading and encode words when spelling.

Letters and Sounds

'Letters and Sounds' is a phonics resource published by the Department for Education and Skills in 2007. It aims to build children's speaking and listening skills in their own right as well as to prepare children for learning to read by developing their phonic knowledge and skills. It sets out guidelines for teaching phonic skills.

It comprises six phases:

Phase 1 – encourages children to think about sounds around them, not just language but sounds in general.

Phase 2 – aims to teach 19 letters so the children are able to read and write some vowel/consonant words e.g. it or of and consonant/vowel/consonant words e.g. cat or big.

Phase 3 – Teaches another 25 graphemes most of which have two letters. A grapheme is a letter or number of letters that represent a sound for example 1 letter - 'p',

2 letters - 'sh' or 4 letters - 'ough'

Phase 4 – To consolidate children's knowledge of graphemes in reading and spelling.

Phase 5 – To broaden the children's knowledge of phonemes and graphemes including alternative pronunciations.

Phase 6 – Children become fluent readers and increasingly accurate spellers. It also looks more closely at aspects such as past tense and suffixes.

It may be useful for you to be aware of some of the terminology the children will be learning about and when more confident using. The list below will help you with this.

DEFINITIONS:

PHONEME – the smallest unit of sound in a word

GRAPHEME – a written letter or group of letters that represent one phoneme.

DIGRAPH – a two letter grapheme where two letters represent one phoneme e.g. 'sh as in ship'. A consonant digraph contains two consonants – sh, ck, th, A vowel digraph contains at least one vowel – ai, ee, oy, oa.

SPLIT DIGRAPH – a split digraph is where two letters represent one phoneme but the two letters are not adjacent - they are separated by another letter e.g. 'a_e as in make' and 'i_e as in like'

TRIGRAPH – a three letter grapheme – igh, dge

SEMENTING – consists of breaking words down into their phonemes in order to spell.

BLENDING – building words from phonemes or graphemes in order to read.

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In Early Years (Reception)

- In Reception phonics is effectively taught in a multi-sensory way. The phase each child has reached will be reported to the Year 1/2 teachers.
- The majority of children leaving EYFS will have worked with Phases 1, 2 and 3 and will know all 26 letter names.

Years 1/2

- Children are divided into three sets
- Phonics is taught four times a week for 20 minutes
- Phonics underpins reading and spelling skills in KS1 across the curriculum
- National phonics testing takes place at the end of Year 1 and is re taken at the end of Year 2 if necessary
- Details of children's progress will be passed to the Year 3/4 teachers

KS2

- Ensure all the children are confident and competent up to the end of phase 6 in terms of reading and spelling.
- Phonics will underpin all teaching of grammar and spelling.

In order to teach these lessons the teacher uses a variety of resources:

- Letters and Sounds website
- Phonic 'fans'
- Individual white boards
- Adding 'sound buttons' to written words to indicate each phoneme
- Word games – see Jump Start Literacy by Pie Corbett and also others such as: Word Ladders, Rhyme it, Full Circle, Word Blocks, Sound Button Frames, Jig Saw Words, Sound Fillers, Phoneme Spotter stories
- Other internet resources such as <http://www.bigbrownbear.co.uk>
- Sentence dictation
- Spelling using recently used phonemes
- Regular visits to high frequency words
- Find a word – how many 'sh' words can they find in a minute

If you have any questions regarding our teaching of phonics please feel free to come and see us.