Phonics Meeting for Parents November 2026

Castle Hill Infant School

Every day a successful day for all
... whatever it takes

Why teach phonics?

- Phonics helps children to develop good reading and spelling skills
- The ability to read and write is a vital skill for all children, paving the way for an enjoyable and successful school experience
- We use a synthetic phonics approach called '**Essential Letters and Sounds**'

What is synthetic phonics?

- **Synthetic phonics** is a way of teaching reading
- Children are taught to read letters or groups of letters by saying the sound(s) they represent – so, they are taught that the letter s sounds like **s** when we say it
- Children can then start to read words by blending the sounds together

A Phoneme

This is the smallest unit of sound in a word.



There are 3 phonemes in the word

cat

Phase 1

- Environmental sounds (sirens, cars, birds etc.)
- Instrumental sounds (musical instruments)
- Body percussion (clapping, tapping, stamping)
- Rhythm and Rhyme (reading rhyming books, singing nursery rhymes)
- Alliteration (bouncy ball)
- Voice sounds (wheeee, boing boing)
- Oral blending and segmenting

Phase 2

- Revisit phase 1
- Phonemes (*sounds*) and graphemes (*letters – what they look like*)
- VC words ('as' and 'on') and CVC words ('sat' and 'pin')

Phase 2

- Sounds are introduced in sets

❖Set 1: s a t p

❖Set 2: i n m d

❖Set 3: g o c k

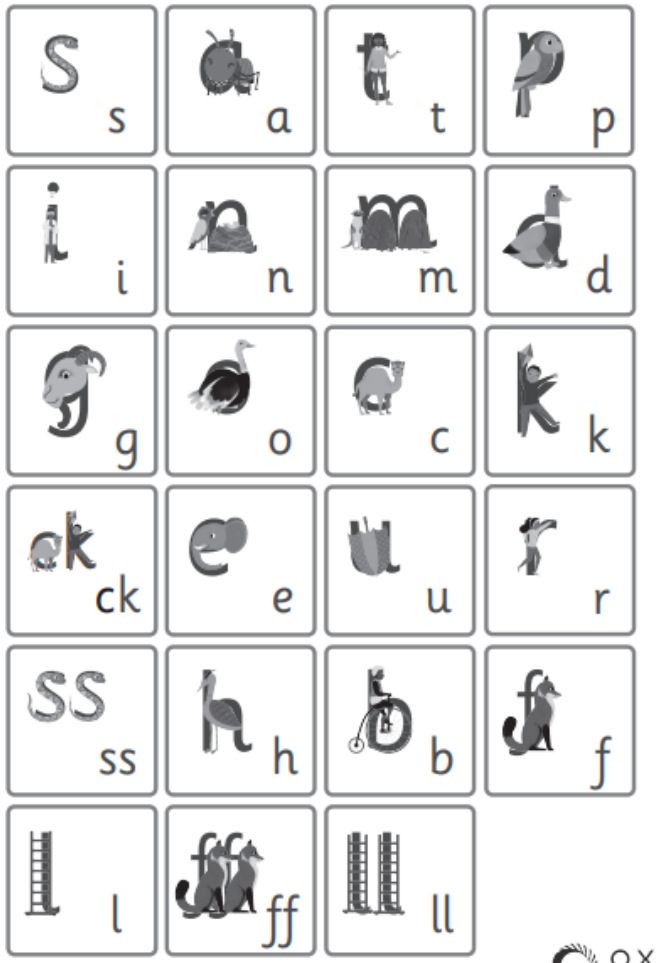
❖Set 4: ck e u r

❖Set 5: ss h b f l ff ll

Phase 2

ELS Essential Letters and Sounds

PHASE 2



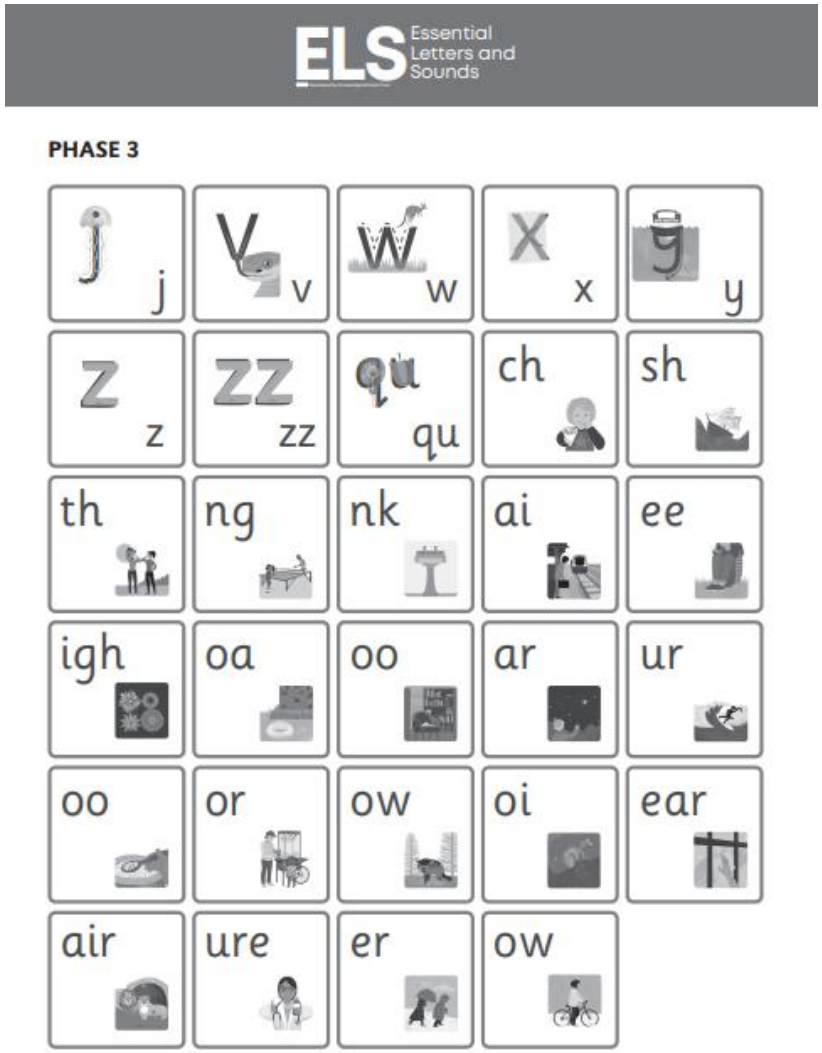
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Phase 3

- **Digraphs** are further explored
- Digraphs are when two graphemes are put together to make one sound e.g. c-h together makes 'ch'

Phase 3


ELS
Essential Letters and Sounds
PHASE 3
j
v
w
x
y
z
zz
qu
ch
sh
th
ng
nk
ai
ee
igh
oa
oo
ar
ur
oo
or
ow
oi
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ure
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ow
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How to say the sounds

- Saying the sounds correctly with your child is extremely important
- The way we say the sound may well be different from when you were at school
- We say the shortest form of the sounds

To help with pronunciation of the pure sounds, visit the Early Years page of the school website for links to some videos

Sounding out

- Recognising the letter sounds in a written word, for example:

c-u-p

You may hear your child talking about 'robot arms'.

Blending

- Merging or 'blending' the sounds in the order in which they are written to pronounce the word

c-u-p

Speedy recognition of the sound for each letter is really important, so your child can blend them to read words easily.

Segmenting

- Using 'phoneme fingers' we can segment words to spell them.

We use one finger for each phoneme we can hear.

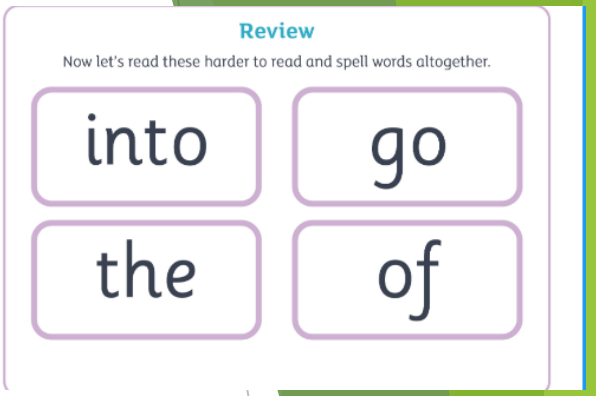


- Say it
- Stretch it
- Use our robot arms and blending hands
- Use our phoneme fingers
- Hear the phonemes

Take a look at these

- c-a-t = 3 phonemes
- s-u-n = 3 phonemes
- d-o-g = 3 phonemes
- b-a-ck = 3 phonemes

Harder to read and spell words



- Some everyday words in English have tricky spellings and can't be read by blending
- These are sometimes called **tricky words or common exception words**
- These words just have to be learned by sight and flashcard-type games are a good way to practise these

How can you help at home?

- Revisit the **sounds** in the zippy wallet regularly
- Play games with the sounds and put them up around the house
- Work on the **common exception words (tricky words)** sent home to learn
- Read to your child and share books
- Listen to your child read for a short time on multiple occasions at least 3 times per week
- Praise your child for trying
- **Talk like a robot**
- Sing an alphabet song together
- Play '**I spy**'…this will help them to hear the initial sound in words
- Continue to read rhyming books and sing nursery rhymes
- Play rhyming games

If you have any questions or would like any advice, please contact us and we will be happy to help

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Thank you for your continued support