



Parent/ Carer Introduction to Phonics and Early Reading **2022-23**

Welcome!

- What is phonics?
- The alphabetic code
- Blending
- Reading and books
- Reading at home
- Spelling
- Concerns about progress
- Questions and next steps



Welcome to our parent session.

We are very excited they are here to learn about the most amazing journey that their children are starting – learning to read!!!

We will be exploring how phonics will be taught and the progressions both in Reception and in Year 1 and the transition into Year 2. We will be considering how you the parents and carers have a vital role in supporting their child's reading journey.



Why is Phonics Changing?

- In April 2021 the DfE introduced a policy paper for choosing a phonics and reading programme. This paper had 16 core criteria which they deemed essential for children to become fluent readers.
- Letters and sounds no longer fulfills this criteria.
- Fidelity is **VERY** important now in the teaching of phonics. It is important for children's cognitive overload. Everyone must use the same language, resources etc. within school.

We will briefly consider the 'why' behind the change in the delivery of phonics at Chew Stoke and how we came to choose Unlocking Letters and Sounds (ULS) for our school.



Why is Phonics Changing?

- All validated programmes have to show they meet the 16 core criteria deemed essential for pupils to become fluent readers.
- All staff even in KS2 should be a part of training for embedding a new programme.
- The Reading Framework supports the idea of keep up and not catch up.
- The Reading Framework says inviting children to write on the IWB, feedback from only 1 child or games which differ day to day are all hinderances to learning. New programmes will ensure a consistent approach in class as well as from class to class.



We love reading!

- Reading for pleasure
- Finding out information
- Reading the world around them
- Understanding forms and official documents
- Accessing learning

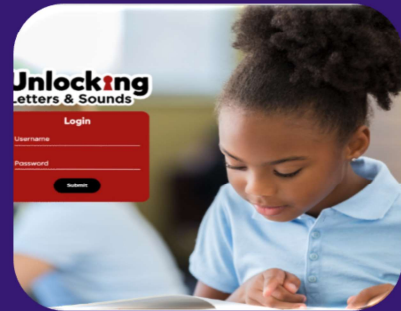
Reading is one of the most important things we can teach our children. We want all our children to be avid readers with a love for all different types of literature.

Think of reading activities you do everyday.... (ask parents to contribute or have a list to share and give some everyday examples E.g. labels on food, road signs, shop signs etc!)

As children start their school life they will very much focus on learning to read. As they move higher up the school and into secondary education and beyond they will be reading to learn. So it is vitally important that we support our youngest pupils to quickly learn to read. We want every child to love reading and to do this we must make sure that it is a pleasurable experience and that they can read with accuracy and fluency so they can access as many opportunities as possible.

What is Phonics?

- Link between the words we say and the letters that represent each sound.
- Grapheme – the written letter or groups of letters
- Phoneme – the sounds that the grapheme makes.



Over the past 50 years schools have taught children to read using lots of different approaches. But, thanks to research we know that phonics is the best way to teach children to read. We know this might be different to how you were taught to read so we hope this session/ sessions helps you to understand what phonics is, how we will teach phonics at our school and how you can help your child to learn to read.

The national curriculum says that phonics should be the main way that schools teach children to read. The Department of education have recently approved phonics schemes that meet it's criteria of a good scheme. Our school has chosen to use a scheme called Unlocking Letters and Sounds (ULS). All schemes are slightly differently but , as a school , we think this is the best one for our pupils. It has a very similar approach to how we have previously taught phonics which we feel in school was having a high impact in school. All children in the school will use Unlocking Letters and Sounds to teach their phonics and early reading. All staff (EYFS, KS1 and KS2) have had training with this scheme so they are experts at using it. This means children who are not yet ready to complete their phonics sessions in Year 2 can continue this work with a consistent approach.

Phonics teaches the link between the words we read/ say and he words we write on the page. It teaches how the letters in written words represent the sounds we say in spoken

words – this is called decoding.

Say the word CAT.

When we say this word we say lots of sounds very quickly – so quickly we hardly notice the sound each letter makes.

Say the sounds in CAT c/a/t

What sounds can we hear? When we write the word cat we represent each sound with a symbol that we call a letter. C A T

This is phonics!

There is some technical vocabulary that we use for phonics and that your children will use.

Grapheme – the written letter or groups of letters

Phoneme – the sounds that the grapheme makes.

With your new vocabulary can you tell me the phonemes that make this word (map)

Can you tell me the graphemes that represent these phonemes?

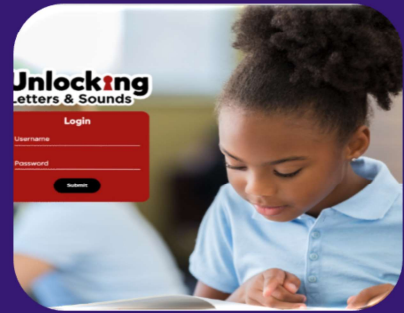
What is Phonics?

Jj	Vv	Ww	Xx	Yy	Zz
zz	qu	ch	sh	th	th
ng	ai	ee	igh	oa	oo
oo	ar	or	ur	ow	oi
ear	air	ure	er		

Unlocking
Letters & Sounds

Sound Mat Phase 3

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As children start to learn their grapheme phoneme correspondences (GPCs) it is very important that we pronounce the sounds clearly and purely. We also help them to learn and remember the GPCs in Reception with an image and action for each phoneme. Your children will be coming home sharing the actions with you so do join them when they are using them!

Model pronunciation and actions for some of the first GPCs children will be learning.
(Sheets in hand outs for Reception and summary of progression for Year 1)

The Alphabetic Code



**44
phonemes**

**Simple
Code**

**Complex
Code**

The English language is made up of about 44 different sounds in different combinations – it is one of the most complicated languages. It will take most children about three years to learn the alphabetic code and to use it to read and it is one of the most important things we teach in Reception and Key Stage 1. We know that children won't learn to read by themselves so we will be teaching phonics every day to help them learn. Your children will have a daily phonics lesson from Reception until the end of Autumn term 2 in Year 2. (This continues for those who are not confident with the alphabetic code if necessary) They will be taught by their teacher in the whole class and each lesson will last about 20 minutes.

Your child will learn 4 new GPCs each week – we organise them into sets. These sets are then put into phases.

In reception children will be taught Phases 2 – 4. They will have a revision of phase 4 and be taught phase 5 in years 1 and 2.

When we start this decoding journey we will keep things very simple. We will teach basic phonemes and their matching graphemes (such as cat and map). This means that children rapidly learn and understand and to build confidence in their reading. This teaching will start straight away in Reception.

We've looked at examples where a phoneme is represented by a single letters.

Some sounds are represented by graphemes that have two or more letters.

Eg. Sh o p th i n r i ch

The sounds sh, th and ch are represented by two letters – these are called digraphs.

Some sounds are represented by three letters:

Eg. L igh t

The sound igh is represented by 3 letters - this is called a trigraph.

Your child will be coming home telling you all about phonemes, graphemes, digraphs and trigraphs! They will be fantastic at understanding this vocabulary as they are learning the alphabetic code and you can help by using these words at home.

As your children continue to learn to read the alphabetic code will become more complex. They will learn about sounds that are represented by lots of different graphemes and how some graphemes can represent different sounds. (They will learn alternative pronunciation and spellings of previously taught sounds) The complexity of the English alphabetic code is why it takes so long to read. Many children will find different parts challenging – especially at first. But our staff are skilled at teaching phonics and will be gradually working through the alphabetic code so that every child becomes an expert reader.

Phase 1 and 2 (Pre-school and Reception)



- This crucial phase is the exciting first step on every child's early reading journey. This phase should take place at pre-school.
- In this phase children will experience a wealth of listening activities, including using their listening skills to hear sounds in the environment, recognise instrumental sounds and use body percussion. Children will enjoy playing with sounds and words as they develop their language skills, spotting rhythm, rhyme and alliteration in songs and stories they hear. This phase forms the bedrock of developing children's early reading ready for when they start school.
- The purpose of this phase is to teach at least 19 letters and to move the children on from oral blending and segmentation to blending and segmenting with letters. By the end of the phase many children should be able to read some VC and CVC words and to spell them either by using magnetic letters or by writing the letters on paper or on whiteboards. During the phase they will be introduced to reading two-syllable words and simple captions. They will also learn to read some common exception words: I, the, to, go, no, into.
- Each week four new GPCs are taught and the week also includes a revision lesson.

At this point highlight what is taught at different phases, the importance of the foundations before moving on in KS1 and how each phase builds on the previous one.

Phase 3 and 4 (Reception and Year 1)



- The purpose of Phase 3 is to teach another 25 graphemes, most of them comprising two letters (e.g. oa), so that by the end of this phase the children will be able to represent each of about 42 phonemes by a grapheme. The children continue to practice CVC blending and segmentation in this phase and will apply their knowledge of blending and segmenting to reading and spelling simple two-syllable words and captions. Children will also learn letter names during this phase, learn to read some more common exception words and also begin to learn to spell some of these words.

- The purpose of this phase is to consolidate children's knowledge of graphemes in reading and spelling words containing adjacent consonants and



Phase 5 (Year 1 and 2)

- The purpose of this phase is to teach further graphemes and phonemes for reading and spelling, and to extend the children's knowledge of the phonetic code. This includes alternative pronunciations for graphemes that have already been met and alternative spellings for phonemes. The children's pace will quicken when recognising graphemes of more than one letter (e.g. digraphs) in words and when blending the phonemes they represent. The children will be taught the appropriate grapheme choice to represent phonemes and will begin to build word-specific knowledge of the spellings of words.

Blending

- Pushing the phonemes together to make a word.



- Fun
- handbag
- Crepuscular



As well as learning to recognise the graphemes and say the phonemes they represent we will be teaching children how to use these to read.

When we read a word we look at each graphemes and match a sound to it. We push the sounds together to make a word. This is called **BLENDING**.

Blending is a really important skills that children need lots of practice at – it will take lots of time! Parents at home in reception can be doing lots of practice of this to support this skills at home E.g. Can you get me the p-e-n or can you put this in the b-i-n?

Let's have a go at blending a word: t / r / ee

We teach the children to work from left to right - identifying each grapheme and saying the phoneme. Once they have done that they go back and push the phonemes together to blend the phonemes together to read the word.

We want to teach children to recognise the grapheme quickly so they can blend it rapidly. Once they can do this their reading will become fluent – and less painful! But this really does take a he amount of practise so it is really important that children practise this at home with the books we give them.

As children progress in their reading journey they will begin to read longer words made up of multiple syllables – give the example of fun – funny – funniest

We teach these words by ‘chunking’ them into syllables and blending these chunks together. But we are still identifying the GPCs and blending them together.

This is what we will do as adults when we come across an unfamiliar word – use the example crepuscular. How would we read this unfamiliar word? We would chunk it and blend the syllables together. This is why it’s really important to teach children to read using phonics – without this skills to decode the graphemes we would not be able to read unfamiliar words.

Common Exception Words

the	to	into
no	I	go

Unlocking Letters & Sounds

Reading Stars Phonics

Unlocking Letters & Sounds CEW Sound Mat Phase 2

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There are some words that we use a lot in English such as the, like, said, were.

To give children's reading a boost and so they can access more tests quickly we want children to learn these CEWs (Common exception words) early on. Many of them have usual patterns or GPCs that aren't taught until later on. So we teach children to recognise them by sight initially. Children will be able to decode some of them later on but , until they have learnt to decode them, we recognise them as CEWs.

These were previously known as tricky words and will now be referred to as Common Exception Words (CEWs).

Reading and Books

- Children will be given books when they can blend – this will be different for every child
- Books precisely match children's phonics attainment



As soon as your child can blend some GPCs together to read words we will be giving them a book. This is incredibly exciting but will be different for every child. Some learn this skills very quickly and others take a bit longer – we will be supporting every child to blend as quickly as possible. Please don't compare your child with others and contact us if you are worried about anything.

Once your child can read they will be given a book that precisely matches their phonics attainment (Individual assessments in all EYFS and KS1 classes will be completed at regular intervals – approx. every 3 weeks) so that they can read at least 95% of the words in it. Please don't think that this makes the book too easy for them – it's vitally important that reading is a celebration of children's reading with you and a chance for them to show their phonics expertise.

In school we will also be reading with children. They will read everyday in their phonics lessons and also in a guided group. This is when they read with their teacher in a small group. The teacher will listen to every child read as well as teaching for part of the session. This allows us to check every child's learning. Later In reception but regularly in Year 1.

We will listen to children read on a 1:1 basis roughly once a fortnight.

Books are allocated to match the sets and phases that children are secure in. When teachers assess they are ready to move onto the next set we will do so but we know that this takes a different amount of time for each child – some will need more practice than others.

Books will be changed in Hedgehog and Owl on a Monday and Thursday. Books will only be changed if we can see it has been read 3 times through the comments in their reading records.



Reading at home

- 5 – 10 minutes
- Choose a time that works for you
- Be positive and celebrate successes
- Encourage them to point to the graphemes
- Encourage them to say the sounds and blend them together
- Be patient and let them try and work it out
- Read common exception words by sight.
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hhu3xeNq3Kg&t=200s>

Reading at home is essential as it gives children the opportunity to practice their decoding and blending skills.

We know everyone is busy and children often don't want to read out of schools. Our top tips are:

- 5 – 10 minutes every day is often more effective than longer times.
- Find a time that works for you. Reading at bed time sounds lovely but with a tired child it can often be tricky! Maybe first thing in the morning is better for your child.
- Celebrate what your child can do. Lots of praise is great for children's self esteem.
- Encourage your child to point at the graphemes as they read – this helps them to track the words and know their place.
- Encourage them to say all the sounds in the words and then blend them together – you can show them how to do this. (Speed up once had an attempt so they can hear the sounds to blend them together).
- Be patient and give them time to work it out before stepping in before stepping in If they can't read a word model how to do it and then ask them to do it with you.
- Let them read common exception words by sight.
- Re-read after decoding to make sure they have understood what they have read.

One of the most important ways to increase children's accuracy, fluency and understanding of the book they are reading is to re-read the same books several times. This is why we only give 2 number of books each week – we would like each book to be read at least three times with a different focus each time.

This films explains the value of re- reading the same book and what you should focus on each time. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hhu3xeNq3Kg&t=200s>

1. The first read will focus on decoding 2. The second read will enable the children to be more fluent 3. The third read will focus on prosody.

Reading at home



- Continue to read to your child.
- Model how to read a book – left to right, turning pages
- Ask questions about what has happened and characters' feelings
- Support vocabulary
- Predict what will happen next
- Make connections
- Model your love of reading!

Whilst learning to decode and reading books that allow children to do this is important there is so much more to reading! We know that decodable books are not the most exciting to read and alone, won't give our early readers all the skills they need to develop a love of reading.

It is therefore important that you continue to read to your child and share a wide range of books with them – these should be books that children cannot decode themselves. Reading books to children is a precious and lovely thing to do – we are sure you and your child already have favourite books that you share together! By modelling reading and show how much you love reading you will be setting a fantastic example to your child.

When you read to your child you will want to:

- Model how to read a book.
- Ask questions about what has happened to support your child's comprehension or understanding of the text.
- Ask questions about characters' feelings.
- Discuss the meaning of words and vocabulary.
- Ask children to predict what they think will happen next.
- Make connections with things your child has experienced or other books or films they have seen.

Most importantly – show that you love reading! By modelling this you will support your child to develop their love of reading.



Unlocking Letters and Sounds
Actions, Images and Handwriting – Phase 2

- These are simple, clear actions that don't require the child saying the sound.
- The sound is only voiced once, so that the teacher can spot those children who are saying the sound slightly behind the rest of the group.
- The actions also help warm up hands and fingers, ready for writing.

GPC	Image	Action	Lower Case Letter Formation	Upper Case Letter Formation
s		Snake – Slithering snake action with arms	Up and over, around the other way	Up and over, around the other way
a		Arrow – Fling an arrow	Around, up, down and back	Down, down, left and across
t		Tap – Tapping a tap	Down and round, pencil all across	Down from the top, left and right across the top
p		Paint – Painting with a paintbrush	Down, up to the top, round to the middle	Down and back up, around to the middle

Spelling

- Segmenting words



- Daily writing as part of phonics lessons

We know that when children are reading they are decoding the GPCs they know and blending them together to read a word or group of words. We teach children to use their phonics to spell in the opposite way. Instead of blending the phonemes together to spell a words we separete the phonemes so we can hear each sound to be able to spell the word. This is called segmenting.

Let's try segmenting this word to write it: sh i p

Your child will write words, captions and sentences as part of their phonics lesson each day. As with reading, we will only ask them to write words contacting GPCs they have been taught. As part of their daily lesson we will also teach them how to write and form the letters they are writing.

Handwriting sheet included in the packs so parents can support the correct letter formation with the handwriting patters at home.

Year 1 spellings soon. Inclusive of CEW and words containing focus sounds.

Concerns about progress

- All children are different
- Discuss any concerns with teachers
- Teachers will assess your child regularly
- Interventions to support child in the specific skill they are struggling with
- Adaptions for children with SEND



All children are different and, at different points in their learning, will find things more difficult or challenging. Staff at our school have all had training to identify what children are finding difficult and to help them overcome this. We know it is very tempting to compare your child to others – especially with reading and what books they are on etc but we would suggest you speak to teachers if you have any concerns. If we have any concerns we will discuss them with you – and we might ask you to do some extra practice at home.

Teachers and TAs will assess your child regularly to check their learning. We quickly identify any child who might be at risk of falling behind and will support them with extra phonics- usually by giving them 'interventions' to support the specific skill they are struggling with – some children may struggle to identify the GPC, others might not be able to blend yet.

If a child has SEND we may need to make adaptations to their phonics eg. additional time to practice, more visuals. Again we will discuss these with you but research has shown that phonics is the most effective way of teaching children with SEND to read.



Phonics Screening Check Year 1

- Children in Year 1 throughout the country will all be taking part in a phonics screening check during the same week in June. Children in Year 2 will also take the check if they did not achieve the required result when in Year 1 or they have not taken the test before.
- The phonics screening check is designed to confirm whether individual children have learnt phonic decoding and blending skills to an appropriate standard.

Discuss what the Phonics screening test is and when and how it takes place for children in Year 1 and those who do not pass in Year 1 and need to re-take the test in Year 2.



Phonics Screening Check Year 1

- The test contains 40 words. Each child will sit one to-one and read each word aloud to a teacher. The test will take approximately 10 minutes per child, although all children are different and will complete the check at their own pace. The list of words the children read is a combination of 20 real words and 20 pseudo words (nonsense words).
- Pseudo words are included because they will be new to all pupils; they do not favour children with a good vocabulary knowledge or visual memory of words.



Phonics Screening Check Year 1

- By the end of the summer term all schools must report each child's results to their parents. They will also confirm if the child has met the standard threshold. Children who do not achieve the expected level will retake the test when they are in Year 2.
- Results from the check will be used by schools to analyse their own performance and for Ofsted to use in inspections.

Questions and next steps



Learning to read is such an exciting journey for children and we are incredibly excited to be starting it with your child. We hope today's session has given you an understanding of how we teach phonics at our school.

A couple of take aways when supporting your children at home:

- *When rehearsing letter names please don't use the traditional song as children miss the middle letters. Singing to the tune of 'Old MacDonald' or 'Bob the Builder' are always hot favourites.

- *Please ensure you are always using a pure sound and not adding an 'uh' or 'swuh' on the end of the sound.

- *Tag cards will come home to reception parents to rehearse sounds taught. These can be used as flash cards or to play games E.g. Say and find, beat the parent, hide and seek and show the action and can you find the sound? If you make a second set you can play pairs or snap too.

- *Ask parents if videos showing the pure sounds would be something helpful to them?

Ask for questions.

Thank you for coming. Myself and the other teachers will remain for any questions parents would like to ask if they'd prefer to ask without an audience.