**Phonics**

In 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, for example, the *‘c’* sound in the word *‘cat’* or the *‘oa’* sound in the word *‘boat’*. It is generally accepted that most varieties of spoken English use about 44 phonemes which include both the sounds of individual letters and of combinations of letters.

# Graphemes

A grapheme is a symbol of a phoneme. It is how we write down a letter or group of letters representing a sound.

**Segmenting and blending**

Segmenting consists of breaking words down into phonemes to spell, for example, *‘cat’* consists of *‘c’*, *‘a’* and *‘t’,* or *‘queen’* consists of *‘qu’, ‘ee’ ‘n’.*

Blending consists of building words from phonemes to read, for example, *‘c’*, *‘a’* and *‘t’* sound out the word *‘cat’* and *‘qu’, ‘ee’* and *‘n’*  sound out the word *‘queen’.*

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. m***a***k***e***

## Abbreviations

V represents a vowel sound and C a consonant sound and are used to describe the order of graphemes in a word. So, VC (eg am or each), CVC (eg Sam or beach), CCVC (eg slam or bleach), CVCC (eg hunt or bench).

**Useful websites**

<https://vimeo.com/106231366> - Jolly phonics songs

<https://www.youtube.com/user/breakthruchris/featured> - Mr Thorne Does Phonics/Geraldine the giraffe

<http://www.letters-and-sounds.com/> - Has lots of information, printable resources for each of the Letters and Sounds phonic phases, and also links to games aligned with each phase.

<https://www.phonicsplay.co.uk/> - Offers a selection of interactive games for all phonic phases. Mostly simple games.

<https://www.ictgames.com/mobilePage/literacy.html> - Has a great selection of games that link well with games in Letters and Sounds.

<http://www.bigbrownbear.co.uk/magneticletters/>- Make any words with this useful game.

<http://www.phonicsinternational.com/hear_the_sounds/hear_the_sounds_1.htm> - Useful page which demonstrates pronunciation of all sounds.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-ksblMiliA8> – YouTube video guide to pronunciation of all sounds.