

# What is Phonics?

- Phonics is the main strategy supporting word recognition. It is taught throughout primary school, beginning in EYFS and developing in KS1. Then in KS2 children apply their phonic knowledge within their writing fluently and independently.
- It Teaches children to connect letters of the alphabet to the sounds they make – blending them together from left to right to make a word.
- Phonics supports children in identifying those individual sounds (phonemes) within words and helps them to segment them for spelling.

## Segmenting and Blending, for reading and writing

- Letters are a code of symbols that spell the phonemes in words. When we read we translate the symbols into sounds and thus decode the words.
- Helping children to read at home is so important because it means they can apply the phonics skills they have learnt that day or that week and of course practice makes perfect.

## Phonemes and graphemes

- A phoneme (speech sound) is the smallest unit of sound.
- There are 44 phonemes in the English language.
- Letters or groups of letters are called graphemes.
- Every phoneme (sound) has a grapheme.  
Phonemes can be represented by a grapheme of 1, 2 or 3 letters:

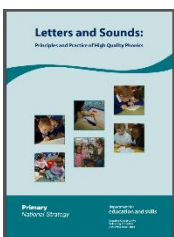
s a t sh ng oo igh

- Pronunciation is IMPORTANT!
- The consonants are the hardest. For example:

sssss NOT s-ugh, mmmm NOT m-ugh, nnnnnnnn NOT n-ugh, lllllllllllllllllll NOT l-ugh, ttt NOT t-ugh

## Teaching Phonics at St Paul's

- Schemes we use: DfE 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 a detailed and systematic programme for teaching phonic skills for children starting by the age of five, with the aim of them becoming fluent readers by age seven. It is divided into 6 phases, which children meet depending on their age and ability.
- Children are taught phases 1, 2 and 3 in EYFS, with phase 4 (longer words) mixed in as well. When children move into Year 1 they begin phases 4 and 5 in

more detail. By the end of Year 2 we would expect all children to be secure at Phase 5.

Although phase 1 begins in EYFS it is important to remember that this phases runs throughout school, as it includes themes such as body percussion and instrumental sounds.

- A phonics lesson is split into sections: **revisit, teach, practice and apply.**
- Lessons are planned using a school wide planning format which shows clear progressions and differentiation thought each class (or group of children). Children are assessed and grouped according to ability.
- We use games, resources, music, and songs. Anything we can do to make phonics active and enjoyable works brilliantly.

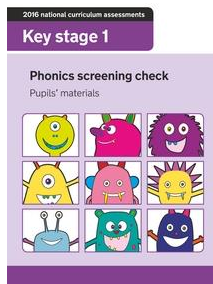
### **Phases 1-6 never stop!**

- Children continue to learn new words all the time, right up into year 6, and even beyond.
- By applying the rules of spelling and phonics they have learnt in phase 1-6 children will able to decode any word to be able to read, write or spell it aloud.
- Even as adults we see new words and subconsciously we decode them using our phonics skills. With spelling we 'just know' how a word is supposed to look, again understanding how the phonemes fit together.

### **The importance of reading, helping your child to read.**

- Say each sound in the word from left to right. (segmenting)
- Blend the sounds by pointing to each letter (grapheme) as you say the sound, i.e. /b/ in **b**at, or letter group (digraph/trigraph) such as /**igh**/ in **sigh**, then run your finger under the whole word as you say it.
- Try to ensure that you say the sounds accurately.
- If your child does not understand the word they have read, talk about its meaning and say in a variety of sentences.
- Work at your child's pace.
- Always be positive and give lots of praise and encouragement.

# Year 1 phonics screening Check



## What is it?

- The Phonics Screening Check is meant to show how well your child can use the phonics skills they've learned up to the end of Year 1, and to identify students who need extra phonics help.
- The Department for Education defines the checks as “short, light-touch assessments” that take about four to nine minutes to complete.

## What's on it?

- The checks consist of **40 words and non-words** that your child will be asked to read one-on-one with a teacher.
- Pseudo words aka Alien words AKA **Non words**.  
A load of nonsense?



Yes! These words are completely made up, however children will be able to read them because they can decode them just like any other word.

Don't be worried if you get these words sent home as reading or phonics spelling practice, we haven't all gone mad, they are there to test the children's decoding skills.

Children will be reading pseudo words as early as class 1

## What does the score mean?

Your child will be scored against a national standard, and the main result will be whether or not they fall below, within or above this standard.

Children last year needed to score 32 out of 40 to pass (the pass mark can change but it has been the same for the past 5 years).

If a Y1 child does not pass, they retake the test in Y2.

You can help prepare children for the test by reading at home, practising phonics, and helping to complete spelling homework, also nearer the time we will send out practise materials.