



# Phonics Guidance

We teach phonics and high frequency words according to the government programme 'Letters & Sounds'. It is split into 6 phases with the different phases being covered in different years in Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1.

## Phase 2 (Reception)

By the end of phase 2, the children should know 24 sounds....

*s a t p i n m d g o c k*  
*ck e u r h b f l ll ss le*

We refer to these sounds as phonemes, children should learn each letter by its sound, not its name. For example, the letter *a* should be called *a* (as in *ant*) not *ai* (as in *aim*). Similarly the letter *n* should be *nn* (as in *net*), not *en*. This will help with blending (saying the individual phonemes and then running them together to make the word), for example c-a-t. Blending is a crucial technique that all the children need to learn. The letters are not taught in alphabetical order, rather than in groups that can be blended into little words. The letters *b* and *d* are introduced separately to avoid confusion.

## Phase 3 (Reception)

Phase 3 builds on phase 2 and the children learn 36 more sounds (including some where the same letters can make different sounds e.g. *oo* – *book*, *loop*).

*j v w x y z zz qu ch sh th ng*  
*dge ve wh cks tch nk ai ee igh oa oo oo*  
*ar or ur ow oi ear air er er ue ue ure*

Some sounds (digraphs) are represented by two letters, such as *sh*. Children should sound out the digraph (*sh*) not the individual letters (*s – h*). *Rain* should be sounded out *r-ai-n*.

Here's the confusing bit..... You will find it helpful to be able to distinguish between a blend (such as *st*) and a digraph (such as *sh*). In a blend the two sounds, *s* and *t* can each be heard. In a digraph this is not so. When sounding out a blend, encourage children to say the two sounds as one unit, so *fl-a-g* not *f-l-a-g*. This will lead to greater fluency when reading.

And now the really confusing part..... Sounds that have more than one way of being written are initially taught in one form only. For example, the sound *ai* (*rain*) is taught first, and then alternatives *a-e* (*gate*) and *ay* (*day*) follow after.

#### **Phase 4 (Reception and Year 1)**

In Phase 4, 16 more sounds are taught....

*ay oy ea ie ow ew ew ou ir aw eer are*  
*ce ea o ed*

Sounds with adjacent consonants or initial and final blends are taught e.g *bl, dr, sc, ft, ct*.

#### **Phase 5 (Year 1 & Year 2)**

In Phase 5, the children learn 5 new sounds all using the 'magic e' rule.

*a\_e e\_e i\_e o\_e u\_e*

Magic e makes the vowel say its name (a longer sound) e.g. *came, Pete, rice, bone, cube*.

They also learn 5 less common sounds...

*wh ph oe au ey*

#### **Phase 6 (Year 2)**

In Phase 6, the children start learning about spelling rules i.e past tense, ing words, suffixes and prefixes.

#### **At home....**

- The easiest way to know how to spell a word is to listen for the sounds in that word (ask the children about Stretchy Jim!!). Start by listening for the first sound in a word. Games like I-Spy are ideal for this. Next listen to the end sounds. The middle sound is often the hardest to hear.
- Tapping out the sounds in a word is a good idea, three taps means three sounds.
- Play games like 'add a sound': what do I get if I add a *p* to the beginning of *ink*? 'Take away a sound': what do I get if I take away *f* from *flap*?