Phonics Information for Parents

Technical vocabulary

Segmenting – breaking up words into their individual sounds so that we can spell a word

Blending - putting individual sounds together so that we can read a word

Phoneme - the smallest unit of sound in a word

Grapheme - the letter or letters that represent the phoneme.

Digraph – two letters, one sound i.e. ai, or, ar

Trigraphs – three letters, one sound i.e. igh, ear, air

Level 1 (Nursery/Pre-school):

 • Showing an awareness of rhyme and alliteration (words that start with the same sounds)

 • Distinguishing between sounds in the environment and phonemes

 • Exploring and experimenting with sounds and words

 • Beginning to orally blend and segment phonemes

Level 2 Learning graphemes

• 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 - h, b, f, ff, l, ll, ss

Level 3 - Learning one grapheme for each phoneme we have in English

• Set 6 - j, v, w, x

• Set 7 - y, z, zz, qu

• Consonant digraphs: ch, sh, th, ng

• Long vowel graphemes: ear, air, ure, er, ar, or, ur, ow, oi, ai, ee, igh, oa, oo
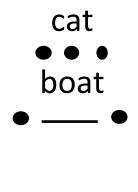
Level 4 - Learning to blend consonant clusters

Children use phase 3 graphemes but practise blending words that have a cluster of consonants i.e.

Level 5 - Learning alternative graphemes for phonemes

- Vowel graphemes - ay, ou, ie, ee, oy, ir, ue (oo), ue (yoo), aw, ew (yoo), ew (oo), oe, au, ey
- Consonant graphemes - wh, ph
- Split digraphs - a-e, e-e, i-e, o-e, u-e (oo), u-e (yoo)

Sound buttons

Children use sound buttons to support when segmenting and blending. They draw either a dot (single letter grapheme) or a line (digraph or trigraphs), like below:

cat
● ● ●

boat
● —— ●

chair
—— ——