

Phonics Teaching at Chipping Hill Primary School



At Chipping Hill Primary School, we utilise Essential Letters and Sounds and supplement with books from Oxford University Press which match the Phonics phase at which each individual child is working.

Our expectation is that children should be secure at Phase 4 at the end of the Foundation Stage so they are ready to work through revision and Phase 5 in Year 1. Regular assessments take place so that if children are having difficulties they are given the opportunity to work in small Intervention Groups. The National Phonics Screening Test for all Year 1 pupils takes place in June. Any child not meeting the threshold will be re-tested the following year. These children will continue to have focused phonics teaching in Year 2 alongside the National Curriculum SPAG programme. The focus shifts to include spelling, punctuation and grammar. A SPAG test will be part of the SATs process at the end of the year.

What is Phonics?

Phonics teaches children to be able to listen carefully and identify the phonemes that make up each word. This helps children to learn to read words and to spell words. Phonics sessions are the repetitive and consistent approach to learning, made up from games, songs and actions.

Sessions last for 15-20 minutes per day.

Why is Phonics important?

Teaching and learning of phonics is crucial to enabling children to read and spell.

Having a strong knowledge of phonemes and correlating graphemes provides children with a core foundation upon which they can develop their skills in reading and spelling as they move up through the school. A child who is able to read can access much more of the curriculum compared to those who cannot read. Reading is therefore one of the most important skills a child can learn.

We want the teaching of phonics to be enjoyable and engaging. To enable us to fulfil this, we utilise teaching phonics using various strategies including song, rhymes and actions.

In phonics lessons children are taught three main things:

GPCs

This stands for grapheme phoneme correspondences. This simply means that they are taught all the phonemes in the English language and ways of writing them down. These sounds are taught in a particular order. The first sounds to be taught are **s, a, t, p**.

Blending

Children are taught to be able to blend. This is when children say the sounds that make up a word and are able to merge the sounds together until they can hear what the word is. This skill is vital in learning to read.

Segmenting

Children are also taught to segment. This is the opposite of blending. Children are able to say a word and then break it up into the phonemes that make it up. This skill is vital in being able to spell words.

The Role of the Class Teacher and Support staff in teaching phonics

- All teaching staff are responsible for developing and implementing our whole school approach to Phonics
- All classroom staff will model good reading of phonetic sounds and encourage the children to copy with accuracy
- All classroom staff will promote reading using phonics with attractive and appropriate books that reflect the topics being taught
- All teaching staff will ensure that their classrooms are phonic rich and that they reflect various sounds being taught at the time, as well as reinforcing previous sounds taught
- All teaching staff will ensure provision of additional support is made for any child with Special Educational Needs
- All teaching staff will ensure the children have daily access to high quality phonics teaching
- All teaching staff will track the progress for each child, keep up to date with record keeping and assessment
- All classroom staff will model how good reading behaviour looks and sounds
- All staff within year group will be responsible for the delivery of phonics

Phonics phases

There are six phonics phases. These are:

Phase 1

Early phonics teaching at the start of Reception focuses on developing children's listening skills.

In Phase 1 phonics, children are taught about:

- Environmental sounds
- Instrumental sounds
- Body percussion (e.g. clapping and stamping)
- Rhythm and rhyme
- Alliteration
- Voice sounds
- Oral blending and segmenting

Phase 2

In Phase 2, children begin to learn the sounds that letters make phonemes. There are 44 sounds in all. Some are made with two letters, but **in Phase 2, children focus on learning the 19 most common single letter sounds**. These should be broken down into smaller sets of approximately six sounds to make them more achievable for children to learn.

The order in which sounds are taught must follow the school scheme, learning the most commonly used phonemes first, starting with: /s/, /a/, /t/, /p/, /i/, /n/.

By the end of Phase 2 children should be able to read some vowel-consonant (VC) and consonant-vowel-consonant (CVC) words, and to spell them out. They also learn some hard to read and spell words like 'the' and 'go.' This phase usually lasts about six weeks.

Phase 3

Phase 3 introduces children to the remaining, more difficult and/or less commonly used phonemes. There are around 25 of these, mainly made up of two letters such as /ch/, /ar/, /ow/ and /ee/.

Alongside this, **children must be taught to recognise more hard to spell words, including 'me,' 'was,' 'my,' 'you' and 'they'**. They learn the names of the letters, as well as the sounds they make. Activities might include learning mnemonics (memory aids) for tricky words, practising writing letters on mini whiteboards, using word cards and singing songs like the Alphabet Song.

Phase 3 takes most children around 12 weeks. By the end, they should be able to say the sound made by most, or all, Phase 2 and 3 graphemes, blend and read CVC words made from these graphemes, read 12 new tricky words and write letters correctly when given an example to copy.

Phase 4

Children should now be confident with each phoneme. In Phase 4 phonics, children will, among other things:

- Practise reading and spelling CVCC words ('such,' 'belt,' 'milk' etc)
- Practise reading and spelling high frequency words
- Practise reading and writing sentences
- Learn more hard to read and spell words, including 'have,' 'like,' 'some,' 'little'

Children should now be blending confidently to work out new words. They should be starting to be able to read words straight off, rather than having to sound them out. They should also be able to write every letter, mostly correctly. This phase usually takes four to six weeks, and most children will complete it around the end of Reception.

Phase 5

Phase 5 begins by introducing alternative spellings for sounds, like 'igh',. Children should master these in reading first, and as their fluency develops use them correctly in their spelling.

Children learn new graphemes (different ways of spelling each sound) and alternative pronunciations for these: for example, learning that the grapheme 'ow' makes a different sound in 'snow' and 'cow'.

They should become quicker at blending, and start to do it silently. They also learn about split digraphs (the 'magic e') such as the a-e in 'name.

They should begin to choose the right graphemes when spelling, and will learn more hard to read and spell words, including 'people,' 'water' and 'friend'. They also learn one new phoneme: /zh/, as in 'treasure.'

By the end of Year 1, children should be able to:

- Say the sound for any grapheme they are shown
- Write the common graphemes for any given sound (e.g. 'e,' 'ee,' 'ie,' 'ea')
- Use their phonics knowledge to read and spell unfamiliar words of up to three syllables
- Read all of the 100 high frequency words, and be able to spell most of them
- Form letters correctly

Phase 6

Phase 6 phonics takes place throughout Year 2, with the aim of children becoming fluent readers and accurate spellers.

By Phase 6, children should be able to read hundreds of words using one of three strategies:

- Reading them automatically
- Decoding them quickly and silently
- Decoding them aloud

Children should now be spelling most words accurately (this is known as 'encoding'), although this usually lags behind reading. They will also learn, among other things:

- Prefixes and suffixes, e.g. 'in-' and '-ed'
- The past tense
- Memory strategies for high frequency or topic words
- Proof-reading
- How to use a dictionary
- Where to put the apostrophe in words like I'm
- Spelling rules

Although formal phonics teaching should be completed by the end of Year 2, children continue to use their knowledge as they move through the school.