



Phonics Workshop

Autumn

Supporting your child at home

An activity guide to support
phonics and reading

Introduction

As you know, the ability to read and write well is a vital skill for all children, paving the way for an enjoyable and successful school experience. From an early age, children develop an awareness of different sounds in spoken language. They develop an understanding that spoken words are made up of different sounds (phonemes) and they learn to match the phonemes to letters (graphemes). The aim of this booklet is to give you an understanding of how we teach phonics and how, as a parent or carer, you can support and encourage your child at home. Please see the glossary for an explanation of some terminology.

What we do at RA Butler School

At RA Butler School every child in Reception and Year 1 and Year 2 (though for the autumn term only) takes part in daily high-quality phonic sessions with their class teacher. These are fun sessions involving lots of speaking, listening and games where the children are encouraged to join in throughout. Each session includes a review of previous learning, the introduction of a new phoneme/grapheme, followed by a chance to practise blending and segmenting the new sound alongside learning new high frequency words.

We understand all children develop at different rates and in different ways. Therefore we teach reading in a variety of ways, predominately through phonics but also through developing sight vocabulary and looking at the shape of words. Our phonics program is based on Phonics the RAB way which is our own systematic and synthetic phonics programme which helps us to support your child in developing their phonic skills.

The program is divided in to six phases, with each phase building on the skills and knowledge of previous learning.

Phase 1 – *begun in pre-school but continued throughout EYFS & KS1.* Nursery rhymes, songs and stories are shared to develop your child's vocabulary. Children are encouraged to listen carefully to the sounds around them and see if they can match the sounds or work out what they are.

Phases 2 – 4 – *usually taught in EYFS and the beginning of Year 1.* We introduce new letter sounds (phonemes). Children are taught how to represent each of the 42 sounds by a letter or sequence of letters (grapheme). Children are also taught how to blend sounds together for reading and how to segment (split) sounds for spelling.

Phase 2 = 19 phonemes: *s, a, t, p, i, n, m, d, g, o, c, k, ck, e, u, r, h, b, l, f, ff, ll & ss.* They will focus on CVC words.

Phase 3 = 26 long vowel phonemes: *j, v, w, x, y, z, zz, qu, ch, sh, th, ng, ai, ee, igh, oa, oo, ar, or, ur, ow, oi, ear, air, ure & er.* They will use these phonemes and the ones they already know from phase to read and spell words.

Phase 4 – does not introduce any new phonemes. It focuses on reading and spelling longer words with the phonemes they already know e.g. CCVC (black), CCCVC (strong), CVCC (felt), CCVCC (blend).

Phase 5 – Usually taught in Year 1. Children learn new alternative ways of representing the sounds they know and practise blending for reading and segmenting for spelling. They learn that there can be many ways of representing the same phoneme (e.g. *burn, first, term*) and that the same grapheme can represent more than one phoneme (e.g. *got/giant, cat/circle*).

Phonemes: *ay, ou, ie, ea, oy, ir, ue, aw, wh, ph, ew, oe, au, a-e, e-e, i-e, o-e & u-e.*

Phase 6 – Usually taught in Year 2. During this phase, the children become fluent readers and increasingly accurate spellers. Children look at syllables, base/root words and mnemonics. They learn the rules for past tense, rules for adding suffixes and prefixes, silent letters and contractions.

Games you can play with your child

- **Rhyming books** – when children are familiar with a particular book, try pausing before the rhyming word. Encourage your child to fill in the missing word. (Julia Donaldson books are great for this!)
- **I spy** – ‘I spy with my little eye something beginning with....’ remember to use the sound (phoneme) rather than the letter name to begin with.
- **Robot talking** – when you are playing, say words as if you are a robot by saying the sound separately and see if your child can work out what it is e.g. Can you h-o-p like a f-r-o-g? Can you s-i-t at the table? Can you pass me your c-u-p please?
- **Phoneme recognition games** – ask your child to look for graphemes (letters) while you are out and about. Can they find graphemes from their own name, ones they have learnt at school or a given phoneme?
- **What’s in the box?** – put some familiar items in the box and ask your child to pull out an item and name it using their robot voice or if you don’t have lots of objects at home you can play the imaginary game - you just pretend that you have a box with lots of objects in and you can be as creative as you like. You just say: ‘In my box today I have a ‘d-o-g’ (in a robot voice) your child then has to blend the sounds together to make the word. If your child struggles with this at first then you can give them a clue, this will encourage positivity and allow them to achieve.
- **Letter sound bingo** – you will need a 3 x 3 grid for each player (you could draw this on a piece of paper), and some counters or coins. Write a grapheme into each space on the grid making sure each grid is slightly different. The ‘bingo caller’ calls out a phoneme and the players cover up the grapheme on their board if they have it. The winner is the first to fill up their board. To make this easier for new readers, you could show them the grapheme for them to match.
- **Matching pairs** – you will need cards with the words your child is learning (you will need 2 of each word). Turn all the cards face down on the table and take turns to turn over two. When a matching pair is found the player can keep them. The winner is the player with the most pairs at the end of the game.

Ways to support your child with reading at home:

We use a combination of reading schemes at RA Butler School. These include Pearson Bug Club, Collins Big Cat, Dandelion Launchers and Read, Write, Inc. These give a variety of fiction and non-fiction books to develop children’s reading range. Reading is included in our ‘Phonics’ sessions with the children using a range of high quality real reading scheme or real books. Every child is encouraged to change their reading book after they have read it to an adult at home at least three times. Ideally they should read daily depending on the length of the book.

- Books that your child brings home from school should be at the right level for your child. The words should be readable for your child with a minimum of support – we say they are levelled reading scheme books. These books are written to ensure steady progress and success. Many of these books include helpful notes for parents inside the front cover.
- If your child gets stuck on a word, try phonics first. Get your child to say the letter sounds and say them quickly to try to hear the word; this is called ‘blending’. If the word can’t be sounded out then it’s best if you say it quickly and move on. If the book is at the right level then this should not happen too much.
- Clapping out syllables or chunks in words and names can help with reading longer words: *Di-no-saur! Cho-co-late!* Or point out that some words are made up of two words, so *wind* and then *mill* makes *windmill*.
- Your child’s expression might sometimes sound stilted on the first read of a sentence or a page. This is because they are focusing on making sounds into words. To keep your child hooked into the story, read it again with expression – after lots of praise, of course!
- It’s sometimes good to get your child to re-read a sentence or even a page if it has been tricky to work out. This helps with meaning, flow and confidence – and we all still have to do this sometimes!
- Before reading a book together, always talk about the title, the pictures and the information on the cover (front and back). If it’s new, ask what your child thinks the book might be about. If it’s an old favourite then talk about the bits you love most! Don’t worry if some books get chosen again and again!

- Don't give up on talking about picture books and sharing that bedtime story or information book. It's just as important now to enjoy reading these books with your child, as well as those they bring home from school. Read with expression when reading to your child. Use different voices and vary the volume for effect or for different bits of information such as, *Did you know that the Tyrannosaurus Rex...? Wow!* You'll soon see that your child will then try these skills when reading to you!
- It's really important to read as much as possible with your child. Read the books that come home from school, borrow library books and look at magazines or comics. Read signs and notices, and find interesting websites to read. And keep reading together at bedtime too!

Phonics Glossary of Terms

Grapheme	A letter or group of letters representing one sound. A grapheme is what you see. <i>e.g. a, f, s, sh, ch, and igh</i>			
Phoneme	The smallest single sound (you hear) <i>e.g. the letters ‘sh’ represent just one sound, but the letters ‘sp’ represent two sounds ‘s’ and ‘p’.</i>			
Blend	To draw individual sounds together to pronounce a word <i>e.g. ‘c-a-t’ can be blended together to read ‘cat’.</i>			
Segment	To split a word up into its individual phonemes in order to spell it. <i>e.g. the word ‘map’ has 3 phonemes ‘m-a-p’.</i>			
Digraph	Two letters that make one sound <i>e.g. sh (ship), ch (chat), or ll (fill).</i>			
Vowel digraph	Two vowels which together make one sound <i>e.g. oo (boot/food), ee (feet), or ai (rain).</i>			
Split digraph	Usually refers to two vowels. A two-letter sound that has another letter in the middle. Used to be called ‘magic e’. <i>e.g. a-e (made), e-e (these), i-e (time), o-e (phone), u-e (cube).</i>			
Trigraph	Three letters that make one sound <i>e.g. igh (night), ear (fear), ure (pure)</i>			
CVC	Consonant Vowel Consonant <i>e.g. cat, dip, got</i>			
Tricky words	Words that cannot be easily decoded or ‘sounded out’, sometimes referred to as ‘red’ words. They are usually high frequency words that the children will come across in their reading or writing <i>e.g. the, was, said or you.</i>			
Sound buttons	These are dots or dashes drawn under graphemes. A single letter grapheme (o) has a dot under it. Graphemes with more than one letter (sh) have a line underneath to remind the child they make one single sound and that they don't sound each letter out individually. <i>e.g. sh o p</i> — • •			
Phoneme frame	These are boxes or grids drawn to show each phoneme in a different box <i>e.g.</i> <table><tr><td>sh</td><td>o</td><td>p</td></tr></table>	sh	o	p
sh	o	p		

Useful websites:

- www.phonicsplay.co.uk
- www.oxfordowl.co.uk
- www.topmarks.co.uk/english-games/3-5-years/letters-and-sounds
- www.topmarks.co.uk/english-games/5-7-years/letters-and-sounds
- www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/ks1/literacy/

Useful apps/websites:

- Cbeebies (Alphablocks game)
- Mr Thorne Does Phonics