

Phonics Information Session

17th September 2026

Session Outlines:

- What is phonics?
- Phases within phonics
- Reading and Assessment
- Phonics Check (Year 1)
- Questions



What is Phonics?

“

Phonics is:

making connections between the sounds
of our spoken words and the letters that
are used to write them down.

”

- Phonics is a way of teaching children the skills to read effectively and to spell words. They are taught how to:
- Recognise the sounds that each individual letter makes;
- Identify the sounds that different combinations of letters make-such as “sh” “oo” “igh”
- **Blend** these sounds together from left to right to make a word
- **Segment** the sounds in words to spell them

Children can use this knowledge to “**decode**” new words that they hear or see.



Why Phonics?

- Research shows that when phonics is taught in a structured way-starting with the easiest sounds and progressing through to the most complex-it is the most effective way of teaching children to read.

Phonics in School...

- Little Wandle
- Taught daily (Reception-Year 2)
- All staff are trained and supported



Saying the sounds...



<https://www.littlewandlelettersandsounds.org.uk/resources/for-parents/>

Terminology

Term	Definition
phoneme	The smallest unit of sound made in a word
grapheme	Letter/s used to represent a sound
blending	Putting sounds together to read
segmenting	Splitting a word in to single sounds
digraph	Two letters used to represent one sound
split digraph	When a digraph is split by a consonant
trigraph	Three letters used to represent one sound
phoneme frame	A grid used to support spelling splitting words into sounds
tricky word	A word that cannot be decoded

Look out for...

- **Digraphs**- 2 letters representing 1 sound (ck th ng) thing click
- **Trigraphs**- 3 letters representing 1 sound (igh air ure) bright flair
- **Split digraphs**- contains 2 letters that are split between a consonant (a-e i-e) make bike

When your children are reading the practise materials get them to sound button these specific letter groups e.g.

click bright smile



Little Wandle

Little Wandle is a phonics programme validated by the department of Education

Built around

the update announced from the DfE (2021)- improve rates of progress

latest research into how children learn best/most effectively

-how best to enable children to apply their learning to become competent and confident readers

Phase 1 – Preschool / Nursery / Reception

Phase 2 – Reception

Phase 3 – Reception

Phase 4 – Reception

Phase 5 – Throughout Year 1

Phase 1

Phase 1 encourages the development of children's speaking and listening skills. It is a vital part in laying the foundations in learning to read using phonics.

Aspects within Phase 1:

- Environmental sounds
- Instrumental sounds
- Body percussion
- Rhythm and rhyme
- Alliteration
- Voice sounds
- Oral blending and segmenting



Phase 2

- Phase 2 is the start of systematic phonics.
- Begins the understanding of **grapheme-phoneme** correspondence.
- Understand that words are constructed from **phonemes** and that phonemes are represented by **graphemes**.
- There are 20 sounds in this phase

Phase 2 grapheme information sheet			Autumn 1	
Grapheme and mnemonic	Picture card	Pronunciation phrase	Formation phrase	
s s		Show your teeth and let the s hiss out ssssss ssssss	Under the snake's chin, slide down and round its tail.	
a a		Open your mouth wide and make the 'a' sound at the back of your mouth a a a	Around the astronaut's helmet, and down into space.	
t t		Open your lips, put the tip of your tongue behind your teeth and press t t t	From the tiger's nose to its tail, then follow the stripe across the tiger.	
p p		Bring your lips together and push them open and say p p p	Down the penguin's back, up and round its head.	
i i		pull your lips back and make the 'i' sound at the back of your mouth i i i	Down the iguana's body, then draw a dot (on the leaf) at the top.	
n n		Open your lips a bit, put your tongue behind your teeth and make the nnnn sound nnnn	Down the stick, up and over the net.	

Phase 2 grapheme information sheet			Autumn 2	
Grapheme and mnemonic	Picture card	Pronunciation phrase	Formation phrase	
j j		Pucker your lips and show your teeth use your tongue as you say j j j	All the way down the jellyfish. Dot on its head.	
v v		Put your teeth against your bottom lip and make a buzzing vvv vvv	Down to the bottom of the volcano, and back up to the top.	
w w		Pucker your lips and keep them small as you say w w w	From the top of the wave to the bottom, up the wave, down the wave, then up again.	
x x		Mouth open then push the ex sound through as you close your mouth ex ex ex (x x x)	Start at the top, then across to the bottom of the box. Start at the top, then across to the bottom of the box.	

Blending

The children begin to **blend** for reading.

s a t p i n

- Using the phonemes they have learnt they start to read simple words e.g. at, it, is, in.
- They then move onto consonant-vowel-consonant (CVC) words e.g. sat, pin, tap, pan.
- Children need to be able to **hear** the separate sounds in a word and then blend them together to **say** the whole word.

Segmenting

The children then begin to **segment** for writing.

s a t p i n

s/a/t = sat

p/i/n = pin

- Children need to be able to **hear** a whole word and **say** every sound that they hear.
- Segmenting is the opposite of blending.
- Children will learn to use both terms **blending** and **segmenting**.

Phase 3

□ 14 new sounds

□ They will apply these to the sounds previously learnt in Phase 2 to read and spell longer words containing:

-Two or more digraph (chairs etc)

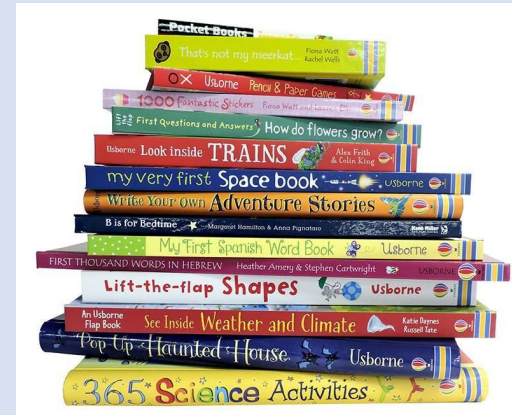
-Compound words (sunset, farmyard)

Grapheme	Catchphrase	Pronunciation phrase	Grapheme	Catchphrase	Pronunciation phrase
ai	 tail in the rain	Open your mouth wide and say ai ai ai	oo	 hook a book	Puck lips at them you say oo oo
ee	 sheep in a jeep	Smile with your lips apart and say ee ee ee	oo	 zoom to the moon	Open mouth bit, push hand, tummy your t in and oo oo
igh	 a light in the night	Open your mouth in a relaxed way and say igh igh igh	ar	 march in the dark	Open mouth! push tongue down and say ar ar ar
oa	 soap that goat	Make an 'o' with your mouth and say oa oa oa	or	 born with a horn	Make an 'o' with your mouth, push your tongue down and say or or or

Grapheme	Catchphrase	Pronunciation phrase	Grapheme	Catchphrase	Pronunciation phrase
ur	 curl the fur	Open your mouth in a relaxed way, push your tongue down and say ur ur ur	ear	 get near to hear	Smile with your lips apart, push your tongue to your teeth as you say ear ear ear
ow	 wow owl	Open your mouth wide then move your lips together as you say ow ow ow	air	 chair in the air	Open your mouth wide, push your tongue down as you say air air air
oi	 boing boing	Make an 'o' with your mouth then move your lips out as you say oi oi oi	er	 a bigger digger	Open your mouth in a relaxed way, push your tongue down and say ur ur ur

Phase 4

- Does not introduce any new phonemes.
- Reading and spelling words with four or more phonemes that they already know.
- Longer words
- Compound words
- Words ending in a suffix –ing, -ed, -er etc



Phase 5

- Review phase 3 and 4
- Learn new graphemes for reading including split-digraphs
- Learn alternative pronunciation/spelling

meat/bread cow/blow
bear/hear

shell
chef
special

caption
mansion
passion

Phase 2



Year 1



s i gh ed

Phase 3



Phase 2

Year 3/4

c r e a t u r e

Phase 5

Complete the code mat

									
/s/ s ss c ce se st sc	/t/ t tt tte	/p/ p pp	/n/ n nn kn gn	/m/ m mm mb mn	/d/ d dd	/g/ g gg gu gue gh	/c/ c k ck ch cc que	/r/ r rr wr rh	/h/ h
									
/b/ b bb	/f/ f ff ph	/l/ l ll le al	/j/ j g ge dge	/v/ v ve vv	/w/ w wh u	/x/ x	/y/ y	/z/ s se z zz ze	/qu/ qu
									
/ch/ ch tch ture*	/sh/ sh ti ch ssi ci si s	/th/ th the	/ng/ ng	/nk/ nk	/a/ a	/e/ e ea	/i/ i y	/o/ o a au	/u/ u o ou o-e

*This GPC has a slight schwa at the end: 'chuh'.

GPCs in order of frequency.

Complete the code mat

							
/ai/ a-e ai ay a eigh ea ey ei aigh	/ee/ y ea ee e ie i ey i-e ei e-e	/igh/ igh i-e i y ie	/oa/ ow o o-e oa oe ou	/ool/ oo u ue ew u-e ou ui	/yool/ u u-e ew ue	/oo/ oo u* oul	/ar/ ar a* al
							
/or/ or a aw au ore oor al oar our ar augh aur	/ur/ er ur ir or ear	/ow/ ou ow	/oi/ oi oy	/ear/ ear eer er ere	/air/ air are ear ere ar	/zh/ si su ge	/er/ er a or ar our re r

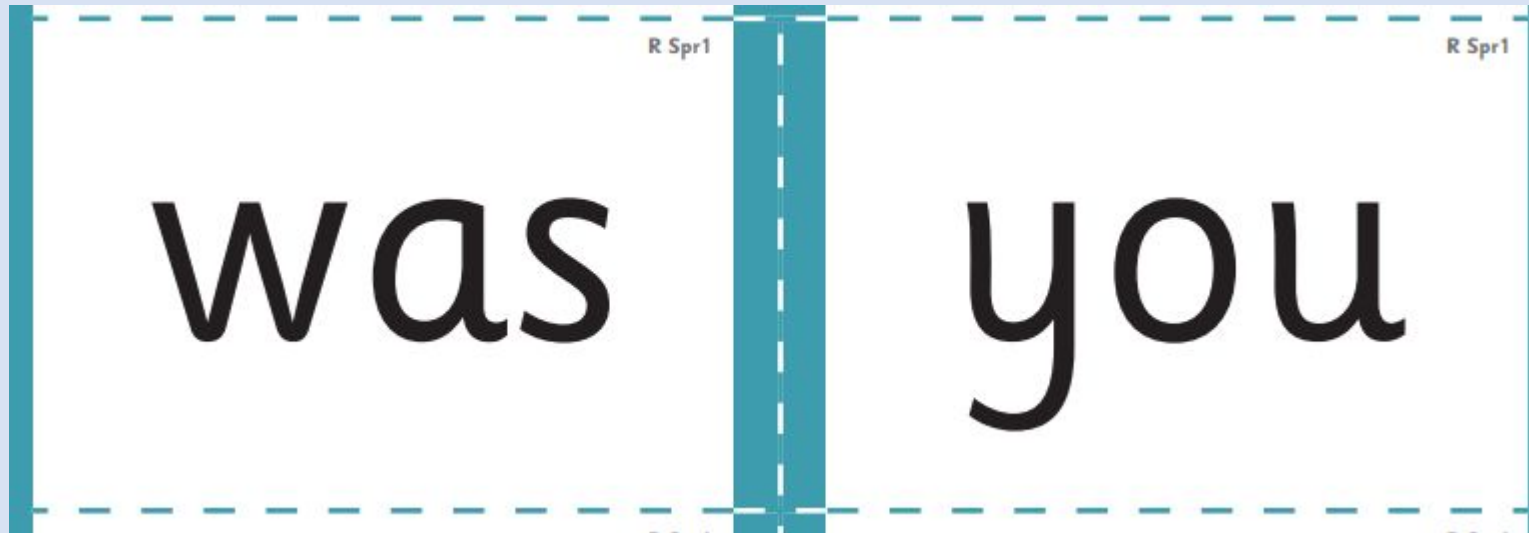
Graphemes
for schwa at
the end of
words

*depending on regional accent

GPCs in order of frequency.

Tricky words

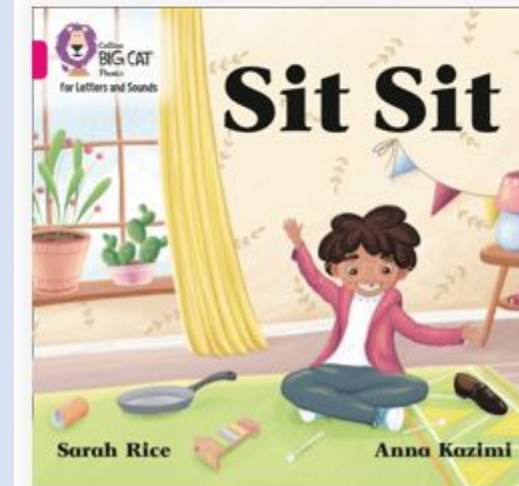
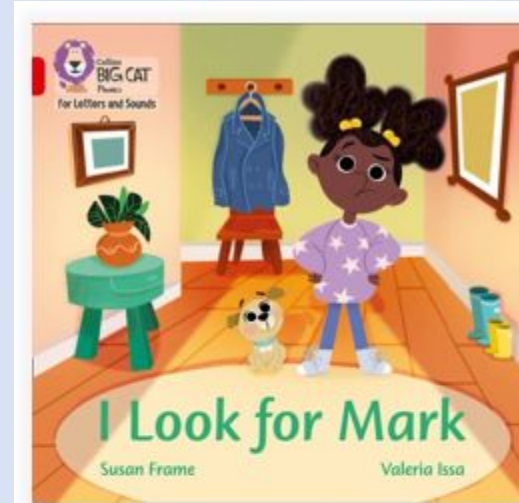
- Most words in the English language can be worked out using phonics
- Some exceptions- eg said
- Learn by sight



How do we teach reading in books?

Reading practice sessions are:

- Timetabled x3 times a week (decode, prosody, comprehension)
- Taught by a teacher/TA
- Taught in small groups



Assessment

We use continued and frequent assessment to match your child to the right level of book

Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised Reception Child assessment

Autumn 1

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

sat man hug red peck



Reading a book at the correct level

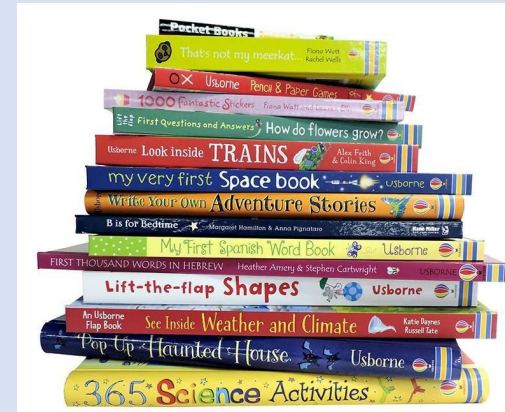
This means that your child should:

- Know all the sounds and tricky words in the phonics book well
- Read many of the words by silent blending-their reading should begin to feel automatic
- Only need to stop and sound out about 5% of the words by the end of their second read-but they should be able to do this on their own.
- Answer questions using the text (not the pictures)



What is the phonics screening check?

- The phonics screening check was introduced in 2012 in primary schools across England
- It is a statutory check of children's phonics knowledge-all children in Year One will take it in the summer term
- It helps the DfE to confirm whether children have made the expected progress in reading.



How does the check work?



- Your child will sit with their class teacher and be asked to read aloud **40 words**
- Your child may have read some of these words before because they are “real”-whilst others are known as “alien” words and are completely new to them.
- The check gets progressively more challenging
- The check normally takes just a few minutes to complete and there is **no** time limit.
- If your child is struggling-we will stop the check. It is carefully designed not to be stressful for your child.
- Children will be in a familiar environment when taking the check and have already started using similar materials within their daily phonics lessons.

What are “nonsense words” or “alien words”?



- The check will contain a combination of “real words” and “alien words”
- Your child will be aware before the check that there will be “alien words” included. All children are familiar with these as we already use “alien words” when we teach phonics (words that are new to them).
- These will be presented with an alien/figure next to them in the check.
- “Alien words” are important to include because words such as “vap” or “jound” are new to all children. Children cannot read these type of words by using their memory or vocabulary; they have to use their phonic decoding skills. This is a fair way to assess their ability to decode.

The “alien words” are presented alongside a picture of an imaginary creature, and children can be told the non-word is the name of that type of creature. This helps children to understand that the non-word should not be matched to their existing vocabulary.

Practice sheet: Real words	Practice sheet: Pseudo words
in	ot 
at	vap 
beg	osk 
sum	ect 

Any Questions?

Thank you



Useful Resources

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/phonics> - DFE documents

<https://www.phonicsplay.co.uk/> - Some resources on the website are only available to subscribers however the planning sequences are free.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-ksblMiliA8> - Pronunciation of sounds

<https://www.topmarks.co.uk/english-games/5-7-years/letters-and-sounds> - Games

<https://www.phonicsbloom.com/> - Games

https://www.primarysupportteam.co.uk/files/phonics_at_ks2.pdf - Phonics in KS2