



A Parents' Guide to Phonics and Learning to Read at Home

The English language alphabet contains 26 letters. Knowing how to say the letters of the alphabet is important, but it is not the most effective method for teaching people to read.

Educational research demonstrates that learning how to pronounce and recognise the approximately **45 different sounds** that are used in the English language is more effective at helping children to read.

These 45 different sounds are known as **phonemes**. The study of these sounds and how to blend them together to read words is called **(Synthetic) Phonics**



What are the 45 phonemes?

Grow the code grapheme chart															Phase 2, 3 and 5				
s ss c se ce st sc	t tt	p pp	n nn kn gn	m mm mb	d dd	g gg	c ck cc ch	r rr wr	h h	b bb	f ff ph	l ll le al	j j g dge ge	v vv ve					
w wh	x	y	z zz s ze	qu qu	ch tch ture	sh ch ti ssi ci	th th	ng ng	nk nk	a a	e e ea	i i y	o o a	u u o-e ou					
ai ay a-e eigh aigh ey ea	ee ea e-e y ey	igh ie i-e y	oa o o-e ou oe ow	oo ue u-e ew ou ui	yoo ue u u-e ew	oo u* oul	ar a* al*	or aw au aur oor al a oar ore	ur er ir or	ow ou	oi oy	ear ere eer	air are ere ear	zh su si					

Each box in the image above shows the different ways that a sound (called a **phoneme**) may be written. We call the writing of a sound a **grapheme**.

For example the first box demonstrates the s sound heard in words such **s**nake, **g**lass, **c**ircle, **f**alse, **h**ence and **s**cience

The key to good phonics teaching, both at home and at school is to pronounce the sounds correctly.

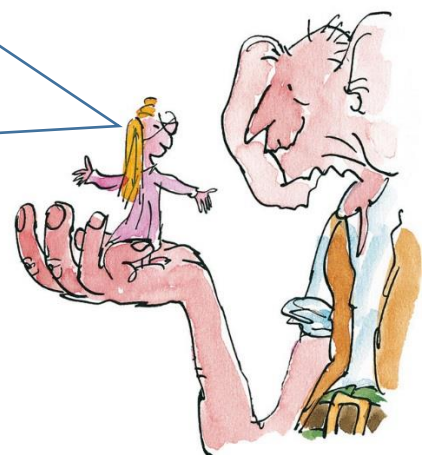
Parents, you can listen to the correct pronunciation of these sounds by visiting the John Keble website and searching for "[Phonics](#)". Children will find it easier to blend the sounds together to read words if they are hearing and saying the sounds correctly.

For example: m-a-t is a blend of

mm-ah-t;

not

muh - ah - tuh.



How do young children learn all 45 phonemes and the many ways of writing them by the end of Year 1?

The order in which children are taught the sounds is important and is separated into five different phases.

The time it takes children to progress along the phases depends upon the child. Teachers at Stockwell will think carefully about how to group their pupils and move this group on only when they are ready to encounter new sounds.

Phase One – this involves children exploring the world of sound from an early age or early stage of their development. At John Keble school, teachers will join children in their play to extend their talk and enrich their vocabulary. They will explore with children the different sounds that animals make including imaginary ones such as dragons! Children will also experiment with different objects and instruments to make a variety of different sounds. Towards the end of the phase, children will learn to clap, tap and beat to the rhythm of the different sounds in a word.

Phase 2 - the children are introduced to their first sounds (phonemes) and the letters used to write them (graphemes).

Reception

Autumn 1 Phase 2 graphemes	New tricky words
s a t p i n m d g o c k c k e u r h b f l	is I the
Autumn 2 Phase 2 graphemes	New tricky words
ff ll ss j v w x y z zz qu ch sh th ng nk • words with –s /s/ added at the end (hats sits) • words ending in s /z/ (his) and with –s /z/ added at the end (bags sings)	put* pull* full* as and has his her go no to into she push* he of we me be

*The tricky words 'put', 'pull', 'full' and 'push' may not be tricky in some regional pronunciations; in which case, they should not be treated as such.

Children will blend together these single letter sounds to make short words (e.g. c-a-t). In the second half-term the children begin to incorporate digraphs: these are when two letters are written to make one sound (e.g. sh-e-ll).

They will also learn some tricky words. These are words that do not follow the phonemes (e.g. we, to, the).

Phase 3 – The children are introduced to longer vowel sounds (e.g. **ai** - as in **sail**) and the two letter (digraphs) and three letter (trigraphs) spellings that are used to write them. They are also introduced to more tricky words of increasing length that do not follow the phonics rules.

Spring 1 Phase 3 graphemes	New tricky words
ai ee igh oa oo oo ar or ur ow oi ear air er <ul style="list-style-type: none"> words with double letters longer words 	was you they my by all are sure pure
Spring 2 Phase 3 graphemes	No new tricky words
Review Phase 3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> words with double letters, longer words, words with two or more digraphs, words ending in -ing, compound words words with s /z/ in the middle words with -s /s/ /z/ at the end words with -es /z/ at the end 	Review all taught so far

Phase 4: The purpose of Phase 4 is to consolidate children's knowledge of all the sounds learnt so far and to blend them together in words of increasing length. Although no new sounds are learnt, the most significant difference between Phase 3 and Phase 4 is in the exposure to larger words. There are more sounds to blend, including blending two consonants together (e.g. **stop**).

Summer 1 Phase 4	New tricky words
Short vowels with adjacent consonants <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CVCC CCVC CCVCC CCCVC CCCVCC longer words and compound words words ending in suffixes: -ing, -ed /t/, -ed /id/ /ed/, -est 	said so have like some come love do were here little says there when what one out today
Summer 2 Phase 4 graphemes	No new tricky words
Phase 3 long vowel graphemes with adjacent consonants <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CVCC CCVC CCCVC CCV CCVCC words ending in suffixes: -ing, -ed /t/, -ed /id/ /ed/, -ed /d/ -er, -est longer words 	Review all taught so far

Phase Five – After a half term of revision, the children are introduced to the alternative ways of writing the same sound (e.g. a_e, ay, and ai are all graphemes for the sound A. This process lasts three half-terms.

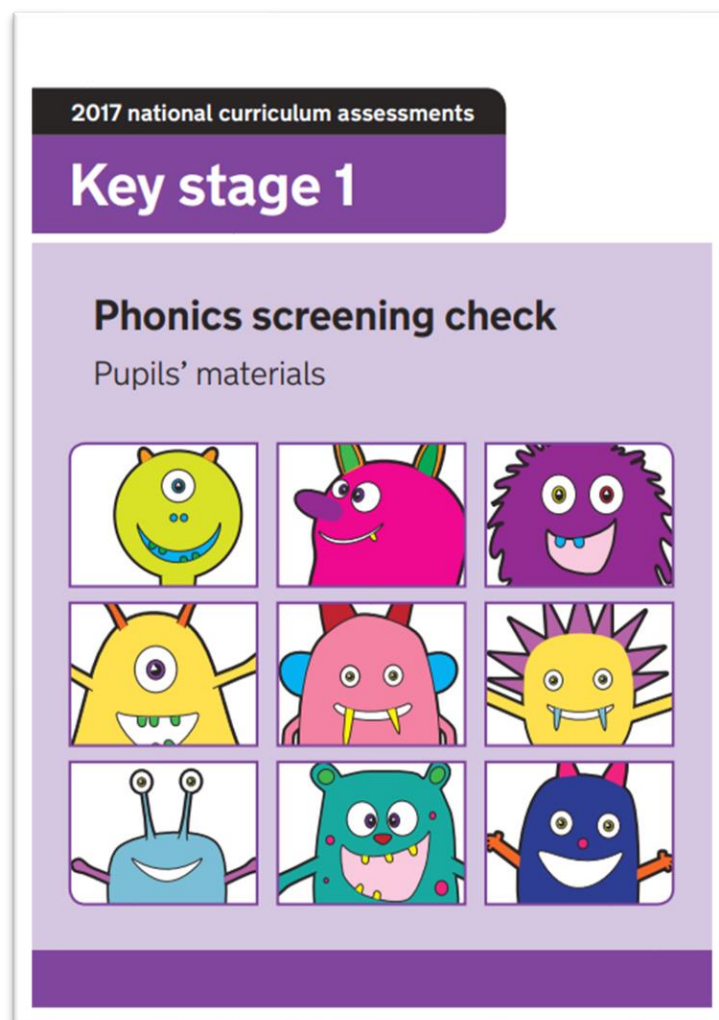
Autumn 2 Phase 5 graphemes	New tricky words
/ur/ ir bird /igh/ ie pie /oo/ /yoo/ ue blue rescue /yoo/ u unicorn /oa/ o go /igh/ i tiger /ai/ a paper /ee/ e he /ai/ a-e shake /igh/ i-e time /oa/ o-e home /oo/ /yoo/ u-e rude cute /ee/ e-e these /oo/ /yoo/ ew chew new /ee/ ie shield /or/ aw claw	their people oh your Mr Mrs Ms ask* could would should our house mouse water want

Spring 1 Phase 5 graphemes	New tricky words
/ee/ y funny /e/ ea head /w/ wh wheel /oa/ oe ou toe shoulder /igh/ y fly /oa/ ow snow /j/ g giant /f/ ph phone /l/ le al apple metal /s/ c ice /v/ ve give /u/ o-e o ou some mother young /z/ se cheese /s/ se ce mouse fence /ee/ ey donkey /oo/ ui ou fruit soup	any many again who whole where two school call different thought through friend work

Spring 2 Phase 5 graphemes	New tricky words
/ur/ or word /oo/ u owl awful could /air/ are share /or/ au aur oor al author dinosaur floor walk /ch/ tch ture match adventure /ar/ al a half* father* /or/ a water schwa in longer words: different /o/ a want /air/ ear ere bear there /ur/ ear learn /r/ wr wrist /s/ st sc whistle science /c/ ch school /sh/ ch chef /z/ ze freeze schwa at the end of words: actor	once laugh because eye

*The tricky words 'half' and 'father' may not be pronounced as this in some regional pronunciations; in which case, they should not be treated as such.

What is the test that the children have to sit at the end of Year1?



The Phonics Screening check is a selection of 40 words (both existing and made-up) that the children are required to read. The purpose is to see if a child is able to recognise the different sounds (in their different written forms) and blend them together. Some of the words are made-up words (pseudo-words); as the child is only demonstrating that they recognise the different sounds – it is not necessary for children to demonstrate understanding of any of the words' meanings.

All pupils in year 1 must take the check, usually administered in early June, unless they have no understanding of grapheme-phoneme correspondences.

Pupils in year 2 who fall into the following categories should also take the check:

- pupils who didn't take the check in year 1 because they were absent, were working below the standard of the check or had recently arrived in the country and couldn't speak confidently in English
- any pupil who didn't reach the expected standard in year 1
- any pupil who entered the schooling system in year 2

The pass mark for the test varies each year depending on the nationally achieved average scores and the pupils must only attempt the check once in a given year.

The check materials include a double-sided 'practice sheet' with 4 pseudo-words and 4 real words on each side.

The following text provides an example of how a teacher would introduce the check.

"In this activity, I am going to ask you to read some words aloud. You may have seen some of the words before and others will be new to you. You should try to read each word but don't worry if you can't. If it helps you, you may sound out the letters before trying to say the word.

This 'practice sheet' shows you what the words will look like.

Have a go at reading these 4 words aloud which you should have come across before:

at

in

beg

sum

The words on this side [turn over 'practice sheet'] are not real words. They are names for types of imaginary creatures. You can see a picture of the creature next to each word. Can you read out the words on this page for me:

ot

vap

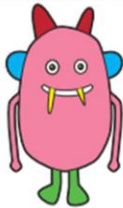

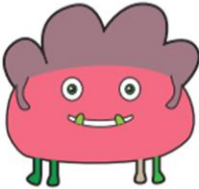

osk

ect

Ok, now we are going to start reading out the words in this booklet and I'm going to write down what you say on my sheet. In this booklet, there are 4 words on each page. I will tell you at the start of each page whether they are real words that you may have seen before or names for types of imaginary creatures.

The first page has names for types of imaginary creatures and you can see their pictures. Can you start reading the words to me?

Section 1

dat	
cag	
rin	
ept	

Below is a list of all of the “words” that appeared in the 2017 Phonics Screening Test:

2017

Phonics

Screening check: answer sheet

First name	
Last name	

Screening check responses: Please tick the appropriate box for each word. The use of the comment box is optional.

Section 1			
Word	Correct	Incorrect	Comment
dat			
cag			
rin			
ept			
jash			
quib			
coid			
quass			
glog			
blard			
disp			
murbs			
chum			
kick			
reef			
short			
blot			
greet			
dust			
parks			

Section 2			
Word	Correct	Incorrect	Comment
tay			
sloam			
zued			
meve			
clend			
braits			
scrug			
splue			
high			
feast			
goal			
shape			
trunk			
groups			
straw			
scribe			
model			
person			
chapter			
reptiles			

Total correct

--

Reading with your child at home.

When should I start reading?

Do read a variety of storybooks at home with your child – every bedtime if possible. It is never too early to start. Babies and toddlers enjoy looking at picture books and hearing them read aloud. Chant nursery rhymes, sing songs and share picture books from birth onwards. Start with familiar stories with lots of repeated phrases like “Who’s been eating my porridge?” or “Run, run, as fast as you can...” Get your child to join in with these phrases.

If my child is learning phonics, should I teach my child the alphabet?

Yes. Teach the alphabet through songs and games. Encourage your child by playing “I Spy”. The children need to know the letter sounds (phonics) but also the letter name.

What if my child does not show much desire to read?

They haven’t found the right book yet. Picture books, comics, newspapers, magazines are all legitimate resources to use with your child. Often books linked to characters they see in their favourite shows and games can be a good way to encourage the children to pick up a book.

What if my child likes to read the same book over and over again?

Don’t worry – and don’t discourage them. It’s good to have a favourite book and reading familiar stories will give them confidence. Introduce new stories, but keep sharing old favourites too.

My child is in a lower phase than another child in the class, or did not achieve a high score in the Phonics Screening Check? What should I do?

Don’t worry! Children develop at different rates. Don’t force the pace too early or you risk putting them off. Discuss with the teacher what sounds your child needs to focus on and find some time at home to practise.

What if my child makes a mistake while they’re reading?

Don’t stop the flow of the reading unless what they have read doesn’t make sense. Go back and revisit the word at the end of the sentence/page.

What if they get stuck on a word?

In the early stages say the word quietly so that the flow isn’t broken. Later you could:

- sound the word out and then blend the sounds together.
- Read the whole sentence again.
- Encourage them to look at the picture for clues.

What other tips do you have to help when reading at home with my child?

- Talk about the title and the pictures on the cover encouraging your child to think about what the book may be about. If they already know the story, then ask them about what part of the story is shown on the cover.
- Read the story to your child pointing to the words as you do so.
- Give them lots of praise when they read to you.
- Recap on what you just heard the child read, so that they can take in the story as well.
- When you have read the story, point out the starting sound of a word and ask them to find another word on the same page with the same starting sound or perhaps to think of a rhyming word.