



CHRISTOPHER PICKERING PRIMARY SCHOOL



**Phonics information
for Foundation Stage
parents and carers**

Introduction

At Christopher Pickering Primary School we know how important it is for teachers and parents to work together to give your child the best start. Reading together at home is one of the easiest but most important ways in which you can help your child. To support your child in becoming an effective and confident reader we hope to work with you to develop their knowledge of phonics (letter sounds) to enable them to decode different words they may come across.

Since September each child in F2 has engaged in a daily phonics teaching session. Through this booklet we hope to give you an overview of phonics teaching with your child, and some ideas for how you can support your child at home.

Ways you can support your children at home: talking and listening

Make time to listen to your child talking: as you meet them from their setting or school, as you walk, or travel home by car, in the supermarket as you shop, at meal times, bath times, bedtimes – any time!

Switch off the TV, radio and mobile phones: and really listen!

Show that you are interested in what they are talking about: look at your child, smile, nod your head, ask a question or make a response to show that you really have been listening.

Make a collection of different toy creatures: for example, a duck, a snake, an alien, say the sound it might make as you play together, for example, ‘quack-quack’, ‘sssssss’, ‘yuk-yuk’, and encourage your child to copy you.

Listen at home: switch off the TV and listen to the sounds, both inside and outside the home. Can your child tell you what sounds they heard, in the order in which they heard them?

Play-a-tune: and follow me! Make or buy some simple shakers, drums and beaters, then play a simple tune and ask your child to copy. Have fun!

Use puppets and toys to make up stories or retell known ones. Record your child telling the story and play it back to them.

Sounds in spoken language – the beginning of phonics

At Christopher Pickering Primary School, when children enter F2 they take part in high-quality phonics sessions every day. These are fun sessions involving lots of speaking, listening and games, where the emphasis is on children's active participation. They learn to use their phonic knowledge for reading and writing activities and in their independent play.

The aim of this booklet is to give you a clear picture of how we approach the teaching of phonics and word recognition and how, as a parent or carer, you can support and encourage your child at home.

Not all children will learn at the same rate!

Your child should be supported *whatever* their rate of learning. There is a very close link between *difficulty with phonics* and *hearing* so, if your child is making progress more slowly than might be expected, it would be worth having their hearing checked.

From a very early stage, children develop awareness of different sounds in spoken language. They develop understanding that spoken words are made up of different sounds (*phonemes*) and they learn to match these phonemes to letters (*graphemes*). Phonics is about children knowing how letters link to sounds (*graphemes* to *phonemes*), for example, **c** as in 'cat', **ll** as in 'fell', **ee** as in 'sheep'.

Children use this phonic knowledge when they are reading and writing. This approach has been shown to provide a quick and efficient way for most young children to learn to read words on the page, fluently and accurately. We want children to develop this skill so that it becomes automatic. This also greatly helps them with their spelling.

Letters and Sounds



At Christopher Pickering Primary we use a systematic phonics programme called *Letters and Sounds* alongside Oxford Reading tree's 'Floppy Phonics' which links to our reading scheme.

Letters and Sounds is divided into six phases, with each phase building on the skills and knowledge of previous learning. There are no big leaps in learning. Children have time to practise and rapidly expand their ability to read and spell words. They are also taught to read and spell 'tricky words', which are words with spellings that are unusual or that children have not yet been taught.

Phase 1 3 - 4 years old

This paves the way for systematic learning of phonics and begins in our F1 class.

Teachers plan activities that will help children to listen attentively to sounds around them, such as the sounds of their toys and to sounds in spoken language. Teachers teach a wide range of nursery rhymes and songs. They read good books to and with the children. This helps to increase the number of words they know – their *vocabulary* – and helps them talk confidently about books.

Learning how to 'sound-talk'

The teacher shows children how to do this – **c-a-t = cat**. The separate sounds (*phonemes*) are spoken aloud, in order, all through the word, and are then merged together into the whole word. The merging together is called *blending* and is a vital skill for reading.

Children will also learn to do this the other way around – **cat = c-a-t**. The whole word is spoken aloud and then broken up into its sounds (*phonemes*) in order, all through the word. This is called *segmenting* and is a vital skill for spelling.

This is all oral (*spoken*). Your child will not be expected to match the letter to the sound at this stage. The emphasis is on helping children to hear the separate sounds in words and to create spoken sounds.

Ways that you can support your children at home:

Sound-talking

Find real objects around your home that have three phonemes (*sounds*) and practise 'sound talk'. First, just let them listen, then see if they will join in, for example, saying:

'I spy a p-e-g – peg.'

'I spy a c-u-p – cup.'

'Where's your other s-o-ck – sock?'

'Simon says – put your hands on your h-ea-d.'

'Simon says – touch your ch-i-n.'

'Simon says – pick up your b-a-g.'

Phase 2 4 – 5 years old

In this phase children will continue practising what they have learned from phase 1, including ‘sound-talk’. They will also be taught the phonemes (*sounds*) for a number of letters (*graphemes*), which phoneme is represented by which grapheme and that a phoneme can be represented by **more than one letter**, for example, ‘ll’ as in **b-e-ll**. They may be using pictures or hand movements to help them remember these.

VC and CVC words

C and V are abbreviations for ‘consonant’ and ‘vowel’. VC words are words consisting of a vowel then a consonant (e.g. *am, at, it*) and CVC words are words consisting of a consonant then a vowel then a consonant (e.g. *cat, rug, sun*).

Words such as *tick* and *bell* also count as CVC words – although they have four letters, they have only three sounds. For example, in the word *bell*, **b** = consonant, **e** = vowel, **ll** = consonant.

Now the children will be *seeing* letters and words, as well as hearing them. They will be shown how to make whole words by pushing magnetic or wooden letters together to form little words, reading little words on the interactive whiteboard and breaking up words into individual sounds, which will help their spelling. These will be simple words made up of two phonemes, for example, *am, at, it*, or three phonemes, for example, *cat, rug, sun, tick, bell*.

Tricky words

They will also learn several tricky words: **the, to, I, go, no**.

Children will still be practising oral blending and segmenting skills daily. They need plenty of practice at doing this.

Saying the sounds

Your child will be taught how to pronounce the sounds (*phonemes*) correctly to make blending easier. Sounds should be sustained where possible (e.g. *sss, fff, mmm*) and, where this is not possible, ‘uh’ sounds after consonants should be reduced as far as possible (e.g. try to avoid saying ‘buh’, ‘cuh’). Teachers help children to look at different letters and say the right sounds for them.

Getting ready for writing

Teachers will model how to form letters (*graphemes*) correctly, so that children can eventually acquire a fluent and legible handwriting style. These skills develop over a long period of time. A child’s ability to form a letter correctly is a separate skill from phonics. Holding a pen or pencil needs considerable co-ordination and practice in making small movements with hands and fingers.

In the early phonic phases children can use letter cards or magnetic letters to demonstrate their knowledge of phonics.

Writing in lower-case letters

We shall be teaching lower-case letters, as well as capital letters. As most writing will be in lower-case letters it is useful if you can use these at home. A good start is for your child to write their name correctly, starting with a capital letter followed by lower-case letters.

Phase 3 4 – 5 years old

The purpose of this phase is to:

- teach more graphemes, most of which are made of two letters, for example, ‘**oa**’ as in **boat**
- practise blending and segmenting a wider set of CVC words, for example, **fizz, chip, sheep, light**
- learn all letter names and begin to form them correctly
- read more tricky words and begin to spell some of them
- read and write words in phrases and sentences.

CVC words containing graphemes made of two or more letters

Here are some examples of words your children will be reading: **tail, week, right, soap, food, park, burn, cord, town, soil.**

Their confidence from the daily experience of practising and applying their phonic knowledge to reading and writing is really paying off!

Tricky words

The number of tricky words is growing. These are so important for reading and spelling: **he, she, we, me, be, was, my, you, her, they, all.**

Phase 4 5 – 6 years old

Children continue to practise previously learned graphemes and phonemes and learn how to read and write:

CVCC words: **tent, damp, toast, chimp** For example, in the word ‘**toast**’, **t = consonant, oa = vowel, s = consonant, t = consonant.**

CCVC words: **swim, plum, sport, cream, spoon** For example, in the word ‘**cream**’, **c = consonant, r = consonant, ea = vowel, m = consonant.**

They will be learning more tricky words and continuing to read and write sentences together.

Tricky words

said, so, do, have, like, some, come, were, there, little, one, when, out, what.

Children will continue daily phonics sessions, covering the additional 2 phases, as they move into Key Stage 1.



Jolly Phonics!

At Christopher Pickering Primary School we also use 'Jolly Jingles' from the Jolly Phonics scheme. This is a fun and child centred approach with songs and actions for each of the 42 letter sounds. As a child progresses you can point to the letters and see how quickly they can do the action and say the sound. As a child becomes more confident, the actions are no longer necessary.

This multi-sensory method is very motivating and fun for children to learn. Below you will find a list of the actions to go with each sound:

The Actions

- s** Weave hand in an *s* shape, like a snake, and say *ssssss*.
- a** Wiggle fingers above elbow as if ants crawling on you and say *a, a, a*.
- t** Turn head from side to side as if watching tennis and say *t, t, t*.
- p** Pretend to puff out candles and say *p, p, p*.
- i** Pretend to be a mouse by wriggling fingers at end of nose and squeak *i, i, i*.
- m** Rub tummy as if seeing tasty food and say *mmmmmm*.
- n** Make a noise, as if you are a plane – hold arms out and say *nnnnnn*.
- d** Beat hands up and down as if playing a drum and say *d, d, d*.
- g** Spiral hand down, as if water going down the drain, and say *g, g, g*.
- o** Pretend to turn light switch on and off and say *o, o; o, o*.
- ck** Raise hands and snap fingers as if playing castanets and say *ck, ck, ck*.
- e** Pretend to tap an egg on the side of a pan and crack it into the pan, saying *eh, eh, eh*.
- h** Hold hand in front of mouth panting as if you are out of breath and say *h, h, h*.
- r** Pretend to be a puppy holding a piece of rag, shaking head from side to side, and say *r*.
- u** Pretend to be putting up an umbrella and say *u, u, u*.
- l** Pretend to lick a lollipop and say *lllll*.
- f** Let hands gently come together as if toy fish deflating, and say *fffff*.
- b** Pretend to hit a ball with a bat and say *b, b*.
- j** Pretend to wobble on a plate and say *j, j, j*.
- z** Put arms out at sides and pretend to be a bee, saying *zzzzzz*.
- y** Pretend to be eating a yoghurt and say *y, y, y*.
- v** Pretend to be holding the steering wheel of a van and say *vvvvvv*.
- x** Pretend to take an x-ray of someone with a camera and say *ks, ks, ks*.

ch Move arms at sides as if you are a train and say *ch, ch, ch*.
sh Place index finger over lips and say *shshsh*.
th th Pretend to be naughty clowns and stick out tongue
qu Make a duck's beak with your hands and say *qu, qu, qu*.
ai Cup hand over ear and say *ai, ai, ai*.
oa Bring hand over mouth as if you have done something wrong and say *oh!*
ie Stand to attention and salute, saying *ie ie*.
ee or Put hands on head as if ears on a donkey and say *eeyore, eeyore*.
w Blow on to open hand, as if you are the wind, and say *wh, wh, wh*.
ng Imagine you are a weightlifter, and pretend to lift a heavy weight above your head, saying *ng...*
oo oo Move head back and forth as if it is the cuckoo in a cuckoo clock, saying *u, oo; u, oo*. (Little and long oo.)
ou Pretend your finger is a needle and prick thumb saying *ou, ou, ou*.
oi Cup hands around mouth and shout to another boat saying *oi! ship ahoy!*
ue Point to people around you and say *you, you, you*.
er Roll hands over each other like a mixer and say *ererer*.
ar Open mouth wide and say *ah*.

Phonics games that can be played at home

1. Mood Sounds

Say a letter sound and ask the children to repeat it. Ask the children to say the sound as if they were angry, happy, frightened etc.

2. Gobbler/Muncher Game

Use a cereal box to make a person, e.g. Gordon the gobbler. Have a large hole for the mouth. Collect a variety of objects beginning with 2 different sounds. Ask your child to select an object from your tray that begins with a certain sound. Children feed the object to the gobbler with replies with an mmmm sound if they are correct.

3. Hoop game

Get 2 hoops, trays or plates and place a letter card on each of them, e.g. s and a. Have a variety of objects beginning with these 2 sounds. Ask your child to select an object and say the name of it. Repeat it several times and then ask your child to place it on the correct letter tray.

4. Croaker

Introduce a puppet to your child. Explain that it is finding it hard to say some words. Ask your child to select an object out of a bag. The puppet pronounces it incorrectly – maybe missing off the initial or end sound. The children help the puppet say the word correctly emphasising the part of the word that was missing, e.g. The puppet says 'encil' the child can say the word correctly 'pencil' and then the adult can emphasise the 'p' sound that was missing.

5. Rogue Sound Game

Show a variety of objects to your child. All of the objects to have the same initial sound except for one item. Children to identify which is the rogue item, e.g. sun, sausages, **cup**, scissors.

6. Bingo

Bingo boards can easily be made to suit the ability of your child. You can use them in a variety of different ways to help your child learn the letters of the alphabet. Make a board containing 6 letters of the alphabet. Then make a set of 6 letter cards that match the board. You can make 2 boards to play a matching game with your child or one of you could be the bingo caller and say the letter on the cards and the other person finds the letter on their board and puts a counter or toy on it. You can just match the letters or you could have some objects to match to the letter boards. Your child can then pick an object and place it on the correct letter to show what sound the object begins with.

Useful Websites;

Jolly Phonics Website -

<http://www.jollylearning.co.uk>

Pronouncing the Phonemes -

<http://www.getreadingright.com/Pronouncephonemes.htm>

Letters and sounds parent guide can be found -

www.letters-and-sounds.com

More ideas for helping at home -

www.phonicsplay.co.uk/ParentsMenu

Phonics glossary

blend (vb) — to draw individual sounds together to pronounce a word, e.g. s-n-a-p, blended together, reads snap

cluster — two (or three) letters making two (or three) sounds, e.g. the first three letters of 'straight' are a consonant cluster

digraph — two letters making one sound, e.g. sh, ch, th, ph.

vowel digraphs — comprise of two vowels which, together, make one sound, e.g. ai, oo, ow

split digraph — two letters, split, making one sound, e.g. a-e as in make or i-e in site

grapheme — a letter or a group of letters representing one sound, e.g. sh, ch, igh, ough (as in 'though')

grapheme-phoneme correspondence (GPC) — the relationship between sounds and the letters which represent those sounds; also known as 'letter-sound correspondences'

mnemonic — a device for memorising and recalling something, such as a snake shaped like the letter 'S'

phoneme — the smallest single identifiable sound, e.g. the letters 'sh' represent just one sound, but 'sp' represents two (/s/ and /p/)

segment (vb) — to split up a word into its individual phonemes in order to spell it, e.g. the word 'cat' has three phonemes: /c/, /a/, /t/

VC, CVC, CCVC — the abbreviations for vowel-consonant, consonant-vowel-consonant, consonant-consonant-vowel-consonant, which are used to describe the order of letters in words, e.g. am, ham, slam

If you have any further queries, do not hesitate to come in and ask!