

Phonics and Reading at Courthill Infant School



PHONICS

Phonics is the link between letters and the sounds that they make. At Courthill we follow 'Bug Club's' progression of sounds as our phonics scheme.

Bug Club is split into phases, which are in turn split into 'sets'.
(See Phonics Progress on school website for details
<https://www.courthillinfants.co.uk/phonics/>).



Phase 1 – focuses on the basic skills needed for reading and writing and includes singing lots of nursery rhymes, playing listening games and using musical instruments. (Mostly taught in pre-school, revisited in autumn term of EYFS).

Phase 2 (Reception curriculum) – Children learn that a phoneme is the smallest unit of sound and that phonemes can be put together to make words. They learn the following sounds in phase 2:

s a t p i n m d g o c k e u r c k h b f ff l ll ss.

They will start to learn how to blend these sounds together to make and read words. Blending is the process of looking at (or hearing) the individual sounds of a word and putting them together to say the word aloud. Children will also learn to read phase 2 common exception words (CEW) and high frequency words, speed blending these or reading them on sight.

Phase 3 (Reception curriculum) – Children continue learning new phonemes (sounds), including digraphs (2 letters making 1 sound) and trigraphs (3 letters making 1 sound). They work on their blending for reading. The following sounds are taught in this phase:

j w v x y z zz qu ch sh th ng nk ai ee igh oa oo ar or ur ow oi ear air ure er.

Children will also learn to read phase 3 common exception words (CEW) and high frequency words, speed blending these or reading them on sight.

Phase 4 (Reception curriculum, recapped in Year 1 autumn term) - children consolidate the sounds taught so far and continue to learn to segment and blend. They also learn to read phase 4 common exception words (CEW) / high

frequency words, now focusing on reading them on sight / without sounding out.

Phase 5 (Year 1 curriculum) – children learn the following new sounds in this phase, focusing on sound families:

wh ph

ay a-e a eigh ey ei (long 'a')

ea e-e ie ey y (long 'e')

ie i-e y i (long i)

ow o-e o oe (long o)

ew ue u-e (long u)

aw (saw) au (launch) al (talk) our (your) oor (door) ore (shore)

ir er (e.g. better – schwa) ear (e.g. learn)

They then start to learn some alternative spellings for sounds:

ou (shout), oy (boy), ea (head)

eer ere (e.g. steer, here)

are ear (e.g. care, bear)

c k ck ch (choir, anchor) (alternative /k/)

c(i) c(y) ce sc st se

(Alternative /s/) e.g. cinema, cyclist, face, scene, castle, intense)

g (e) g(i) g(y) dge

(Alternative /j/ e.g. strange, giant, energy, hedge)

le mb kn gn wr

tch c(ial) ss(ion) t(ion)

(e.g. catch, special, permission, station)

Segmenting: this involves hearing a word and splitting it up into the sounds that make it. This is the basis of spelling.

Sound buttons: this involves using dots and dashes to identify the sounds in a word to help with reading. Dots are for single phonemes, dashes are for digraphs (2 letters, 1 sound) and trigraphs (3 letters, 1 sound).

c a t
s l ee p
c ow
s oi l

Split digraph: this is where a vowel sound is split by a consonant. The 'e' on the end changes the way we say the vowel, e.g. a-e in cake, e-e in eve and theme, i-e in smile, o-e in phone and u-e in huge. You might remember this as the 'magic e' (however, we don't use this term with the children). Children learn that they are best friends, but are a bit chatty on the carpet so the teacher has split them up with a consonant in the middle. We sound button these with a tie underneath the sounds, linking the two 'best friends'.

cake

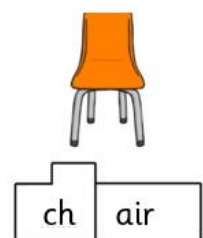
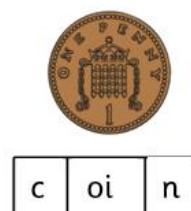
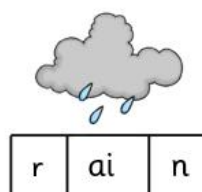
smile

eve

phone

huge

Phoneme frames: these are designed to support children with recognising the number of sounds in a word. They feature a series of boxes where children can attempt to note down all of the sounds (or phonemes) that they hear in a word. This helps to make identifying sounds easier.



Pure Sounds

Encourage children to use **pure** sounds, ('mmm' not 'muh', 's' not 'suh', etc) so that your child will be able to blend the sounds into words more easily.

These first sounds should all be stretched slightly. Try to avoid saying **uh** after each one: e.g. /mm/ not muh, /ss/ not suh, /ff/ not fuh.

m – mmmmmmountain (keep lips pressed together hard)

s – ssssssnake (keep teeth together and hiss – unvoiced)

n – nnnnnnet (keep tongue behind teeth)

f – ffffflower (keep teeth on bottom lip and force air out sharply – unvoiced)

l – llllleg (keep pointed curled tongue behind teeth).

r – rrrrrrobot (say rrr as if you are growling)

v – vvvvvvulture (keep teeth on bottom lip and force air out gently)

z – zzzzzzig zzzzzag (keep teeth together and make a buzzing sound)

th – thhhhank you (stick out tongue and breathe out sharply)

sh – shhhh (make a shhh noise as though you are telling somebody to be quiet!)

ng – thinnnnngg on a strinnnnngg (curl your tongue at the back of your throat)

These next sounds cannot be stretched. Make the sound as short as possible avoiding **uh** ('schwa') at the end of the sound:

t – (tick tongue behind the teeth – unvoiced)

p - (make distinctive p with lips – unvoiced)

k and c – (make sharp click at back of throat)

h – (say h as you breathe sharply out – unvoiced)

ch - (make a short sneezing sound)

x – (say a sharp c and add s – unvoiced)

You will find it harder to avoid saying uh at the end of these sounds.

d – (tap tongue behind the teeth).

g – (make soft sound in throat).

b – (make a short, strong b with lips).

j – (push lips forward).

y – (keep edges of tongue against teeth).

w – (keep lips tightly pursed).

qu – (keep lips pursed as you say cw – unvoiced).

a: a-a-a (open mouth wide as if to take a bite of an apple).

e: e-e-e (release mouth slightly from a position).

i: i-i-i (make a sharp sound at the back of the throat – smile).

o: o-o-o (push out lips, make the mouth into o shape).

u: u-u-u (make a sound in the throat).

Some sounds can be written in different ways.

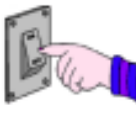
Long Vowel Sounds	Dittie	Dittie	Dittie
ay	ay ay: may I play	a-e: make a cake	ai: snail in the rain
ee	ee: what can you see	ea: cup of tea	e: he me we she be
igh	igh: fly high	i-e: nice smile	

ow	ow: blow the snow	o-e: phone home	oa: goat in a boat
oo	oo: poo at the zoo	u-e: huge brute	ew: chew the stew
oo	oo: look at a book		
ar	ar: start the car		
or	or: shut the door	aw: yawn at dawn	au: what a launch
air	air: that's not fair	are: share and care	
ir	ir: whirl and twirl	ur: nurse for a purse	er: a better letter
ou	ou: shout it out	ow: brown cow	
oy	oy: toy for a boy	oi: spoil the boy	
ear	ear: hear with your ear		
ure	ure: sure it's pure		

Children learn these ditties along with the sounds. They have flashcards used in class with the grapheme and a picture clue. They also have these on phonic sound mats in their classrooms to help them with reading and writing.

Reception Sound Mats

Phase 2 Sound Mat – Sets 1 – 5

Sets 1 & 2							
S s 	A a 	T t 	P p 	I i 	N n 	M m 	D d 
Set 3				Set 4			
G g 	O o 	C c 	K k 	E e 	U u 	R r 	ck 
Set 5							
H h 	B b 	F f 	ff 	L l 	ll 	ss 	

Set 6				Set 7				
J j 	W w 	V v 	X x 	Y y 	Z z 	zz 	qu 	
Set 8								
ch 	sh 	th 	th 	ng 	nk 			
Set 9								
ai 	ee 	igh 	oa 	oo 	oo 			
Set 10				Set 11				
ar 	or 	ur 	ow 	oi 	ear 	air 	ure 	er 

Year 1 and Year 2 Sound Mats

Set 13		Set 14 (long 'a' sound /ai/)					
wh 	ph 	ay 	a-e 				
Set 15 (long 'e' sound /ee/)							
ea 	e-e 	ie 	ey 	y 			
Set 16 (long 'i' sound /igh/)		Set 17					
ie 	i-e 	y 	i 	ow 	o-e 	o 	oe 
Set 18 (long /ao/ and /yoo/)							
ew 	ue 	u-e 	u 				
Set 19 (/or/ sound)							
aw 	au 	al 	our 	oor 	ore 		
Set 20			Set 21				
ir 	er 	ear (/ir/) 	ou 	oy 			

READING

How can you help at home?

Share books together as often as possible. Reading is so good for your child's wellbeing – even just a few minutes a day can have a big impact on children of all ages! Reading together can be a very special and relaxing time for everyone.

Talking about books is a great way to make connections, develop understanding and make reading even more enjoyable. You could discuss the front cover, what surprised you in the story, who your favourite character is or anything that comes to mind!

Encourage reading choice. Give your child opportunities to read different things that interest them – it doesn't just have to be books. It could be a magazine, a recipe or a sign in a shop etc.

Encourage your child to read the book band books we send home, but don't worry if they don't read the whole book in one go. These books are targeted to their exact level so children will be able to feel a sense of achievement reading them.

Re-reading books is a vital part of learning to read. It will develop their CEW word recognition as well as their ability to quickly decode words. After re-reading, children will begin to recognise decodable words 'at a glance'. This will increase their fluency, pace and therefore their understanding of what they are reading. This will all contribute to their enjoyment of reading!

Helpful Resources

Phonics Play – here you can find games to play to support phonics learning
<https://www.phonicsplay.co.uk/>

Alphablocks – videos to help <http://www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/shows/alphablocks>

Try your local library for a wide range of books you can borrow for free 😊

Apps



Hairy Phonics



Teach Your Monster to Read



Pocket Phonics