

Tickhill Estfeld Primary School

Parents Guide to Phonics

Introduction

Phonics is a method of teaching and spelling based on the sounds letters make in words.

At Estfeld, Phonics is taught through 'Letters and Sounds' – a national scheme which organises phonics into phases, from developing the listening skills of our youngest children to the complex spelling patterns our older children need to master. In Reception and Year 1, we use a fun, interactive, multi-sensory programme called 'Jolly Phonics' to deliver stimulating and rigorous phonic lessons.

The English Language uses 44 sounds (phonemes). These are represented by 26 letters in at least 40 different combinations! A sound can be represented by a single letter (eg, h) or a group of letters (eg, th or igh).

Once children begin learning sounds (phonemes) and recognising the letters that represent them (graphemes) they quickly start to read and spell words independently.

Phonics Lessons

In Phonics lessons children are taught three main things:-

- **GPC – grapheme/phoneme correspondence**
This simply means that they are taught all the sounds in the English language and ways of writing them down. These sounds are taught in a particular order. The first phonemes taught are satp as these can immediately be used to start creating words..as, pat, sat etc..
- **Blending – bringing the phonemes together smoothly to make words ,**
eg c-a-t .. cat
- **Segmenting – breaking a word up into the phonemes that make it, eg**
rain... r-a-i-n
This skill is vital in being able to spell words.

What makes Phonics tricky?

We have 44 phonemes but *many* different ways of writing those sounds. The written sound is called a grapheme.

Some graphemes are made from 2,3 or even 4 letters and to make it even worse, some represent more than one phoneme, for example, *ch* makes a different sound in *chip, school and chef*.

Some words cannot be 'sounded out' at all, but need to be learned by heart because they do not fit into the usual spelling patterns. The children know that these are 'tricky words' and are taught ways to help them remember the spelling, for instance, mnemonics are sentences that act as memory joggers (Sally Ann is dancing.. for said).

Assessing Progress

At the end of Year 1, the children take a Phonics Screening Check to make sure they are making progress and have reached an appropriate standard. Most children pass this test. Children who do not pass will be offered extra phonic support in Year 2. They re-take the test at the end of Year 2. Some children find phonics very difficult. This is because it *is* difficult! We continue to offer extra support in reading and spelling throughout Key Stage 2 and our pupils make good progress.

If you are concerned about any aspect of Phonics, please talk to your child's teacher.

A Final Word

In 2014 a new Primary Curriculum was introduced. The spelling requirements have changed and become more challenging. These changes are being incorporated into our school English curriculum.

Phonics is *part* of learning to read. Reading is more than simply working out what words say. *Understanding* what is read is vital. When you read at home with your child, encourage them to use their phonic knowledge to work out what the words say, but talk about the meaning of those words, the ideas in the story, the feelings of the characters, the information learned, the rhymes enjoyed. That will make a huge difference to your child's development as a confident and independent reader.