

Merry Hill Infant school and Nursery



Phonics Booklet

Introduction

We hope this booklet will help you understand how we teach phonics at Merry Hill Infant School and Nursery.

We use "Letters and Sounds" and "Support for Spelling" to deliver high quality phonic teaching within a language rich curriculum to promote and achieve high standards in reading and writing.

Letters and Sounds is a phonics resource published by the Department for Education and Skills in 2007. It aims to build children's speaking and listening skills in their own right as well as to prepare children for learning to read by developing their phonic knowledge and skills. It sets out a detailed and systematic programme of synthetic phonics starting by the age of four, with the aim of children becoming fluent readers by the age of seven.

There are five overlapping phases which are taught in a daily discrete session in all classes from Nursery to Year 2.

Terminology

Term	Meaning
Blend	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	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/
Tricky Words	Words that can not be decoded using phonics
VC, CVC, CCVC	The abbreviations for vowel-consonant, consonant-vowel-consonant, consonant-consonant-vowel-consonant, and are used to describe the order of letters in words, e.g. am, Sam, slam.

Sound Buttons

When children learn a new sound, they are taught to look for this sound within a word to help them decode and read it. When they see a sound we ask them to place their sound buttons underneath.

Single sounds: j a m



Digraphs : c h i p



Trigraphs : h a i r



Split digraph: s n a k e

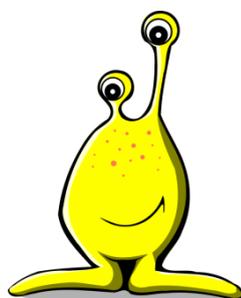


Pseudo or Alien Words

Children are encouraged to read pseudo or, as we call them, “alien words” throughout the phases. They are always identified as ‘alien’ words so that children can distinguish between them and real words.

Alien words assess whether a child is able to decode and blend. They need decoding in the same way as a real word.

Examples of Alien Words



desh



chab



queep

Why do we use Alien words?

“They are included because they will be new to all pupils regardless of reading ability. Pupils who can read pseudo words should have the skills to decode almost any unfamiliar word.”

First One Hundred HFW

the	that	not	look	put
and	with	then	don't	could
a	all	were	come	house
to	we	go	will	old
said	can	little	into	too
in	are	as	back	by
he	up	no	from	day
I	had	mum	children	made
of	my	one	him	time
it	her	them	Mr	I'm
was	what	do	get	if
you	there	me	just	help
they	out	down	now	Mrs
on	this	dad	came	called
she	have	big	oh	here
is	went	when	about	off
for	be	it's	got	asked
at	like	see	their	saw
his	some	looked	people	make
but	so	very	your	an

Reading

- Some can be sounded out using phonics
- Some are more tricky

Spelling

- Some can be sounded out using phonics
- Some are more tricky

Phase 1

This begins in Nursery and concentrates on developing children's speaking and listening skills and lays the foundations for the phonic work which starts in Phase 2. The emphasis during Phase 1 is to get children attuned to the sounds around them and ready to begin developing oral blending and segmenting skills.

Phase 1 is divided into seven aspects:

Aspect 1 – Environmental Sounds - The aim of this aspect is to raise children's awareness of the sounds around them and to develop their listening skills.

Aspect 2 - Instrumental Sounds - This aspect aims to develop children's awareness of sounds made by various instruments and noise makers.

Aspect 3 - Body Percussion - The aim of this aspect is to develop children's awareness of sounds and rhythms.

Aspect 4 - Rhythm and Rhyme - This aspect aims to develop children's appreciation and experiences of rhythm and rhyme in speech.

Aspect 5 – Alliteration - The focus is on initial sounds of words, with activities including I-Spy type games and matching objects which begin with the same sound.

Aspect 6 - Voice Sounds - The aim is to distinguish between different vocal sounds and to begin oral blending and segmenting.

Aspect 7 - Oral Blending and Segmenting - In this aspect, the main aim is to develop oral blending and segmenting skills.

The activities introduced in Phase 1 are intended to continue throughout the following phases, as lots of practice is needed before children will become confident in their phonic knowledge and skills.



Phase 2

This phase begins in Reception and concentrates on developing:

- Vowels (V) - a,e,i,o,u
- Consonants (C) - all other letters of the alphabet
- ability to discriminate between sounds
- recognition of initial sounds at the beginning of words
- awareness of sounds, letters, and words
- Letter-sound correspondence

Sounds

In Phase 2, letters and their sounds are introduced one at a time. A set of letters is taught each week, in the following sequence:

Set 1: s, a, t, p **Set 2:** i, n, m, d **Set 3:** g, o, c, k **Set 4:** ck, e, u, r
Set 5: h, b, f, ff, l, ll, ss



Common exception words

In phase 2, children need to be able to read these tricky words.

l to no go the

Phase 3

By the time they reach Phase 3, children will already be able to blend and segment words containing the 19 letters taught in Phase 2.

During this phase, children will also learn the letter names using an alphabet song, although they will continue to use the sounds when decoding words.

Sounds

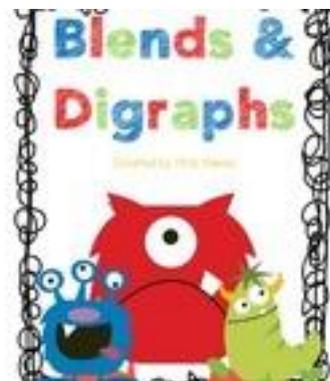
In Phase 3 twenty-five new graphemes are introduced (one by one).

Set 6: j, v, w, x

Set 7: y, z, zz, qu

Consonant Digraphs: ch, sh, th, ng

Vowel Digraphs: ai, ee, igh, oa,
oo, ar, or, ur, ow,
oi, ear, air, ure,
er



Tricky Words

In phase 3, children need to be able to read:

he she we me be was
you they all are my her

and
spell:

I to no go the

Phase 4

In Phase 4, no new graphemes are introduced. The main aim of this phase is to consolidate the children's knowledge and to help them learn to read and spell words which have adjacent consonants, such as trap, string and milk.

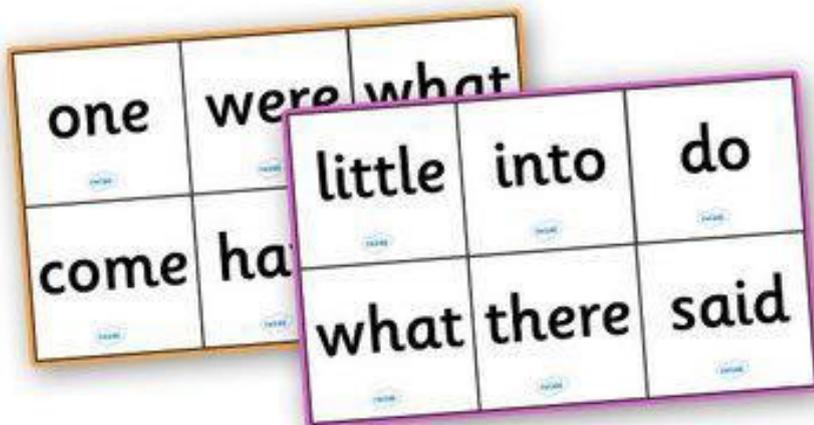
Tricky Words

In phase 4, children need to be able to read:

said have like so do some com
were there little one when out what

and spell:

he she we me be was
you they all are my her



Phase 5

In Phase Five, children will learn more graphemes and phonemes. For example, they already know ai as in rain, but now they will be introduced to ay as in day and a-e as in make.

Alternative pronunciations for graphemes will also be introduced, e.g. ea in tea, head and break.

Sounds

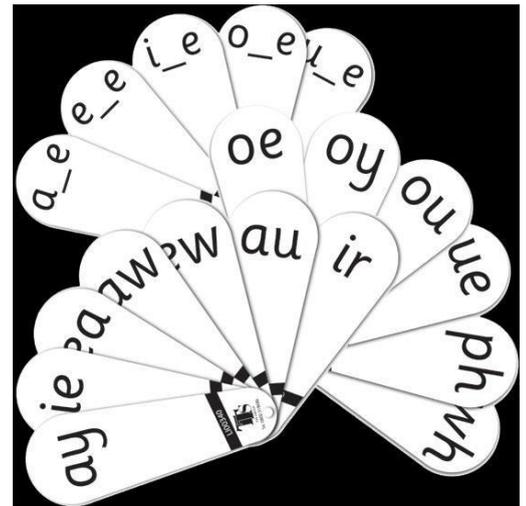
**ay, ou, ie, ea, oy, ir, ue, aw, wh,
ph, ew, oe, au, ey, a-e, e-e, i-e,
o-e, u-e,**

- Alternative pronunciations for;

**i, o, c g, u, ow, ie, ea, er,
ch, y, ou, a, e, ey**

- Alternative spellings for the sounds;

**ch, j, n, r, m, s, z, u, i, ear, ar, ur, air,
or, oo, ai, ee, igh, oa, sh**



Tricky Words

In phase 5, children need to be able to read:

oh	their	people	Mr	Mrs
looked	called	asked	could	

and spell:

said	have	like	so	do	some	com
were	there	little	one	when	out	what

Spelling and Grammar

In 2009, the Support for Spelling document was introduced for years 2-6. It introduced specific half termly spelling units in Y2 which were much more closely aligned with the way that spelling is taught in KS2 (albeit still ensuring that the emphasis was on using phonics to inform spelling). This includes Phase 6 of the Letters and Sounds Programme.

The National Curriculum (2014) includes specific spelling patterns that should be taught and used by pupils in their written work in Y2.



Children who are still working on the phonics phases continue to be taught phonics. There is no one size fits all solution.

The nature of English spelling means that making things a bit harder is usually no problem at all. When children are confident with the basics of a spelling convention they can be encouraged to become familiar with many other words that follow that convention, explore how similar conventions can be applied in other situations or begin to investigate exceptions to the conventions. Children should also be encouraged to have a really secure understanding of words and be able to apply them accurately and effectively. They can be encouraged to make posters, leaflets and games that go beyond simply demonstrating a convention and instead try to explain it. Perhaps most importantly, children who spell confidently should be encouraged to really reflect on how they learn to spell words - this can be a particularly tricky thing to figure out for children who feel like they just 'know' how to spell words. However, if they are going to become better learners they will need to develop and reflect on their learning skills and challenge themselves to improve all the time.

There are a relatively small number of reasons why words can be challenging to spell. There are seven "monsters" - each represents one particular type of challenge and/or strategies needed to overcome those challenges.

The monsters are used throughout Year 2 at Merry Hill and in many of the games we play to help demonstrate the links between learning in different units.

Hard to hear monsters - In some words, it is simply impossible to hear how to spell a particular sound. E.g. double letters, unsounded consonants, unstressed vowels, long vowel phonemes and homophones. Other strategies and knowledge are needed to confidently spell these words.

Word builder monsters - Many words are built up from bits. Root words, prefixes and suffixes combine to make new words and change meanings. Knowing the conventions for adding prefixes and suffixes makes these words much more straightforward to spell.

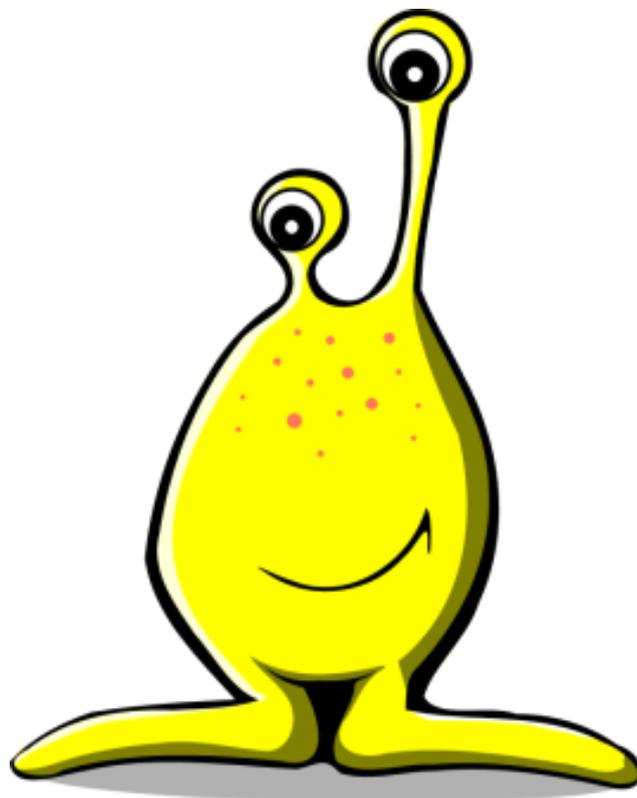
Word Family/Letter string monsters - Lots of words belong to families. They may all contain the same letter string (even if it is pronounced in different ways) or may all be derived from the same root word. Knowing about word families and common letter strings can give some handy clues about how to spell some tricky words.

Apostrophe monsters - Apostrophes can appear in shortened words or to show possession. It can be easy to fall into the trap of putting apostrophes in the wrong place. An understanding of the conventions for using apostrophes can help to avoid falling into these traps.

Have a go monsters - When writing independently, everyone sometimes has to have a go at spelling an unfamiliar word. Knowing good 'have a go' strategies is the best way to avoid wild guesses.

Learning strategy monsters - When we just need to learn how to spell a word there are lots of different strategies available. Different strategies work best for different words and different people.

Phonics monsters - A good knowledge of basic phonics allows us to spell most bits of most words. We can then focus our energies onto using other strategies for the trickier bits of words.

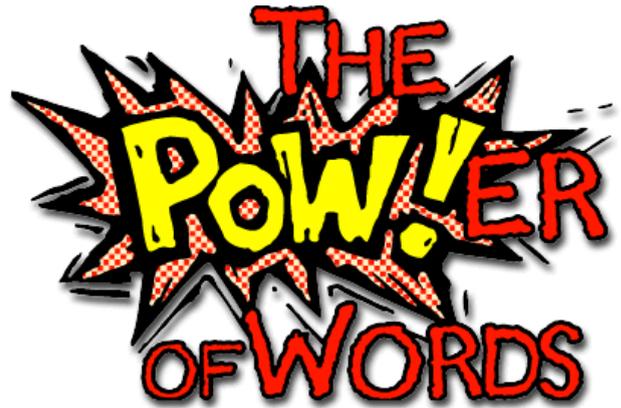


Year 1 Phonics Screening

The Year 1 Phonics Screening Check is a short, light-touch assessment of your child's phonics knowledge. This enables us to identify gaps and ensure suitable provision is provided to support all children.

Your child will sit with a familiar adult and be asked to read 40 words aloud. Your child may have read some of the words before, while others will be completely new. The check will only take a few minutes to complete and there is no time limit.

The screening takes place in the Summer Term. You will be provided with more information nearer the time.



We hope this booklet is useful and provides you with a better understanding of how and why we teach phonics at Merry Hill Infant School and Nursery.

It is important to remember not to skip ahead with reading and to focus on phonics. It becomes trickier to fill in learning gaps later.