



A guide to how phonics will help your child to read and spell.

Read, Write Inc is a fun and interactive way to support children in learning how to read and write.

The alphabet contains only 26 letters. Spoken English uses about 44 sounds (phonemes). These phonemes are represented by letters (graphemes). In other words, a sound can be represented by a letter (e.g. 's' or 'h') or a group of letters (e.g. 'th' or 'ear').

Once children begin learning sounds, they are used quickly to read and spell words.

Phonics is taught daily to the children from Nursery to Year 2. In Nursery, phonics begins with many activities to develop speech, listening and attention. Set 1 and 2 of RWI are taught in reception, with the remaining sets taught in Year 1 and 2.

What do all the technical words mean?

What is a phoneme?

It is the smallest unit of sound and a piece of terminology that children like to use and should be taught. At first it will equate with a letter sound but later on will include the digraphs. For example 'rain' has three phonemes, / r / ai / n.

What is a grapheme?

A grapheme is a letter or a number of letters that represent a sound (phoneme) in a word. Another way to explain it is to say that a grapheme is a letter or letters that spell a sound in a word. E.g. /ee/, / ea/, /ey/ all make the same phoneme but are spelt differently.

What is a digraph/trigraph (special friends)?

This is when two or three letters come together to make a phoneme. /oa/ makes the sound in boat. The children learn these as special friends.

What is blending?

Blending is the process that is involved in bringing the sounds together to make a word or a syllable and is how /c/ /a/ /t/ becomes cat.

To learn to read well children must be able to smoothly blend sounds together. Blending sounds fluidly helps to improve fluency when reading. Blending is more difficult to do with longer words so learning how to blend accurately from an early age is imperative.

Showing your child how to blend is important. Model how to 'push' sounds smoothly together without stopping at each individual sound.

What is segmenting (Fred Talk)?

Segmenting is a skill used in spelling. In order to spell the word cat, it is necessary to segment the word into its constituent sounds; c-a-t.

Before writing a word young children need time to think about it, say the word several times, 'Fred Talk' the word and then write it. Once children have written the same word several times they won't need to use these four steps as frequently.

Children will enjoy spelling if it feels like fun and if they feel good about themselves as spellers. We need, therefore, to be playful and positive in our approach – noticing and praising what children can do as well as helping them to correct their mistakes.

At Lovelace, each class has Fred the Frog who is our Read, Write Inc. friend. We use Fred to teach oral segmenting to the children, which allows them to identify each sound in a word. We also teach oral blending through the use of Fred which is pushing individual sounds together to pronounce a word, e.g. s-n-a-p, blended together, reads snap.

The children also remind Fred how to pronounce each individual sound and encourage Fred not to add 'uh' to the sounds in order to keep them pure. For example to say 'c' and not 'cuh'.

What are red words?

Red words are words that cannot be 'sounded-out' but need to be learned by heart. They don't fit into the usual spelling patterns. In order to read simple sentences, it is necessary for children to know some words that have unusual or untaught spellings. It should be noted that, when teaching these words, it is important to always start with sounds already known in the word, then focus on the 'tricky' part. Examples of red words are – the, to, because, said, was

What are CVC words?

CVC stands for consonant- vowel- consonant, so a word such as map, cat is CVC. We also talk about CCVC words such as clip, stop.

Phonics in Nursery

The initial concept of phonics concentrates on developing children's speaking and listening skills and lays the foundations for the phonic work which starts in Reception. The emphasis during this time is to get children attuned to the sounds around them and ready to begin developing oral blending and segmenting skills.

Set 1 (Reception)

In Set 1 and 2, letters and their sounds are introduced one at a time. A new letter is taught each day, with 4 being taught each week alongside a red word. These are Set 1 graphemes:

m	a	s	d
t	i	n	p
g	o	c	k
u	b	f	e
l	h	sh	r
j	v	y	th
z	ch	qu	x
ng	nk		

The children will begin to learn to blend and segment to begin reading and spelling. This will begin with simple words linked to the sounds they have learnt (eg sad, pat, tin)

Set 2 (Reception)

By the time they reach Set 2, most children will already be able to blend and segment words containing the graphemes taught in Set 1.

During Set 2, the children will learn the following 'special friends' per week alongside a red word.

ay	ee	igh	ow
oo	oo	ar	or
air	ir	ou	oy

During set 2, the children will spend a lot of time learning about how these sounds are used in words. They will begin to blend and segment these sounds in words, captions and sentences. We encourage the children to only use their sounds if they are unsure of the word, as this develops fluency in their reading.

Set 3 (Year 1)

When children reach Year 1, they will spend time recapping on Set 1 and 2 to consolidate their phonic knowledge and apply it in their reading and writing.

By this stage, most children will be able to represent each of 42 phonemes with a grapheme. They will blend phonemes to read CCVC and CVCC words and segment these words for spelling. They will also be able to read two syllable words that are simple. They will be able to read all the tricky words learnt so far and will be able to spell some of them.

Set 3 will introduce alternate graphemes for sounds already taught in Sets 1 and 2

ea (tea)	oi	a-e (make)	i-e(smile)
o-e (home)	u-e (tune)	aw (saw)	are (share)
ur (burn)	er (letter)	ow (cow)	ai (snail)
oa (goat)	ew(chew)	ire(fire)	ear (near)
ure (pure)	tion (celebration)	cious/tious (delicious/scrumptious)	

By this point children would be expected to be reading CVC words at speed along with the red words from the previous sets. It is important that children are taught that blending is only used when a word is unfamiliar.

Year 2

When children reach Year 1, they will spend time recapping on Set 1,2 and 3 to consolidate their phonic knowledge and apply it in their reading and writing.

There is a focus on introducing new red words to read and write.

Year 2 children will learn about:

Suffixes	prefix	contractions	homophones
Possessive apostrophes		further alternate spellings	

What can I do at home?

A great way to engage children at home with phonics is to play games. Matching pairs, snap, sorting words or letters can all be ways to help teach your children. Being phonic detectives; finding red words or sounds in a book is also a fun way to explore phonics at home.

If you have a computer/device at home then below is a list of websites that also include fun interactive games for children to play.

<https://letters-and-sounds.com/>
<https://www.phonicsplay.co.uk/>
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b006sf18>
<https://www.ictgames.com/phonicsPop/index.html>
<https://home.oxfordowl.co.uk/https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/subjects/>

We hope you have found this useful and please ask your class teacher if you have further questions.