



Phonics at SPA

What are Phonics?

Words are made up from small units of sound called **phonemes**. Phonics teaches children to be able to listen carefully and identify the phonemes that make up each word. This helps children to learn to read words and to spell words

In phonics lessons children are taught three main things:

GPCs

They are taught GPCs. This stands for **grapheme phoneme correspondences**. This simply means that they are taught all the phonemes in the English language and ways of writing them down. These sounds are taught in a particular order. The first sounds to be taught are **s, a, t, p**.

Blending

Children are taught to be able to **blend**. This is when children say the sounds that make up a word and are able to merge the sounds together until they can hear what the word is. This skill is vital in learning to read.

Segmenting

Children are also taught to **segment**. This is the opposite of blending. Children are able to say a word and then break it up into the phonemes that make it up. This skill is vital in being able to spell words.

At our school we follow the **Letters and Sounds** phonic programme.

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 and write by developing their phonic knowledge and skills. It sets out a detailed and systematic programme for teaching phonic skills for children enabling them to become fluent readers and writers.

There are six overlapping phases. The table below is a summary based on the Letters and Sounds guidance for Practitioners and Teachers. The Year groups listed in brackets suggest the age that children are taught each phase, but some children will progress more rapidly than others and so this is fluid.



Phase	Phonic Knowledge and Skills
<i>Phase One</i> (Nursery/Reception)	Activities are divided into seven aspects, including environmental sounds, instrumental sounds, body sounds, rhythm and rhyme, alliteration, voice sounds and finally oral blending and segmenting.
<i>Phase Two</i> (Reception) up to 6 weeks	Learning 19 letters of the alphabet and one sound for each. Blending sounds together to make words. Segmenting words into their separate sounds. Beginning to read simple captions.
<i>Phase Three</i> (Reception) up to 12 weeks	The remaining 7 letters of the alphabet, one sound for each. Graphemes such as <i>ch</i> , <i>oo</i> , <i>th</i> representing the remaining phonemes not covered by single letters. Reading captions, sentences and questions. On completion of this phase, children will have learnt the "simple code", i.e. one grapheme for each phoneme in the English language.
<i>Phase Four</i> (Reception) 4 to 6 weeks	No new grapheme-phoneme correspondences are taught in this phase. Children learn to blend and segment longer words with adjacent consonants, e.g. swim, clap, jump.
<i>Phase Five</i> (Throughout Year 1)	Now we move on to the "complex code". Children learn more graphemes for the phonemes which they already know, plus different ways of pronouncing the graphemes they already know.
<i>Phase Six</i> (Throughout Year 2 and beyond)	Working on spelling, including prefixes and suffixes, doubling and dropping letters etc.

For more detailed information, visit the [Letters and Sounds website](#).

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/190599/Letters_and_Sounds_-_DFES-00281-2007.pdf

Your child's teacher completes regular assessments of your child's progress and so will be able to inform you if they have completed a particular phonic stage. It is important that children do not rush through the different phases until they are ready to move on, as they need to consolidate their phonic knowledge to prevent misconceptions forming.

We use lots of fun activities and games to teach your child phonics some of which you may have seen during parents "drop in" sessions. If you would like to access free online activities for parents and children to play together you might enjoy using the *Phonics Play* resource please just follow the link : <http://www.phonicsplay.co.uk/freeIndex.htm>