

Phonics

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Phonics

Parent Mini
Guide

The Three
Schools

What is phonics?

Phonics is a way of helping children to skilfully read and write with accuracy, pace and fluency. Phonics is taught using both the Jolly Phonics programme and following Letters and Sounds, a phonics resource published by the Department for Education and Skills in 2007. Letters and sounds 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 for teaching phonic skills for children starting by the age of five, with the aim of them becoming fluent readers by the age of seven.

Reading

At The Three Schools, the children are taught to

- recognise and say the sounds that each individual letter makes.
- identify sounds the different letter combinations make e.g sh or oa.
- blend these sounds from left to right to make a word.

Children can then use and apply this knowledge to 'de-code' new words that they hear or see. This is the first, most important part in learning to read.

What is the phonics screen check?

The phonics screening check is an easy way for teachers to check your child's progress in reading. With the other frequent assessments we do, it will confirm whether your child has made the expected progress by the end of Year 1. Every school across the country will complete the phonics screening check during the month of June.

How does the check work?

- Your child will sit with a teacher and be asked to read 40 words aloud.
- Some of the words they may have read before and some will be completely new to them.
- The check normally takes just a few minutes to complete and there is no time limit. If your child is struggling, the teacher can easily stop the check.
- The check will be carried out in a comfortable, familiar environment and is carefully designed not to be stressful for your child.

What are 'non-words'?

The test will contain a mix of real words e.g **t-r-u-ck** and 'made up' words e.g **s-t-r-u-n-t**, your child will know these as 'alien' words. During the check they will be informed which words are 'alien' and which words are real. The children will have had experience of these sorts of words during their phonics lessons.

After the check

We will tell you how well your child has done on the screening check in the last half term of Year 1. Please remember, all children are individuals and develop at different rates. We assess your children on a regular basis from Foundation stage through to Year 2 and if they need extra help with phonic decoding we will have strategies in place.

Helping your child with reading

Phonics works best when children are given plenty of encouragement and learn to love reading books and writing for different purposes. Parents play a very important part in helping us with this.

- Read alongside your child, the reading scheme books sent home by your child's class teacher. The level of the books chosen will be linked to the sounds and tricky words they are learning in phonics.
- With all books, encourage your child to 'sound out' unfamiliar words and then blend the sounds together from left to right rather than looking at the pictures to guess (please note, individual sounds are different to letter names, such as 'a' for ant and not A).
- Play 'spot the sound' by asking your child to look for familiar sounds everywhere! E. g signs, posters, recipes, shopping lists, books, newspapers etc
- Try to make time to read with your child every day. Grandparents or older brothers and sisters can help too. Encourage your child to blend the sounds all the way through the book.
- Practise reading tricky words (words that cannot be 'sounded out') in isolation but also within sentences.

Helpful websites

1. www.phonicsplay.co.uk
2. www.ictgames.com (Literacy section)