

# Letters and Sounds – The Six Phases

*In Phase 1 phonics, children are taught about:*

Environmental sounds

- Instrumental sounds
- Body percussion (e.g. clapping and stamping)
- Rhythm and rhyme
- **Alliteration**
- Voice sounds
- Oral **blending** and segmenting (e.g. hearing that d-o-g makes 'dog')

Typical activities for teaching Phase 1 phonics include **'listening' walks, playing and identifying instruments, action songs, learning rhymes and playing games like I Spy.**

This phase is intended to develop children's listening, vocabulary and speaking skills.

*In Phase 2 phonics, children are taught about:*

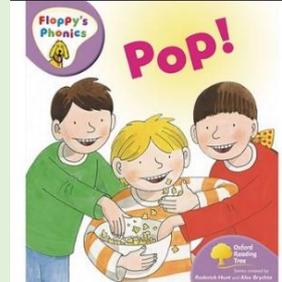
Children begin to learn the sounds that letters make (**phonemes**). There are 44 sounds in all. Some are made with two letters, but **in Phase 2, children focus on learning the 19 most common single letter sounds**. These are broken down into smaller sets of about six sounds to make them more achievable and simpler for children to learn.

Broadwood Primary School is following the Letters and Sounds phonics approach and the order in which sounds are taught begins with the most commonly used **phonemes**, starting with: **/s/, /a/, /t/, /i/, /p/, /n/.**

By the end of Phase 2 children should be able to read some vowel-consonant (VC) (for example 'it' and 'in') and consonant-vowel-consonant (CVC) words (for example cat, dad), and to spell them out. They also learn some **high frequency 'tricky words'** like 'the' and 'go.' This phase usually lasts about six weeks.



Your child will bring home Phase 2 books as home readers (the first 19 sounds) and these can be fully decoded. By this we mean that the words can be broken down into their sounds and then blended together to make words. They will include some tricky words too. The following books are examples of books your child may bring home to read.



***In Phase 3 phonics, children are taught about:***

Phase 3 introduces children to the remaining, more difficult and/or less commonly used phonemes. There are around 25 of these, mainly made up of two letters such as /ch/, /ar/, /ow/ and /ee/. These sounds are needed so that children are able to read and form useful words.

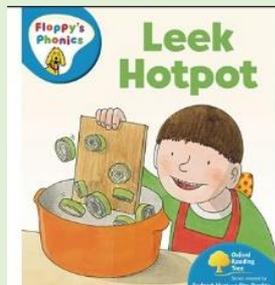
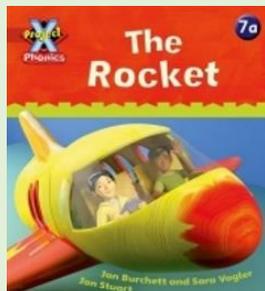
Alongside this, **children are taught to recognise more tricky words, including 'me,' 'was,' 'my,' 'you' and 'they'.** They learn the names of the letters, as well as the sounds they make.

Activities they do in their phonics lessons might include learning mnemonics (memory aids) for the digraphs and British Sign Language signs for tricky words, practising writing letters on mini whiteboards, using word cards and singing songs like the Alphabet Song.

Phase 3 takes most children around 12 weeks. By the end, they should be able to say the sound made by most, or all, Phase 2 and 3 **graphemes**, blend and read CVC (for example 'rain' or 'park') words made from these graphemes, read 12 new tricky words and write letters correctly when given an example to copy.



Your child will now bring home Phase 3 books, which will include the next 25 graphemes that can be fully decoded. The following books are examples of books your child may bring home to read.



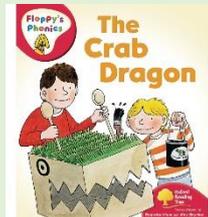
**In Phase 4 phonics, children are taught how to:**

- Practise reading and spelling CVCC words ('bump', 'nest', 'belt,' 'milk', etc)
- Practise reading and spelling compound words (words such as 'toothbrush' or 'farmyard'.
- Practise reading and spelling high frequency words
- Practise reading and writing sentences
- Learn more tricky words, including 'have,' 'like,' 'some,' 'little'

Children should now be blending confidently to work out new words. They should be starting to be able to read words straight off, rather than having to sound them out. They should also be able to write every letter, mostly correctly. This phase usually takes four to six weeks, and most children will complete it around the end of Reception.



Your child will now bring home Phase 4 books, which will include consonant blends or compound words and practise the Phase 2 and Phase 3 graphemes they have been taught. The following books are examples of books your child may bring home to read.



**In Phase 5 phonics, children are taught about:**

Phase 5 generally takes children the whole of Year 1. Alternative spellings for sounds are introduced, like igh/ie. 'Children master these in reading first, and as their fluency develops, we begin to see them using them correctly in spelling.'

Children learn new **graphemes** (different ways of spelling each sound) and alternative pronunciations for these: for example, learning that the grapheme 'ow' makes a different sound in 'snow' and 'cow'.

**They should become quicker at blending, and start to do it silently.**

They learn about split **digraphs** (the 'magic e') such as the a-e in 'name.'

They'll start to choose the right graphemes when spelling, and will learn more tricky words, including 'people,' 'water' and 'friend'. They also learn one new phoneme: /zh/, as in 'treasure.'

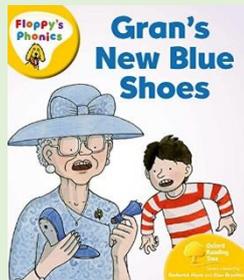
By the end of Year 1, children should be able to:

- Say the sound for any grapheme they are shown
- Write the common graphemes for any given sound (e.g. 'e,' 'ee,' 'ie,' 'ea')
- Use their phonics knowledge to read and spell unfamiliar words of up to three **syllables**
- Read all of the 100 high frequency words, and be able to spell most of them
- Form letters correctly

**At the end of Year 1, all children are given a Phonics Screening Check** to ensure they have mastered the appropriate knowledge. Parents will be informed whether their child has achieved or not achieved the standard in the phonics screen.



Your child will now bring home Phase 5 books, which will include graphemes containing the alternate spellings they have been taught. The following books are examples of books your child may bring home to read.



***In Phase 6 phonics, children are taught about:***

Phase 6 phonics takes place throughout Year 2, with the aim of children becoming fluent readers and accurate spellers.

By Phase 6, children should be able to read hundreds of words using one of three strategies:

- Reading them automatically
- Decoding them quickly and silently
- Decoding them aloud

**Children should now be spelling most words accurately (this is known as 'encoding'), although this usually lags behind reading.** They will also learn, among other things:

- **Prefixes** and **suffixes**, e.g. 'in-' and '-ed'
- The **past tense**
- Memory strategies for high frequency or topic words
- Proof-reading
- How to use a dictionary
- Where to put the **apostrophe** in words like 'I'm'
- Spelling rules

Although formal phonics teaching is usually complete by the end of Year 2, children continue to use their knowledge as they move up the school.

Your child will now bring home Phase 6 books, which will consolidate the phonics teaching they are receiving however they will also bring home reading books that are not fully decodable but which practise the high frequency words they have been taught. These books will also help to develop their fluency and their comprehension skills. The books may be Oxford Reading Tree, Rigby Stars or other book schemes. At this point, teachers will be giving children books in relation to book banding. For more information about book banding please see your class teacher.