



Headteacher: Mrs N Peters

St Teresa's Catholic Academy Phonics information for Parents

We hope that this information sheet helps you support your child's learning at home. Please ask your child's teacher if you require further information.

What is phonics?

- Phonics is an approach to teaching reading and spelling that enables a child to identify, blend and segment the individual 'phonemes' or sounds that combine to form words.
- Synthetic phonics- is systematic, consistent and usually swift in approach with clearly defined incremental sequence.
- Phonics has been taught in schools for many years but has become more important in recent years because of the government's commitment to phonics as a primary foundation block in teaching reading.

Useful phonics vocabulary

Your child will learn and use this vocabulary at school:

Phoneme - the smallest unit of sound.

Grapheme - the sound written down.

Blending - joining the sounds together to form a word.

Segmenting - chopping the sounds up so it can be spelled.

Grapheme - is matching sounds with the letters that represent them.

Digraph - two letters that make one sound.

CVC word - a word made up of a consonant - vowel - consonant e.g. cat

Split digraphs – a-e as in cake, (used to be called 'magic e')

Frequently asked Questions

How do we teach phonics at St Teresa's

- 6 Phases of phonics teaching and learning.
- In 2007 the government produced a phonics resource called **Letters and Sounds**. This is a systematic approach to teaching phonics in 6 overlapping phases. This structure is used throughout Early Years, Key Stage 1 and is continued into the KS2 to ensure children are secure in their reading and spelling. These are the stages below: **Phase 1** - Activities are divided into seven aspects, including environmental sounds, instrumental sounds, body sounds, rhythm and rhyme, alliteration, voice sounds and finally children are introduced to oral blending and segmenting.
Phase 2 - Children learn 19 letters of the alphabet and one sound for each. They start to blend and segment sounds to make simple words.
Phase 3 - Children learn the remaining 7 letters of the alphabet with one sound for each. They also begin to learn graphemes that have 2 letters for each sound (e.g. th or ch) or 3 letters for each sound (e.g. igh or air).
Phase 4 - 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.
Phase 5 - Children learn more graphemes for the phonemes which they already know, plus different ways of pronouncing the graphemes they already know.
Phase 6 - Children continue to work on spelling, including prefixes and suffixes, doubling and dropping letters etc. As well as letters and sounds the children are introduced to tricky words – ones that do not follow phonic rules and to read and write words, captions and sentences.

Phase 6+ - Children develop their knowledge about the history of spelling and the English language. They are taught a range of strategies and approaches to help improve and practise spelling.

What do phonemes sound like?

- One of the most important aspects of phonics is that the sounds are articulated correctly. Most sounds are much shorter than we imagine. The following links are to video clips showing the correct pronunciation of phonemes.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lwJx1NSineE&feature=youtu.be>

<http://www.phonicbooks.co.uk/teaching.php>

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BahXUW_v-1s

How is phonics taught in school?

- In Early Years and KS1 all the children have a daily phonics lesson. These lessons reinforce previous phonics learning, teach new graphemes/phonemes and help the children to apply their phonic knowledge in reading and writing. Each half term the children are assessed and children are placed into specific teaching groups according to need and phonic phase. These are flexible groups and children move between them as necessary to ensure provision is matched to their needs. During everyday lessons the phonics taught are embedded in each class and the children reminded in reading and writing activities across the curriculum.
- In KS2 phonics and spelling rules are taught during a focused spelling lesson and reinforced in literacy lessons. Children have spellings to learn or revisit every week, based upon this teaching.

How can you help your child at home?

- **Reading** - Please hear your child reading the first instance every day if possible. When reading encourage your child to use their phonics to decode words they get stuck on.
- **Read to your child** - Especially rhymes and poetry which help children learn the sounds.
- **Spellings** - These are linked to the phonemes/graphemes your child has been working on during the week. Encourage them to sound out their spellings as they write them. Encourage them to find other words with the same sounds.
- **Use the internet** - There are a number of free interactive websites that have phonics games which reinforce learning at school. Many of these are referenced at:

- http://www.familylearning.org.uk/phonics_games.html
- <http://www.phonicsplay.co.uk/>
- <http://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/ks1/literacy/phonics/play/>
- <http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/wordsandpictures/phonics/>
- <http://www.ictgames.com/literacy.html>
- www.mrthorne.com
- <http://www.ictgames.com/helpAHedgehog/index.html>
- <http://www.teachyourmonstertoread.com/u/207781>

A useful guide with further information can also be found at:

<https://www.readwithfonics.com/parents-phonics-guide>

Please note— references to internet sites do not mean that the school endorses products or services offered by the sites

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