

Burwell Village College Primary School



Phonics information for parents.

Your child will be learning to read and write through the development of their phonic knowledge. This information is to help you understand how your child is taught phonics and what you can do to support them at home. The earliest beginnings of reading and writing come from talking and listening.

We have also suggested some activities that will support you with your child in their learning.

Introduction

As you know, the ability to read and write well is a vital skill for all children, paving the way for an enjoyable and successful school experience.

Children learn and practise many of the skills that they need for reading and writing from a very early age. They do this through a wide range of activities and experiences, at home, in settings and in school. They explore and learn through singing and saying rhymes, making and listening to music, talking with others, sharing books with adults and other children, dressing up, experimenting with writing and using puppets and toys to retell and make up stories.

Children's spoken language supports reading and writing

In order to make a good start in reading and writing, children need to have an adult listen to them and talk to them. Speaking and listening are the foundations for reading and writing. Even everyday activities such as preparing meals, tidying up, putting shopping away and getting ready to go out offer you the chance to talk to your child, explaining what you are doing. Through these activities, children hear the way language is put together into sentences for a purpose.

Books are a rich source of new words for your child; words you would not use in everyday conversations appear in books. Children need to have a wide vocabulary to understand the meaning of books, so read aloud and share books as often as you can. They will enjoy it and it will be useful to them when they come across these words in their own reading later on.

Ways you can support your child at home: talking & listening:

- **Make time to listen to your child talking** – as you meet them from their setting or school, as you walk, or travel home by car, in the supermarket as you shop, at meal times, bath times, bedtimes – any time!
- **Switch off the TV, radio and mobile phones** – and really listen!
- **Show that you are interested in what they are talking about** – look at your child, smile, nod your head, ask a question or make a response to show that you really have been listening.
- **Make a collection of different toy creatures** – for example, a duck, a snake, an alien, say the sound it might make as you play together, for example, 'quack-quack', 'sssssss', 'yuk-yuk', and encourage your child to copy you.
- **Listen at home** – switch off the TV and listen to the sounds, both inside and outside the home. Can your child tell you what sounds they heard, in the order in which they heard them?
- **Play-a-tune** – and follow me! Make or buy some simple shakers, drums and beaters, then play a simple tune and ask your child to copy. Have fun!
- **Use puppets** and toys to make up stories or retell known ones. Record your child telling the story and play it back to them.

Sounds in spoken language – the beginning of phonics

At the Burwell Primary school, when children enter the Reception class they take part in high-quality phonics sessions every day. These are fun sessions involving lots of speaking, listening and games, where the emphasis is on children's active participation. They learn to use their phonic knowledge for reading and writing activities and in their independent play. At this School we use a systematic phonics programme called *Letters and Sounds*. The school uses both Phonics Play and Phonics Bug to deliver this programme.

Letters and Sounds is divided into six phases, with each phase building on the skills and knowledge of previous learning. There are no big leaps in learning. Children have time to practise and rapidly expand their ability to read and spell words. They are also taught to read and spell 'tricky words', which are words with spellings that are unusual or those children, have not yet been taught.

Some useful definitions:

- | | |
|------------------------|---|
| A phoneme | is the smallest unit of sound in a word. |
| A grapheme | these are the letters that represent a phoneme. |
| A digraph | two letters making one (ai, ee, or) |
| A trigraph | three letters making one sound (igh, ear) |
| A split digraph | where the two letters are not adjacent to each other (a-e, e-e) |

Phase 1

This paves the way for systematic learning of phonics and usually starts in nursery or playgroup.

Teachers plan activities that will help children to:

- **Show an awareness of rhyme and alliteration.**
- **Distinguish between sounds in the environment and phonemes sounds.**
- **Explore and experiment with sounds and words.**
- **Discriminate speech sounds in words.**
- **Begin to orally blend and segment phonemes.**

Ways you can support your child at home:

Play 'What do we have in here?'

Put some toys or objects in a bag and pull one out at a time. Emphasise the first sound of the name of the toy or object by repeating it, for example, 'c c c c – car', 'b b b b – box', 'ch ch ch ch – chip'.

Say: 'A tall tin of tomatoes!' 'Tommy, the ticklish teddy!' 'A lovely little lemon!' This is called alliteration. Use names, for example, 'Gurpreet gets the giggles', 'Milo makes music', 'Naheema's nose'.

Teach them '*Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers*'.

Learning how to 'sound-talk'

The teacher shows children how to do this – **c-a-t = cat**. The separate sounds (*phonemes*) are spoken aloud, in order, all through the word, and are then merged together into the whole word. The merging together is called *blending* and is a vital skill for reading.

Children will also learn to do this the other way around – **cat = c-a-t**. The whole word is spoken aloud and then broken up into its sounds (*phonemes*) in order, all through the word. This is called *segmenting* and is a vital skill for spelling.

This is all oral (*spoken*). Your child will not be expected to match the letter to the sound at this stage. The emphasis is on helping children to hear the separate sounds in words and to create spoken sounds.

Ways you can support your child at home: Sound-talking

Find real objects around your home that have three phonemes (*sounds*) and practise 'sound talk'. First, just let them listen, then see if they will join in, for example, saying:

'I spy a p-e-g – peg.'

'I spy a c-u-p – cup.'

'Where's your other s-o-ck – sock?'

'Simon says – put your hands on your h-ea-d.'

'Simon says – touch your ch-i-n.'

Phase 2 (Taught in reception over a 6 week period)

In this phase children will:

- Continue practising what they have learned from phase 1, including 'sound-talk'.
- Be taught the phonemes (*sounds*) for a number of letters (*graphemes*), which phoneme is represented by which grapheme and that a phoneme can be represented by more than one letter, for example, /ll/ as in b-e-ll.
- Learn hand movements to help them remember the sounds.

Letter Sets

Set 1: s, a, t, p

Set 2: i, m, n, d

Set 3: g, o, c, k

Set 4: ck, e, u, r

Set 5: h, b, f, ff, l, ll, ss

Extra information on the Jolly Phonics actions used to teach these sounds can be found on the [school website](#).

VC and CVC words

C and V are abbreviations for 'consonant' and 'vowel'. VC words are words consisting of a vowel then a consonant (e.g. *am, at, it*) and CVC words are words consisting of a consonant then a vowel then a consonant (e.g. *cat, rug, sun*). Words such as *tick* and *bell* also count as CVC words – although they have four letters, they have only three sounds. For example, in the word *bell*, **b** = consonant, **e** = vowel, **ll** = consonant.

Now the children will be *seeing* letters and words, as well as hearing them. They will be shown how to make whole words by pushing magnetic or wooden letters together to form little words, reading little words on the interactive whiteboard and breaking up words into individual sounds, which will help their spelling. These will be simple words made up of two phonemes, for example, *am, at, it*, or three phonemes, for example, *cat, rug, sun, tick, bell*.

Tricky words

They will also learn several tricky words: **the, to, I, go, no.**

Children will still be practising oral blending and segmenting skills daily. They need plenty of practice at doing this.

Enunciation (how the sounds are pronounced / spoken)

- Teaching phonics requires a technical skill in enunciation.
- Phonemes (sounds) should be articulated clearly and precisely.

Enunciations of phonemes: Clips showing the correct enunciation for the phonics sounds

www.youtube.com/watch?v=BqhXUW_v-1s

Jolly phonics: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-ksbIMiliA8>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lwJx1NSineE>

Ways you can support your child at home: Magnetic letters

Buy magnetic letters for your fridge, or for use with a tin tray. Find out which letters have been taught – have fun finding these with your child and place them on the magnetic surface.

Making little words together

Make little words together, for example, *it, up, am, and, top, dig, run, met, pick*. As you select the letters, say them aloud: ‘*a-m – am*’, ‘*m-e-t – met*’.

Breaking words up

Now do it the other way around: read the word, break the word up and move the letters away, saying: ‘*met – m-e-t*’.

Both these activities help children to see that reading and spelling are reversible processes.

Don’t forget the writing box!

Spelling is harder than reading words – praise, don’t criticise. Little whiteboards and pens, and magic boards, are a good way for children to try out spellings and practise their handwriting.

Your child might be trying to use letters from their name to write; this shows that they know that writing needs real alphabet letters.

Phase 3 (Taught in reception up to 12 weeks)

The purpose of this phase is to:

- teach more graphemes, most of which are made of two letters, for example, 'oa' as in **boat**
- practise blending and segmenting a wider set of CVC words, for example, **fizz, chip, sheep, light**
- learn all letter names and begin to form them correctly
- read more tricky words and begin to spell some of them
- read and write words in phrases and sentences.

Letter progression

Set 6: j, v, w, x

Set 7 : y, z, zz, qu

Graphemes

ear, air, ure, er, ar, or, ur, ow, oi, ai, ee, igh, oa, oo

Consonant digraphs

ch, sh, th, ng

CVC words containing graphemes made of two or more letters

Here are some examples of words your children will be reading: **tail, week, right, soap, food, park, burn, cord, town, soil**

Their confidence from the daily experience of practising and applying their phonic knowledge to reading and writing is really paying off!

Tricky words

The number of tricky words is growing. These are so important for reading and spelling: **he, she, we, me, be, was, my, you, her, they, all.**

Ways you can support your child at home:

- Sing an alphabet song together.
- Play 'I spy', using letter names as well as sounds.
- Continue to play with magnetic letters, using some of the two grapheme (*letter*) combinations:
r-ai-n = rain blending for reading *rain = r-ai-n* – segmenting for spelling
b-oa-t = boat blending for reading *boat = b-oa-t* – segmenting for spelling
h-ur-t = hurt blending for reading *hurt = h-ur-t* – segmenting for spelling
- Praise your child for trying out words.
- Ask teachers for a list of the tricky words.
- Set a timer. Call out one word at a time and get your child to spell it on a magic board or a small whiteboard, against the timer – remember, they can use magnetic letters.
- Play 'Pairs', turning over two words at a time trying to find a matching pair. This is especially helpful with the tricky words: **the the, to to, no no, go go, I I**

Don't worry if they get some wrong! These are hard to remember – they need plenty of practice.

Phase 4 (Taught in reception/Year1)

This is a consolidation unit Children continue to practise previously learned graphemes and phonemes and learn how to read and write:

CVCC words: **tent, damp, toast, chimp**

For example, in the word 'toast', **t = consonant, oa = vowel, s = consonant, t = consonant.**

and **CCVC** words: **swim, plum, sport, cream, spoon**

For example, in the word 'cream', **c = consonant, r = consonant, ea = vowel, m = consonant.**

They will be learning more tricky words and continuing to read and write sentences together.

Tricky words

said, so, do, have, like, some, come, were, there, little, one, when, out, what.

Ways you can support your child at home:

- Practise reading and spelling some CVCC and CCVC words but continue to play around with CVC words. Children like reading and spelling words that they have previously worked with, as this makes them feel successful.
- Make up captions and phrases for your child to read and write, for example, *a silver star, crunch crisps*. Write some simple sentences and leave them around the house for your child to find and read. After they have found and read three, give them a treat!
- Look out for words in the environment, such as on food packaging, which your child will find easy to read, for example, *lunch, fresh milk, drink, fish and chips, jam*.
- Work on reading words together, for example, a street name such as *Park Road*, captions on buses and lorries, street signs such as *bus stop*.

Phonics teaching will continue into Key Stage 1 (Year 1 and Year 2)

As your child enters Key Stage 1 (Year 1) they will continue to take part in daily phonics sessions.

Phase 5 (Taught in year 1)

In Phase 5 children:

- Are taught further graphemes for reading.
- Are taught alternative pronunciations of graphemes.
E.g. c- cat – city
- Are taught alternative spellings for phonemes
E.g. – ee ,ea, y
- Recognise graphemes in reading words.
- Practise reading and spelling of common high frequency words.
- Practise reading and spelling two and three syllable words.
- Practise reading and writing sentences.

Further graphemes

Ay, ou, ie ,ea, oy, ir , ue, aw, wh, ph,

ew, oe, au, o-e, a-e, e-e, i-e, o-e, u-e

Alternative spellings:

/c/	/ch/	/f/	/j/	/m/	/n/	/ng/	/r/	/s/	/sh/	/v/	/w/
k	tch	ph	g	mb	kn	n(k)	wr	c	ch	ve	wh
ck			dge		gn			sc	t(ion)		
qu									ss(ion, ure)		
x									s(ion, ure)		
ch									c(ion, ious, ial)		

/e/	/i/	/o/	/u/ (south)	/ai/	/ee/	/igh/	/oa/	/oo/	/ool/
ea	y	(w)a	o	ay	ea	y	ow	ew	u
	ey			a-e	e-e	ie	oe	ue	oul
				eigh	ie	i-e	o-e	ui	o (north)
				ey	y		o	ou	
				ei	ey				
					eo				

/ar/	/or/	/ur/	/ow/	/oi/	/ear/	/air/	/ure/	/er/
a (south)	aw	ir	ou	oy	ere	are	our	our
	au	er			eer	ear		e
	al	ear						u
	our							etc

Phase 6 (Taught in Year 2)

In Phase 6 children:

- Are taught to recognise phonics irregularities and become more secure with less common grapheme – phoneme correspondences.
- Apply phonics skills and knowledge to recognise and spell an increasing number of complex words.
- Are introduced to and taught past tense.
- Learn how to add suffixes.
- Taught how to spell long words.
- Find and learn the difficult bits in words.

For example :

The past tense dealt with in this section is simple past tense e.g I looked, not continuous past tense, e.g. I was looking.

To reinforce understanding and application of the – **ed** suffix for the past tense (e.g rounded, helped, turned)

Strategies

1. **Syllables**- To learn my word I can listen to how many syllables there are so I can break it into smaller bits to remember (e.g. Sep-tem-ber, ba-by)
2. **Base words** -To learn my word I can find its base word (e.g Smiling – base smile +ing)
3. **Analogy** – To learn my word I can use words that I already know to help me (e.g. could,would, should)
4. **Mnemonics**- To learn my word I can make up a sentence to help me remember it (e.g, could O U Lucky Duck)

In addition to this children learn 'tricky' spelling words (those words which do not fit easily in to any phonics pattern) and key sight vocabulary.

Letters and sounds: High Frequency Words Checklist

The Tricky Words are in bold

Phase 2

a	an	as	at	if	in
is	it	of	off	on	can
dad	had	back	and	get	big
him	his	not	got	up	mum
but	the	to	I	no	go
into					

Phase 3

will	that	this	then	them	with
see	for	now	down	look	too
he	she	we	me	be	was
you	they	all	are	my	her

Phase 4

went	It's	from	children	just	help
said	have	like	so	do	some
come	were	there	little	one	when
out	what				

Phase 5

don't	old	I'm	by	time	house
about	your	day	made	came	make
here	saw	very	put	oh	their
people	Mr	Mrs	looked	called	asked
could					

The Next 200 High Frequency Words

Water	away	good	want	over
how	did	man	going	where
would	or	took	school	think
home	who	didn't	ran	know
bear	can't	again	cat	long
things	new	after	wanted	eat
everyone	our	two	has	yes
play	take	thought	dog	well
find	more	I'll	round	tree
magic	shouted	us	other	food
fox	through	way	been	stop
must	red	door	right	sea
these	began	boy	animals	never
next	first	work	lots	need
that's	baby	fish	gave	mouse
something	bed	may	still	found
live	say	soon	night	narrator
small	car	couldn't	three	head
king	town	I've	around	every
garden	fast	only	many	laughed
let's	much	suddenly	told	another
great	why	cried	keep	room
last	jumped	because	even	am
before	gran	clothes	tell	key
fun	place	mother	sat	boat
window	sleep	feet	morning	queen
each	book	its	green	different
let	girl	which	inside	run
any	under	hat	snow	air
trees	bad	tea	top	eyes
fell	friends	box	dark	grandad
there's	looking	end	than	best
better	hot	sun	across	gone
hard	floppy	really	wind	wish
eggs	once	please	thing	stopped
ever	miss	most	cold	park
lived	birds	duck	horse	rabbit
white	coming	he's	river	liked
giant	looks	use	along	plants
dragon	pulled	We're	fly	grow

Further sources of information: (all links worked at time of publication)

Enunciations of phonemes: Clips showing the correct enunciation for the phonics sounds

www.youtube.com/watch?v=BqhXUW_v-1s

Jolly phonics: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-ksblMiliA8>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lwJx1NSineE>

Phonics Play: interactive phonics games, printable resources & advice for parents:

<http://www.phonicsplay.co.uk/>

<http://www.phonicsplay.co.uk/ParentsMenu.htm>

Letters and Sounds: free resources and games for each phonics phase:

<http://www.letters-and-sounds.com/>

Jolly phonics Parent / teacher guide:

<http://jolly2.s3.amazonaws.com/Catalogues%20and%20Guide/Parent%20Teacher%20Guide.pdf>

Jolly Phonics: Links to Jolly Phonics videos:

<http://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=jolly+phonics+songs&docid=607986504012596452&mid=29146720A7F378A3B54529146720A7F378A3B545&view=detail&FORM=VIRE1#view=detail&mid=29146720A7F378A3B54529146720A7F378A3B545>

BBC: Alphablocks guide to phonics:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/grownups/article/the-alphablocks-guide-to-phonics>

Oxford Owl:

<http://www.oxfordowl.co.uk/for-home/reading-owl/expert-help/phonics-made-easy>

Department for Education phonics information for parents

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/learning-to-read-through-phonics-information-for-parents>