

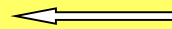
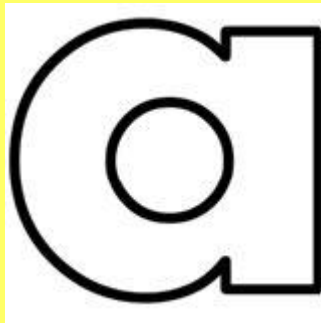
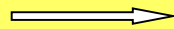
A Guide for Parents

Phonics

What is phonics?

Spoken words are made up of different sounds (*phonemes*) and children learn to match these phonemes to letters (*graphemes*).

Letter
sound =
phoneme



Letter
shape =
grapheme

a for ant



Children should initially learn each letter by its sound not its name, e.g. the letter **a** should be pronounced **a** not **ai**, the letter **b** should be pronounced **b** not **bee** and so on.

The letter sounds are not introduced in alphabetical order.

The first group (*s, a, t, p, i, n*) has been chosen because they make more simple three-letter words than any other six letters.

The letters *b* and *d* are introduced in different groups to avoid confusion.

Learning the letter sounds

Some sounds are written with one letter, such as **b** and **p**.

Some are written with two letters, such as **ee** and **or**. These are called ***digraphs***.

Some are written with more than two letters, such as **igh**.

Some *graphemes* can make two different sounds,

e.g. the letter *g* as in *got* and *giant*
or the letters *ea* as in *eat* and
bread and the letters *ow* as in *cow*
and *throw*.

Sounds can have more than one way of being written. Initially they are taught in one form only.

For example, the sound **ai** (*rain*) is taught first, and then alternatives **ay** (*day*) and **a-e** (*gate*) follow later.

Blending

Blending is the process of saying the individual sounds in a word and then running them together to make the word, e.g. sounding out *c- a- t* and making *cat*.

Segmenting

Segmenting is the process of saying the individual sounds in a word and then writing the letters that represent them, e.g. sounding out *c- a- t* and writing *cat*.

Blending and segmenting are two sides of the same process.

Learning the techniques of blending and segmenting improve with practice.

Letters and Sounds

At St John Rigby we follow a six phase teaching programme, recommended by the Government, which focuses on high quality phonic work.

By the end of Year Two children should have completed Phase 6.

Which phase the children should be working on is assessed by the teacher, and appropriate teaching is planned for.

In Phase 1

Children explore and experiment with hearing and saying sounds and become familiar with rhyme and rhythm.

In Phase 2

Children are introduced to
grapheme/phoneme
(letter/sound) correspondence.

Children learn that words are constructed from *phonemes* (sounds) and that *phonemes* are represented by *graphemes* (letters).

In Phase 2 they learn a small selection of common **consonants** and **vowels** and begin to put them together to read and spell **CVC** words, e.g. *cat, dog, run*.

In Phase 3

Children learn one *grapheme* (representation) for each of the 44 *phonemes* (sounds) in order to read and spell simple regular words.

They practise blending and segmenting with these phonemes.

In addition they learn common *digraphs* (e.g. th) and read some high frequency words (e.g. the, go).

In Phase 4

Children learn to blend (read)
and segment (spell) words
containing adjacent consonants, e.g.

CVCC words (*pots*) and *CCVC* words
(*spot*) and then *CCVCC* words
(*spots*).

In Phase 5

Children learn further graphemes for reading (e.g. **ay**, **ou** and **i-e**), and alternative ways of pronouncing the *graphemes* (e.g. the **c** in **coat** and **city**).

They learn to recognise an increasing number of high frequency words automatically.

They learn to read *two and three syllable* words (e.g thir/teen, af/ter/noon).

In Phase 6

Children apply their phonic knowledge to recognise and spell an increasing number of complex words (e.g. words with suffixes like *looked*, *longer*, *quickly*).

They read an increasing number of high and medium frequency words independently and automatically.

We also use Jolly Phonics to support our phonics teaching.

As we introduce each new sound we teach an action for it which helps children remember the letter or letters that represent it.

Some words in English have an irregular spelling and cannot be read by blending, such as *said*, *was* and *one*. Unfortunately, many of these are common words. The irregular parts have to be remembered. These are called the 'tricky words'.

**How you can help
your child**

You could ask your children what *phonemes* (sounds) they have been doing each day in class and get them to show you the action that goes with it.

As your child progresses you can point to the letters and see how quickly they can do the action and say the sound.

As a child becomes more confident, the actions are no longer necessary.

Helping your child with blending

To start with you should sound out the word and see if your child can hear it, giving the answer if necessary,

e.g. 'What is the word I am saying (sound-talking)? p-i-n?'

Pure sounds

Take care when saying the letter sounds. They should be 'pure' to aid blending, e.g

c not 'cuh',

b not 'buh',

d not 'duh'.

(f, g, h, j, k, p, s, t, v, w, x, y, z)

Likewise;

lll not 'luh',

mmm not 'muh',

nnn not 'nuh',

rrr not 'ruh'.

Some children take longer than others to hear this. The sounds must be said quickly to hear the word. It is easier if the first sound is said slightly louder.

Remember that some sounds are represented by two letters (*digraphs*), such as **sh**. Children should sound out the *digraph* (**sh**), not the individual letters (*s* - *h*).

With practice they will be able to blend the *digraph* as one sound in a word.

So a word like *rain* should be sounded out *r-ai-n*, and *feet* as *f-ee-t*. This is difficult to begin with and takes practice.

Identifying sounds in words

The easiest way to know how to spell a word is to listen for the sounds in that word. Even with the tricky words an understanding of letter sounds can help.

Start by having your child listen for the first sound in a word. Games like I-Spy are ideal for this.

Next help them to listen for the end sound, as the middle sound of a word is the hardest to hear.

When segmenting (spelling) with your child a good idea is to say a word and tap out the sounds. Three taps means three sounds. Say each sound as you tap.

Take care with *digraphs*.

The word *fish*, for example, has four letters but only three sounds,
f-i-sh.

Rhyming games and poems also help tune the ears to the sounds in words.

Other games to play are:

a) Add a sound: what do I get if I add a **p** to the beginning of *ink*?

Answer: *pink*.

Other examples are **m**-ice, **b**-us, etc.

b) Take away a sound: what do I get if I take away **p** from *pink*?

Answer: *ink*.

Other examples *f-lap*, *s-lip*, *c-rib*,
d-rag, *p-ant*, *m-end*, *s-top*, etc.

Spelling the tricky words

There are several ways of learning tricky spellings:

1) Look, Cover, Say, Write and Check.
Look at the word to see which bit is tricky. Ask your child to try writing the word in the air saying the letters. Cover the word over and see if your child can write it correctly. Check to make sure.

2) Say it as it sounds.

Say the word so each sound is heard. For example, the word *was* is said as 'wass', to rhyme with *mass*, the word *Monday* is said as 'M-on-day' etc.

3) Mnemonics.

The initial letter of each word in a saying gives the correct spelling of a word.

For example, *because - big elephants can always understand small elephants.*

4) Using joined-up writing also improves spelling.

Handouts

high frequency word lists in phases,
next 200 words, jolly phonics actions,
games (see woodcote), websites
(www.phonicsplay.com)

Resources

bingo cards, reading cards,
sentences, magnetic letters and
boards, flashcards.