



Radford Academy

A L.E.A.D. Academy

How we Teach Phonics

(2019/2020)

Phonics is a way of teaching children to read and write. It is the ability to hear, identify, and manipulate sounds and understand the link between the sound (phoneme) and the way it is written (grapheme). At Radford Academy we follow Letters and Sounds which we access through phonics play. This is a phonics programme in which individual letters or letter sounds are 'blended' to form groups of letters or sounds, and those groups are then blended to form complete words. Pupils are also taught to read and spell 'tricky words' – words with spellings that do not follow the usual patterns. These include the words 'to', 'was', 'said' and 'the'. 'Tricky words' are ones that we can't sound – so these words just need to be remembered.



Children in Year R, 1 and 2 have daily Phonics sessions. These sessions focus on developing reading, writing and speaking and listening skills. The 'Letters and Sounds' programme is divided into six phases 1 being the first phase and 6 being the last. Pupils are divided into phonics groups depending on their ability. However these groups are fluid and as they master the skills in that particular phase, they move to the next phase and into the next group.

KEY STAGE 2

In Key Stage 2 we have a greater emphasis on whole word recognition. They follow words suitable for the age that they are working at and progress through those. Where appropriate phonics through letters and sound is used at the Teachers discretion for children they feel would still benefit from it.

Bear Words:

Bear words are the first lists of key words that we teach the pupils. This supports them in their development of reading and helps them to start writing independently. English homework in Reception class and year 1 focusses on learning to read and write all the Bear words.



Spelling :There is a focussed spelling session in each class during the week. Part of the homework is to learn the words expected for their year group from the National Curriculum. All pupils from years 1 to 6 will have a spelling test every week.

Assessment of Phonics:

- **Phonics Screening Check**

The National Phonics Screening Check is a statutory assessment introduced in 2012 to all Year 1 pupils. It is devised to confirm whether pupils have learned phonic decoding (breaking words down into the sounds that

The image shows a screenshot of a '2013 Phonics Screening Check: Answer sheet'. At the top, there are fields for 'First name' and 'Last name'. Below these, there is a table with two columns for 'Sound 1' and 'Sound 2'. Each column contains a list of words and a grid of boxes for marking. The words in the 'Sound 1' column include: 'ax', 'at', 'ay', 'ay', 'ax', 'at', 'ay', 'ax', 'at', 'ay', 'ax', 'at', 'ay', 'ax', 'at', 'ay'. The words in the 'Sound 2' column include: 'ay', 'ax', 'at', 'ay', 'ax', 'at', 'ay', 'ax', 'at', 'ay', 'ax', 'at', 'ay'. The bottom of the page has a 'Total correct' field.

make them up and saying the word) to an age-appropriate standard at the end of Year 1. It involves your child sitting with their teacher and reading 40 words in total. It begins with practice words that are not scored and then moves onto the test where both real and pseudo-words are included. If a pupil does not reach the age appropriate standard they will retake the assessment when they are in year 2.

- Children are also regularly assessed on what sounds they do/ do not know and the planning is adapted accordingly to accommodate for any gaps that the children may have in their learning. This is done regularly and children can easily move groups within their classes.
- Class R teach phonics in 3 targeted groups, Year 1 children are split into 2 groups and year 2 are also split into 2 groups 1 group targeted support and the other looking at the spelling patterns expected for year 2 children.



Letters and sounds/ Phonics Play



Phase.1 - This is the first phase and it focuses on developing listening skills. This is the most important phase because you need to be able to hear the sounds in a word if you are going to read and write successfully. Pupils will be encouraged to try and think of other words that start with the same sound as well as listen out for rhyming words. When they are confident in this phase they will be able to say what the word is that an adult has segmented (sounded out).

Phase.2 - This is the next step in the learning journey and this is where they start learning the sounds that the phonemes (letters) make. They will learn 4 sounds a week and will practice reading words with these phonemes in and also learn how to form the letters correctly. They also learn 6 tricky words, which are words that they cannot read by just sounding out the phonemes.

Phase.3 - This is where they start learn about capital letters and the alphabet. Pupils learn that each letter has a name and a sound that it represents. They also start to learn some digraphs (which are phonemes made with 2 letters, so there may be 2 letters but together they only make 1 sound, e.g 'sh'). As in Phase 2 there is another set of tricky words to learn to read. Pupils will start reading words with the new phonemes as well as beginning to write simple words using phonemes and tricky words from Phase 2.

Phase.4 - This phase tries to pull together all the phonemes and skills learnt in the previous phases and giving pupils more opportunities to apply their knowledge. In this phase they focus on being able to read and write words confidently using all the phase 2 and 3 phonemes. Pupils learn to read another set of tricky words and practice writing their writing so that can confidently write the phase 2 and 3 tricky words independently.

Phase.5 - Once confident with a core set of phonemes and how to use pupils will enter phase 5 which is a long phase with a lot to learn and master. They will learn that some graphemes (letters) can have different phonemes (sounds) for example 'c' in cat makes a different sound to the 'c' in cell (which is more of a 's' sound). They will also learn that there is sometimes more than one

grapheme to represent a phoneme. Pupils will also be introduced to split digraphs (which is where 2 letters work together in a word to make the sound, but are not next to each other and the letters are not sounded out when reading the word). The word 'game' is a good example, in this word the 'a – e' graphemes work together to make an 'ay' sound. As in all of the phases there is another set of 'tricky words' to learn.

Phase.6 -This is the last phase. In this phase pupils will focus on writing with all of the phonemes and tricky words that they have learnt in all of the phases. They will also be learning spelling rules, for example what we do if we add 'ing' to the end of a word.

Click her for links to the letters and sounds and phonics play website:

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

Helping with phonics at home

- **Read regularly with your child** - Encourage children to recognise sounds and as they grow more confident, encourage them to blend the sounds together and to read sentences independently.
- **When you are reading to your child**, emphasise the rhyming words and ask what is special about them. Initial letter sound hunt – Say a sound to your child and see if they can find something in their house that starts with that letter. This also works well with 'I spy' but remember to use the letter sound and not its name.
- **Songs** – Sing nursery rhymes and traditional songs with your child and talk to them about the patterns that they notice in the words.

Useful terms in phonics

Grapheme vowels – the open sounds / letters of the alphabet: a,e,i,o and u.

Consonants – sounds/ letters of the alphabet that are not vowels.

Blend – to merge individual sounds together to pronounce a word, e.g. s-n-a-p, blended together, reads snap

Cluster – two (or three) letters making two (or three) sounds, e.g. the first three letters of 'straight' are a consonant cluster

Digraph – two letters making one sound, e.g. sh, ch, th, ph.

Vowel digraphs – two vowels which, together, make one sound, e.g. ai, oo, ow

Split digraph – two letters, split, making one sound, e.g. a-e as in make or i-e in site – letter or a group of letters representing one sound, e.g. sh, ch, igh, ough (as in 'though')

Mnemonic — a device for memorising and recalling something, such as a snake shaped like the letter 'S'

Phoneme — the smallest single identifiable sound, e.g. the letters 'sh' represent just one sound, but 'sp' represents two (/s/ and /p/)

Segment — to split up a word into its individual phonemes in order to spell it, e.g. the word 'cat' has three phonemes: /c/, /a/, /t/

Please come and talk to us if you have any questions or need advice about how to support your child.