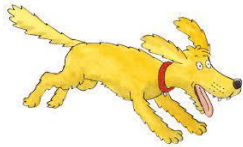


# Tickhill Estfeld Primary School

## Parents' Guide to Phonics



### Introduction

Phonics is a method of teaching reading and spelling based on the sounds letters make in words.

At Estfeld, we have recently introduced a new scheme *Floppy's Phonics*, to ensure phonics continues to be taught in an engaging, effective and systematic way. This enables our pupils to progress from the earliest phase of developing vital listening skills to the complex spelling patterns our older children need to master.

*Floppy's Phonics* was chosen because it fits perfectly with our well established core reading scheme, *The Oxford Reading Tree*.

The children are taught each phoneme (letter sound) in a multi-sensory way with an action, visual clue and a catchy song to help them remember it. They are encouraged to practise the phonemes, songs and actions at home to help build confidence.

### The Basics

The English Language uses 44 sounds (phonemes). These are represented by 26 letters in at least 140 different combinations! A sound can be represented by a single letter (for example *h*) or a group of letters (for example *th* or *igh*).

Once children begin learning sounds (phonemes) and recognising the letters that represent them (graphemes) they quickly start to read and spell words independently.



### Phonics Lessons

In Phonics lessons children are taught three main things:

- **GPC - grapheme/phoneme correspondence**

This simply means that they are taught all the sounds in the English language and ways of writing them down. These sounds are taught in a particular order. The first phonemes taught are *s a t p i n*. These can immediately be used to start creating words...*as, pat, sat* etc

- **Blending** - bringing the phonemes together smoothly to make words eg *c- a -t ...cat*
- **Segmenting** - breaking a word up into the phonemes that make it eg *rain....r-ai-n*. This skill is vital in being able to spell words.

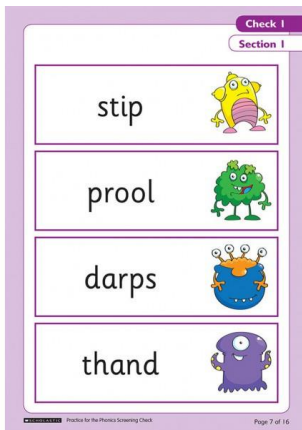
## What Makes Phonics Tricky?

We have 44 phonemes but many different ways of writing those sounds. The written sound is called a grapheme. Some graphemes are made from two, three or even four letters and, to make it even worse, some represent more than one phoneme, for example, *ch* makes a different sound in *chip*, *school* and *chef*.

Some words cannot be sounded out at all, but need to be learned by heart because they do not fit into the usual spelling patterns. The children know these as 'Helpful Words' and are taught ways to help them remember the spelling, for instance, mnemonics - these are sentences that act as memory joggers (*Sally Ann is dancing for said*).

## Year One Phonics Screening Check

At the end of Year One the children take a Phonics Screening Check to make sure they are making progress and have reached an expected standard for their age. Most children pass this test. Children who do not pass will be offered extra phonic support in Year 2. They re-take the test at the end of Year 2.



### The Test

The children take the test one-to-one with their teacher. They are asked to read a series of words independently. Some words are real, but some are nonsense words to test children's ability to use phonics to 'sound out' the word. The children are encouraged to say the phonemes first, then the whole word eg 's...t...i...p.....stip' 'th...a...n...d...thand,'

## Year Two

Work on phonics to support reading and spelling continues throughout Year Two. Learning follows the National Curriculum. Pupils are grouped so that teaching can be targeted to their specific needs. They will be encouraged to build confidence by practising spellings at home. Ideas to make this interesting and fun can be found in the posters 'Spelling at Home' and 'Spelling Play' (available to download from our website).

## A Final Word

Some children find phonics very difficult. This is because it *is* difficult! Good teaching and good learning behaviour will help most children progress well but, as we all know, different children are good at different things and for some children accurate spelling is not easy. However, there are many ways of supporting children in gaining confidence and independence as spellers. We continue to offer extra support in reading and spelling to both groups and individuals throughout Key Stage 2 in addition to class English lessons.



*If you are concerned about any aspect of Phonics please talk to your child's teacher.*