



Eastcote
Primary Academy

Phonics International

Eastcote Primary Academy

Eastcote's new approach to Phonics.

We value the importance of Early Reading and understand how development in Early Reading supports better development across all curriculum areas.

We wanted to ensure that our approach to Early Reading was rigorous and sets high expectations of ourselves as educators, our parents as partners and our children as learners. We wanted to ensure that our approach to Early Reading was suitable for ALL of our learners. Being an inclusive school, we did not want to run multiple programmes of intervention, but wanted to have one superior programme which encompassed the specialist strategies used in the very best interventions.

The Government released new updated guidance for the teaching of early reading- 'The reading framework'
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-reading-framework-teaching-the-foundations-of-literacy>

This guidance is a really positive step in ensuring that every school follows the best possible approach for all learners.

Why Phonics International?

Phonics International is created by Literacy specialist Debbie Hepplewhite. Debbie has had an extensive career as a highly prominent figure in the Literacy world, advising the Government and the Department for Education on the importance of systematic synthetic phonics and championing this approach continuously. Debbie has been part of influential reviews such as 'Teaching Children to Read' (March 2005) and Sir Jim Rose's 'Independent review of the teaching of early reading' (March 2006) along with many others.

The Phonics International programme encompasses everything that we need in an early literacy programme- a structured, systematic and synthetic phonics approach, high quality resources and a 'whole literacy' approach in which knowledge of the alphabetic code is combined with reading, spelling and handwriting.

What is the 'structured, systematic, synthetic' strategy ?

Systematic synthetic phonics (SSP) is a proven strategy for developing essential reading skills in children. As the name suggests, it follows a structured and sequential way of showing learners how to read.

We teach the alphabetic code knowledge (the relationship, or links, between the smallest sounds of speech and the letters or letter groups) by systematically introducing the letter/s-sound correspondences of the alphabetic code.

We model how to put the letter/s-sound correspondences introduced to immediate use with cumulative real written and spoken words, sentences and texts teaching the three core skills of Decoding, Encoding and Handwriting.

- Decoding (**reading**): Identify the printed word from left to right to recognise any letter groups: t r ay Say the sounds for the letters and letter groups all through the printed word and blend (synthesise) the sounds to 'hear' the target word: /t/ /r/ /ai/ "tray"
- Encoding (**spelling**): Orally segment (split up using sound buttons) all through the spoken word to identify the phonemes (sounds): "tray /t/ /r/ /ai/" and then write the graphemes (letters and letter groups) as the correct code for the identified sounds: t r ay
- Handwriting: Holding a pen/ pencil/ fine motor implement with the tripod grip. Learn to write the 26 lower case letters and 26 upper case (capital) letters of the alphabet correctly (starting points and direction of formation, position on a writing line, relative sizes). In Early Years we promote this through play and throughout Key Stage 1 and 2, we promote very high expectations of these skills through the use of handwriting practise.

The English Alphabetic Code

units of sound phoneme/s	graphemes, or spelling alternatives, in key words which are code for the sounds	units of sound phoneme/s	graphemes, or spelling alternatives, in key words which are code for the sounds
/s/	snake glass palace house scissors [c o nts c i ty bic o cle] castle pseudonym	/ee/	eel eat emu concrete key chief sardines
/a/	apple	or /i-ee/	sunny monkey movie
/t/	teddy letter skipped	/or/	fork ears door snore four [wardrobe quarter] water
/i/	insect cymbals	or /aw/	dawn sauce chalk caught thought
/p/	pan puppet	/z/	zebra jazz fries cheese breeze
/n/	net bonnet knot gnome engine	/ŋ/	gong jungle [ŋk/ ink uncle
/k/	kit cat duck chameleon bouquet plaque	/v/	violin dove
/e/	egg head said	short /oo/	book should push
/h/	hat who	long /oo/	moon blue flute crew fruit soup move through
/r/	rat arrow write rhinoceros	/ks/	fox plurals: books ducks cakes
/m/	map hammer welcome thumb column	/gz/	exam plurals: pegs eggs catalogues
/d/	dig puddle rained	/ch/	chairs patch /chu/ picture
/g/	girl juggle guitar ghost catalogue	/sh/	sheep chef station magician admission
/o/	orange [watch qualify sale]	/th/	unvoiced: thistle voiced: there
/u/	umbrella son touch thoroughfare	/kw/	queen
/l/	ladder shell	/ou/	ouch owl plough
/u:/	kettle pencil hospital camel	/oi/	ointment toy
/f/	feathers cliff photograph laugh	/yo/	unicorn statue tube new pneumatic
/b/	bat rabbit building	/er/	mermaid birthday nurse earth world
/j/	jug cabbage [girbil giraffe gymnast] fridge	schwa /er/ (or /u/)	mixer humour theatre
/y/	yawn	/ar/	artist father [palm, half, cat er]
/ai/	aid tray table sundae cake prey eight break straight	/air/	hair hare bear where
/w/	web wheel penguin	/eer/	deer ears adhere cashier
/oa/	oak bow yo-yo oboe rope dough plateau	/zh/	television treasure azure courgette collage
/igh/	night tie behind fly bike eider duck		

No alphabetic code chart can be definitive because of variations in accent and occasional differences in spelling (e.g. UK compared to the USA).
Hollow letters (e i g w q s k n f v s) show patterns which alert readers to pronunciations or possible pronunciations dependent on the words.

• As you can see our alphabetic code is extremely complex, our children have a big task at hand! Our alphabet has 26 letters and 44 (ish!) phonemes or ‘smallest’ sounds.

• 44 ‘ish’ because accents and regional variations of pronunciation can slightly alter things!

• When we teach each new unit of sound we say “these letters are the code for thesound.” • We are transparent with our learners that this is complex and that there are 3 main complexities to be aware of:

1. One sound (phoneme) can be represented by one, two, three or four letters: e.g. /a/ a, /f/ ph, /ch/ tch, /oa/ ough

2. One sound can be represented by multiple spelling alternatives (graphemes): e.g. /oa/: o, oa, ow, oe, o-e, eau, ough

3. One grapheme (letter or letter group) can represent multiple sounds: e.g. ‘ough’: /oa/ though, /or/ thought, long /oo/ through, /ou/ plough, /u/ thorough

What is a digraph, trigraph and split digraph?

There are three main keywords we use to describe the phonemes learnt in our Phonics lessons.

Digraph- This is where **2** separate sounds come together to make **1** sound.

E.g. the 'o' (c o t) and the 'a' (c a t) sounds come together to make the 'oa' sound- (b oa t)

Trigraph- This is where **3** separate sounds come together to make **1** sound.

E.g. the 'i' (n i t), 'g' (g a p) and the 'h' (h o p) sounds come together to make the 'igh' sound- (n igh t)

Split Digraph- A split digraph contains 2 letters (a-e, e-e, i-e, o-e and u-e) but they are split between a consonant.

E.g. make, bike and pure.

How to model pure sounds.

It is crucial that we pronounce each letter sound as a 'pure' sound. This means pronouncing each letter sound clearly and distinctly without adding additional sounds to the end e.g. 'fff' not 'fuh', 'sss' not 'suh' - the 'schwa'.

This is really important to support children in accurately blending and segmenting.

Here is a link to a video of the pure phonic sounds when supporting your child with Phonics at home:

<https://phonicsinternational.com/hear-the-sounds/>

'Tricky words'

Words which are not easily decodable used to be referred to as 'tricky' words or even 'non-decodable' words. **ALL words are decodable**, but children may come across some words which contain graphemes that they have not been explicitly taught yet. This is essentially what is meant by a 'tricky' word.

Rather than reading these words for children, or simply teaching them to memorise them by sight, we explain the code of these words, for example;

"This is the word **me**, in this word the letter **e** makes an **'ee'** sound. We sound out this word like this-

m / ee."

Although it is okay to learn these words by sight or memory, we will still explicitly teach the code.

What does a Phonics International lesson look like?

	the main letter/s-sound correspondences introduced and/or revisited in each unit
unit 1	s a t i p n c k ck e h r
unit 2	m d g o u l -ll f -ff s -ss b j y ai ay w oa ow ie igh -le o
unit 3	ee or z -zz w wh ea e-ea /z/ s se ze
unit 4	ng nk v ve oo-oo y -y x ch sh th-th
unit 5	qu ou ow-ow oi oy ue-ue er ar -ve -ce s-ss ge- -se y-y-y
unit 6	ce,ci,cy ge,gi,gy o-oe 'oes' ie,i-e ee,e-e oe,o-e ae,a-e ue,u-e air are ear ere eer ear ere ier ir ur ear wor er,our -re
unit 7	le il al el aw au al oar oor ore our ch,tch ge,dge x,x kn wr mb sc gu bu ch rh
unit 8	sh,ch ti ci ssi /zh/ si s z g ge ou 'ous' ph gh g,gg,gh ch,ch,ch wa qua war gn st
unit 9	-ey eigh -ea -aigh -ey -ie -y -ie ei
unit 10	-o -ew -ui -ou -o eu ew -iew
unit 11	ough augh ch qu -que quar
unit 12	-gue -ine -ine -ine mn ps alm alt -ture -eau -re


Phonics International introduces the sounds in the following order.



What does 'reading' look like for children at Eastcote?

Reading with your child – in school and at home

Teaching Reading

In school, reading written words (decoding) is taught by phonics. 

Phonics is how the **sounds** in spoken words link to **letters** in written words.

'sh' 'i' 'p'
ship = 


Children are taught to **sound out** and **blend the sounds** to read new words.

Children talk about the books they read.

They think about what is happening and ask what new words mean.

Learn: Children read aloud to the teacher.
The words, sentences and books have the letter-sounds they are working on in class.

Practising Reading

Children practise by reading aloud. This helps to **improve** their reading so they feel **more confident**. 

Listen to your child read aloud. For new words, your child will **look** at the letters and letter groups. They will then **sound them out** from left to right to read the words.

f ff ph 



Help your child if needed.

Talk with your child about the content of the books.

Talk about what is happening and what any new words mean.

Practice: Children read aloud to a parent/carer.
The words in the book have the letter/s and sounds already introduced in class.

The World of Books

Children enjoy listening to books that they might not be able to read by themselves yet.  

Reading books aloud to children helps them to learn about themselves and other people.

They can step into a world that is different from their own.




Read lots of different types of books to your child.

You can borrow books from your local library.

Talk about the books you share

Experience: Children hear lots of different stories (fiction) and poems, and also enjoy books with facts (non-fiction).

Reading to Learn

Children learn about the world around them from books and other texts. 

Books teach children about different subjects such as history or science.

Books help children to find out about the world around them.



Teachers **share** books and texts that are right for the child's age or level of understanding.

Knowledge: Children find out facts and information even if they are not able to read the books themselves yet.



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Home Reading Book Routine

- Children will be given, typically, one story to read a week. Many of the books have two stories in, please focus on the story directed by your child's class teacher. This will be changed weekly on your child's reading day. Please read this story so your child can decode words and continue until the text becomes familiar. We strongly encourage that children re-read over a period of one week to build up fluency. Children at this point are not encouraged to 'move on' through book bands, this is the stage to practice decoding with books containing taught sounds.
- We are continually ensuring that reading books given to children match perfectly their phonic ability, this may sometimes mean children change 'colour' band, please do not worry that this means no progress has taken place, this simply means that we are ensuring that children have adequate practice of sounds taught and are given the opportunity to build up fluency.
- Children will also be given a 'reading for pleasure' book weekly, this is not a decodable book for the child to read, but a book to share together, perhaps as a bedtime story.

How to support your child when reading PI books at home

1. Inside the front cover of the book discuss the sounds to ensure that your child can name each sound.
2. Support your child to read the decodable words within the text, ensuring you use the pure sound for each grapheme. E.g. 'cat': c-a-t = cat.
3. Inside the front cover talk through the 'words for understanding', these words ensure comprehension and inference of the story/ text.
4. Work through the book, encouraging your child to sound out any words, whilst encouraging 'whole word' reading of familiar words.
5. Re-read as many times as needed to build fluency over the week.

In addition to the weekly decodable book, take as many opportunities as you like to engage in reading for pleasure, both using the given texts from school and books you may have at home.



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Want to find out more about Phonics International?

An overview of all of the units taught and the 'order' of teaching can be found on the phonics international website in this handy 'In a nutshell' guide:

https://phonicsinternational.com/Brief_overview_of_Phonics_International_in_a_nutshell.pdf

A 'full' guidance document is also available for anyone who would like to become a real Phonics International expert! https://phonicsinternational.com/guidance_book.pdf

Come and speak to us at school! If you have any questions about the programme or about how you can support your child at home, our school staff will always be happy to help.