



**Reading  
in the  
Early Years  
Foundation Stage at  
Scott Primary  
School.**



'Jolly phonics' and 'Letters and Sounds' are systematic phonics schemes that teach children the alphabetic code of English. They are taught how to blend sounds together to read words (c-a-t = cat) how to segment words in order to write them (dog = d-o-g) and how to cope with tricky words (irregular words such as 'one'). There are five main elements to the teaching:

### 1. Multisensory method

A multisensory method is used to introduce the children to the letter sounds. There is an action and sound for each letter. By doing an action associated with the sound, for example, rub your tummy and say 'mmmmm' for the sound 'm', the children remember it more readily.

We would really appreciate any support you are able to give your child with their sounds, either by simply using them as flash cards or making duplicate sets and playing games of 'snap' or memory 'pairs'. Can your child match the letter(s) with words in a favourite reading book? Are the sounds the same?

In order to blend sounds efficiently, it is important for your child to know the letter sounds fluently. Initially it may well help your child if you perform the letter sound action as well as the letter image.

Some sounds are represented by two letters. Children need to be able to recognise these sounds (known as digraphs) in words, e.g. the 'ng' in 'strong'. The digraphs 'oo' and 'th' each have two different sounds, e.g. 'book' and 'moon', 'thin' and 'that'.

### 2. Learning Letter Formation:

As the letter sounds are introduced, the children are shown exactly how to form each letter correctly. Initially the children form letters in the air or on each other's backs using their finger. By regularly feeling the formation of each letter, and then writing it, children should begin to form their letters correctly. It is also important to teach children to hold their pencils correctly in the tripod grip.



### 3. Blending:

As well as learning the sounds, the children need to be taught how to blend them together to hear a word. The aim is to enable the children to hear the word when the teacher says the sound. E.g. 'What word am I saying c-a-n?' Once the children hear the word when the adult says the sounds, they are ready to try and blend words for themselves.

The ability to blend letters and sounds fluently is the essential skill for reading and should always be the first strategy for working with unknown words. Children then need to be supported to recognise consonant blends and digraphs in words such as 'fl-a-g' and 'sh-o-p'.

### 4. Segmenting (identifying sounds in words):

It is essential that children can hear the individual sounds in words, especially for writing. Initially, the children are asked to listen carefully and say if they can hear a given sound in words. For example, 'Is there a 's' in 'sun?'. It can help to hold up a finger as they say each sound so that they are able to visualise how many sounds make up one word.

At school, teachers will write the letters on the board as the children say them. Then the children look at the word, say the sounds and blend them to read the word.

The children will also focus on segmenting words to support both their reading and writing skills. The teacher will say a whole word, e.g. 'hen' and the children will attempt to identify the sounds in the order they occur. The children will 'have a go' at writing the sounds as they hear them. This activity helps to build the children's confidence as independent writers.

### 5. Tricky Words:

Tricky words are words that cannot be worked out by blending. For example, 'was', 'she', 'to'. We will introduce these with other key words in class and send them home on word cards as appropriate. In school, we try and find fun ways to help the children memorise them.

#### **Getting started:**

In the beginning, your child may come home with a picture book. It is important that they can talk about what is happening in the pictures, talk about character feelings and begin to make predictions. The children will be taught to sound several single letter sounds before they are given whole words and a simple reading book. The initial letters are as follows:

S a t p i n

C e h r m d

g o u l f b

Once these are known, your child will receive a book with the first set of nine words in them. These words relate to Stage One of the Oxford Reading Tree scheme. These stories centre around a four-year-old boy named Kipper. Kipper has a brother named Chip and a sister called Biff. Chip and Biff are twins and are aged seven. They all live with Mum and Dad and Floppy the dog. The following are the stage one keywords:

Kipper Biff Chip Floppy Mum Dad and a the

The children will then be taught the first set of High Frequency words to support the vocabulary they will encounter in their reading books:

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

Once known, we will then teach stage two words. These words use the keywords from stage one and also introduces a further 18 new keywords. As so many new words are introduced, most children will remain on stage two words for some time. The stage two words are as follows:

Everyone said got pushed pulled wanted cross They it It made He  
put had to was went in

As you can see, some of the stage two keywords have capital letters when they are introduced.

It is important that your child can readily recognise (and sound) the keywords in stage two before moving onto the next stage. Stage Three introduces 21 new keywords. It also introduces two new characters, a brother and sister named Wilf and Wilma – they are friends of Biff, Chip and Kipper. The following are the stage three keywords:

Barked children climbed jumped couldn't looked played an  
down Get he on up gave tree what I Wilf Wilma

At this point, we introduce groups of other high frequency words to broaden your child's reading vocabulary:

Will see you that for she this now we all then down them down  
me are them be my with too her said come out it's have were what  
from like so do some come little one when don't about here people  
could old your saw Mr. I'm day very Mrs. By made time came oh  
called house make their asked.

Alongside these keywords, your child will also have word lists with the following digraphs in them:

ng ch sh th

Following this, the next list focuses on the long vowel sounds:

ai ee igh oa oo

After this, your child will have a series of word lists based on the following sounds:

ar or ur ow oi ear air ure er

Once your child has successfully completed all of the above (phew!!) they will receive a high frequency word list based on the next 200 common words.

Having completed the above, your child should now be a confident and competent word- builder and reader!

