

## How we teach phonics

We teach children in groups of roughly similar ability, and group them across other classes of the same/similar age to ensure that teaching matches their development.

We teach capital letters and lower case, but as most writing is in lower case this is how we expect your child to write. If you can teach them their name with a capital letter at the start and the rest in lower case this will really help.

Some of the skills of reading and writing are complex and take longer to develop. By working together we can ensure that your children acquire these skills and meet their potential.

## Some vocabulary

**Phoneme** means sounds in words, cat has 3 phonemes, ghost has 4

**Digraph** is where 2 letters represent one sound such as the sh in ship

**Blending** is saying the sounds in a word and then running them together to read the word

**Segmenting** is breaking up a spoken word into the individual sounds

## How to say the phonemes

We teach letter names and sounds/phonemes. But the letter names don't help with reading and writing in the early stages, so our main focus is on the sounds. Some sounds stretch and some don't

→ If you can - stretch the sound out so s becomes sssss, and m becomes mmmm.

→ If you can't stretch them out be careful not to say the "uh" sound at the end. So b is not buh.

## Our programme – Please ask your child's teacher which phase they are on

**Phase 1** – focuses on speaking and listening, hearing and talking about different sounds in the environment, and hearing and saying the speech sounds within words. We start teaching this in nursery.

### **Ways to support your child at home:**

- talk about sounds you can hear, such as the fridge, or cars
- talk about the way words sound such as "oo, mouse and mummy, they both begin with m" or "cat and rat, they sound similar
- play I spy but say the sounds not the letter names



**Phase 2** – (we start teaching this in reception when your child starts school, but some children in years 1 & 2 may still be working on this)

We teach the most common sound that each of the single alphabet letters makes (except q and x). We teach them in these groups:

s m t c g p a o  
r h b d l i f u  
z y w v e n k j

Children learn to read and spell words where each letter represents one sound, such as cat, wet and ran (but not words like coat)

### **Ways to support your child at home:**

- play I spy but say the sounds not the letter names
- talk about letters you see in print and on signs, can they remember the sound it makes? Have they seen it in another word?
- remind your child to say the sounds before trying to blend when they are reading
- use cards with one letter on each and see if they can put three together to read a word



**Phase 3** – (we start teaching this in reception but some children in years 1 & 2 may still be working on this)

Children learn that two or more letters are sometimes put together to make one sound in English.

We teach them in these groups

ss ff zz ll

sh ch wh th (as in thin, and also as in that)

ck ng qu x (as it is pronounced at the ends of words like fox)

ee igh oa a-e (as in game, it makes an ay sound)

ow oy oo (as in moon and also as in book)

ear air (as in hear and chair)

Children learn to read and write using these. Children's writing isn't always as accurate as their reading. This is normal.

### **Ways to support your child at home:**

- encourage them to spot the new digraphs they are learning in books, or on signs
- build words with cards with one sound on each card, start to use some digraphs on these cards. See if they can make words, or read the words you make



**Phase 4** – (we start teaching this in reception if your children are ready for this, if not it will be taught in year 1, some children in year 2 will be working on this)

Children are taught to read words with 4 sounds in, using the letters and sounds they have already been taught such as:

from, pond, short (sh-or-t)

**Ways to support your child at home:**

-build words with cards with one sound on each card, you can use any of the sounds they know, including digraphs and single letters, but try to build words with 4 sounds



**Phase 5** – (we start teaching this in year 1, this phase is complex and can take a long time to master)

Children learn to read and write new ways of representing the sounds they know.

Such as a-e (game) ay (day) a (apron) ai (pain)

Children might not always choose the correct spelling when writing and will be more confident reading a range of these spelling patterns

**Ways to support your child at home:**

-encourage your child to look at words as they read, or see them on signs, and notice anything interesting or unusual about the spelling patterns. This will help with their writing.



**Phase 6** - (we start teaching this in year 2, although in some cases year 1 children may be ready for this as well)

Children are taught unusual ways of spelling certain sounds.

They are also taught how to change words, for instance by adding beginnings and endings, such as do to undo, and like to liked

Children are taught to be increasingly accurate in their spelling, and increasingly fluent in their reading

**Ways to support your child at home:**

-continue to read stories to your child if they want you to  
-listen to them read, re-read sentences or paragraphs to them to help them hear how to phrase their reading  
-let them see you reading for pleasure  
-encourage them to help with writing such as by writing you a shopping list



# phonics



**Bluecoat Academy**

believe in yourself, in others, in God

## a guide for parents

Wherever you see a box like this, with a star like this, you will find tips for how to support your child at home



Please remember all children progress at their own rate.  
Praise lots for their efforts as well as their achievements

