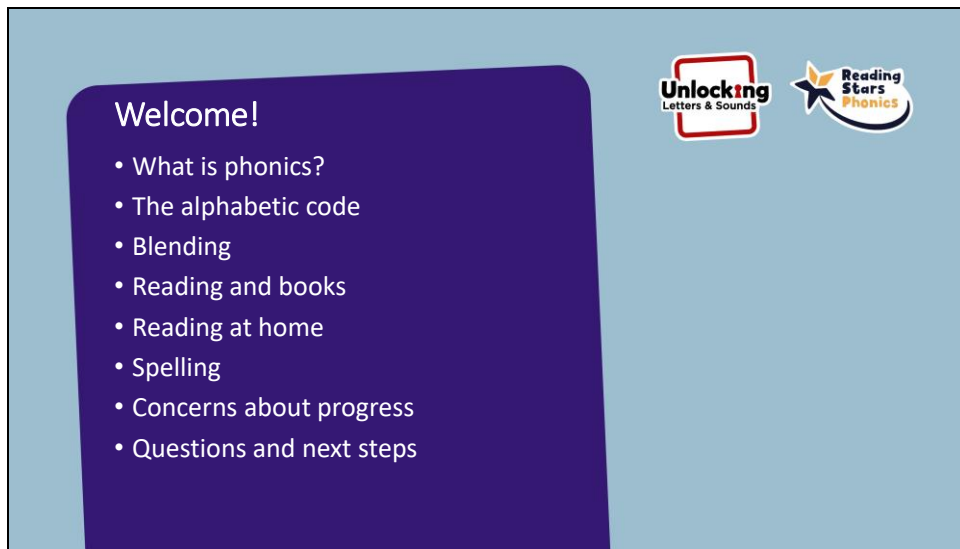


Parent/ Carer Introduction to Phonics
and Early Reading
2023-24



Welcome!

- What is phonics?
- The alphabetic code
- Blending
- Reading and books
- Reading at home
- Spelling
- Concerns about progress
- Questions and next steps

Unlocking
Letters & Sounds

Reading Stars
Phonics

Welcome parents to the session.

We are very excited they are here to learn about the most amazing journey that their children are starting – learning to read!!!

Explain how you are structuring the session/ sessions to give them information about how early reading is taught at your school and how they can play a vital role in supporting their child's reading journey.



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Reading Stars
Phonics

We love reading!

- Reading for pleasure
- Finding out information
- Reading the world around them
- Understanding forms and official documents
- Accessing learning





Reading is one of the most important things we can teach our children. We want all our children to be avid readers with a love for all different types of literature.

Think of reading activities you do everyday....

As children start their school life they will very much focus on learning to read. As they move higher up the school and into secondary education and beyond they will be reading to learn. So it is vitally important that we support our youngest pupils to quickly learn to read. We want every child to love reading and to do this we must make sure that it is a pleasurable experience and that they can read with accuracy and fluency so they can access as many opportunities as possible.

What is Phonics?

- Link between the words we say and the letters that represent each sound.
- Grapheme – the written letter or groups of letters
- Phoneme – the sounds that the grapheme makes.



Over the past 50 years schools have taught children to read using lots of different approaches. But, thanks to research we know that phonics is the best way to teach children to read. We know this might be different to how you were taught to read so we hope this session/ sessions helps you to understand what phonics is, how we will teach phonics at our school and how you can help your child to learn to read.

The national curriculum says that phonics should be the main way that schools teach children to read. The Department of education have recently approved phonics schemes that meet it's criteria of a good scheme. Our school has chosen to use a scheme called Unlocking Letters and Sounds. All schemes are slightly differently but , as a school , we think this is the best one for our pupils. All children in the school will use Unlocking Letters and Sounds to teach their phonics and early reading. All staff have had training with this scheme so they are experts at using it.

Phonics teaches the link between the words we read/ say and he words we write on the page. It teaches how the letters in written words represent the sounds we say in spoken words – this is called decoding.

Sat the word CAT.

When we say this word we say lots of sounds very quickly – so quickly we hardly notice the sound each letter makes.

Say the sounds in CAT c/a/t

What sounds can we hear? When we write the word cat we represent each sound with a symbol that we call a letter. C A T

This is phonics!

There is some technical vocabulary that we use for phonics and that your children will use.

Grapheme – the written letter or groups of letters

Phoneme – the sounds that the grapheme makes.



With your new vocabulary can you tell me the phonemes that make this word (map)


Can you tell me the graphemes that represent these phonemes?

What is Phonics?

Jj	Vv	Ww	Xx	Yy	Zz
zz	qu	ch	sh	th	th
ng	ai	ee	igh	oa	oa
oa	ar	or	ur	ow	oi
ear	air	ure	er		

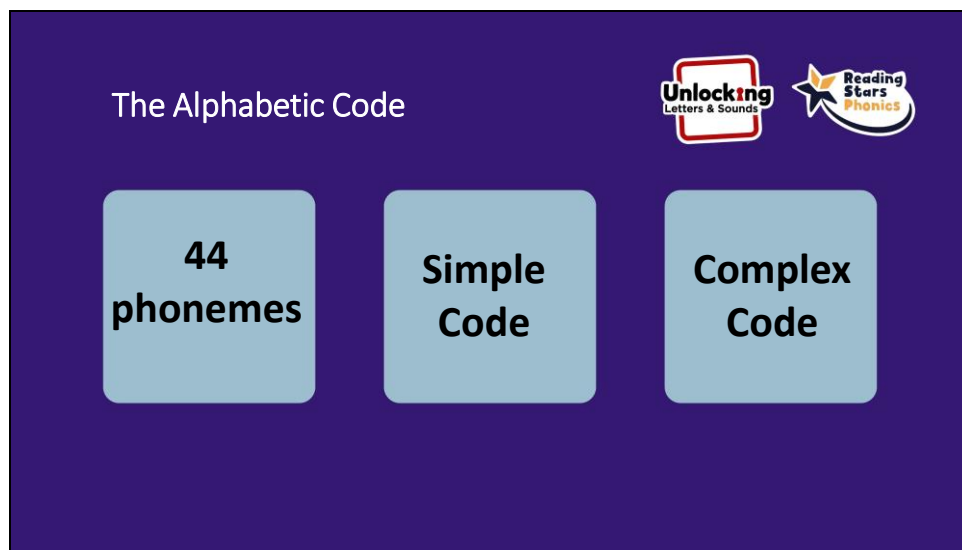
Unlocking Letters & Sounds Sound Mat Phase 2 Copyright ©2020 Unlocking Letters and Sounds



As children start to learn their grapheme phoneme correspondences (GPCs) it is very important that we pronounce the sounds clearly and purely. (Please do not add an 'uh' sound to the end of a phoneme, it will not be assessed as correct) We also help them to learn and remember the GPCs in Reception with an image and action for each phoneme. Your children will be coming home sharing the actions with you so do join them when they are using them!

Model pronunciation and actions for some of the first GPCs children will be learning.



The English language is made up of about 44 different sounds in different combinations – it is one of the most complicated languages. It will take most children about three years to learn the alphabetic code and to use it to read and it is one of the most important things we teach in Reception and Key Stage 1. We know that children won't learn to read by themselves so we will be teaching phonics every day to help them learn. Your children will have a daily phonics lesson from Reception until Year 2. They will be taught by their teacher in the whole class and each lesson will last about 20 minutes.

Your child will learn 4 new GPCs each week – we organise them into sets. These sets are then put into phases.

In reception children will be taught Phases 2 – 4. They will be taught phase 5 in years 1 and 2.

When we start this decoding journey we will keep things very simple. We will teach basic phonemes and their matching graphemes (such as cat and map). This means that children rapidly learn and understand and to build confidence in their reading. This teaching will start straight away in Reception.

We've looked at examples where a phoneme is represented by a single letters.

Some sounds are represented by graphemes that have two or more letters.

Eg. Sh o p th i n r i ch

The sounds sh, th and ch are represented by two letters – these are called digraphs.

Some sounds are represented by three letters:

Eg. L igh t

The sound igh is represented by 3 letters - this is called a trigraph.

Your child will be coming home telling you all about phonemes, graphemes, digraphs and trigraphs! They will be fantastic at understanding this vocabulary as they are learning the alphabetic code and you can help by using these words at home.

As you children continue to learn to read they alphabetic code will become more complex. They will learn about sounds that are represented by lots of different graphemes and how some graphemes can represent different sounds. The complexity of the English alphabetic code is why it takes so long to read. Many children will find different parts challenging – especially at first. But our staff are skilled at teaching phonics and will be gradually working through the alphabetic code so that every child become an expert reader.

Blending

- Pushing the phonemes together to make a word.



- Fun – Funny - Funniest
- Crepuscular

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As well as learning to recognise the graphemes and say the phonemes they represent we will be teaching children how to use these to read.

When we read a word we look at each graphemes and match a sound to it. We push the sounds together to make a word. This is called **BLENDING**.

Blending is a really important skills that children need lots of practice at – it will take lots of time!

Let's have a go at blending a word: t / r / ee

We teach the children to work from left to right - identifying each grapheme and saying the phoneme. Once they have done that they go back and push the phonemes together to blend the phonemes together to read the word.

We want to teach children to recognise the grapheme quickly so they can blend it rapidly. Once they can do this their reading will become fluent – and less painful! But this really does take a he amount of practise so it is really important that children practise this at home with the books we give them.

As children progress in their reading journey they will begin to read longer words made up of multiple syllables – give the example of fun – funny – funniest

We teach these words by 'chunking' them into syllables and blending these chunks together. But we are still identifying the GPCs and blending them together.

This is what we will do as adults when we come across an unfamiliar word – use the example crepuscular. How would we read this unfamiliar word? We would chunk it and blend the syllables together. This is why it's really important to teach children to read using phonics – without this skills to decode the graphemes we would not be able to read unfamiliar words.

Common Exception Words

the	to	into
no	I	go

Unlocking Letters & Sounds


Reading Stars Phonics

There are some words that we use a lot in English such as the, like, said, were.

To give children's reading a boost and so they can access more tests quickly we want children to learn these CEWs early on. Many of them have usual patterns or GPCs that aren't taught until later on. So we teach children to recognise them by sight initially. Children will be able to decode some of them later on but , until they have learnt to decode them, we recognise them as CEWs.

Reading and Books

- Children will be given books when they can blend – this will be different for every child
- Books precisely match children’s phonics attainment



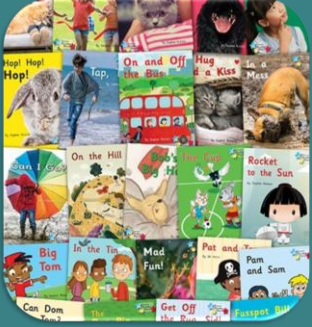

The image shows a collection of children's books covers arranged in a grid. At the top left of the grid is the 'Unlocking Letters & Sounds' logo, and at the top right is the 'Reading Stars Phonics' logo. The book covers feature various illustrations of animals, people, and objects, with titles that correspond to the phonics sets mentioned in the text.

As soon as your child can blend some GPCs together to read words we will be giving them a book. This is incredibly exciting but will be different for every child. Some learn this skills very quickly and others take a bit longer – we will be supporting every child to blend as quickly as possible. Please don't compare your child with others and contact us if you are worried about anything.

Once your child can read they will be given a book that precisely matches their phonics attainment so that they can read at least 95% of the words in it. Please don't think that this makes the book too easy for them – it's vitally important that reading is a celebration of children's reading with you and a chance for them to show their phonics expertise.

In school we will also be reading with children 1:1 and after Christmas when your child is assessed as being in phase 3 we will start guided reading. This is when they read with their teacher in a small group. The teacher will listen to every child read as well as teaching for part of the session. This allows us to check every child's learning.

Books are allocated to match the sets and phases that children are secure in. When teachers assess they are ready to move onto the next set we will do so but we know that this takes a different amount of time for each child – some will need more practice than others.



Reading at home

- 5 – 10 minutes
- Choose a time that works for you
- Be positive and celebrate successes
- Encourage them to point to the graphemes
- Encourage them to say the sounds and blend them together
- Be patient and let them try and work it out
- Read common exception words by sight.

Reading at home is essential as it gives children the opportunity to practice their decoding and blending skills.

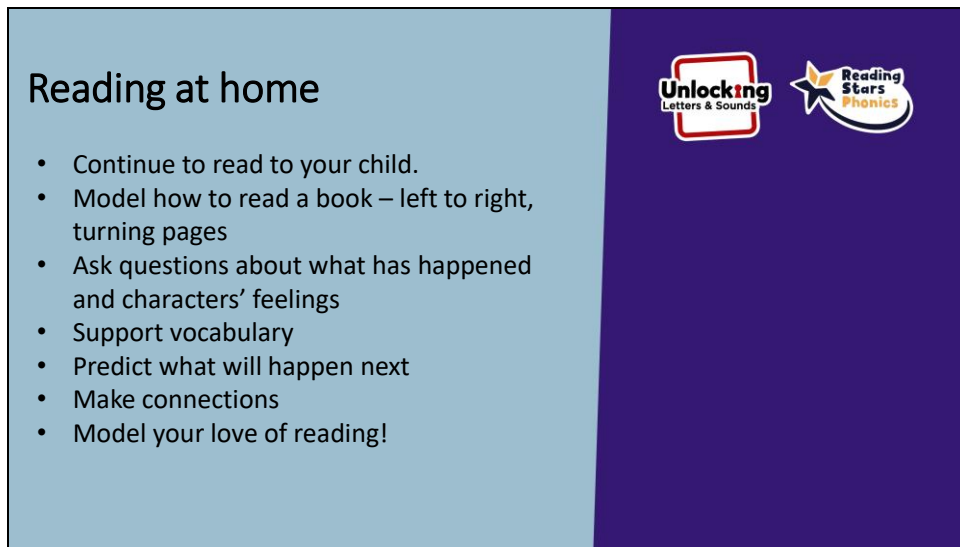
We know everyone is busy and children often don't want to read out of schools. Our top tips are:

- 5 – 10 minutes every day is often more effective than longer times
- Find a time that works for you. Reading at bed time sounds lovely but with a tired child it can often be tricky!
- Celebrate what your child can do and
- Encourage your child to point at the graphemes as they read – this helps them to track the words and know their place
- Encourage them to say all the sounds in the words and then blend them together – you can show them how to do this.
- Be patient and give them time to work it out before stepping in before stepping in If they can't read a word model how to do it and then ask them to do it.
- Let them read common exception words by sight.
- Show tag cards and explain how these can be used as flash card to rehearse sounds individually but also taken off the string to build words to segment and blend.

One of the most important ways to increase children's accuracy, fluency and understanding of the book they are reading is to re-read the same books several times. This is why we only give a maximum of 2 books each week – we would like each book to be read at least three times with a different focus each time.

Books should be read a minimum of 3 times with three clear comments in their reading record books. If we cannot see three comments we will not change the book. Book changing days are a Monday and Thursday. Children will have the opportunity to change reading for pleasure books everyday, so can do this as required.

This film explains the value of re-reading the same book and what you should focus on each time. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hhu3xeNq3Kg&t=200s>



Reading at home

- Continue to read to your child.
- Model how to read a book – left to right, turning pages
- Ask questions about what has happened and characters' feelings
- Support vocabulary
- Predict what will happen next
- Make connections
- Model your love of reading!

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Whilst learning to decode and reading books that allow children to do this is important there is so much more to reading! We know that decodable books are not the most exciting to read and alone, won't give our early readers all the skills they need to develop a love of reading.

It is therefore important that you continue to read to your child and share a wide range of books with them – these should be books that children cannot decode themselves. Reading books to children is a precious and lovely thing to do – we are sure you and your child already have favourite books that you share together! By modelling reading and show how much you love reading you will be setting a fantastic example to your child.

When you read to your child you will want to:

- Model how to read a book
- Ask questions about what has happened to support your child's comprehension or understanding of the text
- Ask questions about characters' feelings
- Discuss the meaning of words and vocabulary
- Ask children to predict what they think will happen next
- Make connections with things your child has experienced or other books or films they have seen

Most importantly – show that you love reading! By modelling this you will support your child to develop their love of reading.

Unlocking Letters & Sounds **Reading Stars Phonics**

Spelling

- Segmenting words

Unlocking Letters and Sounds
Actions, Images and Handwriting – Phase 2

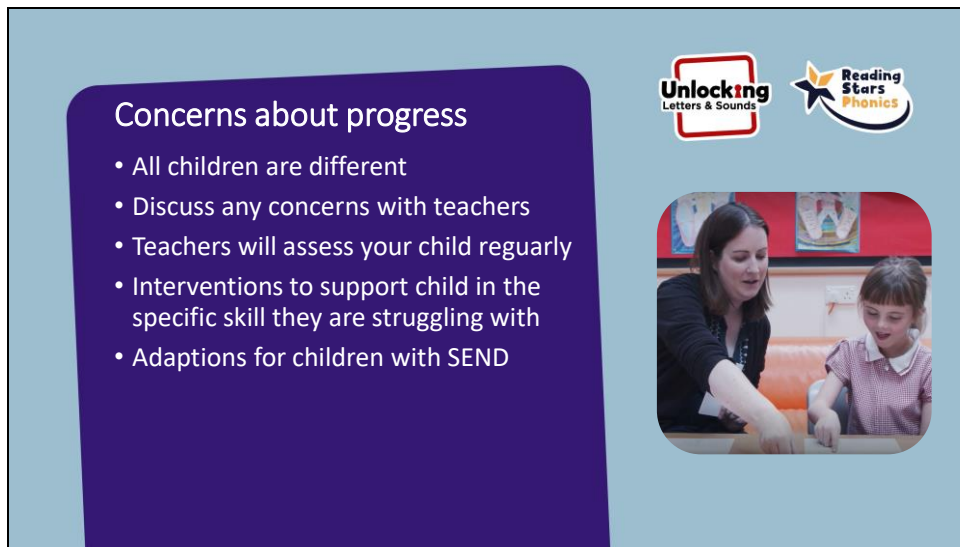
Image	Action	Lower Case Letter Formation	Upper Case Letter Formation
	Snake - Slithering snake coil	Start on the ground and slither down	Start on the ground and slither down
	Ship - Slingsy slide	Start on the ground and slither down	Start on the ground and slither down
	Tree - Slingsy slide	Start on the ground and slither down	Start on the ground and slither down
	Plane - Slingsy slide	Start on the ground and slither down	Start on the ground and slither down

Daily writing as part of phonics lessons

We know that when children are reading they are decoding the GPCs they know and blending them together to read a word or group of words. We teach children to use their phonics to spell in the opposite way. Instead of blending the phonemes together to spell a words we separate the phonemes so we can hear each sound to be able to spell the word. This is called segmenting.

Let's try segmenting this word to write it: sh i p

Your child will write words, captions and sentences as part of their phonics lesson each day. As with reading, we will only ask them to write words contacting GPCs they have been taught. As part of their daily lesson we will also teach them how to write and form the letters they are writing.




Concerns about progress

- All children are different
- Discuss any concerns with teachers
- Teachers will assess your child regularly
- Interventions to support child in the specific skill they are struggling with
- Adaptions for children with SEND

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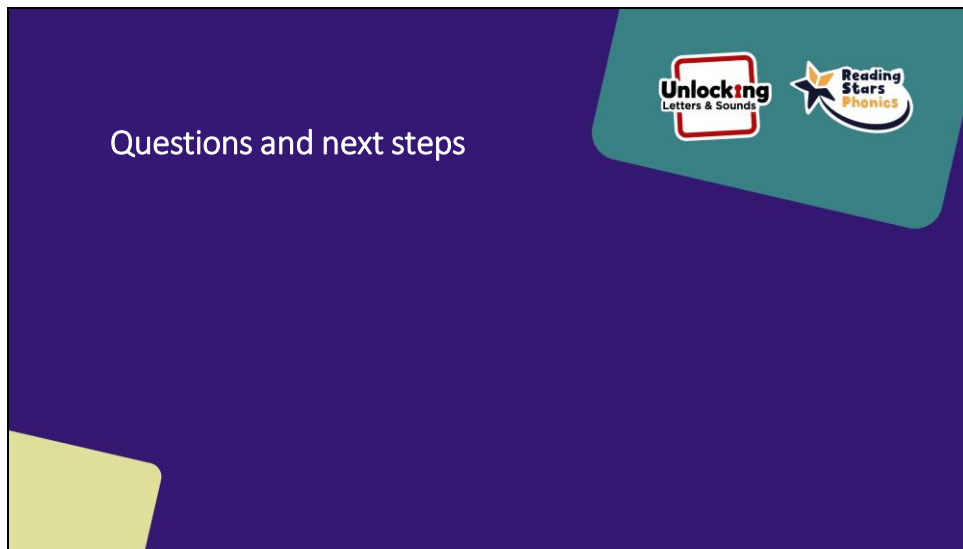
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All children are different and, at different points in their learning, will find things more difficult or challenging. Staff at our school have all had training to identify what children are finding difficult and to help them overcome this. We know it is very tempting to compare your child to others – especially with reading and what books they are on etc but we would suggest you speak to teachers if you have any concerns. If we have any concerns we will discuss them with you – and we might ask you to do some extra practice at home.

Teachers and TAs will assess your child regularly to check their learning. We quickly identify any child who might be at risk of falling behind and will support them with extra phonics- usually by giving them 'interventions' to support the specific skill they are struggling with – some children may struggle to identify the GPC, others might not be able to blend yet.

If a child has SEND we may need to make adaptations to their phonics eg. additional time to practice, more visuals. Again we will discuss these with you but research has shown that phonics is the most effective way of teaching children with SEND to read.



Learning to read is such an exciting journey for children and we are incredibly excited to be starting it with your child. We hope today's session has given you an understanding of how we teach phonics at our school.

Ask for questions