

# St. Paul's Catholic Primary School



## Phonics Information Booklet

### A guide for Parents

## Introduction

At St Paul's we believe in the importance of parents and teachers working together to give your child the best start. Reading together at home is one of the easiest, but most important ways in which you can help your child. To support your child in becoming a confident reader we hope to work with you to develop their knowledge of phonics (letter sounds) to enable them to decode different words. Since September Reception and KS1 classes have engaged in daily Phonics sessions.

A definition of Phoneme and Grapheme - your child will need to know both.

A letter consists of; a sound, a shape and it has a capital and lower case form.

The letter sound is the first thing that children need to recognise.

Only use capital letters for names, and when children are ready at the beginning of sentences.

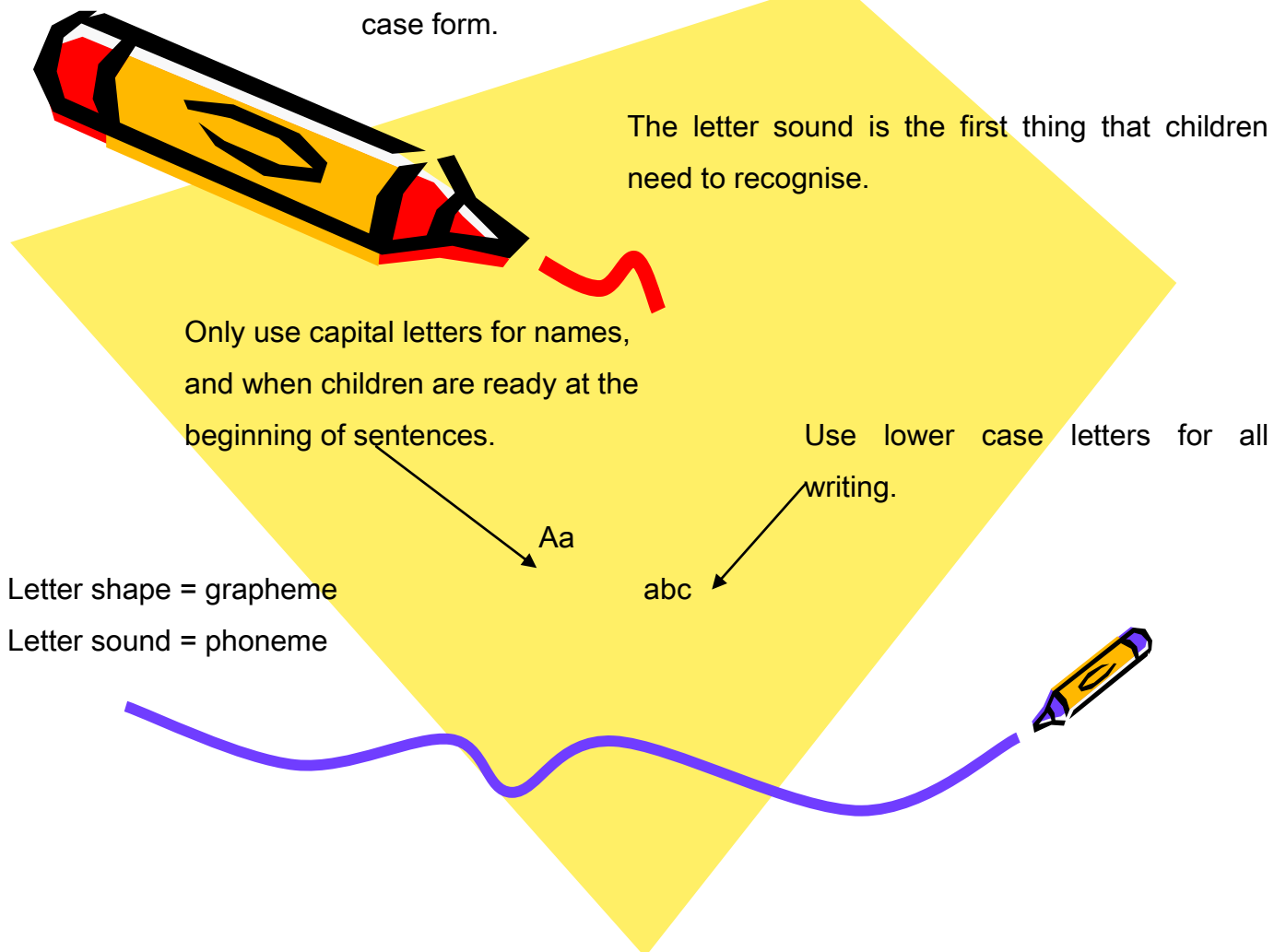
Use lower case letters for all writing.

Aa

abc

Letter shape = grapheme

Letter sound = phoneme



## Progression through the Phonics programme.

### Phase 1

Children explore and experiment with sounds, differentiate between sounds and become familiar with rhyme, rhythm and alliteration (from birth – Nursery\*)

### Stages of Phonological Awareness in Phase One

- Environmental sound
- Instrumental sounds
- Body percussion
- Alliteration
- Rhythm and rhyme
- Voice sounds
- Oral blending and segmenting

### Phase Two

**To introduce grapheme/phoneme (letter/sounds) correspondence (beginning of Reception)**

Children know that words are made from phonemes (sounds) and that phonemes are represented by graphemes (shapes). They have a knowledge of a small selection of common consonants and vowels (which usually begin with s, a, t, p, i, n) and begin to put them together to read and spell CVC words. CVC words are those with a consonant, vowel and consonant i.e. cat.

### Jolly Phonics

In Nursery we introduce the sounds to the children through Jolly Phonics. In Jolly Phonics the main sounds of English are taught, not just the alphabet. As with all phonics the sounds are taught in groups; some sounds are written with two letters, such as ee and or. These are called digraphs and some can make different sounds such as th in that and three and oo in moon and book.

In Jolly Phonics each sound has an action which helps the children to remember it. Children should learn each letter by its sound, not its name. For example the letter a should be called /a/ (as in ant) and not /ai/ (as in aim). This will help with blending. The names of the letters can follow later. The letters are not introduced in alphabetical order. The first group (s, a, t, p, n) has been chosen because they make more simple three letter words than any other letters. The letters b and d are introduced in different groups to avoid confusion. Sounds that have more than one

written form are initially taught in one form only. For example, the sound /ai/ in rain is taught first, and then alternatives a-e in gate and ay in day follow later.

### Phase Three

**To teach children one grapheme for each of the 44 phonemes in order to read and spell simple, regular words. (Reception)**

Children link sounds to letters, naming and sounding the letters of the alphabet. They hear and say sounds in the order they occur in the word and read simple words by blending the phonemes from left to right. They recognise common digraphs (two letters that appear together to make one sound e.g. th) and read some high frequency words.

### Phase Four

**To teach children to read and spell words containing adjacent consonants. (End of Reception)**

Children will be able to blend and segment adjacent consonants in words and apply this skill when reading and spelling.

Children will move from CVC words to CVCC (e.g. pots) and CCVC (e.g. spot) and then CCVCC (e.g. spots)

### Phase Five

**Teaching children to recognise and use alternative ways of pronouncing the graphemes and spelling the phonemes already taught. (Year One)**

Children will use alternative ways of pronouncing the graphemes (e.g. "c" in coat and in city.)

They will recognise an increasing number of high frequency words automatically. Knowledge and skills of phonics will be the prime approach to reading and spelling.



*Your child's class teacher will be able to inform you which stage they are working on, but remember to ask your child which phoneme/s they have been doing each day in class.*

## Blending

Blending is the process of saying the individual sounds in a word and then running them together to make the word. For example, sounding out d- o- g and making dog. It is a technique every child will need to learn, and it improves with practice. To start with you should sound out the word and see if a child can hear it, giving the answer if necessary. Some children take longer than others to hear this. The sounds must be said quickly to hear the word. It is easier if the first sound is said slightly louder.

Remember that some sounds (digraphs) are represented by two letters, such as sh. Children should sound out the digraph (sh), not the individual letters (s - h). With practice they will be able to blend the digraph as one sound in a word. So, a word like rain should be sounded out r-ai-n, and feet as f-ee-t. This is difficult to begin with and takes practice.

You will find it helpful to be able to distinguish between a blend (such as st) and a digraph (such as sh). In a blend the two sounds, s and t can each be heard. In a digraph this is not so. When sounding out a blend, encourage children to say the two sounds as one unit, so fl-a-g not f-l-a-g. This will lead to greater fluency when reading.

Some words in English have an irregular spelling and cannot be read by blending, such as said, was and one. Unfortunately, many of these are common words. The irregular parts have to be remembered. These are called the **'tricky words'**.

## Identifying sounds in words

The easiest way to know how to spell a word is to listen for the sounds in that word. Even with the tricky words an understanding of letter sounds can help. Start by having your child listen for the first sound in a word. Games like I-Spy are ideal for this. Next try listening for the end sounds, as the middle sound of a word is the hardest to hear. Begin with simple three-letter words such as cat or hot. A good idea is to say a word and tap out the sounds. Three taps means three sounds. Say each sound as you tap. Take care with digraphs. The word fish, for example, has four letters but only three sounds, f-i-sh. Rhyming games and poems also help tune the ears to the sounds in words. Other games to play are: a) Add a sound: what do I get if I add a p to the beginning of i n k? Answer: pink. Other examples are m-ice, b-us, etc. b) Take away a sound: what do I get if I take away p from pink? Answer: ink. Other examples as above, and f-lap, s-lip, c-rib, d-rag, p-ant, m-end, s-top, b-end,s-t-rip, etc.

## Spelling the tricky words

There are several ways of learning tricky spellings: 1) Look, Cover, Write and Check. Look at the word to see which bit is tricky. Ask the child to try writing the word in the air saying the letters.

Cover the word over and see if the child can write it correctly. Check to make sure. 2) Say it as it sounds. Say the word so each sound is heard. For example, the word was is said as 'wass', to rhyme with mass, the word Monday is said as 'M-on-day'. 3) Mnemonics. The initial letter of each word in a saying gives the correct spelling of a word. For example, laugh – Laugh At Ugly Goat's Hair. 4) Using joined-up (cursive) writing also improves spelling.

### Phonics Games for Home

#### **1. Mood Sounds**

Say a letter sound and ask the children to repeat it. Ask the children to say the sound as if they were angry, happy, frightened etc.

#### **2. Gobbler/Muncher Game**

Use a cereal box to make a person. E.g. Gordon the gobbler. Have a large hole for the mouth. Collect a variety of objects beginning with 2 different sounds. Ask your child to select an object from your tray that begins with a certain sound. Children feed the object to the gobbler with replies with an mmmm sound if they are correct.

#### **3. Hoop game**

Get 2 hoops, trays or plates and place a letter card on each of them e.g. s and a. Have a variety of objects beginning with these two sounds. Ask your child to select an object and say the name of it. Repeat several times and then ask your child to place it on the correct letter tray.

#### **4 Croaker**

Introduce a puppet to your child. Explain that it is finding it hard to say some words. Ask your child to select an object out of a bag. The puppet pronounces it incorrectly – maybe missing off the end or initial sound. Your child helps the puppet to say the word emphasising the part of the word that was missing. Eg the puppet says 'encil' the child can say the word correctly pencil and the adult can emphasise the 'p' sound that was missing.

#### **5 Rogue Sound Game**

Show a variety of objects to your child. All of the objects have the same initial sound except for one item. Children are to identify which is the rogue item. Eg sun, sausages, cup, scissors.

## Useful Websites

Teachers TV – Early Reading and Phonics - <http://www.teachers.tv/video/27626>

Jolly Phonics Website - <http://www.jollylearning.co.uk/>

Pronouncing the Phonemes - <http://www.getreadingright.com/Pronouncephonemes.htm>

Reading Egg- <http://readingeggs.co.uk/>

Phonics Play- <http://www.phonicsplay.co.uk/>



***If you have any further queries, do not hesitate to come in and ask.***