

# PHONICS

## WHAT IS PHONICS?

Phonics is a way of teaching children to read by breaking up words into small chunks of sound. For example we can break a simple word like **'cat'** into the three sounds **c-a-t**.

To become successful readers, children will learn the individual sounds for each letter or group of letters. Some sounds in English are made up of more than one letter such as the sound 'ea' in tea or team.

Once children know the sounds they will be able to 'decode' unfamiliar words by breaking the word into sounds then read the word by blending back together. For example: **sh - o - p = shop**

## WHY DO WE TEACH PHONICS?

Research shows that when phonics is taught in a structured way (starting with the easiest sounds, progressing through to the most complex), it's the most effective way of teaching young children to read. It's particularly helpful for children aged 5–7.

Almost all children who have good teaching of phonics will learn the skills they need to tackle new words. They can then go on to read any kind of text fluently, confidently and for enjoyment.

## HOW DO WE TEACH PHONICS AT HEMINGBROUGH?

Phonics is most successful when taught using a consistent resource and approach across the school. At Hemingbrough we use the Letters and Sounds programme. Within this we use Jolly Phonics to introduce the initial sounds in Apple Tree Class.



This is a 'synthetic phonics scheme'. This simply means that we teach the sounds first and then begin to blend them together to make whole words.

Below is a glossary of words that teachers use when planning and describing phonics. Children also enjoy learning the technical words for the different sounds and letter groups.

<b>Phoneme</b>	Smallest unit of sound.
<b>Grapheme</b>	Letter sound correspondence.
<b>Digraph</b>	Two letters, but one sound.
<b>Consonant digraph</b>	th, sh, ch, ss, ll, ff, ck, ng
<b>Vowel digraph</b>	ai, ee, ie, oa, ue
<b>Split digraph</b>	a_e, o_e, i_e, u_e, e_e
<b>Trigraph</b>	Three or more letters, but one sound.

## WHAT IS THE GOVERNMENT'S PHONICS SCREENING CHECK?

The Government has a phonics screening check for all Year 1 children. Each child will sit with a teacher they know and be asked to read 40 words aloud. Some of the words they may have read before and some words will be completely new to them. The test normally takes a few minutes to complete and there is no time limit. The 40 words in the test will be made up of real words and non-words. The test is carefully designed not to be stressful for your child.

For a sample test please visit:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/phonics-screening-check-sample-materials-and-training-video>

## WHAT ARE NON-WORDS?

Non-words or pseudo words are nonsense words made up of letter sounds. For example: '**vam**' or '**jound**'.

These words are included in the screening test so they are unfamiliar to the child and therefore test their ability to decode words using phonics.

## HOW CAN YOU HELP AT HOME?

Please practise the sounds with your child and refer to them when they become stuck on a word in their reading book.

**Most importantly, enjoy reading with your children everyday!**