

# **Letters and Sounds Parent Information:**

## **How you can help at home?**

### **Introduction**

As you know, the ability to read and write is a vital skill for all children. Children practice many of the skills they need for reading and writing from a very early age. They do this through a wide range of activities and experiences, at home and in school. They explore and learn through singing and saying rhymes, making and listening to music, talking with others, sharing books with adults and other children, dressing up, experimenting with writing and using puppets and toys to retell and make up stories. For children to make a good start in reading and writing, they need to have an adult listen to them and talk to them. Speaking and listening are the starting blocks for reading and writing

### **What is Phonics?**

From a very early stage, children develop an awareness of different sounds in spoken language. They develop an understanding that spoken words are made up of different sounds (phonemes) and they learn to match these phonemes to letters (graphemes). Phonics is about children knowing how letters link to sounds (graphemes to phonemes), e.g. c as in 'cat', ll as in 'fell', ee as in 'sheep'. Children use this phonics knowledge when they are reading and writing. This system has been shown to be a quicker and more efficient way for children to learn to read the words on a page fluently and accurately. This also helps them greatly with their spelling. At **Landsdale Primary** school we use the phonics programme **Letters and Sounds**. Letters and Sounds is divided into six phases with each phase following closely from the last. Children have time and practice to improve their ability to read and spell words. They are also taught to read and spell 'tricky words' – words with unusual spellings or which children have not yet been taught.

### **Phase 1**

In Phase 1 children listen to sounds around them. Children listen to and look at books with the teacher during whole/ small group instruction. This helps to increase the number of words they know – their vocabulary – and helps them to talk confidently about books.

### **Supporting your child with Phase 1 Sound talking**

During literacy support the teacher shows the children how to do this – c-a-t = cat. The separate sounds (phonemes) are spoken aloud, in order and are then merged together into the whole word. The merging together is called **blending** – it is a vital skill for reading. Children will also learn to do this the other way round – cat = c-a-t. The whole word is spoken aloud, and then broken up into its sounds (phonemes) in order. This is called **segmenting** – it is a vital skill for spelling. The emphasis is on helping children to hear the separate sounds in words and to create spoken sounds.

## Phase 2

In this phase children will practice what they have learned in phase 1, including 'sound talking'. They will also be taught the phonemes (sounds) for a number of letters (graphemes), which phoneme is represented by which grapheme and that a phoneme can be represented by more than one letter, e.g. ll as in b-e-ll. VC and CVC words C and V are 'consonant' and 'vowel'. VC words are words such as **am**, **at** and **it** (words made up of a vowel and then a consonant). CVC words are words such as **cat**, **rug** and **sun** (consonant, vowel, consonant). Words such as bell and tick also count as CVC words – although they have four letters, they only have three sounds. For example, in the word **bell** – **b = consonant e = vowel ll = consonant**. Now the children will be seeing letters and words, as well as hearing them. They will be shown how to make whole words by pushing magnetic or wooden letters together to form little words, reading little words on the interactive whiteboard, and breaking words up into individual sounds which will help with their spelling. These will be simple words made up of two phonemes, e.g. am, at, it, or three phonemes, e.g. cat, rug, sun, tick, bell.

### Tricky words

The children will also learn several tricky words: the, to, I, go, no. Children will still be practising blending and segmenting skills every day.

They need plenty of practice at doing this.

## Phase 3

The purpose of this phase is to:

- Teach more graphemes, most of which are made up of two letters, e.g. 'oa' as in boat
- Practice blending and segmenting a wider set of CVC words, e.g. fizz, chip, sheep
- Learn all letter names and begin to form them correctly
- Read more tricky words and begin to spell some of them
- Read and write words in phrases and sentences CVC words.

Here are some examples of words they will be reading. Their confidence from the daily practice and reading and writing will really be paying off! Tail, week, right, soap, food, park, burn, cord, town, soil.

### Tricky words

The number of tricky words is getting larger. These are so important for reading and spelling: he, she, we, me, be, was, my, you, her, they, all.

### **Ways you can support your children at home**

Magnetic letters – these can be used on your fridge. Encourage your child to find the letters they have been learning. Have fun making CVC and tricky words.

### **Phase 4**

In this phase the children will continue to practice the graphemes (letters) and phonemes (sounds) they have already learned. They will also learn how to read and write CVCC words – tent, damp, toast, chimp. E.g. in the word ‘toast’, t = consonant, oa = vowel, s = consonant, t = consonant. They will also learn to read and spell CCVC words – swim, plum, sport, cream, spoon. E.g. in the word ‘cream’, c = consonant, r = consonant, ea = vowel, m = consonant. They will be learning more tricky words and continuing to read and write sentences together.

### **Tricky words**

Said, so, do, have, like, some, come, were, there, little, one, when, out, what

### **Ways you can support your children at home**

Practise reading and spelling some CVCC and CCVC words – but continue to play around with CVC words. Children like reading and spelling words that they have previously worked with, as this makes them feel successful. Make up captions and phrases for your child to read and write – e.g. ‘a silver star’, ‘clear the pond’, ‘crunch crisps’. Write some simple sentences and leave them around the house for your child to find and read – when they find and read three, give them a treat! Look out for words in the environment on food packaging that your child will find easy to read, e.g. lunch, fresh milk, drink, fish and chips,

### **Phases 5 and 6**

As your child moves onto phases 5 and 6 they will learn that most sounds can be spelled in more than one way. For example the f sound can be written as f as in fan, ff as in huff or ph as in photo. This develops their knowledge of spelling choices. They will learn that most letters and combinations of letters (graphemes) can represent more than one sound. For example, the grapheme ea can be read as /ee/ as in leaf or /e/ as in bread. This supports their reading development. Good phonics knowledge and skills help your child to read words fluently and spell words, but they need to understand what they are reading and understand the processes and purposes for writing too.

**Enjoy and share books together** – Buy or borrow books that will fire their imagination and interest. Read and re-read those they love best. Make time to read with your child throughout their time in school – PLEASE continue reading to your child even when they are reading independently. This is very important – your child needs to practise their reading skills every day, and needs the support of an interested adult. A grandparent, older brother or sister can help.

### **What to do if your child is reluctant to read or write at home:**

Ways you can support them.

#### **Reading:**

- Make sure your child sees you reading
- Read to your child. Show you like the book. Bring stories to life by using loud/soft/scary voices
- Spread books around your house for your child to dip into.
- Let your child choose what they would like to
- Read favourite books over and over again.

#### **Writing:**

- Make sure your child sees you writing.
- Compose an email together inviting a friend over to tea.
- Continue to make words together using magnetic letters.
- Leave a message on the fridge door – encourage them to write a reply to you.

**If you speak another language read to your child in first language, we have bi-lingual books in LA25, come and see me if interested in borrowing them.**

There are many websites like:

[www.globallanguagebooks.com.au](http://www.globallanguagebooks.com.au)

[www.language lizard.com.au](http://www.language lizard.com.au)

that will provide you with lots of ideas and resources in supporting your child's first language development.

Just remember children learn, grow and develop at different rates and Letters and Sounds is constantly monitored and adjusted according to each group's progress. Each group is exposed to reading passages to improve fluency and automaticity when a group of phonemes (sounds) are secure, following intensive teaching. It is very important that the children apply what they have learnt in their reading, writing, listening and speaking.

These are very helpful sites:

[www.phonicsplay.com.uk](http://www.phonicsplay.com.uk)

[www.lettersandsounds.com.uk](http://www.lettersandsounds.com.uk)

[www.twinkl.com.uk](http://www.twinkl.com.uk)

Kindest Regards:

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