



Supporting Learning at Home: Learning to Read and Spell

At Eastington we use an augmented version of Letters and Sounds (which is inline with the expected standard set out in the new curriculum) to structure the teaching of early reading and spelling for children in Reception to Y2.

Reception Year

Speaking and listening Phase 1

- Speaking and listening are the foundations for reading and writing.
- Even everyday activities such as preparing meals, tidying up, putting shopping away and getting ready to go out offer you the chance to talk to your child, explaining what you are doing. Through these activities, children hear the way language is put together into sentences for a purpose.
- Books are a rich source of new words for your child; words you would not use in everyday conversations appear in books. Children need to have a wide vocabulary to understand the meaning of books, so read aloud and share books as often as you can. They will enjoy it and it will be useful when they come across these words in their own reading later on.



Ways you can support your children at home: talking and listening

- **Make time to listen to your child talking** – as you meet them from their setting or school, as you walk, or travel home by car, in the supermarket as you shop, at meal times, bath times, and bedtimes – any time!
- **Switch off the TV, radio and mobile phones** – and really listen!
- **Show that you are interested in what they are talking about** – look at your child, smile, nod your head, ask a question or make a response to show that you really have been listening.
- **Make a collection of different toy creatures** – for example, a duck, a snake, an alien, say the sound it might make as you play together, for example, ‘quack-quack’, ‘sssssss’, ‘yuk-yuk’, and encourage your child to copy you.
- **Listen at home** – switch off the TV and listen to the sounds, both inside and outside the home. Can your child tell you what sounds they heard, in the order in which they heard them?

- **Play-a-tune** – and follow me! Make or buy some simple shakers, drums and beaters, then play a simple tune and ask your child to copy. Have fun! **Use puppets** and toys to make up stories or retell known ones. Record your child telling the story and play it back to them.

Reading and Spelling Readiness Phase 1

As we begin to teach the children the skills that they will need in order to be successful readers and writers, we focus on different listening activities.

We explore body sounds, sounds in the environment, the difference in the sounds of percussion instruments, rhythm and rhyme, voice sounds and alliteration - words that all begin with the same initial sound – ‘sad, Sammy snake’, ‘big, bad bug’.

All the way through we also teach the skills of ‘blending’ and segmenting’.

- **Blending**

We teach the children how to blend or merge sounds together to read each word, in the right order, to read a word. E.g. c-a-t = cat.

The aim is for the children to say the whole word automatically.

- **Segmenting**

We teach the children how to segment each word to spell. E.g. cat = c-a-t

These activities are all done orally. The emphasis is on helping children to hear the separate sounds in words and to create spoken sounds.



Ways you can support your children at home: reading and spelling readiness

Sound-talking or Robot-talking

Find real objects around your home that have three phonemes (*sounds*) and practice ‘sound talk’. First, just let them listen, then see if they will join in, for example, saying:

‘I spy a p-e-g – peg.’

‘I spy a c-u-p – cup.’

‘Where’s your other s-o-ck – sock?’

‘Simon says – put your hands on your h-ea-d.’

'Simon says – touch your ch-i-n.'

Reading and Spelling Phase 2

We teach the children the smallest unit of sound – called a '**phoneme**'. Correct pronunciation is vital!
c not cuh or cee b not buh or bee a not ay

A very useful website to support correct pronunciation - <http://mrthorne.com/>

Pronouncing the single phonemes correctly enables the children to hear just that sound, supporting their blending, fluency and eventually their writing. This is the order in which the 'phonemes' are taught and practiced:

Set 1 letters = s, a, t, p

Set 2 letters = i, n, m, d

Set 3 letters = g, o, c, k

Set 4 letters = ck, e, u, r

Set 5 letters = h, b, f, ff, l, ll, ss

Set 6 letters = j, v, w, x

Set 7 letters = y, z, zz, qu

A phoneme can be represented by more than one letter. E.g. **ll** as in bell **ss** as in hiss **ck** as in sock

Tricky words

Children will be taught to read and spell 'tricky' words – those that cannot be read or spelt using the sounds of the letters. This will be achieved through the use of flash cards and games.

Phase 2 tricky words – l, the, no, go, to



Ways you can support your children at home: reading and spelling

Magnetic letters

Buy magnetic letters for your fridge, or for use with a tin tray. Find out which letters have been taught – have fun finding these with your child and place them on the magnetic surface.

Making little words together

Make little words together, for example, *it, up, am, and, top, dig, run, met, pick*. As you select the letters, say them aloud: '*a-m – am*', '*m-e-t – met*'.

Breaking words up

Now practice it the other way around: read the word, break the word up and move the letters away, saying: '*met – m-e-t*'.

Both these activities help children to see that reading and spelling are reversible processes.

Spelling is harder than reading words – little whiteboards and pens, and magic boards, are a good way for children to try out spellings and practice their handwriting. Your child might be trying to use letters from their name to write; this shows that they know that writing needs real alphabet letters.

Getting ready for handwriting

We will model how to form letters (*graphemes*) correctly, so that children can eventually acquire a fluent and legible handwriting style. These skills develop over a long period of time. A child's ability to form a letter correctly is a separate skill from phonics. Holding a pen or pencil needs considerable co-ordination and practice in making small movements with hands and fingers.

(In the early stages of phonics children can use letter cards or magnetic letters to demonstrate their knowledge of phonics.)

Writing in lower-case letters

We teach lower-case letters, as well as capital letters. As most writing will be in lower-case letters it is useful if you can use these at home. A good start is for your child to write their name correctly, starting with a capital letter followed by lower-case letters.



Ways you can support your children at home

Using their whole body

For handwriting children need to be well co-ordinated through their whole body, not just their hands and fingers. Games that help co-ordination include throwing balls at a target, under-arm and over-arm, and bouncing balls – also skipping on the spot, throwing a Frisbee, picking up pebbles from the beach and throwing them into the sea. Have fun!

Hand and finger play

Action rhymes such as *'Incy Wincy spider'*, *'One potato, two potato'* and *'Tommy Thumb'* are great fun and get their hands and fingers moving. Playing with salt dough or clay really helps strengthen little fingers, as does cookery and using simple toolkits.

Hand-eye co-ordination

Pouring water into jugs and cups of different sizes, sweeping up with a dustpan and brush, cutting, sticking, tracing, threading beads, completing puzzles, peeling off stickers and sticking them in the right place – these all help hand-eye co-ordination.

Pencil hold

The 'pincer' movement needs to be practiced. This is important as it enables children to hold a pencil properly as they write. Provide them with kitchen tongs and see if they can pick up small objects. Move on to challenging them to pick up smaller things, for example, little cubes, sugar lumps, dried peas, lentils, first with chopsticks, then with tweezers.

Ask children to peg objects to a washing line.

Provide plenty of different types of pen and pencil; hold their hand to practice the correct grip.

Phase 3

As the children progress they will be introduced to other phonemes.

They will be taught another 25 graphemes, most of them comprising two letters eg 'oa'.

Some phonemes have more than one letter.

- **Digraphs** have two letters (sh, ch, ck, th, ng, ll)
- A **vowel digraph** contains at least one vowel - **ai, ee, oa, oo, ar, or, ur, ow, oi, er**
- **Trigraphs** have three letters making one sound - **igh, ear, air, ure**
- A **split digraph** has two letters making the sound, but they are not adjacent, eg **cake, (a- e), Pete, (e- e), mine (i-e), pole (o-e), tune, (u- e).**

New tricky words

he	me	my	her
she	be	you	all
we	was	they	



Ways you can support your child at home

- Set a timer. Call out one word at a time and get your child to spell it on a magic board or a small whiteboard, against the timer – remember, they can use magnetic letters.
- Play a game – hunt the word - hide words in sand or flour, set a timer, hold up the word that you want them to hunt for, and 'go'! Repeat the word and encourage them to say –'I am looking for the word 'the'.

- Play 'Pairs', turning over two words at a time trying to find a matching pair. This is especially helpful with the tricky words: **the, to, no, go, I**
- Don't worry if they get some wrong! These are hard to remember – they need plenty of practice.

As the children make even more progress, they will be introduced to the remaining phonemes, and given time to practice and consolidate their new learning. Obviously, the more children are exposed to activities involving letters and sounds, the quicker they will consolidate their newly acquired skills. Your involvement in this new learning is vital, and we ask that whenever possible you take time to encourage them to use their new knowledge through the activities outlined above.

Phase 4

By Phase 4 children will be able to represent each of 42 phonemes with a grapheme. They will blend phonemes to read CVC words and segment CVC words for spelling. They will also be able to read two syllable words that are simple such as laptop or boatman. They will be able to read all the tricky words learnt so far and will be able to spell most of them.

In Phase 4 children are taught to read and spell words with two letters at the start/end of the word which need to be blended together. EG: **flap, star, fist, crisp**. It is important that children are taught that blending is only used when a word is unfamiliar.

New tricky words:

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



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Year 1

Phase 5

The purpose of this phase is for children to broaden their knowledge of graphemes and phonemes for use in reading and spelling. They will learn new graphemes and alternative pronunciations for these and graphemes they already know, where relevant. Children become quicker at recognising graphemes of more than one letter in words and at blending the phonemes they represent. When spelling words they will learn to choose the appropriate graphemes to represent phonemes and begin to build word-specific knowledge of the spellings of words.

Alternative pronunciations for graphemes when reading:

Children will be taught alternative pronunciations for some graphemes. For example, **ow** makes a different sound in these two words: **blow**, **cow**.

i fin, find	ow cow, blow	y yes, by, very
o hot, cold	ie tie, field	ch chin, school, chef
c cat, cent	ea eat, bread	ou out, shoulder, could, you
g got, giant	er farmer, her	u but, put (south)
a hat, what		

New graphemes for reading and spelling:

Children are taught new graphemes for phonemes they already know. The skill of selecting the correct grapheme when spelling takes time and lots of practice. For example children will be able to segment the word chain but will learn to select the correct way of spelling the middle sound. It could be: ai, ay, eigh, a_e, ey or ei! Sometimes the placement of the phoneme in the words helps in selecting the correct grapheme. For example the spelling ay is usually used at the end of root words: **day**, **play**, **stay** etc. We teach children to find placement patterns, use visual skills and rime (if I can spell **all**, I can spell **ball**, **fall**, **tall** etc) to help. They practice by sorting words and playing games and applying their skills in sentence writing.

ay day	a-e make		
e-e these	ey key	ea eat	y baby
i-e like	ie tie	y cry	
oe toe	o-e home	ow low	
ew new	ue cue	u-e tune	
ph photo			
wh when			
tch hutch			
aw saw	au Paul	oor floor	

ue blue	ew flew	u-e rule	
ou out			
oy boy			
ir girl			
ea head			
are care	ear bear		
al half	a past		

Spelling rules and patterns

These are the spelling rules that are taught within Phase 5:

Spell words with the prefix un.

Spell words with the suffixes ing/ed/er.

Spell plural nouns s/es.

Spell words ending in the suffix y [crispy]

Spell words ending in er/est.

Spell compound words.

Know k is used [not c] before e/i/y (EG: Kent, skin).

Know the ending v sound is usually followed by e (EG: give, live, have).

New high frequency words for reading and spelling:

High frequency words are words that are used most often when reading and writing. When children can read and spell these words automatically it supports fluency and pace. The words in bold are tricky words.

should	called	by	made	put	don't
their	asked	time	came	old	today
people	could	house	make	very	says
Mr	oh	about	here	day	love
Mrs	looked	your	saw	I'm	full
push		one	two	four	three

five	six	seven	eight	nine	ten
eleven	twelve	thirteen	fourteen	fifteen	sixteen
seventeen	eighteen	nineteen	twenty		



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Year 2

Phase 6

In phase 6 children will be reading longer and less familiar texts independently and fluently. It is crucial that at this point children are now reading to learn and reading for **pleasure**.

Children will be learning to read the high frequency words with ease. At this point it is important that comprehension strategies are developed so that children clarify meaning, ask and answer questions about the texts they are reading, construct mental images during reading and summarise what they have read. In spelling, children are introduced to more spelling rules, the adding of **suffixes/prefixes** and how to spell longer words. Throughout the phase children are encouraged to develop strategies for learning spellings.

Strategy	Explanation
Syllables	To learn a word by listening to how many syllables there are so it can be broken into smaller bits. (e.g. Sep-tem-ber)
Base Words	To learn a word by finding its base word. (e.g. jumping- base word jump +ing)
Analogy	To learn a word by using a word that is already learnt. (e.g. could, would, should)
Mnemonics	To learn a word by making up a sentence to help remember them. (e.g. could – O U Lucky Duck; people - people eat orange peel like elephants)

Spelling common graphemes for any phonemes

j / g / dge (EG: giant/hedge)	s/c (EG: face)	or / a / al (sport, almost, talk)	w(a) / qu(a) (EG: want/squash – the a makes an o sound)
kn / wr / gn	le / al / el/ il	u / o (but/other)	er / or (work – after w)
or / ar (EG: warm – ar after w)			

Spelling rules and patterns

Spell plural nouns with rules [s/es/ies]

Spell words with suffix ing / ed with rules

Spell words with suffix y with rules

Spell words ending in er /est with rules

Spell words with suffix ful / less

Spell words with suffix ment

Spell words with suffix ness

Spell words with suffix ly with rules

Spell homophones and near homophones [quiet / quite]

New high frequency words for reading and spelling:

High frequency words are words that are used most often when reading and writing. When children can read and spell these words automatically it supports fluency and pace. The words in bold are tricky words.

water	long	other	fish	fast
away	things	fox	gave	only
good	new	food	mouse	many
want	after	through	something	laughed
over	wanted	path	wild	let's
how	eat	been	kind	much
floor	everyone	bath	still	suddenly
poor	our	must	found	told
going	two	pass	live	another
where	hour	father	move	great
would	child	right	soon	why
mind	climb	sea	night	cried
took	take	these	narrator	keep
behind	class	cold	beautiful	break
school	thought	began	small	room
think	grass	hold	everybody	last
home	well	animals	couldn't	jumped
who	find	never	three	because
didn't	more	next	head	even
pretty	I'll	first	king	steak

know	round	work	town	before
bear	tree	lots	I've	gran
can't	magic	need	around	clothes
again	shouted	that's	every	tell
past	us	baby	garden	key
move	inside	looking	stopped	looks
place	any	end	ever	dragon
mother	improve	than	miss	grow
prove	under	parents	most	thing
boat	busy	better	cold	plants
window	snow	sugar	park	fly
sleep	air	sun	lived	there's
feet	trees	across	birds	along
morning	half	gone	duck	we're
queen	money	hard	horse	which
each	whole	floppy	rabbit	use
book	eyes	wind	white	pulled
its	fell	really	coming	giant
green	friends	wish	he's	please
different	sure	eggs	river	grandad
Christmas	dark	once	liked	girl

Appendix 1: Phonics Glossary

blend — to draw individual sounds together to pronounce a word, e.g. s-n-a-p, blended together, reads snap.

consonant cluster — two (or three) letters making two (or three) sounds/phoneme. EG: the first three letters of 'straight' are a consonant cluster. The **s-t-r** each have their own sound. (This is different from a digraph/trigraph where 2 or 3 letters work together to make **one** sound/phoneme.)

digraph — two letters making one sound, e.g. sh, ch, th, ph.

vowel digraphs - comprise of two vowels which, together, make one sound, e.g. ai, oo, ee.

split digraph — two letters, split, making one sound, e.g. a-e as in **make** or i-e in **site**.

grapheme — a letter or a group of letters representing one sound, e.g. a, p, sh, ch, igh, ough (as in 'though').

grapheme-phoneme correspondence (GPC) — the relationship between sounds and the letters which represent those sounds; also known as 'letter-sound correspondence'.

mnemonic — a device for memorising and recalling something. EG: a snake shaped like the letter 'S' or the phrase “**sally ann is dancing**” to help spell the tricky word **said**.

phoneme — the smallest single identifiable sound. EG: the letters 'sh' represent just one sound, but 'sp' represents two (s and p).

segment — to split up a word into its individual phonemes in order to spell it, e.g. the word 'cat' has three phonemes: c- a- t.

prefix - is a group of letters added before a word or base to alter its meaning and form a new word (EG: pre - **pre**historic).

suffix - is a group of letters added after a word or base (EG: er - farmer**er**).

trigraph — three letters making one sound (EG: air, igh).

Appendix 2: Useful websites/apps (For Phase 2 onwards)

<http://www.letters-and-sounds.com>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/wordsandpictures/>

<http://www.ictgames.com/literacy>

www.familylearning.org.uk/phonics_games

<http://mrthorne.com/>

<http://www.coxhoe.durham.sch.uk/curriculum-links/literacy/word-work>

There are some free games on the website of: Phonics Play

Useful app

<http://www.nessy.com/hairyletters/>