

# Burrough Green Primary School

## Letters & Sounds

Letters and Sounds is a fun and interactive way to support children in learning how to read and write. Initially, for the children to learn their sounds we use a programme called Jolly Phonics. Jolly Phonics represents each sound with an action helping children to remember both more easily.

The alphabet contains only 26 letters. Spoken English uses about 42 sounds (phonemes). These phonemes are represented by letters (graphemes). In other words, a sound can be represented by a letter (e.g. 's' or 'h') or a group of letters (e.g. 'th' or 'ear')

Once children begin learning sounds, they are used quickly to read and spell words. Children can then see the purpose of learning sounds. For this reason, the first six letters that are taught are 's', 'a', 't', 'p', 'i', 'n'. These can immediately be used to make a number of words such as 'sat', 'pin', 'pat', 'tap', 'nap'

As a parent, your involvement in supporting your child's learning will be a vital factor in determining their success in learning to read.

### Blending—for reading

To learn to read well children must be able to smoothly blend sounds together. Blending sounds fluidly helps to improve fluency when reading. Blending is more difficult to do with longer words so learning how to blend accurately from an early age is imperative.

Showing your child how to blend is important. Model how to 'push' sounds smoothly together without stopping at each individual sound.

It is also recommended to talk to your child about what blending is so they understand what they are trying to achieve.

### Segmenting—for spelling

Segmenting is a skill used in spelling. In order to spell the word cat, it is necessary to segment the word into its constituent sounds; c-a-t.

Children often understand segmenting as 'chopping' a word. Before writing a word young children need time to think about it, say the word several times, 'chop' the word and then write it. Once children have written the same word several times they won't need to use these four steps as frequently.

Children will enjoy spelling if it feels like fun and if they feel good about themselves as spellers. We need, therefore, to be playful and positive in our approach – noticing and praising what children **can** do as well as helping them to correct their mistakes.

### The phases

Letters and Sounds is split into 6 phases.  
Below is an overview what is included in each phase.

#### Phase One

The aim of this phase is to foster children's speaking and listening skills as preparation for learning to read with phonics. ***Parents can play a vital role in helping their children develop these skills, by encouraging their children to listen carefully and talk extensively about what they hear, see and do.***

## **Phase Two – Four**

Phase Two is when systematic, high quality phonic work begins. During Phase Two to Four, children learn:

- \* How to represent each of the 42 sounds by a letter or sequence of letters.
- \* How to blend sounds together for reading and how to segment (split) words for spelling.
- \* Letter names
- \* How to read and spell some high frequency 'tricky' words containing sounds not yet learnt (e.g. they, my, her, you).

The Letters and Sounds Programme progresses from the simple to the more complex aspects of phonics at a pace that is suitable for the children who are learning.

## **Phase Five**

Children learn new ways of representing the sounds and practise blending for reading and segmenting for spelling.

## **Phase Six**

During this phase, children become fluent readers and increasingly accurate spellers.

### **Tips and Definitions**

Talk to children about Letters and Sounds - "These are letters. A letter can make a sound. Sometimes letters are stuck together and they make a new sound. Letters together can make words. If we can read those words we can read; labels, signs, notes, comics, books and lots of other things all around us."

### **Tricky words**

Tricky words are words that cannot be 'sounded-out' but need to be learned by heart. They don't fit into the usual spelling patterns. In order to read simple sentences, it is necessary for children to know some words that have unusual or untaught spellings. It should be noted that, when teaching these words, it is important to always start with sounds already known in the word, then focus on the 'tricky' part.

### **High frequency Words**

High frequency (common) are words that recur frequently in much of the written material young children read and that they need when they write. If you would like a list of High frequency words please ask your child's class teacher.

### **Websites**

Interactive websites at home to support your child's learning:

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

[www.sentenceplay.co.uk](http://www.sentenceplay.co.uk)

And finally...

If you would like further guidance or have any questions please ask your child's class teacher

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