



What is Phonics?

Phonics is a way of teaching children how to read and write. It helps children hear, identify and use different sounds that distinguish one word from another in the English language.

Written language can be compared to a code, so knowing the sounds of individual letters and how those letters sound when they're combined will help children decode words as they read.

Understanding phonics will also help children know which letters to use when they are writing words.

Phonics involves matching the sounds of spoken English with individual letters or groups of letters. For example, the sound *k* can be spelled as *c*, *k*, *ck* or *ch*.

Teaching children to blend the sounds of letters together helps them decode unfamiliar or unknown words by sounding them out. For example, when a child is taught the sounds for the letters *t*, *p*, *a* and *s*, they can start to build up the words: "tap", "taps", "pat", "pats" and "sat".



Phonics at Hemingbrough CP School

At Hemingbrough, from February 28th 2022, in Apple tree (EYFS) and Oak (Year One) we will be using 'Rocket Phonics' to teach our children which is supported by, and compliments our Early reading scheme. Willow Class (Year 2) will continue to use Letters and sounds as a basis for teaching and learning in phonics, until the Year Two Rocket Phonics materials are released.

Rocket Phonics is a fully resourced, systematic synthetic phonics programme that enables us to teach children to read and write. It uses a combination of

digital and printed resources, as well as a fully matched series of decodable reading books.

Resources used within Rocket Phonics to support teaching and learning



Big Books

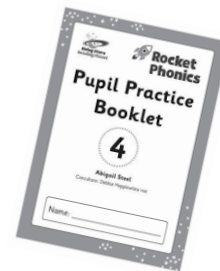
Digital books, consisting of language rich stories to teach the target letter-sounds in context



Flashcards

Flashcards are designed to review previously taught letter-sounds as well as introducing new letter-sounds.

Pupil Practice Books



These enable children to practise and apply blending and segmenting skills at letter-sound, word, sentence and text levels.

Frieze and Sound Mats

The Frieze and Sounds Mats are used as a visual reference to support letter-sound recognition, letter formation and spelling.



Targeted Practice Reading Books

The Target Practice reading books provide focused practice. The books are fully aligned with the programme, and can be used for whole-group guided, one-to-one or independently.



When is Phonics taught?

Phonics is taught daily in Apple Tree, Oak and Willow classes. Lessons follow a similar structure each week.

For example:

Day 1:

Blending focus Revisit and review – Using flashcards to revisit and review previously taught sounds.

Teach –Teach the new letter-sound correspondence.

Practise and apply – Children practise decoding using the Big Book decodable word lozenges, then using Pupil Practice Booklet lesson page.

Apply – Use Target Practice reading books for shared, guided and/or individual reading.

Further application and consolidation – Children read independently using Rocket Phonics reading books.

Day 2:

Segmenting focus Revisit and review – Use ‘air’ writing, for example, to revisit and review previously taught sounds.

Teach –Model and teach letter formation and segmenting.

Practise and apply – Children practise segmenting and letter formation using, for example, mini whiteboards, then using the Pupil Practice Booklet lesson page.

Apply – Children transfer skills to English and wider curriculum lessons

Days 3 and 4:

Blending focus and segmenting focus - The above sequence in Days 1 and 2 is repeated with a new letter-sound correspondence.

Day 5:

A flexible day that can be tailored to children’s needs.

Consolidation – Revisit learning using a range of resources.

Focus on common exception words – Use the Pupil Practice Booklet common exception word lesson to teach, practice, apply and consolidate
 Assessment – Check, observe on children’s progress.
 Enrichment – Playing games such as letter-sound or word bingo or use activities.

Some children in KS2 may not have fully grasped or embedded all the phonic skills. These children will be supported and taught further either one – one or in small groups using ‘No Nonsense Phonics’, developed by the Debbie Hepplewhite who also wrote the Rocket Phonics scheme.



Phonics Glossary

Some phonic-related terms that might be helpful:

blending	The process of using phonics for reading. Children identify and blend the phonemes in order to hear and say a whole word.
common exception word (CEW)	A high frequency word with an unusual letter-sound correspondence, e.g. one, their, because.
consonant digraph	Two consonant letters which represent one sound
CVC, CCVC, CCVCC	These represent the consonant and vowel sounds in word structures. For example, a CVC word = h-e-n, b-oa-t or ch-i-p.
digraph	Two letters which together represent one sound, e.g. ai, ea, mb.
grapheme	A letter or group of letters representing one sound (phoneme).
phoneme	The smallest unit of sound in a word.
segmenting	The process of using phonics for spelling and writing. Children listen to the whole word and break it down into constituent phonemes, choosing the corresponding grapheme to represent each phoneme. For example, ‘lunch’ can be segmented as l-u-n-ch.
split digraph	Two letters, which work as a pair to represent one sound, but are separated within the word, e.g. a–e in cake; o–e in note.
trigraph	Three letters which together represent one sound, e.g. igh, eer.
vowel digraph	A digraph in which at least one of the letters is a vowel, e.g. ee, oi, or.



Systematic Synthetic Phonics Teaching Principles

The Systematic Synthetic Phonics Teaching Principles are the specific knowledge and skills children need to be able to read and write in the English language. These principles can be broken down into smaller steps.

Knowledge of the English Alphabetic Code (150+ graphemes that represent 44 speech sounds)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • see the letters, say the sounds for reading to automaticity • hear the sounds, recall the letters for spelling to automaticity (these are reversible processes)
Skill of blending for reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • oral blending • modelled blending • supported blending • independent blending at word, sentence and text levels
Skill of segmenting for spelling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • oral segmenting • modelled segmenting • supported segmenting • knowing which spelling alternative to use
Skill of handwriting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pencil hold • letter formation • positioning on a writing line • print before cursive

Handwriting

Tripod pencil grip

Here is some useful information about how to help children with the tripod pencil grip (commonly recognised as the most effective way to hold a pencil).

1. Use a frog toy (or a picture of a frog) to show young learners the shape of the frog's bowed back legs.
2. Show children how to use their thumb and forefinger to create a shape which looks similar to the frog's back bendy legs.
3. Pinch the pencil, just above the cone end, and use the middle finger as a supporting 'log under'
4. To make this skill child-friendly say, Put your froggy legs (thumb and forefinger) on the bottom of the painted part of the pencil (not on the cone shaped end part), with the pencil across the frog's back (back of the hand), then put the log under the frog (middle finger supporting the pencil to complete the tripod grip).
5. Emphasise the need for good sitting posture.
6. The 'writing hand' should rest lightly on the paper below the words being written, so that the words are not obscured.
7. The paper may be tilted slightly to the right (for right-handers) or to the left (for left-handers).
8. Use the frog toy or picture of a frog when you need to remind children about holding their pencil correctly