

Castle Hill Primary School

Phonics



At Castle Hill Primary School, we are committed to the delivery of excellence in the teaching of phonics. We aim to develop each child so that they are able to read with fluency as well as develop a love of reading that will stay with our children all their lives.

We use a systematic and structured phonics programme: *Floppy's Phonics*. This is in line with the Systematic Synthetic Phonics (SSP) teaching principles described in the 'English programmes of study: key stages 1 and 2 – National curriculum in England' which was statutory from September 2014.



The *Floppy's Phonics* programme teaches the letter/sound correspondences of the English alphabetic code explicitly and comprehensively for reading and spelling. It includes the characters of Floppy the dog, Biff, Chip and Kipper and their family and friends which engages children fully in the process of phonics teaching and learning, vocabulary enrichment and language comprehension.

Initially, children's listening skills are developed through the use of music, environmental sounds and rhyme. During their journey through the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage, they are taught the 44 phonemes (sounds) that make up all the sounds required for reading and spelling. These phonemes include those made by just one letter 'b' as in 'bed' and those that are made by two 'ai' as in 'rain' or three letters 'igh' as in 'high'.

Children are taught the key skills of blending sounds together for reading and segmenting (breaking up) words for spelling.

As the children grow in confidence and experience, they are introduced to alternative ways of representing the same sound, eg 'ee' can be represented as 'ee' as in 'bee', 'ea' as in 'tea', 'e-e' as in 'theme' and 'e' as in 'we'. They also learn when to apply simple spelling rules and to use verbs in the correct tense.



We ensure that our teaching of phonics is rigorous, structured and enjoyable. From Reception to Year 2, children have discrete, daily phonics sessions where they are introduced to new phonemes, explore, practise and revise previous learning and have plenty of opportunities to apply the knowledge they have.

We use a range of multisensory strategies to enthuse and engage the children, including the use of interactive whiteboards, magnetic letters, grapheme tiles, speaking and listening, and practical activities. Children work with pace and are encouraged to apply their knowledge across the whole curriculum.

Here are some examples of how the sounds are used in a phrase:

ea – cup of tea

oi – boil the water

oa – a goat in a boat



The 44 Sounds (Phonemes) of English

A phoneme is a unit of sound in **speech**. It's the **smallest unit of sound** that distinguishes one word from another. Since sounds cannot be written, we use letters to represent or stand for the sounds. A grapheme is the written representation (a letter or cluster of letters) of one sound. It is generally agreed that there are approximately 44 sounds in English, with some variation dependent on accent and articulation.

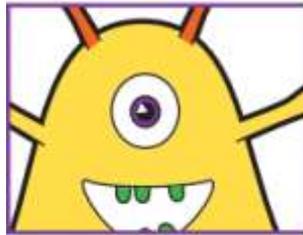
The 44 English phonemes are represented by the 26 letters of the alphabet individually and in combination. Phonics instruction involves teaching the relationship between sounds and the letters used to represent them. There are hundreds of spelling alternatives that can be used to represent the 44 English phonemes. Only the most common sound / letter relationships need to be taught explicitly. The 44 English sounds can be divided into two major categories – consonants and vowels. The 44 phonemes represented below are in line with the International Phonetic Alphabet.

Please see [alphabetic code attached](#)



Phonics Screening Check

What is it?



 zorps	 dirst
 harnd	 gair
 jigh	 thobe
 zale	 scroy
 bluns	 spraw

Children in Year 1 throughout the country all take part in a phonics screening check during the same week in June. Children in Year 2 will also take the check if they did not achieve the required result when in Year 1 or they have not taken the test before.

The phonics screening check is designed to confirm whether individual children have learnt phonic decoding and blending skills to an appropriate standard.

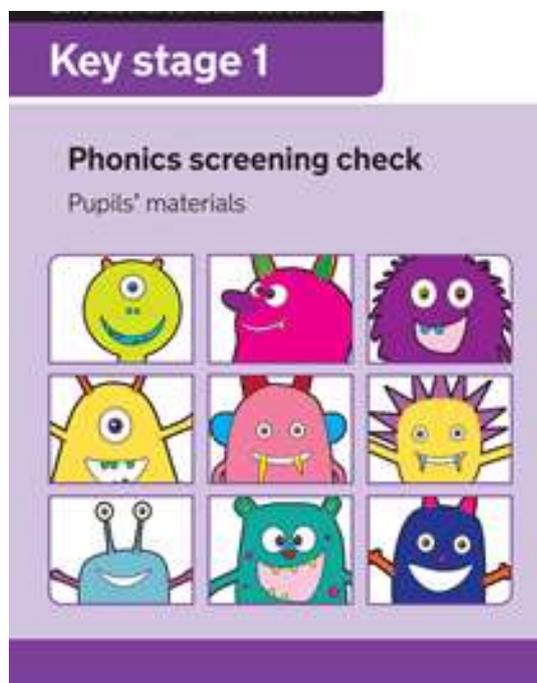
What happens during the check?

The test contains 40 words. Each child will sit one-to-one and read each word aloud to a member of the SLT who your child knows well and feels comfortable with. The test will take approximately 10 minutes per child although all children are different and will complete the check at their own pace (there is no time limit).

The list of words the children read is a combination of 20 real words and 20 psuedo (alien) words.

Through Year 1, they will have been taught all the sounds they need to be able to complete the test. We teach and practise these sounds and words everyday from Foundation Stage right through to Year 2.

We report to you as parents on whether your child was successful or not in the Phonics Screening Test in the end of year report.





How can I help my child at home?

- Play lots of sound and word games with your child.
- Read as much as possible to, and with, your child.
- Read word in the environment with your child – signs, shopping lists etc.
- Encourage and praise - encourage your child to use their phonic knowledge to decode the words before jumping in and telling them the word.
- If your child is struggling to decode a word, help them by encouraging them to say each sound in the word from left to right.
- Blend the sounds by pointing to each one e.g s-i-ng. Segment in to sounds and then move your finger under the whole word as you say and read it.
- Discuss the meaning of words to help with comprehension.

Phonics Vocabulary

Phoneme	The smallest unit of sound. There are approximately 44 phonemes in English. Phonemes can be put together to make words.
Grapheme	A way of writing down a phoneme. Graphemes can be made up from 1 letter – a 2 letters - sh 3 letters – tch 4 letters - ough
GPC	This stands for Grapheme Phoneme Correspondence. A GPC means being able to match a phoneme to a grapheme and vice versa.
Digraph	A grapheme containing two letters that makes just one sound e.g. th
Trigraph	A grapheme containing three letters that makes just one sound e.g. igh
Blending	This involves looking at a written word, looking at each grapheme and using knowledge of GPCs to work out which phoneme each grapheme represents and then merging these phonemes together to make a word.
Segmenting	This involves hearing a word, splitting it up into the phonemes that make it, using knowledge of GPCs to work out which graphemes represent those phonemes and then writing those graphemes down in the right order.
Alien Words	These are made up words which test children's knowledge of known phonemes e.g blurt, hiss,

There are many games to play that make learning to read fun and engaging.

Listening Walk – go for a walk around the house, garden, local area and encourage children to listen attentively to sounds around them. Talk about different sounds they can hear. When talking and teaching phonics it is so important to use the pure sound as in 'a' not 'aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa'. This enables your child to segment and blend with success.

Sounds a day/week – Write out the sounds to practise on lots of bits of paper and stick around the house. Encourage your child to practise spotting and saying the sounds throughout the day/week. Here are some suggestions you could do at home:

- **Matching pairs** – play snap with phonemes and words which contain the phoneme – e.g. play/stay, flight/right.
- **Phonics detective** – finding words with a certain phoneme in a book.
- **Phonics fishing** – Use homemade letter flashcards, add a paperclip to each, tie a magnet to some string and a stick and ask your child to fish for a particular phoneme/word.
- **Phonics Pop** – Write phonemes on bubble wrap and then as you call out each phoneme, your child can pop the right bubble.
- **News** – Ask them to highlight all the phonemes/words they know in a newspaper/magazine. Do this as a team – you could highlight in a different colour and your child could highlight words they know in a different colour. It is important for your child to see you as a reader because you are their role model.
- **Simon Says** – 'Put your hand on your b-a-ck', or they have to read the word on the card to complete the action.
- **I Spy** – BUT use phonemes children are learning at the middle/end of a word instead of the initial phoneme e.g. – 'I spy with my little eye something which ends in the sound 'ay' (tray).', or 'I spy with my little eye something which contains the sounds 'ai' (rain).'
- **Car Park** – Write a phoneme in a car parking space (draw out simply on paper or card) and challenge your child to park the car in the right place.
- **Phonics Bingo** – Create a grid on a piece of paper and write down various phonemes. Next, take or make your own flashcards and mix them up. Pull out a card at random and say the phoneme out loud. If your child has the correct sound written down, they can cross it off. Once they have crossed them all off, **they shout 'BINGO'**. Some phonemes have more than one spelling e.g. r, rr, wr, rh. These are alternative graphemes for the phoneme 'r'. This game will help your child make the connection between letter sounds and shapes in a quick and enjoyable way.
- **Phonics Splat** – Write out phonemes/words on bits of paper and stick them up. Say a phoneme/word at random and children can splat it with their hand or even a plastic fly swatter!