



What does Phonics look like at Priory CE Primary School?

Phonics is a method of teaching children to read by linking sounds (phonemes) and the symbols that represent them (graphemes) Phonics is the learning-to-read method used at Priory and we embed Phonics from the Nursery.

What is a phoneme?

A phoneme is the smallest unit of sound. The phonemes used when speaking English are:

s sat	t tap	p pan	n nose	m mat	a ant	e egg	i ink	o otter
g goat	d dog	ck click	r run	h hat	u up	ai rain	ee knee	igh light
b bus	f farm	l lolly	j jam	v van	oa boat	oo cook	oo boot	ar star
w wish	x axe	y yell	z zap	qu quill	or fork	ur burn	ow now	oi boil
ch chin	sh ship	th think	th the	ng sing	ear near	air stair	ure sure	er writer

Phonics learning step 1: segmenting/decoding

Children are taught letter sounds in our EYFS. This involves thinking about what sound a word starts with, saying the sound out loud and then recognising how that sound is represented by a letter.

The aim is for children to be able to see a letter and then say the sound it represents out loud. This is called segmenting/ decoding

We start our children on their phonics journey by learning the letters s, a, t, p, i, n first. This is because once they know each of those letter sounds, they can then be arranged into a variety of different words (for example: sat, tip, pin, nip, tan, tin, sip, etc.).

Phonics learning step 2: blending

Our Children then go from saying the individual sounds of each letter, to being able to blend the sounds and say the whole word. This can be a big step for many children and takes time to embed the skills that are being taught. Reading at home supports this and is greatly appreciated. While children are learning to say the sounds of letters out loud, they will also begin to learn to write these letters. They will be taught where they need to start with each letter and how the letters need to be formed in relation to each other. Letters (or groups of letters) that represent phonemes are called graphemes.

Phonics learning step 3: decoding CVC words

Children will focus on decoding (reading) three-letter words arranged consonant, vowel, consonant (CVC words) for some time. They will learn other letter sounds, such as the consonants g, b, d, h and the remaining vowels e, o, u. Often, they will be given letter cards to put together to make CVC words which they will be asked to say out loud. EG. c-a-t cat, r-a-t rat, sh-o-p shop.

Phonics learning step 4: decoding consonant clusters in CCVC and CVCC words

Children will also learn about consonant clusters: two consonants located together in a word, such as tr, cr, st, lk, pl. Children will learn to read a range of CCVC words (consonant, consonant, vowel, consonant) such as trap, stop, plan. They will also read a range of CVCC words (consonant, vowel, consonant, consonant) such as milk, fast, cart.

Phonics learning step 5: digraphs

Children are then introduced to vowel digraphs. A digraph is two vowels that together make one sound such as: /oa/, /oo/, /ee/, /ai/. They will move onto sounding out words such as deer, hair, boat, etc. and will be taught about split digraphs (or 'magic e'). They will also start to read words combining vowel digraphs with consonant clusters, such as: train, groan and stool. Children will also learn the consonant digraphs (two consonants that together make one sound) ch and sh and start blending these with other sounds to make words, such as: chat, shop, chain and shout.

Further phonics:

By the end of Reception, children should be able to write one grapheme for each of the 44 phonemes.

They will start to explore vowel digraphs and trigraphs (a group of three letters that makes a single sound, like 'igh' as in 'sigh') further. They will begin to understand, for example, that the letters ea can make different sounds in different words (dream and bread). They will also learn that one sound might be represented by different groups of letters: for example, light and pie (igh and ie make the same sound).

Further learning for our children will be spelling rules, such as adding suffixes to words (such as -ed, -ing, -er, -est, -ful, -ly, -y, -s, -es, -ment and -ness). They will be taught rules on how to change root words when adding these suffixes (for example, removing the 'e' from 'have' before adding 'ing') and then move onto harder concepts, such as silent letters (knock, write, etc) and particular endings (le in bottle and il in fossil).

Useful websites to help with phonics at home:

www.phonicsplay.co.uk