

Phonics Key Vocabulary

Phonics

- Phonics consists of knowledge of the skills of segmenting and blending, knowledge of the alphabet including letter names and their sounds is the foundation for developing reading and spelling.

Phoneme

- A phoneme (what you hear) is the smallest unit of sound in a word that can change its meaning
- e.g. in bed, and led the difference between the phonemes b and l signals the difference in meaning between the words bed, led

Grapheme

- A grapheme is a letter or group of letters representing a sound. The alphabet contains only 26 letters but we use it to make up all the graphemes (what is written) that represent the phonemes (what you hear).

Blending

- Blending consists of linking phonemes to read words. It is very important to make sure that children have secure blending skills in order to read whole words to obtain reading for meaning. The skill of blending is practised through the reading of pseudo/nonsense words.

Segmenting

- Segmenting consists of breaking words down into their phonemes (what you hear) to spell by choosing the correct grapheme (what you write). There will always be the same phonemes and graphemes in a word. Phoneme frames and bars and buttons are used to support this skill.

Consonant

- A letter that is not a vowel.

Vowel

- Any of the letters a, e, i, o, u

Digraphs

- A digraph is a two-letter grapheme where two letters represent one sound such as 'ea' in seat and 'sh' in ship. A split digraph is a digraph that is separated by a letter but still makes the same sound. For example 'ae' is split in date. (A split digraph in the past was widely named the magic 'E' however the sound is clearer when explained as a split digraph)

Trigraphs

- A trigraph is a three-letter grapheme where three letters represent one phoneme.
- e.g. 'ure' in manicure, and 'igh' in light.