



Ettington Church of England  
Primary School

# Whole School Phonics for Parents

### **What is phonics and why is it important?**

Phonics is a method of teaching children to read by linking sounds (phonemes) and the symbols that represent them (graphemes).

In UK primary schools, phonics is the method that is used for teaching reading and writing in the English language. It is based on developing learners' phonemic awareness—the ability to hear, identify, and manipulate phonemes—in order to teach the correspondence between these sounds and the spelling patterns that represent them. Once children can hear phonemes and identify the corresponding graphemes, they can be taught to use this phonic knowledge to create words by blending from left to right, for example, 'c – a – t', blended together gives 'cat'.

As the number of phonemes and corresponding graphemes that the children know increases, so does the number of words they can decode (read) and subsequently construct (spell then write). Phonics is essential for children to become successful readers, spellers and writers in the early years of schooling and beyond. In the first three years of their school life, it is a requirement that all children should have a daily lesson of phonics. Over these years (and beyond in certain cases), a systematic synthetic approach should be followed in order that the best possible outcomes are available for all children. It is vitally important that children are taught phonics in a systematic and synthetic way.

The definition of systematic phonics teaching is the direct teaching of a set of grapheme phoneme correspondence (GPC) in a clearly defined sequence. If phonics teaching is truly systematic, the order is such that children become confident and successful readers, spellers and writers in a very short amount of time.

Synthetic phonics is the method that has been briefly mentioned previously, where words are broken up into the smallest units of sound (phonemes). An emphasis is placed on every sound within each word. Children are taught how to break up words, or decode them, into individual sounds, and then blend all the way through the word. Children do not need to rely on any other cues to decode. They then spell and write the words using this approach as once the GPC is secure, the children can readily access the words needed for these skills.

SSP stands for Systematic Synthetic Phonics. It is **an approach which teaches children to recognise letters (graphemes) and their associated sounds (phonemes)**. It is also known as alphabetic phonics and involves breaking the word down into the smallest units of sound.

At Ettington Church of England Primary School, we believe that early, effective phonics teaching and learning is essential for achieving high attainment in reading and writing. Additionally, children's confidence with phonics is integral to the curriculum and is used in all subjects. Achievement in this area benefits every area of pupils' development and the school as a whole.

## *Learning for the Fullness of Life (John 10:10)*

This policy is aimed at reinforcing a consistent, high quality approach to the teaching of phonics across the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), Key Stage One and on into Key Stage two for children who require further support.

### **Aims**

- To teach children aural discrimination, phonemic awareness, alliteration and rhyme to aid reading, writing and spelling development.
- To encourage the use of segmenting and blending so that decoding skills provide a sound foundation for reading, writing and spelling.
- To ensure that the teaching of phonics is lively, interactive and inclusive.
- To enable children to use their phonological awareness across the curriculum.
- To ensure that children know the 44 phonemes within the English language.
- To teach children to recognise the graphemes within words and associate them with the appropriate phoneme when reading.
- To provide children with strategies to identify and decode Common Exception and High Frequency words.

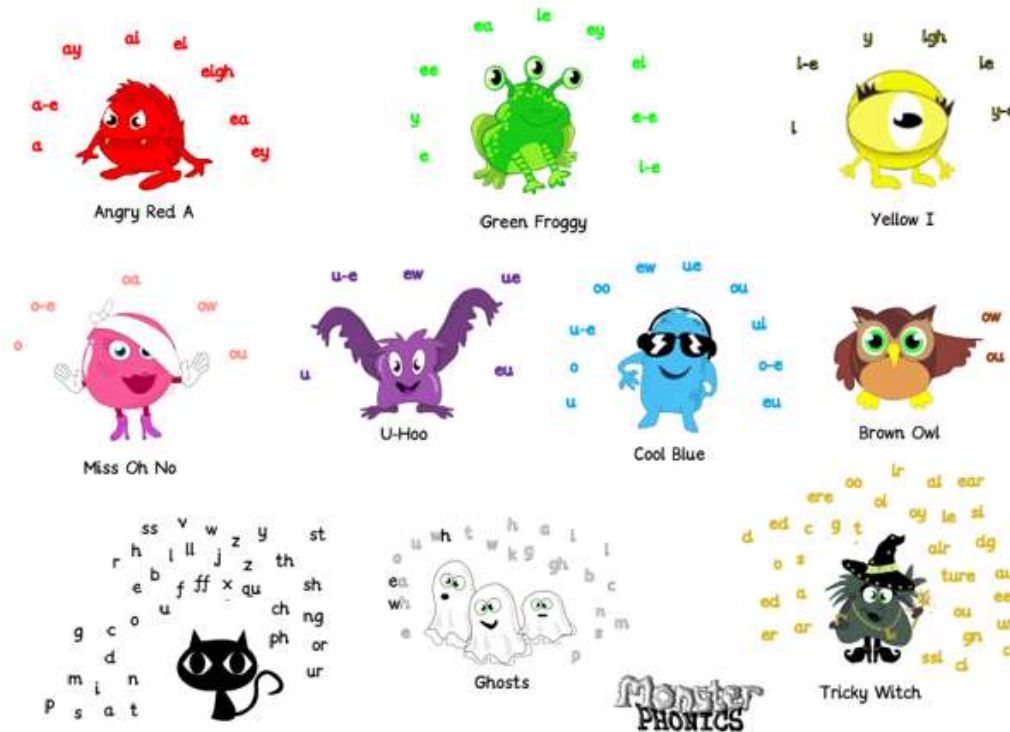
### **Objectives**

- To provide consistent, high quality phonics teaching that ensures all children have a strong foundation upon which to tackle the complexity of reading and writing.
- To ensure that teaching of synthetic phonics is systematic and progressive throughout the Foundation stage, Key Stage One and Key Stage Two for those children needing interventions to support phonemic knowledge and understanding.
- To ensure that children have a sound phonetic knowledge, understanding and skills so that they can decode words with confidence and engage with higher order reading and writing skills.

## Teaching and Learning

At Ettington, we use DFE listed, Monster Phonics as a whole-class scheme. 'Monster Phonics' is a rigorous, systematic synthetic programme developed by Ingrid Connors, a primary teacher, phonics specialist and audiological scientist. All of the resources within the programme are mapped against the **Letters and Sounds phases 1 to 6** and the **KS1 Spelling Curriculum**.

Different to any other scheme, Monster Phonics uses colour to consistently code for key graphemes in English. Colour shows children how to pronounce the most difficult aspects of reading. It is unique in that it uses character (monster) phoneme cues and colour coding to represent the long vowel sounds, silent letters and tricky letters. With Monster Phonics, spellings are more memorable and learning to read and spell becomes exciting and fun!

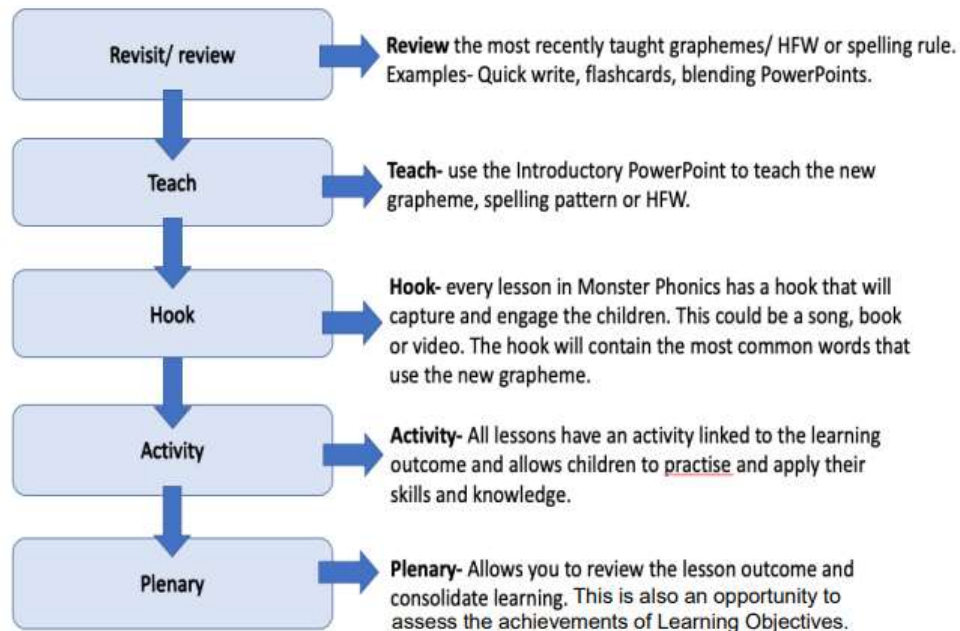


The innovative colour-coding system aims to accelerate learning to read and spell. It is the only scheme that uses colour-coding for sound and audio-visual cues (monsters) to bring phonics teaching to life. Monster Phonics best supports children with **dyslexia** because it is by far the most multisensory scheme available.

Visual learners benefit from the visual memory of colour in words. EAL learners have pronunciation support for every word that they learn. Monster Phonics highlights the existence of the open syllable spelling of long vowels A, E, I, O and U, such as in be, no, apron, open, me which many young learners misspell.

Phonics lessons at Ettington use the following sequence in all lessons:

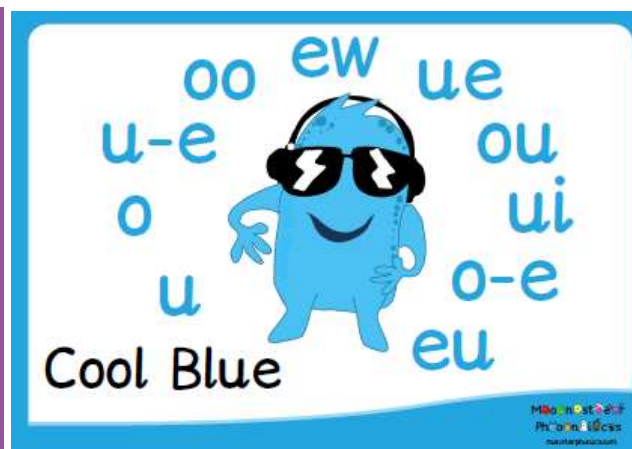
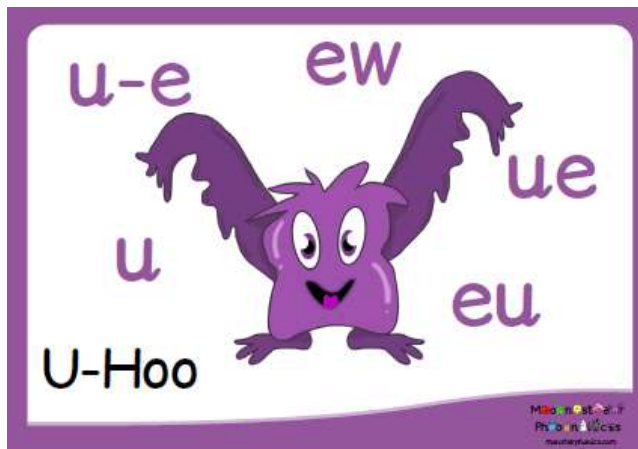
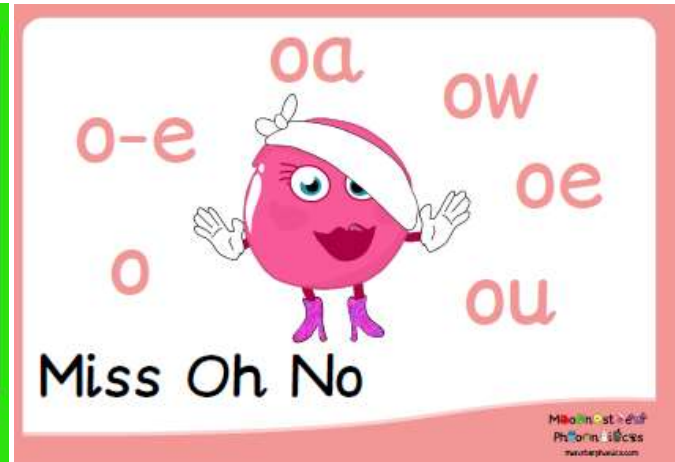
### **Monster Phonics Teaching Sequence**

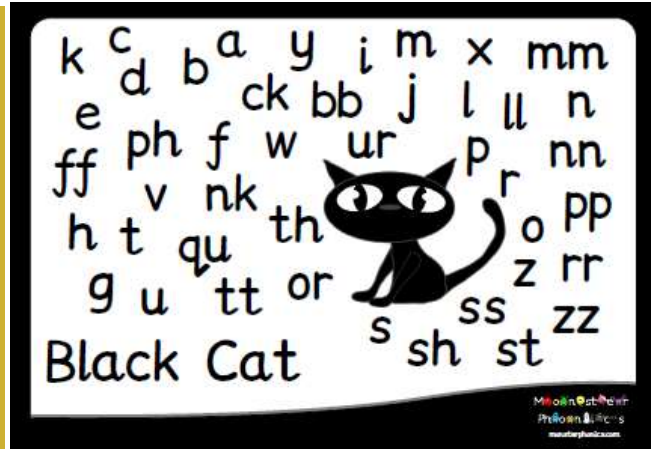
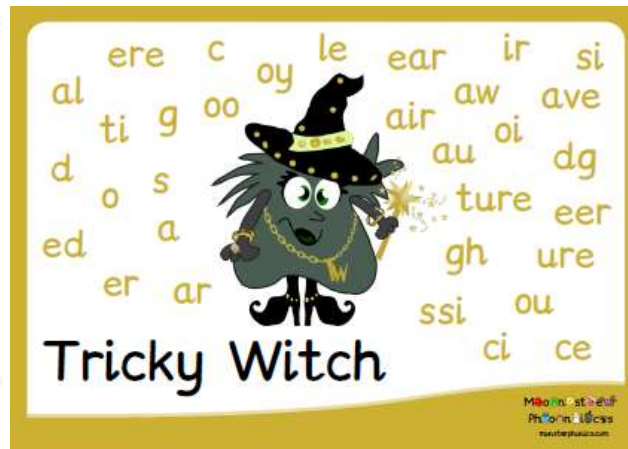
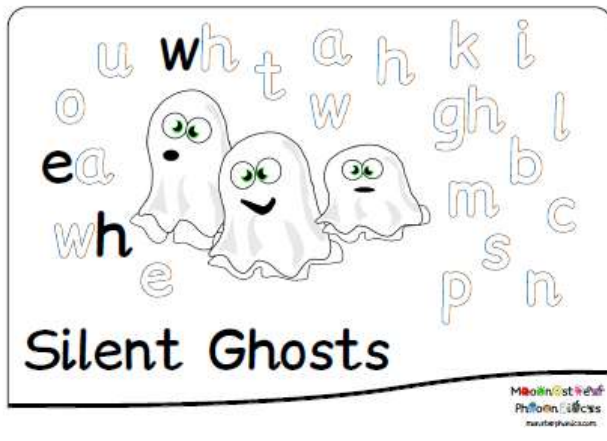


Learning for the Fullness of Life (John 10:10)

In the Early Year Foundation stage, this is achieved by using a fast-paced flashcard review. In Key Stage 1 this is achieved using a Monster Phonics learning wall/chart to review all the sounds that have been previously taught since EYFS up to a current point.

To ensure consistency and to aid independence, these wall charts are displayed throughout KS1 and KS2.





## Glossary of Terminology

### Phonics terminology: a glossary for parents

#### Adjacent consonants

Two or three consonants next to each other that represent different sounds. For example, bl in black. Notice here that bl makes the two different sounds b and l, whereas ck makes the single sound ck.

#### Blending

Blending involves merging the sounds in a word together in order to pronounce it. This is important for reading. For example, j-a-m blended together reads the word jam.

## **Consonant**

The letters of the alphabet (apart from the vowels a, e, i, o and u).

## **Consonant digraph**

A digraph that is made up of two consonants (sh in shop).

## **CVC words**

An abbreviation for consonant-vowel-consonant. This is a simple way of indicating the order of the graphemes in words. For example, it (VC), cat (CVC), bench (CVCC).

## **Digraph**

A grapheme made up of two letters that makes one sound (sh in fish).

## **Grapheme**



A grapheme is simply a way of writing down a phoneme. A grapheme can be one letter (s), two letters (ir), three letters (igh) or four letters in length (tough).

## **Grapheme-phoneme correspondences (GPCs)**

Knowing your GPCs means being able to hear a phoneme and knowing what grapheme to use to represent it. This is helpful for spelling. Conversely, it also means seeing a grapheme and knowing the phoneme that relates to it, which is important for reading.

## **Phoneme**

The smallest unit of sound in a word. There are around 44 phonemes in English and they are represented by graphemes in writing. Phonemes are usually shown as symbols between two forward slashes. For example, /b/ or /ch/.

## **Segmenting**

Segmenting involves breaking up a word that you hear into its sounds. This helps with spelling because if you know what graphemes represent the sounds in the word, you can write it! For example, the word jam is segmented into the sounds j-a-m.

## **Split digraph**

A digraph that is split between a consonant (a-e in make). A split digraph usually changes the sound of the first vowel. For example, compare the pronunciation between hug and huge.

## **Tricky words**

Words that are commonly used in English, but they have complex spelling patterns which make them difficult to read and write. For example: said, of and was.

## **Trigraph**

A grapheme made up of three letters that makes one sound (igh in high).

## **Vowel**

The letters a, e, i, o and u.

## **Vowel digraph**

A digraph that is made up of two vowels (ea in sea).

*Learning for the Fullness of Life (John 10:10)*