

ELS Essential Letters and Sounds

developed by Knowledge Schools Trust

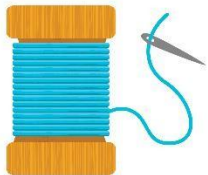
Getting all children to
read well, quickly.



OXFORD

What are we going to cover?

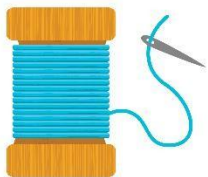
- What is Phonics?
- What is Essential Letters and Sounds?
- How we teach phonics
- Getting children ready to read
- Supporting your child with reading at home
- Pronouncing pure sounds
- Using the letter formations and spelling sequence to support writing at home



What is Phonics?

A method of teaching beginners to read and pronounce words by learning to associate letters or letter groups with the sounds they represent.

There are 44 main sounds in the English Language. Each sound is represented by a grapheme (the written representation of a sound).



What is Phonics?

Phoneme: the smallest single identifiable sound in a word.
For example, in the word 'cat' there are three phonemes c/a/t.

Grapheme: the written representation of a sound.

Digraph: two letters making one sound. For example, /sh/ in the word 'shop'.

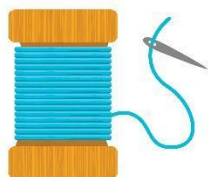
Trigraph: three letters making one sound. For example, /igh/ in the word 'night'.

Split digraph: two vowel letters split but are split by one or more consonants. For example, /a-e/ in the word 'cake'.

What is ELS?

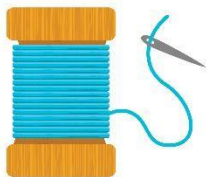
Essential Letters and Sounds (ELS) is our chosen phonics programme

Children will experience the joy of books and language whilst rapidly acquiring the skills they need to become fluent independent readers and writers.



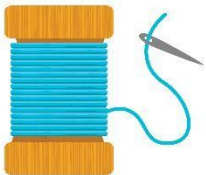
How do we teach phonics?

- We use a simple, consistent approach to teaching phonics.
- We have mnemonics and rhymes to support learning and recall.
- We teach phonics every single day from the first days of Reception.



How do we teach phonics?

- Phonics throughout the day to review new sounds & graphemes taught
- Lots of opportunities for oral blending- /c/ /oa/ /t/
- We teach the 'code' for reading, alongside teaching vocabulary.



How do we teach phonics?

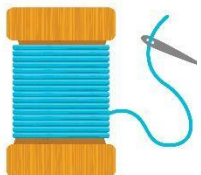
Teach

These objects all have the /ng/ sound in.

ng



ng ... ng ... ring
ng ... ng ... wing
ng ... ng ... sing



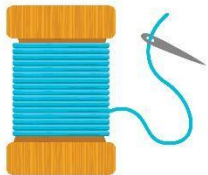
How do we teach phonics?

Practise

Quit activity 

Read the word. Click on the icon to reveal the picture.

net



Practise

Quit activity 

Read the word. Click on the icon to reveal the picture.

net



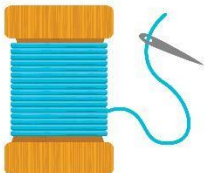
How do we teach phonics?

Apply

Quit activity 

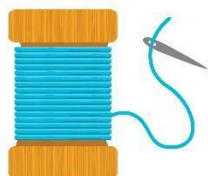
Read the sentence. Click on the icon to reveal the picture.

Her friend said it
was sweater
weather.



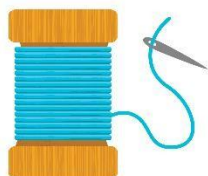
ELS Progression

Phase 1*	Phase 2	Phase 3**
<p><i>Nursery/Pre-School</i></p> <p>Seven aspects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental sounds • Instrumental sounds • Body percussion • Rhythm and rhyme • Alliteration • Voice sounds • Oral blending 	<p><i>Reception Autumn 1</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oral blending • Sounding out and blending with 23 new grapheme-phoneme correspondences (GPCs) • 12 new harder to read and spell (HRS) words 	<p><i>Reception Autumn 2, Spring 1 and Spring 2</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oral blending • Sounding out and blending with 29 new GPCs • 32 new HRS words • Revision of Phase 2



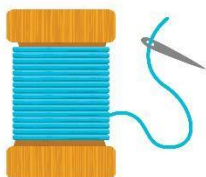
ELS Progression

Phase 4**	Phase 5 including alternatives and lesser-known GPCs	Beyond Phase 5
<p><i>Reception Summer 1</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oral blending • No new GPCs • No new HRS words • Word structures – cvcc, ccvc, ccvcc, cccvc, cccvcc • Suffixes • Revision of Phase 2 and Phase 3 	<p><i>Reception Summer 2</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to Phase 5 for reading • 20 new GPCs • 16 new HRS words <p><i>Year 1 Autumn 1 and 2</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revision of previously taught Phase 5 GPCs • 2 new GPCs • 9 new HRS words <p><i>Year 1 Spring 1 and 2</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alternative spellings for previously taught sounds • 49 new GPCs • 4 new HRS words • Oral blending • Revision of Phase 2, Phase 3 and Phase 4 	<p><i>Year 1 Summer, Year 2 and Key Stage 2</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With ELS, phonics teaching does not stop at the end of Year 1, but continues as children move through the school, with links being made between their GPC knowledge and spelling • Revision of all previously taught GPCs for reading and spelling • Wider reading, spelling and writing curriculum



Supporting your child with reading at home

- Only 1 in 3 children are read a bedtime story night
- Reading a bedtime story every night to your child improves their outcomes
- If your child views themselves as a 'good reader' when they leave Primary School they are more likely to earn a higher salary in their 40s.



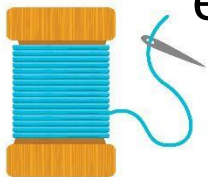
Supporting your child with reading at home

- Children are only reading from books that are entirely decodable
- Your child should be able to read their book confidently
- We only use pure sounds when decoding words (no 'uh' after the sound)
- We want them to practise reading their book 4 times across the week working on these skills:

decode

fluency

expression

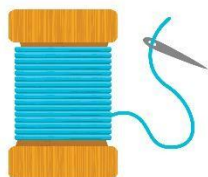


Supporting your child with reading at home

We want children to create a strong orthographic map. This means that they learn sounds spelt by the letters or groups of letters in each word.

To read fluently, or well, we need a strong orthographic map.

To consistently recognise that the <ea> in bread spells /e/ we need to read it at least 4 times. This means we need to read the word many times to build fluency for reading.



Pronouncing pure sounds

We must use pure sounds when we are pronouncing the sounds and supporting children in reading words.

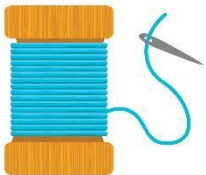
c a t

not

cuh a tuh

If we mispronounce these sounds we will make reading harder for our children.

There are videos for this on our school website where you can hear the correct pronunciation of the sounds.



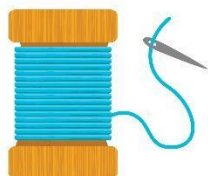
Supporting your child with writing at home



You can use the spelling sequence with your children at home to support them with their writing.

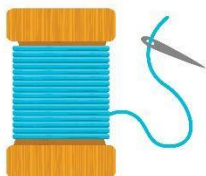
Let's try this with the word: rain

We also practise saying our sentences before we write them to make sure we write the sentence we have planned and to ensure it makes sense!



Phonics Screening Check

- Statutory check completed in Year 1
- Children are tested in June
- Test consists of 40 words. 20 real words and 20 alien words
- Pass mark – 32/40
- For those children who do not pass, interventions are put in place for re-testing in Year 2
- Tests ability to phonetically decode words containing learned sounds
- It should not be mistaken for a test of children's reading ability



Year 2

- As children enter Year 2, some will continue to choose decodable books.
- Those children who have mastered early reading skills, move towards refining accuracy, fluency and comprehension through more challenging texts (Turquoise – Grey). We aim for children to be reading Gold reading books at the end of Year 2.
- Whole Class Guided Reading taught once a week. These sessions provide opportunity for **all** children to analyse and discuss a text in detail and will focus on developing reading skills (content domain/s).
- Children encouraged to read at home every night.
- Children change books when they have completed them. All Reading Records are handed in so teacher can monitor who is reading at home and can support children who might not be.



Reading in Reception

Each week, your child will receive a decodable reading book, an eBook and a copy of a 100 Recommended Read book (we call them 'star books').

To best support us in teaching your child to read, we ask that you read the decodable reading book **four times** across the week. Spending 10 minutes a day reading with your child will hugely support them on their journey to becoming an independent reader.

Children's books will be changed on a **Friday**. This will allow your child to re-read their book several times during the week, building their confidence and fluency. Each read should be recorded in their Reading Record.

For children, re-reading words and sentences that they can decode (sound out) until they are fluent (read with ease and precision) is a key part of learning to read. By reading texts several times, children have the greatest opportunity to achieve this fluency.

The decodable reading book sent home has been carefully matched to your child's phonetic knowledge. **Your child will be able to decode this book by themselves.**

A new eBook will be assigned on a **Friday** and will be matched to the teaching that has taken place in school that week. This will allow your child to practise what they have been taught in school with you at home. **Your child may require support with this text.**

100 Recommended Read books (star books) will be sent home for you to read with your child, helping us to instil a love of reading from the very beginning of their reading journey. These could be read together with your child reading the words they are able to decode or could be read to your child.

ELS whole-class, daily phonics teaching will begin in the first full week of Reception. Children will build an immediate understanding of the relationship between the sounds they can hear and say (phonemes) and the written sounds (graphemes).

Half termly assessments will check children's GPC knowledge and word reading.

Decodable reading books are organised into Phases and Sets.

Autumn

During the Autumn term, your child will learn Phase 2 and will begin learning Phase 3.

By the end of the Autumn term, your child will have been taught the graphemes up to the decodable reading books in **Phase 3 Set 9**.

For many children, this will be their first experience with blending and segmenting sounds—essential skills for early reading. It's completely normal for children to progress at different rates, so please don't worry if your child is not yet reading the same decodable books as others. We closely monitor each child's development and provide high-quality, targeted support to ensure every child makes progress with their reading.

Spring

During the Spring term, your child will continue learning Phase 3.

By the end of the Spring term, your child will have been taught the graphemes up to the decodable reading books in **Phase 4 Set 12**.

Summer

During the Summer term, your child will apply all Phase 2 and Phase 3 learning during Phase 4 of the ELS programme and begin learning Phase 5.

By the end of the Summer term, your child will have been taught the graphemes up to the decodable reading books in **Phase 5 Set 14**.

Please be assured that our half-termly assessments will inform us of your child's reading level and their books will be changed in line with the phase they are secure in.

Reading in Year 1

In Year 1, your child will continue to receive a decodable reading book, an eBook and a copy of a 100 Recommended Read book.

We continue to ask that you read the decodable reading book **four times** across the week. Spending 10 minutes a day reading with your child will hugely support them on their journey to becoming an independent reader.

Children's books will continue to be changed on a **Friday**. This will allow your child to re-read their book several times, building their confidence and fluency. Each read should be recorded in their Reading Record.

For children, re-reading words and sentences that they can decode (sound out) until they are fluent (read with ease and precision) is a key part of learning to read. By reading texts several times, children have the greatest opportunity to achieve this fluency.

The decodable reading book sent home has been carefully matched to your child's phonetic knowledge. Your child **will be able** to decode this book by themselves.

A new eBook will be assigned on a **Friday** and will be matched to the teaching that has taken place in school that week. This will allow your child to practise what they have been taught in school with you at home. Your child may require support with this text.

100 Recommended Read books will be sent home for you to read with your child, helping us to instil a love of reading from the very beginning of their reading journey. These could be read together with your child reading the words they are able to decode or could be read to your child.

Autumn

The whole of Autumn term will be spent revisiting Phase 5. During this time, children will consolidate the graphemes taught during the summer term in Reception. Assessments will be completed at the end of each half term and reading books will be updated accordingly.

By the end of the Autumn term, your child will have **be** taught the graphemes to be able to access the decodable reading books in **Phase 5 Set 14**. This may be what your child was reading at the end of Reception, however, it is expected for them to still be reading these books at this stage of Year 1.

Spring

During the Spring term, children will begin to learn alternative spellings and pronunciations for previously taught phonemes and graphemes.

By the end of the Spring term, your child will have **be** taught the graphemes up to the decodable reading books in **Phase 5 Set 18**.

Summer

During the Summer term, no new graphemes are taught in preparation for the Phonics Screening Check which is completed in June. All previous learning is revisited and revised through longer text extracts to support reading fluency and comprehension. By continuing to use the decodable readers, children will have exposure to these more rarely used graphemes.

By the end of the Summer term, your child will have been taught the graphemes up to the decodable reading books in **Phase 5 Set 18**.

Please don't worry if your child is not yet reading the same decodable books as others. We closely monitor each child's development and provide high-quality, targeted support to ensure **every child** makes progress with their reading.

Please be assured that our half-termly assessments and Benchmarking will inform us whether your child is reading beyond the expected phase and set each half term.

Reading in Year 2

In Year 2, your child will continue to receive a reading book and a 100 Recommended Read book.

If your child is reading a decodable book, we continue to ask that you read this book **four times** across the week. Those children reading book banded books should be reading these throughout the week. Spending 10 minutes a day reading with your child will hugely support them on their journey to becoming an independent reader.

Children's books will continue to be changed on a **Friday**. This will allow your child to re-read their decodable book four times or their book banded book several times, building their confidence and fluency. Each read should be recorded in their Reading Record.

A 100 Recommended Read book will be sent home for you to read with your child, helping us to instil a love of reading. These could be read together with your child or could be read to your child. **In Year 2, these books are longer and may not need changing every Friday.**

With ELS, phonics teaching does not stop at the end of Year 1 but continues as children move into Year 2. ELS Essential Spelling is a continuation of this and builds upon the progression taught in Reception and Year 1.

ELS Essential Spelling provides children with the opportunity to revise the code they already know by looking at grapheme-phoneme correspondences (GPCs) they have already been taught in Reception and Year 1. Within each lesson, the specific code being taught is shown within words and then studied. We know the importance of reading to underpin spelling and that is why ELS Essential Spelling continues to give children opportunities to read within each spelling lesson.

Autumn term will be spent revising any gaps identified during our baseline assessments. During this time, children will consolidate alternative spellings and pronunciations for the phonemes and

graphemes taught in Year 1. Assessments will continue to be completed at the end of each half term and reading books will be updated accordingly.

These assessments may show that your child still requires a decodable reading book to support their phonic development. Alternatively, teacher assessment will be supported by benchmarking your child to see which colour book band they should be reading.

During Spring and Summer term, these lessons will focus on encoding and applying previous taught GPCs to spell words correctly.

Whole Class Guided Reading

Although our daily spelling lessons will provide reading opportunities, our whole class guided reading lessons will further develop your child's comprehension skills. These weekly lessons will reinforce phonics from Year 1 while reading with expression and building stamina as a reader. It is expected that during these lessons, children will develop the skills to begin reading book banded reading books.

Year 2 Benchmark Book Bands:

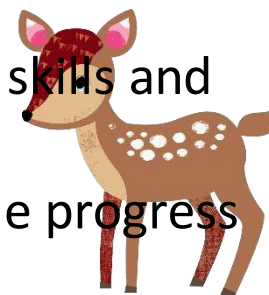
- **Turquoise**
- **Purple**
- **Gold** – Expected level at the **end** of Year 2
- **White**
- **Lime**

Children will only progress through these book bands based on their fluency and comprehension and not on their word recognition alone. Please use the questions at the front of your child's Reading Record to develop their comprehension at home.

Please don't worry if your child is not yet reading the same decodable or book banded books as others. We closely monitor each child's development and provide high-quality, targeted support to ensure **every child** makes progress with their reading.

Impact of early reading practice in Key Stage 2

- As children move into Key Stage 2, the teaching of comprehension becomes the primary element of reading and takes precedence over word reading.
- Investing early is key. Key Stage 1 sets the foundations for learning in Key Stage 2. These foundations are built upon as children progress through each year.
- Early language skills have an enormous impact on children's literacy and language in later years.
- Encouraging a love of reading in the home is so important and can make a huge difference to children's language and reading skills in school.
- Teachers and Teaching Assistants have the understanding, skills and resources to help struggling children catch up if necessary.
- Children complete SATs at the end of Key Stage 2 where the progress they have made is measured and compared nationally.



Questions

