

# ELS Essential Letters and Sounds

developed by Knowledge Schools Trust

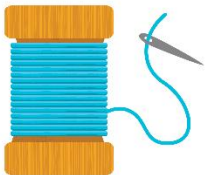
Getting all children to  
read well, quickly.



OXFORD

# What are we going to cover?

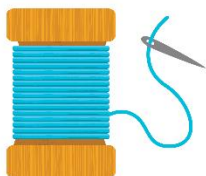
- What is Phonics?
- What is Essential Letters and Sounds?
- How we teach phonics
- Getting children ready to read
- Supporting your child with reading at home
- Pronouncing pure sounds
- Using the letter formations and spelling sequence to support writing at home



# End of Reception expectations

What we are progressing towards...

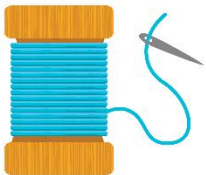
<b>ELG: Comprehension</b>	<p><i>Children at the expected level of development will:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Demonstrate understanding of what has been read to them by retelling stories and narratives using their own words and recently introduced vocabulary;</li> <li>-Anticipate – where appropriate – key events in stories;</li> <li>-Use and understand recently introduced vocabulary during discussions about stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems and during role-play.</li> </ul>
<b>ELG: Word Reading</b>	<p><i>Children at the expected level of development will:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Say a sound for each letter in the alphabet and at least 10 digraphs</li> <li>-Read words consistent with their phonic knowledge by sound-blending;</li> <li>-Read aloud simple sentences and books that are consistent with their phonic knowledge, including some common exception words.</li> </ul>
<b>ELG: Writing</b>	<p><i>Children at the expected level of development will:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Write recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed;</li> <li>-Spell words by identifying sounds in them and representing the sounds with a letter or letters;</li> <li>-Write simple phrases and sentences that can be read by others.</li> </ul>



# 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'.

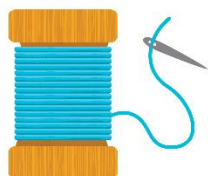
**Trigraph:** three letters making one sound. For example, /igh/ in the word 'night'.

**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?

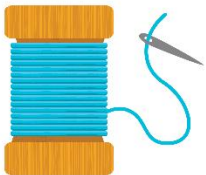
Essential Letters and Sounds (ELS) is our chosen phonics programme

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



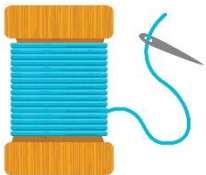
# How do we teach phonics?

- 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 some of 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.



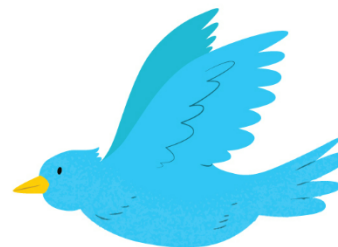


# How do we teach phonics?

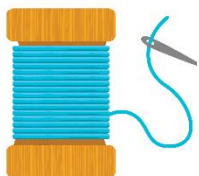
## Teach

These objects all have the /ng/ sound in.

ng




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



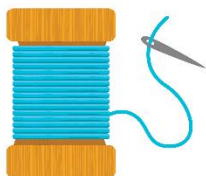
# How do we teach phonics?

Practise


Quit activity 

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

net

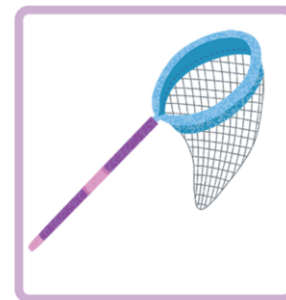


Practise

Quit activity 

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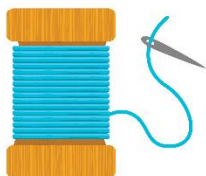
# How do we teach phonics?

Apply

Quit activity 

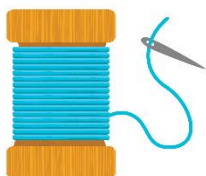
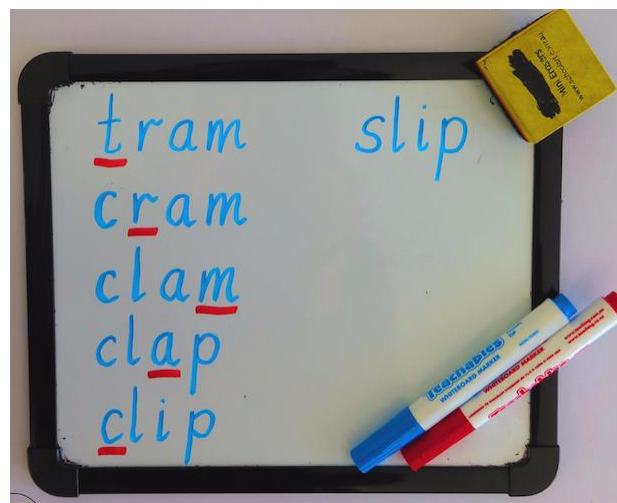
Read the sentence. Click on the icon to reveal the picture.

Her friend said it  
was sweater  
weather.



# How do we teach phonics?

**Apply** – we apply our learning in our booklets or on mini whiteboards. We practice forming the grapheme and practice writing words and sentences.



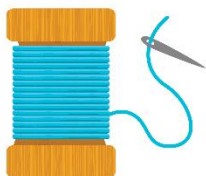
# Supporting your child with writing at home



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

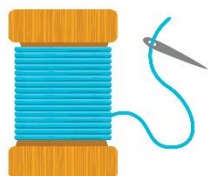
Let's try this with the word: rain

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!



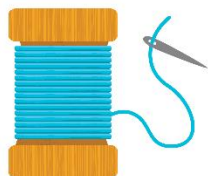
# ELS Progression

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



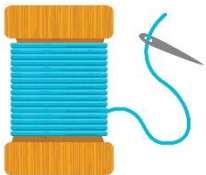
# ELS Progression

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"> <li>• Oral blending</li> <li>• No new GPCs</li> <li>• No new HRS words</li> <li>• Word structures – cvcc, ccvc, ccvcc, cccvc, cccvcc</li> <li>• Suffixes</li> <li>• Revision of Phase 2 and Phase 3</li> </ul>	<p><i>Reception Summer 2</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction to Phase 5 for reading</li> <li>• 20 new GPCs</li> <li>• 16 new HRS words</li> </ul> <p><i>Year 1 Autumn 1 and 2</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revision of previously taught Phase 5 GPCs</li> <li>• 2 new GPCs</li> <li>• 9 new HRS words</li> </ul> <p><i>Year 1 Spring 1 and 2</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alternative spellings for previously taught sounds</li> <li>• 49 new GPCs</li> <li>• 4 new HRS words</li> <li>• Oral blending</li> <li>• Revision of Phase 2, Phase 3 and Phase 4</li> </ul>	<p><i>Year 1 Summer, Year 2 and Key Stage 2</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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</li> <li>• Revision of all previously taught GPCs for reading and spelling</li> <li>• Wider reading, spelling and writing curriculum</li> </ul>



# 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.





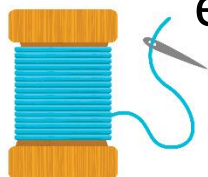
# Supporting your child with reading at home

- 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

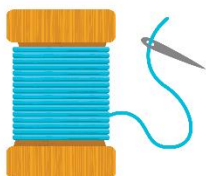


# Supporting your child with reading at home

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.

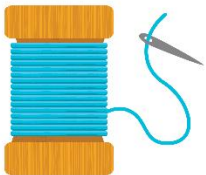
**c a t**

**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.



# Pronouncing pure sounds

## Phonics

### CURRICULUM

Curriculum Introduction

EYFS Curriculum

Year 1 Curriculum

Year 2 Curriculum

Year 3 Curriculum

Year 4 Curriculum

Year 5 Curriculum

Year 6 Curriculum

English

Phonics

Maths

Global Links

British Values

PE and Sport Premium

#### Essential Letters and Sounds

Essential Letters and Sounds (ELS) is our chosen Phonics programme. The aim of ELS is 'Getting all children to read well, quickly'. It teaches children to read by identifying the phonemes (the smallest unit of sound) and graphemes (the written version of the sound) within words and using these to read words.

Children begin learning Phonics at the very beginning of Reception and it is explicitly taught every day during a dedicated slot on the timetable. Children are given the knowledge and the skills to then apply this independently.

Throughout the day, children will use their growing Phonics knowledge to support them in other areas of the curriculum and will have many opportunities to practise their reading. This includes reading 1:1 with a member of staff, with a partner during paired reading and as a class.

Children continue daily Phonics lessons in Year 1 and further through the school to ensure all children become confident, fluent readers.

We follow the ELS progression and sequence. This allows our children to practise their existing phonic knowledge whilst building their understanding of the 'code' of our language GPCs (Grapheme Phoneme Correspondence). As a result, our children can tackle any unfamiliar words that they might discover.

Children experience the joy of books and language whilst rapidly acquiring the skills they need to become fluent independent readers and writers. ELS teaches relevant, useful and ambitious vocabulary to support each child's journey to becoming fluent and independent readers.

We begin by teaching the single letter sounds before moving to diagraphs 'sh' (two letters spelling one sound), trigraphs 'igh' (three letters spelling one sound) and quadraphs 'eigh' (four letters spelling one sound).

We teach children to:

- Decode (read) by identifying each sound within a word and blending them together to read fluently.
- Encode (write) by segmenting each sound to write words accurately.

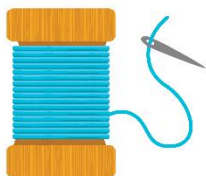
The structure of ELS lessons allows children to know what is coming next, what they need to do, and how to achieve success. This makes it easier for children to learn the GPCs we are teaching (the alphabetic code) and how to apply this when reading.

ELS is designed on the principle that children should 'keep up' rather than 'catch up'. Since interventions are delivered within the lesson by the teacher, any child who is struggling with the new knowledge can be immediately targeted with appropriate support. Where further support is required, 1:1 interventions are used where needed. These interventions are short, specific and effective.

#### Supporting Reading at Home:

- Children will only read books that are entirely decodable, this means that they should be able to read these books as they already know the code contained within the book.
- We only use pure sounds when decoding words (no 'uh' after the sound)
- We want children to practise reading their book 4 times across the week working on these skills:

Decode – sounding out and blending to read the word.



<https://ightham.kent.sch.uk/curriculum/phonics/>

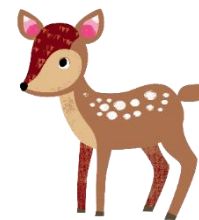
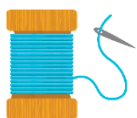


# Supporting your child with reading at home

## Harder to Read and Spell Words

Each term a new set of Harder to Read and Spell Words is taught. These are words that cannot be sounded out and have to be learnt to be read by sight. (Previously known as tricky words).

Your child will receive a bookmark-style list of words to learn to read at home. It would also be beneficial to practice writing these as well. Sometimes children can learn to read these by rote and remember the order they are in. It would be good to practise reading them in a different order to make sure they can read them by sight and haven't just remembered the order they are in!



## How we assess reading

Every term, during week 5 of the term, we assess the children's recognition of the sounds we have learnt and the Harder to Read and Spell words. We also assess the children's blending and segmenting (sounding out) skills.

This informs our planning and teaching and ensures that children who need a bit more help, get the support they need.

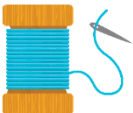
Every term we send home a sheet showing the sounds and Harder to Read and Spell words your child needs a bit more practice with.

Once your child is confident with the Harder to Read and Spell words, the next set will be sent home.

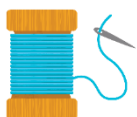


# How we assess reading

- **Weekly reading** - we hear your child read weekly (sometimes more than once). Every child has a reading day, however please make sure reading books are in school everyday.
- **Phonics lessons**
- **Literacy/teacher directed activities**

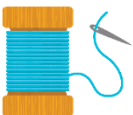


# Supporting your child's comprehension skills

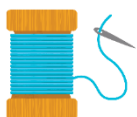




- Spend time talking and looking through the book before you start to share it together.
- Talk about how the cover will tell you the title; the pictures are clues of the story sequence.
- Discuss characters e.g. how do they feel, what kind of person are they? How do they know this?
- Predict what will happen next – why do they think this?
- Being able to express preferences - favourite part of a story, which characters they liked or disliked, why they found a story funny or exciting or boring and why.
- Encourage your child to concentrate on the meaning of what she/he is reading and to make a sensible guess at an unknown word.

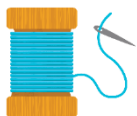


- **Discuss the front and back** – Can you find the title? What do you think the book is about? Why? Let's read the blurb on the back, is this book fiction or non-fiction?
- **Discuss the pictures** – what is happening? How do you know?
- **Point to the words as you read** – very important when in the early stages of reading – helps if your child loses focus!
- **Sound out and blend to read words** – recognise tricky words by sight. Read sentences back (together where needed) to support comprehension.
- **Use picture clues** to help decode difficult words/comprehension.



# Supporting word reading at home

- Once they can recognise letter sounds they can begin to blend sounds together. It takes lots of practise and demonstration from adults. It would be great if you can support your child at home to recognise the sounds we have been learning in school.
- If they are finding it difficult to sound out (segment) and blend to read a word, model this first and ask your child to copy. Encourage them to ‘use their phonics’ – emphasise recognising letters and their sounds, sound talking the word and blending these, recognising digraphs. They can also use picture clues to help.
- Remind your child that ‘Harder to Read and Spell Words’ cannot be sounded out and need to be read by sight.
- Sight reading and fluency take lots of practise. It is something we encourage near the end of the Reception – although fantastic if they pick it up sooner! Using phonics to decode is great until they build their knowledge of the letters and sounds and sight reading and fluency “clicks”.



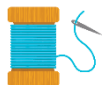
## A few more tips!

- Listen to your child read daily – remember a good 10 minutes is much better than a difficult half hour!
- Choose a time when they can be relaxed and can give their undivided attention – away from the television and not when they are very tired.
- Praise what your child can do – build confidence at every opportunity.
- Make it enjoyable for both of you – enjoy the book, it's not just about getting the words right.
- Remember... there are many sources of reading other than books brought home from school – all printed words are for reading.
- Re-reading is really important! Even if your child seems to have memorised the book word for word, there are plenty more opportunities to support their reading...



# What else can we do with our reading book?

- Select a sentence from their book copy it out and cut it up. Then ask your child to rearrange the sentence.
- Ask your child to count the harder to read and spell words on the page. Can they find a given Harder to Read and Spell Word?
- Asking questions to support inference...
- Re-read themselves but change the story plot! Perhaps to a younger sibling?
- Finding words with a chosen sound – very good activity when we learn digraphs and trigraphs!
- Write Harder to Read and Spell Words on small pieces of paper – ask your child to jump on a given word. Also words for recognising sounds!



# Finally....

- And most importantly, we want your child to ENJOY READING!
- We want children to love books and develop a real love for reading.
- **“Children fall in love with books because of the memories created when they snuggle up and read with someone they love.” – Raising Readers**



# Questions

