



Essential letters and sounds (FS1)

Introduction:

Children learn through interacting with other people. As parents and carers, you are your child's first teacher. You have a powerful influence on your child's early learning. Early reading and writing starts in Nursery and develops with your child's language development.

As a school we use the phonics programme – Essential Letters and Sounds – to support the initial stages of early reading and writing. Your child will then continue this into school as they begin more formal elements of reading. Your child will be doing phase 1 which is all about talking and sounds in the environment.

In order to make a good start in reading and writing, children need an adult to talk and listen to them. Through listening your child can begin to identify sounds within our language and how language is put together into sentences for a purpose.

Ways to support your children at home:

- Make time to listen to your child talking.
- Children cannot learn language through tablets and tv.
- Play with your child.
- Read to your child (show a love of reading).

Sounds:

Identifying sounds both in the environment and in words is important as gradually they will begin to match sounds to letters. It is important that you use the correct sound and not its letter name. There are videos on the school website to support this.

Oral blending – This is when children identify different sounds within a word. This can be done at home to support your child.

For example:

- 'Can you find your h-a-t?' (The children will gradually be able to blend the sounds together to understand that h-a-t becomes hat).
- 'Where is the c-a-t?'
- 'Can you see the p-e-g?'

It is important that you say the sounds in the correct order and use the correct sounds. For example: seat - You would not say 's-e-a-t' but rather the sounds 's-ee-t'. This isn't about identifying spellings at this stage, but being able to hear the sounds in words.



Robot arms - When sound-talking a word (orally segmenting it into the phonemes within the word), we use robot arms to physically make the link between the separating of the sounds. This assists children in hearing the separate sounds within the word. The word is said in 'robot talk' and then blending hands are used to blend the word.

Oral Segmenting – This is the opposite of blending.

This can be done at home to support your child.

For example:

- ‘cat – what is the first sound?’

To support your children, you will need to model this first.

We use the phrase ‘**me then you**’ in school.

You will say it first and then the child will repeat.

For example:

Adult: ‘peg. p-e-g. peg’

Child: ‘peg. p-e-g. peg’