

Phonics

At Charing Church of England Primary School, we teach synthetic phonics through a structured, systematic approach that is based on the Government scheme 'Letters and Sounds' and incorporates the use of interactive resources and a wide range of teaching strategies and activities that encourage the children to participate actively in their learning, developing their reading ability and knowledge of spelling.

What is Phonics?

The term 'phonics' is used to describe the process of matching the spoken sound (phoneme) to the written symbol (grapheme) and is one of the first strategies that young children learn in order to support them in beginning to read simple texts.

How do we teach Phonics at Charing Church of England Primary School?

Phonics is taught as a discrete lesson daily for 20 minutes to all children in Years R, 1 and 2. The children are taught phonics systematically, beginning with the 'pure' sounds for every letter of the alphabet (this is not taught in alphabetical order), before learning the sounds made by clusters of letters (digraphs etc.). Each phonics lesson follows the same structure of revisiting and consolidating previous learning, teaching of a new sound or skill, practising that sound or skill and applying their new learning in their work whilst the teacher assesses progress.

The children are taught to recognise the grapheme-phoneme correspondences (letter-sound), to blend (put the sounds together) and segment (break the sounds apart) in order to read and spell real and nonsense words.

The scheme of work is structured to match the requirements of 'Letters and Sounds'. It is divided into 'Phases' 2 through to 5 (as Phase 6 has been replaced with the 'No Nonsense Spelling' programme for Year 2). Phase 1 is taught in pre-school settings and focuses on 'tuning' the children into the spoken sounds of English, developing both their speech and listening skills in preparation for Phase 2 in Year R.

During Phase 2 the children learn s, a, t, p, i, n, m, d, g, o, c, k, ck, e, u, r, h, b, f, ff, l, ll, ss and begin to read and spell cvc (consonant-vowel- consonant) words.

In Phase 3 the children learn j, v, w, x, y, z, zz, qu, ch, sh, th (both long sound and short sound), ng, ai, ee, igh, oa, oo (both long sound and short sound), ar, or, ur, ow, oi, ear, air and er and practise reading and spelling a greater range of cvc words that include those with a diagraph eg. duck.

Phase 4 consolidates all of the children's prior learning and develops their ability to read and spell word with adjacent consonants such as black and street.

In Phase 5 the children learn ay, ou, ie, ea, oy, ir, ue, aw, wh, ph, ew, oe, au, ey, a-e, e-e, i-e, o-e, u-e, alternative pronunciations and spellings for some of the graphemes.

Throughout each Phase the children are taught to read and spell a range of High Frequency words (the words that most commonly occur in English), and 'tricky' words (those that cannot be decoded through the use of phonics).

How do we assess Phonics at Charing Church of England Primary School?

Every child's progress and attainment in phonics is assessed at least once a term throughout Year R, 1 and 2 using individual record sheets in order to ensure that they are receiving lessons within the correct Phase for their ability.

During Term 6 all Year 1 children are assessed formally on their ability to apply their phonic knowledge in the decoding (reading) of both real and nonsense words through the use of the Government produced Phonics Screening test. These results are reported to both Parent's and the Government by the end of the academic year. Those children that do not reach the expected level are re-screened during Term 6 of Year 2.

Children in Year 2 are now assessed on their spelling ability as part of the Year 2 end of Key Stage 1 assessments.