

Phase 3 Phonics

A Guide for Parents

Children will progress to Phase 3 of the Letters and Sounds phonics programme during Reception. Phase 3 introduces the final seven letters of the alphabet as well as more single sounds that can be made by grouping two or three letters together.

In the original Letters and Sounds programme, the Phase 3 letters and sounds are taught in this order:

Set 6 - j v w x

Set 7 - y z zz qu

Digraphs - ch sh th ng ai ee oa oo ar or ur
ow oi er

Trigraphs - igh ear air ure

Glossary

Phoneme - a single sound that can be made by saying one or more letters e.g. saying c or ck, out loud.

Grapheme - written letters or group of letters which represent a single sound e.g. reading and writing c or ck.

Digraph - two letters which together make one sound e.g. ck.

Trigraph - three letters which go together to make one sound e.g. 'igh' in the word 'sigh'.

Some words cannot be sounded out. These are tricky words. In Phase 3, the tricky words your child will learn are: he, she, we, me, be, you, are, her, was, all, they and my.

Through Phase 3, the range of words that can be read, written and spelt is surprisingly large and the words are surprisingly long. For example, 'church' is made up of digraphs 'ch' and 'ur' so, although the word is six letters long, it is only made up of three separate sounds. The word 'chairs' is made of 'ch' 'air' and 's' sounds - your child will be learning to decode words in this way. The word 'beard' is read as 'b' 'ear' d'.

Books that support early readers are widely available and your child will be given a reading book from school weekly. Your local library will also have sets of early reader books that you can borrow. At school, your child will continue to be taught phonics through specific phonics sessions and small group interventions where the teacher introduces or recaps phonemes and graphemes. Activities will then be set up around the room to practise saying and writing the phonics. The range in reading books is much wider than it was in Phase 2 and the reading books will start to tell more of a story.

Ask your child which letter, sound, action, or picture they have learnt in phonics today!

Most importantly, keep reading with your child every day. Let them read to you, but also make sure that you are reading more complex books to them and they are continuing to hear stories and other texts read aloud.

Whilst many schools follow the Letters and Sounds programme, some follow other schemes, so it is worth checking with your child's teacher if you are unsure how best to support them.