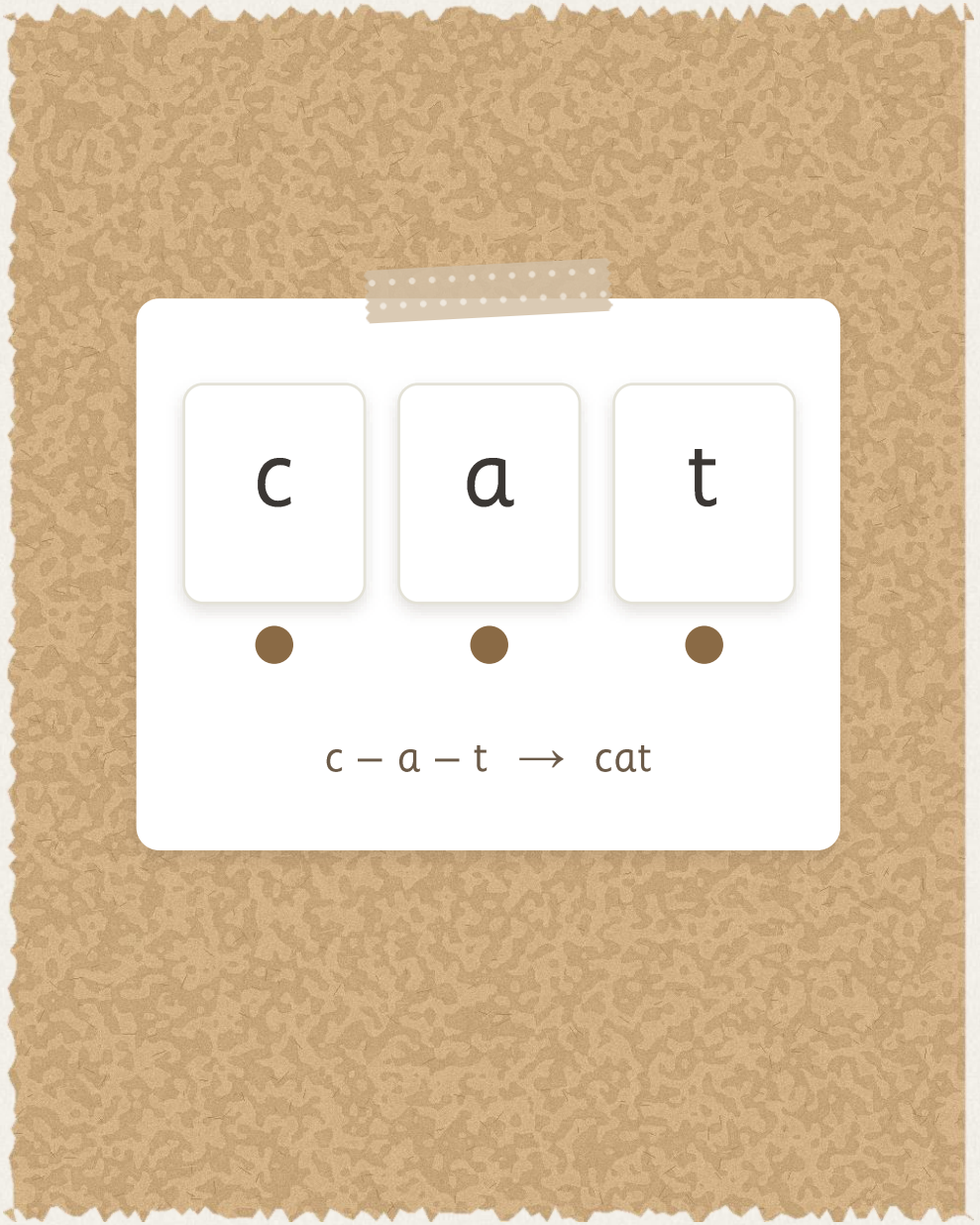
Phonics Workshop

Helping your child learn to read

Grimsargh St Michael's CofE Primary School
9th November 2026



What we'll explore this morning...

1



What is phonics?

The sounds and words behind early reading.

2



How we teach it

Blending, segmenting and tricky words.

3



Reading books

What comes home and how to use it.

4



Helping at home

Simple, fun ideas that make a big difference.

What is phonics?

Phonics teaches children that letters represent sounds, and how to use those sounds to read and spell words.

It is the main way children learn to read in school, alongside a love of stories and books.



Hear the sounds

Children learn the 44 sounds (phonemes) in English.



Link sounds to letters

They learn the letters that represent each sound (graphemes).



Read and spell

They blend sounds to read, and segment words to spell.

How phonics has changed

When many of us learnt

- Letter names first (A, B, C)
- Memorising whole words
- Guessing from pictures
- Repetitive reading schemes

How children learn now

- Letter sounds first (/s/, /a/, /t/)
- Blending sounds to read words
- Segmenting words to spell
- Decoding new words independently

Why? Systematic phonics gives children the tools to work out new words, rather than relying on memory or guessing.

Words you'll hear us use

Phoneme

A single sound

e.g. /sh/ in ship

Grapheme

The letter or letters that write a sound

e.g. sh

Digraph

Two letters, one sound

e.g. ch, ee, oa

Trigraph

Three letters, one sound

e.g. igh, air

Blending

Pushing sounds together to read

c-a-t → cat

Segmenting

Splitting a word into sounds to spell

dog → d-o-g

Pure sounds matter

Say this	Not this
mmm	muh
sss	suh
t	tuh
p	puh
c	cuh

Please use pure sounds at home too.

c – a – t → cat

Easy to blend!

cuh – a – tuh → cuhatuh?

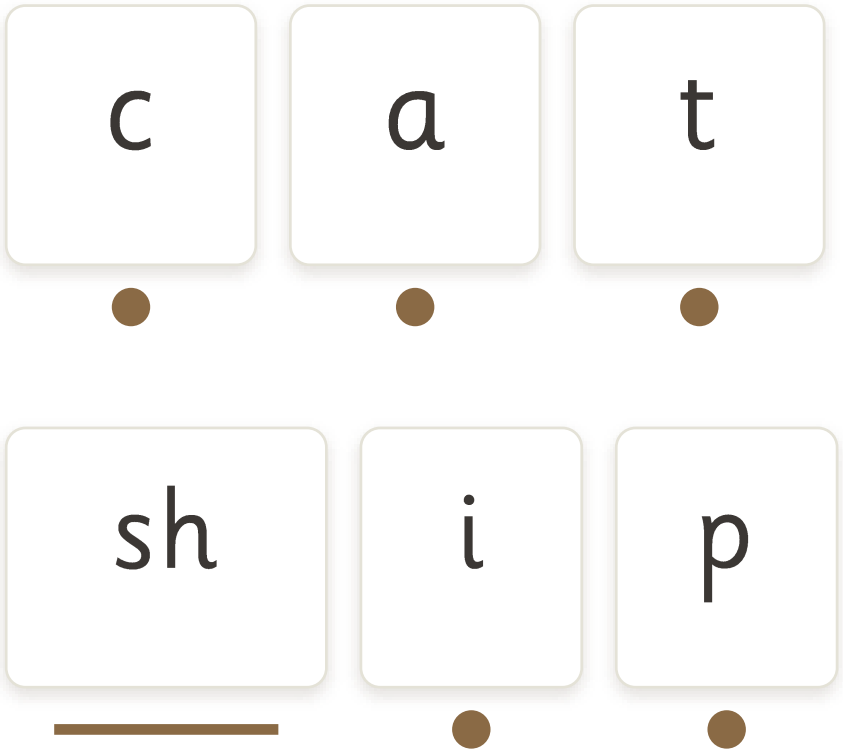
Extra “uh” sounds make blending much harder.

Let's practise!

Say each sound together, nice and pure.

s	a	t	p
i	n	m	d

Blending for reading



1 Say each sound

Touch the dots and dashes (sound buttons).

2 Push them together

Say the sounds faster and faster.

3 Read the word

c-a-t … cat!

Segmenting for spelling

dog

d	o	g

3 sounds, 3 boxes

1. **Say the word**

   Say it slowly: “dog”.

2. **Count the sounds**

   Use “phoneme fingers”: d-o-g.

3. **Write each sound**

   Write a grapheme for each sound.

Digraphs and trigraphs

Digraphs

Two letters that make one sound

ch	sh	th	ng
ai	ee	oa	oo

Trigraphs

Three letters that make one sound

igh	ear
air	ure

Tricky words

Some common words have a tricky part that doesn't follow the sounds children know yet.

We sound out the parts we can, then learn the tricky bit.

the I to no go
into he she we be me



A phonics lesson in our class

Phonics is taught every day for about [20–30] minutes.



Revisit

Practise sounds and words we already know.



Teach

Learn a new sound or tricky word.



Practise

Read and spell words with the new sound.



Apply

Read or write a sentence using it.

Our phonics journey

We follow Red Rose Letters and Sounds. Here's what Reception looks like:

Autumn

- Single letter sounds and some digraphs (s, a, t, p, i, n...ck, ff, ll, ss)
- Blending to read simple words
- First tricky words

Spring

- Digraphs and trigraphs (sh, ch, ai, igh...)
- Reading longer words
- More tricky words

Summer

- Words with adjacent consonants (frog, tent)
- Reading with more fluency
- Writing simple sentences

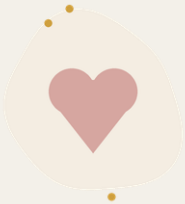
Reading books coming home



Reading book

Matched to the sounds your child knows, so they can read it themselves.

Read it more than once to build confidence and fluency.



Sharing book

A book for you to read to or with your child.

For enjoyment, talking and new vocabulary. They don't need to read it alone!

One book, three reads

Read 1

Sounding out

Your child uses their phonics to work out the words.

Read 2

Fluency

Reading more smoothly, with expression and fewer pauses.

Read 3

Understanding

Talking about the story: what happened, and why?

Writing in the reading record

Your comments help us match books to your child and plan next steps.

Try to say what went well and what was tricky.

Less helpful

"Read well!"

More helpful

"Read most of the book smoothly. Needed help sounding out words with 'ai', like rain and tail."

The Phonics Screening Check

Looking ahead to Year 1



When?

In June of Year 1.



What?

Children read 40 words aloud, one-to-one with a teacher they know.



Alien words

Some are made-up “alien” words, to check children can truly decode.



Results

Schools share results with families at the end of Year 1.

How you can help at home



Read every day

Even 5–10 minutes makes a big difference.



Use pure sounds

Say sounds the way we teach them in school.



Encourage blending

Sound out new words rather than guessing.



Spot tricky words

Hunt for them in books and around you.



Make it fun

Play sound games out and about.



Praise effort

Celebrate every little bit of progress.

Phonics games for home

No special resources needed!

Just a few minutes of play while cooking, walking or at bathtime.

I spy sounds

"I spy something beginning with /s/."

Robot talk

"Can you find your s-o-ck?"

Sound hunt

Find things around the house that start with a sound.

Magnetic letters

Build simple words on the fridge.

Silly sentences

Make up sentences full of one sound.

Splat!

Swat the tricky word you hear.

Thank you!

Any questions?

Contact us via bursar@grimsargh-st-michaels.lancs.sch.uk or speak to Mrs Coupe.



Happy reading!