Phonics

When your child gets ready and goes to ‘big school’ you may notice they will become more interested in the environment around them and that many aspects of their world involve letters. When they start Reception they will be taught individual letter sounds and how these letters are blended together to create a word. This will not only teach a child how to spell but also how to read.

Many teaching practices have changed since parents went to school and how the letters are sounded (phonics) are more than likely to have changed too. E.g. The letter f, is sounded as fffff (let the air move through your lips, top teeth resting on the inside of your bottom lip) rather than f-uh. All the consonants (non-vowel) letters, no longer have the ‘uh’ sound after the letter, they are short and sharp. If you are unsure of how a letter sounds, using the new phonics strategy, **Alphablocks** on **CBeebies** sounds each letter and will blend simple words, which could be beneficial to both children and parents or feel free to ask a member of staff. Here is a link, which might be useful: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VxBEmaaSh1c>

With this in mind, if you would like to help your child in the lead up to Reception, here are a few ideas and reminders.

**Reminders:**

When looking at letters, use the lower-case letters unless it is the beginning of their name or place they live (this will be explained more fully once the child has started to school).

Use the letter names –A-ay B-bee or the letter sounds a-a b- b

If you would like to look at some letters before they start school, the initial sounds the majority of schools start with are: s a t p i n (if you are unsure how these letters are sounded please ask a member of staff).

Not all words can be sounded out – these are often called red words or tricky words (the majority of schools will start with the following words, children have to learn these by sight; the, go, no, I, to.

**Ideas:**

Start with the first 6 letters above (satpin).

**Letter Treasure Hunt** - when you are walking through town or at home – how many s’s can they find etc. What does the letter sound like?

**Letter Snap** – cut up two pieces of A4 paper into 6 (can be plain/coloured/or ready for recycling as long as one side is clear) write one letter onto each piece. Shuffle the cards, when the same letter has been put down – shout SNAP!

**Letter Match** – Draw a cross and put a letter in each area. Using the 6 letter cards, made earlier, choose a card, which letter matches? First person to match all of their cards ins.

**Letter Bingo** – Draw a cross and put a letter in each area. Using the 6 letter cards, made earlier, choose from the pile and say the sound the letter makes. Do you have this letter?

**I Spy** - When on a journey, look out of the window – What can you see? I can see something beginning with t – sound the ‘t’ sound. What can you see, that begins with the sound t? Tree.

**Bonkers Blending** – When asking your child to find something, break the word down. Can you find you c-oa-t? Which colour c-u-p, would you like? (To begin with the adult could blend the word back together, after playing this a couple of times, the child should be able to have a go at guessing the word).

**Letter Painting** – Use a paint brush and water to practise writing these letters on a fence or a wall, form them in sand or with a stick in the mud (depending on the school your child is going to, they may teach them to use cursive handwriting, this information will probably be available on their website).