



Phonics Guide For Parents
Essential Letters and Sounds
(ELS)



What is Phonics?

Phonics is the way that we teach your child to read. Each letter of the alphabet has a sound (or phoneme)

s – sun
a – apple
t – top

There are 26 letters in the alphabet. Each letter has its very own sound.

However, it doesn't stop there!

There are 44 sounds in total in the English language and some of these sounds are made up of 2 or more letters.

2 letters – **digraphs** (For example: ch, sh, ck)

3 letters – **trigraphs** (For example: igh, air, ure)

How is phonics taught?

Your child will receive 5 phonics lessons a week where they will progress through the different phonics phases.

At Keresforth we follow the **Essential Letters and Sounds** scheme throughout the school.

How does phonics help my child to read?

As your child learns more sounds they will be able to read (or blend) more words.

They will blend the different sounds in the word together until they say the final word.

For example:

c a t




Each of the above sounds will be individually sounded out by your child. They will then blend them together, getting quicker until they read the word.


As your child begins to learn digraphs and trigraphs they will begin to blend more complex words.

For example:

b a ck



ch i p



The dots and lines are called '**sound buttons**'. These represent the individual units of sound.

What is Essential Letters and Sounds?

Essential Letters and Sounds (ELS) is our chosen phonics programme. It teaches children to read by identify the phonemes (smallest unit of sound) and graphemes (written version of the sound) within words and using these to read words. Children experience the joy of books and language whilst rapidly acquiring the skills they need to become fluent independent readers and writers.

ELS uses a consistent approach to learning how to read in order to refrain from cognitive overload for your child.

We use a lot of repetition and the phrase 'Me then you'. Your child will become used to using this to develop their reading.

What can I do at home to support my child?

Your child will receive a new reading book every week on a **Friday**.

They will have this book for a full week and will need to return it the following Friday.

It is important that your child is given the opportunity to rehearse familiar stories to build their confidence.

Each week the book will cover words with sounds in that the child has learnt that week in their phonics lesson (Or prior books during review weeks).

It is important that your child is exposed to phonetically decodable books in order to develop their confidence and ability to read.

Ways to support your child:

- Reading for a few minutes every/most days. (Even reading words and sentences will support your child)
- Read stories to your child during the day or at bed time. The child doesn't need to read the story but it will foster a love of reading.
- Practise recognising the different sounds that your child has learnt that week or previous weeks.
- Practise recognising harder to read and spell words.
- Attend phonics workshops at school when delivered.

ELS Strategies

- **Me then you** – If your child is struggling with a particular sound say it and get them to repeat. This will help their confidence grow.
- **Robot arms** – The children will learn to move their arms like a robot as they blend the individual sounds within a word.
- **Blending hands** – This follows the robot arms. Your child will clap and say the final word.