Devonshire House Preparatory School

Phonics Glossary

When children talk about phonics at home, you may hear some unfamiliar vocabulary. Here's a quick guide to some of the words we use in school.

Phonics

Learning to read and spell by matching sounds to letters and letter groups.

Phoneme

A sound that can be heard in a word. *Example: ship = sh – i – p*

Grapheme

The letter or letters used to represent a sound. *Example: sh, ay, igh*

Fred Talk

The way children sound out words before blending them. *Example: c-a-t → cat*

Blending

Pushing sounds together to read a word. *Example: s-u-n → sun*

Decoding

Using phonics knowledge to work out an unfamiliar word.

Green Words

Words that can be read using the sounds children have been taught. *Examples: play, train, shout, storm, toy*

Red Words

Common words that cannot always be sounded out using the phonics patterns children know. *Examples: said, was, they, you, are*

Story Green Words

Key words found at the front of a phonics book that help children prepare for reading the story.

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Speedy Green Words

Words children practise reading quickly and automatically until they can read them at a glance.

Special Friends

Two or more letters working together to make one sound. *Examples: sh, ch, th, ng, ay, ee*

Set 1 Sounds

The first sounds children learn in Reception.

Set 2 Sounds

Longer vowel sounds children learn once they are confident with Set 1. *Examples: ay, ee, igh, ow, oo, ar, or, air, ir, ou, oy*

Set 3 Sounds

Alternative spellings for sounds children already know. *Examples: ea in tea, a-e in cake, oi in spoil*

Fluency

Reading accurately and smoothly without needing to sound out most words.

Expression

Using punctuation, intonation and voice to make reading sound natural and meaningful.

Comprehension

Understanding what has been read and being able to talk about it, answer questions and find evidence in the text.

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