**Key Vocabulary for the Teaching of Phonics**

**Phoneme** – The smallest unit of sound. There are approximately 44 phonemes in English (dependent upon accent). We call these ‘letter sounds’. Phonemes can be put together to make words.

The word day has 2 phonemes d-ay

The word church has 3 phonemes ch-ur-ch

The word start has 4 phonemes s-t-ar-t

The word strap has 5 phonemes s-t-r-a-p

**Grapheme** – A way of writing down a phoneme. Graphemes can be made up of one or more letters that represent one sound.

There can be multiple graphemes for some sounds e.g. play, rain, bake

**Digraph** – A grapheme containing two letters that make one sound. We call these “special friends” “two letters, one sound” e.g. ‘ay’, ‘ee’, ‘or’.

**Vowel** and **Consonant** – The letters a/e/i/o/u are called vowels. The remaining letters of the alphabet are called consonants.

**CVC words** – These are words with three phonemes which consist of a consonant, vowel, consonant e.g. cat, jug, run.

**Split digraph** – A two letter grapheme that represents a vowel sound where the sounds are pushed apart by another letter. This digraph used to be referred to as ‘magic e’. We say “Where’s his friend? e’s on the end”. Examples of split digraphs are ‘cake’, ‘bite’, phone’, these, cube.

**Trigraph** – A grapheme containing three letters that make one sound. We call these “special friends” e.g. ‘igh’, ‘air’, ‘ure’.

**Oral blending** – This involves hearing phonemes/sounds and being able to merge them together to make a word. We use CVC words to practice this skill. Children need to develop this skill before they will be able to blend written words.

**Blending** – Building words for reading. This involved looking at a written word, looking at each grapheme and identifying the associated phoneme/sound that is represented by each grapheme and then merging the phonemes together to make a word. We call this “sounding out”. We use CVC words to practice this skill.

**Oral segmenting** – This is the act of hearing a whole word and then splitting it up into the phonemes that make it. We use CVC words to practice this skill. Children will generally identify initial sounds first, then final sounds, followed by medial sounds.

**Segmenting** – Splitting up words for spelling. This involves hearing a word, splitting it up into the phonemes/sounds that make it, identifying the associated graphemes that represent each sound and then writing them down in the right order. We use CVC words initially to practice this skill. This is the basis of spelling. Children are encouraged to pinch the sounds on to their fingers to do this before then writing the word.

**Set 1 sounds –** Simple sounds. The first sounds to be taught

m a s d t i p n

g o c k u b f e

l h sh r j v y w

th z ch qu x ng nk

**Set 2 sounds**

ay ee igh ow oo OO

ar or air ir ou oy

**Set 3 sounds –** Complex sounds and alternative spellings

ea oi a-e i-e o-e u-e aw are

ur er ow ai oa ew ire ear

ure tion tious cious e

**Red words** – These are words which do not have conventional spelling patterns. These words cannot be ‘sounded out’ and have to taught on sight. These words used to be referred to as ‘tricky words’. We say “The red words are the tricky ones. Don’t sound them out!”