



## Jolly Phonics

At Spicey Gill we follow the Jolly Phonics method of learning letters and their sounds. We do this daily through fun group activities with an emphasis on hearing and saying different sounds, learning the associated hand actions and recognising the letters themselves.

### Learning the letter sounds

In Jolly Phonics the 42 main sounds of English are taught, not just the alphabet sounds. For each sound there is an action which helps the children remember the sound the letter makes.

The letters are not taught in alphabetical order. The first group 's a t i p n' has been chosen because they make more simple three letter words than any other six letters. Sounds with more than one way of being written are first taught in one form only. As the letters are taught, our older children - those who will start school in the next academic year - stick the letters into a Sound Book, which is brought home regularly. It is helpful if parents can look at this book with children, although this should be fun, not a chore. If your child shows no interest in looking at their Sound Book with you, please do not push it.

### Letter formation

At Spicey Gill we are not too concerned with writing letters correctly - we much prefer the children to begin to understand the purpose of writing and to have a go at writing because it is meaningful to them and because they are having fun. We provide writing materials in all of the play areas at Spicey Gill, outdoors as well as indoors and praise all attempts at writing. However it is very important that your child holds the pencil correctly. If the hold starts incorrectly it is very difficult to get it right later on. Rather than insisting on correct letter formation at this stage, we focus on holding the pencil correctly, making loops and zig-zag type marks and moving across the page from left to right. We do not draw dots for the children to trace over. If you are showing your child how to write their name, please use a capital initial letter and then lower case letters.

### Blending

Blending is the process of saying the sounds in a word and then running them together to make the word, e.g. c-a-t is cat. It is a technique your child will need to learn, and it improves with practice. Some children take longer to do this than others. To start with you should sound out the word and see if your child can hear it. The sounds must be said quickly to hear the word. It is easier if the first sound is said slightly louder e.g. b-u-s.

It is very important that your child can recognise the letters instantly before we begin to teach them how to blend words. Your child may be able to read words by sight - ie without blending the sounds. There is nothing wrong with this, although it is important that they can recognise the blends of letters within the words.

### Finally

If your child is really not interested, please don't worry - it is far better to leave it than push too hard. It all sounds like a lot of work, but it goes in stages and is spread over a considerable period of time. Little and often is best. There is no doubt that the effort on your part in reinforcing what we are doing at Spicey Gill is well worth it. If you would like any more information on Jolly Phonics or on reading and writing, please do ask a member of staff.

Stepping Stones to success...

