Phonics information for parents

Definitions:

What is rhyme?
Words that sound the same at the end e.g. cat, bat

Words can be split into onset (the sound or sounds before the vowel) and rime (the rest of the word). Rhyming words share the same sounding rime but may not be spelt the same way e.g. c-at, h-at or p-ie, sp-y, gr-ate, pl-ate, l-ate.

What is a syllable?
A word or part of a word with one vowel sound e.g. gate =1, coffee = 2 (co /ffee), elephant = 3 (el / eph / ant), caterpillar=4 (cat/er/pill/ar)

What is a phoneme?
A phoneme is the smallest unit of sound in a word

What is a grapheme?
Letter(s) representing a phoneme e.g. tch igh

What is a digraph?
Two letters, which make one sound e.g. A consonant digraph contains two consonants e.g. sh ck th ll
A vowel digraph contains at least one vowel e.g. ai ee ar oy

What is a trigraph?
Three letters, which make one sound e.g. igh dge

What is blending?

Recognising the letter sounds in a spoken or written word, for example c-u-p, and merging or synthesising them in the order in which they are heard / written to pronounce the word 'cup'

What is segmenting?

Identifying the individual sounds in a spoken word (e.g. h-i-m) and writing down or saying letters for each sound to form the word 'him'

The ages at which phonological awareness skills develop:

Age 3- Children have an awareness of Rhyme, can recognise words that rhyme in songs and may produce rhyme strings e.g. dog, sog, log

Age 4 – Children can judge which words rhyme and can begin to tap out words according to the number of syllables. Start to learn to match sounds and letter shapes.

Age 5- Children begin to segment words into the onset (sounds before the vowel) and rime (sounds after the vowel). They begin to blend phonemes to **recognise** a word e.g. c-a-t = "cat"

Age 6- Children can **segment** a word into individual sounds or phonemes. They can sound out "cat"= c-a-t in order to spell it.

Age 7- Children can identify the number of phonemes a word has

Speech Sounds – What to Expect When

The sounds a child is expected to use –

by 2 ½ - m, n, p, b, t, d, w

by 3 ½ - k, g, f, s, l, y, h

by 4 ½ - ch, j, v, z, sh

by 5 – blends eg kr, gl, sp

by 7 – all sounds will be used, including r and th

Common difficulties can include;

- Final consonant deletion – missing off the last sound. eg: they say "gra" instead of "grass"
- Fronting – the sounds made at the back of the mouth (k, g) are changed to sounds made at the front (t, d). eg: they say "tar" for "car" or "det" for "get"
- Stopping – 'long' sounds (f, v, s, z, sh) are replaced by 'short' sounds (p, t, d) eg: they say "peet" for "feet".
- Voicing – 'quiet' sounds (p, t, k, s) are replaced by 'loud' sounds (b, d, g, z). eg: they say "bea" for "pea" or "gar" for "car".

Up to the age of 5 children may still be making these substitutions

- Cluster reduction – missing off one sound where two or more consonant sounds occur together. eg: they say "nake" or "sake" for **sn**ake or say "poon" or "soon" for **sp**oon.

Up to the age of 7 children may still be making these substitutions

- Gliding – where "r" is said as a "w". eg: they say "wabbit" for rabbit or "wed" for red.