

Information for parents about decoding

Decoding is the process of seeing written words on a page and being able to say them out loud.

Decoding is concerned with sounds (**phonemes**), rather than the understanding of meaning. Sometimes teachers will comment that a child is good at decoding, but has poor comprehension. This means that they can read aloud very fluently, but have trouble understanding what they have read.

- Children learn their **letter sounds**. This means knowing what sound to make when you see a letter written down.
- They will then progress to seeing **CVC (consonant, vowel, consonant)** words which they need to read out loud, such as cat, log or Sam.
- Children will move onto decoding words with **consonant clusters**, such as st, tr, cr, sk, st etc. They will need plenty of practise in doing this and may need to see plenty of words with the same consonant cluster before they can decode them confidently. For example: a teacher may concentrate on the consonant cluster tr for a few days, so will give children various activities to do involving words containing this consonant cluster, such as: tram, trap, trip, trim.
- Teachers then move onto teaching children how to decode **vowel digraphs**. A vowel digraph is two vowels placed together that make one sound, for example: ai, oo, ea, ee etc. Again, teachers may concentrate on one digraph, for example: ai and give children various activities involving words with this digraph, such as: rain, train, pail, snail.
- Teachers also need to teach children to decode **consonant digraphs**. This is two consonants that are placed together to make one sound, such as: ch, sh, th.

