Ellison Primary Academy

# Phonics Glossary of Terms

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| **adjacent consonants** | Two (or three) consonant letters representing two (or three) sounds, e.g. tw, str, bl. (Also known as a consonant cluster or blend.) |
| **blending** | The process of using phonics for reading. Children identify and blend the phonemes in order to hear and say (discern) a whole word. (Also known as decoding or synthesizing. |
| **code** | The English Alphabetic Code is the correlation between the sounds of speech and the individual letters or groups of letters used to represent those sounds in print. A 'piece of code' refers to a letter-sound correspondence or grapheme-phoneme correspondence. |
| **common exception word** (CEW) | A high frequency word with an unusual letter-sound correspondence, e.g. one, their, because. These words are taught by decoding the familiar part and pointing out the unusual part. |
| **consonant digraph** | Two consonant letters which represent one sound. |
| CVC, CCVC, CCVCC | These represent the consonant and vowel sounds in word structures. For example, a CVC word = h-e-n, b-oa-t or ch-i-p. |
| **decoding** | See **blending** |
| **digraph** | Two letters which together represent one sound, e.g. ai, ea, mb. There are different types of digraph – vowel, consonant and split. |
| **encoding** | See **segmenting** |
| **grapheme** | A letter or group of letters representing one sound (phoneme). |
| **phoneme** | The smallest unit of sound in a word. Represented in print using slash marks, e.g. /a/. |
| **quadgraph** | Four letters which together represent one sound, e.g. eigh, ough. |
| **schwa** | An unstressed syllable. It is common for people to pronounce various graphemes as an /uh/ sound in natural speech. |

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| **segmenting** | The process of using phonics for spelling and writing. Children listen to the whole word and break it down into constituent phonemes, choosing the corresponding grapheme to represent each phoneme. For example, 'lunch' can be segmented as l-u-n-ch. (Also known as encoding.) |
| **split digraph** | Two letters, which work as a pair to represent one sound, but are separated within the word, e.g. a–e in cake; o–e in note. |
| **synthesising** | See **blending** |
| **trigraph** | Three letters which together represent one sound, e.g. igh, eer. |
| **vowel digraph** | A digraph in which at least one of the letters is a vowel, e.g. ee, oi, or. |