Phonics Jargon Buster

Pure Sounds – pronouncing the sounds of letters and combinations of letters correctly, for example not saying 'muh' but 'mmmmm'. Avoid trying to say an 'uh' at the end of the sound.

Oral blending – hearing a series of sounds and merging them together to say the word, for example an adult says 'b-u-s' and the child says 'bus'.

Blending – children see a word, say those individual sounds in the word and then merges those sounds together to hear the whole words like
c-a-t makes 'cat'. This is vital for reading.

Segmenting – the opposite to blending. Children break up the word into its component sounds. This is vital for spelling and writing words.

Phoneme – The smallest unit of sound. There are approximately 44 in the English language to learn.

Grapheme – the written form of a phoneme. They can be made up of different numbers of letters for example 1 letter – s, 2 letters – ai, 3 letters – igh.

Digraph – two letters that make one phoneme, for example oo, oa, ee

Trigraph – three letters that make one phoneme, for example ear, igh, air

Split digraph – perhaps you know this as the 'magic e'? It is when a digraph (ie) has been split and a consonant has been placed in the middle. The 'ie' is still making the sound despite a letter in the middle. There are five split digraphs to learn
i_e like in time
a_e like in cake
o_e like in joke
e_e like in theme
u_e like in tube

Decoding/decodable – being able to 'sound out' the word into its component phonemes.

Polysyllabic – a word that is made up of more that one syllable.

Tricky words – there are words within each of the phonics phases that cannot be decoded and sounded out. These words just need to be learnt by sight. Sometimes a tricky word taught within a phase can become a decodable word once your child moves up the phases, for example 'out' and 'like'

High Frequency words – these are words that occur most often in books and stories. They can be both decodable or tricky words.

Non-words/Alien Words – Words that can be decoded but are made up and do not make sense. These words really test phonics skills. If a child has good phonic knowledge they will be able to decode both real and alien words.

Sound buttons – a button drawn or placed under each individual grapheme. Every time the button is pressed your child makes the sound and then blends all the sounds together to read the words. The word 'cat' would have three dot sounds buttons and 'moon' would also have three but the 'oo' would have a longer line button underneath.

CVC – Consonant, vowel, consonant. These can be simple three letter words like 'mat' but also the word 'rain' is a CVC word as the 'ai' is a vowel digraph in the middle. This is the same for words like moon, chain, sheet. The 'ch' and 'sh' are a consonant digraph and one sound. The word 'boy', for example, even though has 3 letters is not a CVC word as it only has two phonemes b-oy. This is the same for words like cow, tie, say.

Alliteration – words that begin with the same phoneme (snake, sock, scissors, star)

Letter formation – the way each individual letter is formed. Children will need to learn where they need to start for each letter.