



Systematic Synthetic Phonics

Pre course Subject Knowledge Audit

Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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**Introduction**

This document is designed to support you in identifying the subject knowledge required when teaching systematic synthetic phonics (SSP). It is aligned to the DfES publication *Letters and Sounds (DfE 2007)* which is the recommended SSP programme for schools to follow. **We will give you guidance and support on how to deliver this as part of your Early Reading preparation for teaching – so please do not worry. This document is designed to help you get to grips with the terminology and progression of skills when learning to read.**

Letters and Sounds is divided into 6 phases.

This document will guide you through each phase.

Whilst on school-based training you are likely to make use of one of several commercial phonics schemes, such as Jolly Phonics, Floppy Phonics or Read, Write, Inc. These programmes follow similar principles and objective structures to Letters and Sounds.

This document aims to support you in developing the subject knowledge required for teaching reading with a focus on systematic synthetic phonics. It provides:

* summaries of key aspects
* a range of supporting materials
* links to materials for auditing and tracking subject knowledge with action plans
* an opportunity for you to identify where your gaps in knowledge are
* reference to key aspects to support you in filling those gaps before the programme begins.

# You should complete the audit and follow the tasks and reading that accompany each section.

Where a reading is identified within this document the relevant, online document or Phase from Letters and Sounds has embedded in the text.

YOU SHOULD HAVE THE ONLINE DOCUMENT OPEN AND STUDY THE PHASE PRIOR TO COMPLETING THE TASKS.

BEFORE STARTING PLEASE READ THE GLOSSARY FOR AN EXPLANATION OF KEY TERMS ( see page 25).

**At the end of the audit you should rate your confidence & subject knowledge in each of the phases.**

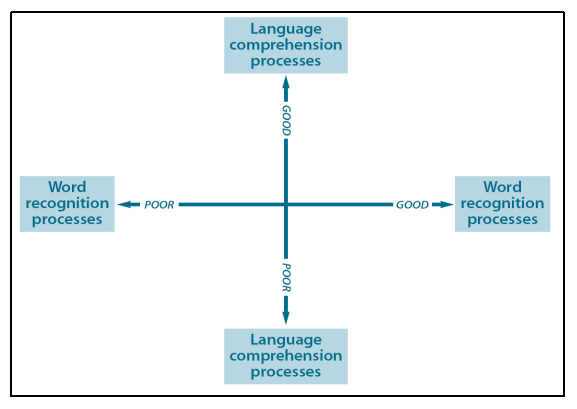
You should then identify what further study is required (in the Action Tracker at the end of this document) in order to revisit that area and improve your knowledge. This will ensure you have the background information and knowledge required in preparation for the start of the programme.

# **1. The purpose of phonics**

You may want to consult the Glossary for explanation of key terms.

The teaching of systematic synthetic phonics supports beginning readers in developing skills to decode and encode text. Teaching of the phonetic structure of the language and common and alternative spelling choices, incrementally, provides a thorough grounding for spelling.

The ‘simple view of reading’ (SVoR) outlined in the [Rose Review (2006)](https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/5551/2/report.pdf) identifies two dimensions of reading: ‘word recognition’ and ‘language comprehension’.

This conceptual framework proposes that skilled reading entails development of a set of processes by which the words on the page are recognised and understood (i.e. word recognition processes), and development of increasingly sophisticated language comprehension processes, by which texts, as well as spoken language, are understood and interpreted. Learning to read therefore involves setting up processes by which the words on the page can be recognised and understood and continuing to develop the language comprehension processes that underlie both spoken and written language comprehension. Both sets of processes are necessary for reading: neither is sufficient on its own. Children who cannot adequately recognise the words on the page are, by that fact alone, prevented from fully understanding the text; however, recognising and understanding the words on the page is no guarantee that the text will be understood. You will also come across children who can understand quite complex spoken language, but struggle with interpreting the written word (top left quadrant). As a trainee teacher, it is important that you are able to recognise where your children may be having certain difficulties and make provision to address these.

***Why is it more difficult to learn to read and write in English than in other languages?***

One reason for the complexity of the English alphabetic code is that changes in pronunciation over the centuries have not always been accompanied by changes in spelling. Another reason is that English has absorbed many words from other languages, often retaining their original spellings.

In English, much more than in other languages,

* many letters or letter combinations can commonly represent more than one sound – for example, *ea* as in *heat* and *head*;
* most sounds can be spelt in more than one way, e.g. the vowel sound in *heat* is also commonly spelt as in *he, see, chief and complete*;
* some very common words contain grapheme-phoneme correspondences that occur in few, if any, other words, e.g. *one, two, are, said, great, people, laugh.*

This lack of consistency in grapheme-phoneme correspondence in English make it a more linguistically complex language, unlike, for example, Spanish, Italian or Finnish, where any given grapheme is always represented by the same phoneme. Being aware of this will help you when teaching children for whom English is a second language.

In spite of the complexity and the exceptions, however, it is still very important to teach children how the alphabetic code works in English. There is very much less learning to do if children are taught how the alphabetic code works and can understand the underlying logic which underpins word-reading

(see paragraphs 5 and 56 of Appendix 1 in Rose’s [*Independent Review of the Teaching of Early Reading*, 2006.](https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/5551/2/report.pdf)

# Essential knowledge for teaching systematic synthetic phonics

Trainees need to know and understand the principles and practices of teaching and assessing reading and writing using SSP, specifically:

* understanding the model of the Simple View of Reading (SVoR)
* the role of systematic synthetic phonics in reading and writing
* understanding that phonological awareness and phonemic understanding is developed in rich spoken language contexts
* phoneme discrimination: to segment (hear) and enunciate (say) phonemes
* grapheme/phoneme correspondences
* planning in systematic steps, for example, as embodied in phonic phases in *Letters and Sounds* (DfES, 2007) and other high quality systematic synthetic phonics programmes
* the application of phonics for teaching and assessing progress in reading and writing across key stages

Trainees need to know and understand the key features of the teaching of systematic synthetic phonics, as follows:

* use phonics as the prime approach to word recognition
* ensure grapheme-phoneme correspondences are taught in a clearly defined, incremental sequence
* from the outset, apply the skill of blending phonemes in order, all through a word, to decode (read) it
* from the outset, apply the skills of segmenting words into their constituent phonemes to encode (spell)
* demonstrate that blending and segmenting are reversible processes.

# Key readings

If you are planning on working in EYFS, or have children who are working at this level, it is essential that you are familiar with the requirements for language, communication and reading for children in EYFS. Please refer to the following document:

Early Education, 2012 Development Matters, available at <http://www.foundationyears.org.uk/files/2012/03/Development-Matters-FINAL-PRINT-AMENDED.pdf> - (due to be updated Sept 2021)

For literacy requirements for KS1 and KS2, please refer to:

DfE (2014) English Programmes of Study: Key Stages 1 and 2. National Curriculum in England. London Crown Copyright. On Moodle and also at [www.education.gov.uk](http://www.education.gov.uk)

# Self-audit 1

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | |
| What does ‘word recognition’ refer to in the Simple View of Reading? | |
|  | |
| What does ‘language comprehension’ refer to in the Simple View of Reading? | |
|  | |
| How many phonemes are there in English? | |
|  | |
| What is blending? | |
|  | |
| What is segmenting? | |
|  | |
| How many vowel *sounds* are there in spoken English? | |
|  | |
| How many consonant *sounds* are there in spoken English? | |
|  | |
| What is a phoneme? | |
|  | |
| What is a grapheme? | |
|  | |
| List the suggested daily teaching sequence from Letters and Sounds for Phases 2 - 5 | |
|  | |
| How many phonemes in each of these words? | |
| cat | clap |
| book | track |

# **2. Progression in learning**

# **Teaching phonics in phases**

Phonics teaching programmes divide the teaching into steps, stages or phases. Letters and Sounds, for example has a six-phase structure which provides a useful map from which to plan children’s progress, although *the boundaries between the phases should not be regarded as fixed.* Guided by reliable assessments of children’s developing knowledge and skills, practitioners and teachers will need to judge the rate at which their children are able to progress through the phases and adapt the pace accordingly. As with much else in the early years, some children will be capable of, and benefit from, learning at a faster pace than their peers whereas others may need more time and support to secure their learning.

**Phases in Letters and Sounds**

**Phase 1 - Nursery (7 Aspects)**

This phase develops children’s general sounds awareness, using sounds in the environment and phonological awareness (their ability to discriminate speech sounds aurally). It progresses to supporting phonemic awareness: the ability to discriminate individual phonemes. It is important to note that phase 1 activities are designed to underpin and run alongside activities in other phases. This phase is not viewed as finite.

In Phase 1 children are working on

* *showing awareness of rhyme and alliteration*
* *distinguishing between different sounds in the environment, of musical instruments and phonemes*
* *exploring and experimenting with sounds and words*
* *discriminating speech sounds in words*
* *beginning to orally blend and segment phonemes.*

# Key reading

[**Phase 1 Letters and Sounds**](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/190537/Letters_and_Sounds_-_Phase_One.pdf)

|  |
| --- |
| **Knowledge of Phase 1** |
| **Which aspects in Phase One focus on general sound discrimination?** |
|  |
| **Define each of the following, and give examples if you wish:** |
| * 1. **auditory discrimination** |
| * 1. **auditory memory and sequencing** |
| * 1. **oral blending and segmenting** |

[**Phase 2**](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/190537/Letters_and_Sounds_-_Phase_One.pdf) **(Pages 52-71) – Taught in Reception**

In Phase 2 children are working on

* *knowing that words are constructed from phonemes and that phonemes are represented by graphemes*
* *single-letter graphemes, other than those given below*
* *using common consonants and short vowel sounds*
* *blending for reading and segmenting for spelling simple VC (vowel sound, consonant sound) and CVC (consonant sound, vowel sound, consonant sound) words*
* *‘tricky’ or non-decodable words (see Letters and Sounds Phase 2)*

Letter progression:

Set 1: s, a, t, p

Set 2: i, n, m, d

Set 3: g, o, c, k

Set 4: ck, e, u, r

Set 5: h, b, f, ff, l, ll, ss

# Key reading

[Letters and Sounds Phase 2 guidance](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/190537/Letters_and_Sounds_-_Phase_One.pdf)

|  |
| --- |
| Knowledge of Phase 2 |
| What is grapheme-phoneme correspondence? |
|  |
| Which of these are NOT CVC words: bag, cow, hot, apple, pig, up, by, tap, pit, sheep? |
|  |
| What is blending? |
|  |
| What is segmenting? |
|  |
| What is the recommended letter progression for Phase 2? |
|  |
| What are the 4 consonant digraphs for Phase 2? Write a CVC, short vowel sound word for each one, and include sound buttons. |
|  |
| Write 3 two-syllable words you could teach during this phase. |
|  |

[**Phase 3**](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/190537/Letters_and_Sounds_-_Phase_One.pdf) **(Pages 72 -104) – Taught in Reception**

In Phase 3 children are working on

* *knowing one grapheme for each of the 43 phonemes introduced to this point*
* *reading and spelling a wide range of CVC words using all letters and less frequent consonant digraphs and some* ***long vowel*** *phonemes*
* graphemes for the long vowel phonemes:
  + **ear, air, ure, er,**
  + **ar, or, ur, ow, oi,**
  + **ai, ee, igh, oa, oo**
* *letter names in order to articulate the spellings for new digraphs and trigraphs*
* *reading and spelling CVC words using a wider range of letters, short vowels, some consonant digraphs and double letters*
* *consonant digraphs*
  + **ch, sh, th, ng**
* *reading and spelling CVC words using letters and short vowels*
* *further ‘tricky’ words (see Letters and Sounds Phase 3)*

Letter progression

Set 6: j, v, w, x

Set 7: y, z, zz, qu

# [Key reading](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/190537/Letters_and_Sounds_-_Phase_One.pdf)

[Letters and Sounds Phase 3 guidance](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/190537/Letters_and_Sounds_-_Phase_One.pdf)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Knowledge of Phase 3** | |
| **What is a digraph?** | |
|  | |
| **What is a vowel digraph? Give 3 examples from this phase, and 3 words which contain each one, using sound buttons.** | |
|  | |
| **What is a consonant digraph? Give 3 examples from this phase, and 3 words which contain each one. Use sound buttons to illustrate.** | |
|  | |
| **What is a trigraph? Give three examples, with words, from this phase** | |
|  | |
| **What is a high frequency word? Which are the ten most frequently used words in English (use more than one source to find out)?** | |
|  | |
| **What is the difference between a decodable word and a ‘tricky’ word?** | |
|  | |
| **List some of the ‘tricky’ words from this phase.** | |
|  | |
| **How many phonemes in each of these words? Use sound buttons to illustrate:** | |
| dog | spot |
| in | light |
| **Write 3 two-syllable words you could teach during this phase.** | |
|  | |

[**Phase 4 (Pages 105 – 128) - Taught Reception/Y1**](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/190537/Letters_and_Sounds_-_Phase_One.pdf)

**There are no new graphemes taught in this phase**. In Phase 4 children are working on:

* *segmenting adjacent consonants in words and applying this in spelling*
* *blending adjacent consonants in words and applying this skill when reading unfamiliar texts*
* *further ‘tricky’ words (see Letters and Sounds Phase 4)*

# [Key reading](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/190537/Letters_and_Sounds_-_Phase_One.pdf)

[Letters and Sounds Phase 4 guidance](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/190537/Letters_and_Sounds_-_Phase_One.pdf)

|  |
| --- |
| **Knowledge of Phase 4** |
| **What is a polysyllabic word? Give four examples that use the phonemes children know at phase 4.** |
|  |
| **What is the difference between an adjacent consonant and a consonant digraph? Give examples of words containing each, using sound buttons to illustrate.** |
|  |
| **How does *Letters and Sounds* suggest two- or poly-syllabic words should be taught?** |
|  |

[**Phase 5 (Pages 129-165) – Taught in Y1**](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/190537/Letters_and_Sounds_-_Phase_One.pdf)

In Phase 5 children are working on

* *reading phonically decodable two-syllable and three-syllable words*
* *using alternative ways of pronouncing previously learnt graphemes*
* *learning alternative spellings for known phonemes*
* *spelling complex words using phonically plausible attempts*
* *identifying rules for using certain graphemes*
* *further ‘tricky’ words (see Letters and Sounds Phase 5)*

# [Key reading](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/190537/Letters_and_Sounds_-_Phase_One.pdf)

[Letters and Sounds Phase 5 guidance](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/190537/Letters_and_Sounds_-_Phase_One.pdf)

|  |
| --- |
| **Knowledge of Phase 5** |
| **Write down the five split digraphs. Give an example of a word for each one.** |
|  |
| **For each of the following write at least two words with different pronunciations of the graphemes, e.g. c – cat, city** |
| g |
| y |
| ow |
| ch |
| s |
| **Selecting the most appropriate grapheme: indicate where in a word the following graphemes are *most likely* to be used (ie beginning, middle or end)** |
| oa  ey  ew  ck  ss  ue  au  wh |

**[Phase 6 (pages 166 -192) - Taught in Y2 (sometimes end of Yr1)](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/190537/Letters_and_Sounds_-_Phase_One.pdf)**

Phase 6 addresses the development and combined use of both **phonemic knowledge** (phonics, spelling patterns and conventions, homophones, phonological knowledge**)** and **morphological knowledge** (root words, compound words, prefixes, suffixes, etymology).

In this phase children are working on

* *recognising phonic irregularities. and becoming more secure with less common grapheme-phoneme correspondences*
* *applying phonic skills and knowledge to recognise and spell an increasing number of complex words*
* *learning other strategies, rules and conventions of the English alphabetic and spelling system in order to apply this to their own reading and writing.*

Morphology is the study of the structure of English words. A morpheme is the smallest unit of meaning. Words can have one or more morpheme, e.g. *school* (one unit of meaning), *schools* (two units of meaning)

There are two types of morphemes:

* **roots/stems** which often appear on their own;
* **affixes** which cannot appear on their own.

Affixes are added to roots/stems and influence the word’s meaning. They can be **prefixes** or **suffixes**.

The word ‘*read*’ has a single morpheme which is its root/stem form. The suffix ‘*er’* can be added to make the word - ‘*read****er***’. The suffix ‘*able*’ can be added to make the word ‘*read****able***’. To this word the prefix ‘*un*’ to make the word ‘***un****read****able***’.

Children who have a good level of awareness of morphemes – both roots/stems and affixes – also have a sound word attack strategy that can help them with spelling and in developing their vocabulary

Morphemes give an indication of the meaning of words and also have a fixed spelling. As morphemes are represented in spelling, many words that seem to have an unpredictable or irregular spelling can actually be considered regular. This is the case of the word ‘*magician*’, which is written by adding ‘*ian*’ to ‘*magic*’, to form a person word. For example, the words ‘*confession*’ and ‘*magician’* sound exactly the same in the end but are spelled differently. ‘*Confession*’ is written by adding ‘*ion’*, a suffix used to form abstract nouns, to the word ‘confess’. It is just as regular as ‘*magician*’.

Primary school children of all ages have difficulties with spelling words when the spelling cannot be predicted from the way the word sounds. Children’s difficulties with the spelling of many words can be reduced by making them aware of the morphemes that compose the words. Making children more aware of morphemes has a positive effect on their vocabulary growth.

# [Key reading](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/190537/Letters_and_Sounds_-_Phase_One.pdf)

[Letters and Sounds Phase 6 guidance](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/190537/Letters_and_Sounds_-_Phase_One.pdf)

|  |
| --- |
| **Knowledge of Phase 6** |
| **How would you summarise the purpose of phase 6 teaching? Identify three key points.** |
|  |

# Action Trackers

# Reviewing your own confidence & subject knowledge:

Which 3 aspects of each of the phonic phases do you feel you have the most knowledge and understanding in?

# Phase 1

List them below

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Strength | Give an example | Why is this? |
| 1. |  |  |
| 2. |  |  |
| 3. |  |  |

Now think about the gaps in your knowledge.

List 3 aspects of this phonic phase that you need to go back and re visit.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Area for development | Give an example | What do you need to do to close the gap? |
| 1. |  |  |
| 2. |  |  |
| 3. |  |  |
| 4. |  |  |
| 5. |  |  |
|  |  |  |

# Phase 2

List them below

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Strength | Give an example | Why is this? |
| 1. |  |  |
| 2. |  |  |
| 3. |  |  |

Now think about the gaps in your knowledge.

List 3 aspects of this phonic phase that you need to go back and re visit.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Area for development | Give an example | What do you need to do to close the gap? |
| 1. |  |  |
| 2. |  |  |
| 3. |  |  |
| 4. |  |  |
| 5. |  |  |
|  |  |  |

# Phase 3

List them below

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Strength | Give an example | Why is this? |
| 1. |  |  |
| 2. |  |  |
| 3. |  |  |

Now think about the gaps in your knowledge.

List 3 aspects of this phonic phase that you need to go back and re visit.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Area for development | Give an example | What do you need to do to close the gap? |
| 1. |  |  |
| 2. |  |  |
| 3. |  |  |
| 4. |  |  |
| 5. |  |  |
|  |  |  |

# Phase 4

List them below

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Strength | Give an example | Why is this? |
| 1. |  |  |
| 2. |  |  |
| 3. |  |  |

Now think about the gaps in your knowledge.

List 3 aspects of this phonic phase that you need to go back and re visit.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Area for development | Give an example | What do you need to do to close the gap? |
| 1. |  |  |
| 2. |  |  |
| 3. |  |  |
| 4. |  |  |
| 5. |  |  |
|  |  |  |

# Phase 5

List them below

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Strength | Give an example | Why is this? |
| 1. |  |  |
| 2. |  |  |
| 3. |  |  |

Now think about the gaps in your knowledge.

List 3 aspects of this phonic phase that you need to go back and re visit.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Area for development | Give an example | What do you need to do to close the gap? |
| 1. |  |  |
| 2. |  |  |
| 3. |  |  |
| 4. |  |  |
| 5. |  |  |
|  |  |  |

# Phase 6

List them below

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Strength | Give an example | Why is this? |
| 1. |  |  |
| 2. |  |  |
| 3. |  |  |

Now think about the gaps in your knowledge.

List 3 aspects of this phonic phase that you need to go back and re visit.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Area for development | Give an example | What do you need to do to close the gap? |
| 1. |  |  |
| 2. |  |  |
| 3. |  |  |
| 4. |  |  |
| 5. |  |  |
|  |  |  |

# **3. Planning for the teaching of phonics**

**Teaching a structured programme**

An important feature of high quality phonic work is that it should be ‘systematic’, which means teaching all the major grapheme–phoneme correspondences in a clearly defined sequence. The aim will be to secure essential phonic knowledge and skills so that children progress quickly to independent reading and writing. Learning should be at a brisk pace but sensitive to children’s developing abilities.

**Principles of high quality phonic work**

Phonic work should be regarded as an essential body of knowledge, skills and understanding that has to be learned largely through direct instruction, rather than as one of several methods of choice.

Beginner readers should be taught:

* grapheme–phoneme correspondences in a clearly defined, incremental sequence
* to apply the highly important skill of blending (synthesising) phonemes in the order in which they occur, all through the word to read it;
* to apply the skills of segmenting words into their constituent phonemes to spell;
* that blending and segmenting are reversible processes.

**OFSTED recommendations**

See the principles for high quality phonics teaching recommended by OFSTED at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/379093/Reading_20by_20six.pdf>

**Multi-sensory learning**

The processes of segmenting and blending for reading and spelling need to be made enjoyable and easy for children to understand and apply. Well-timed multi-sensory activities serve this purpose and intensify learning. One easily available resource that has proved very effective in this respect is a set of solid, magnetic letters that can be manipulated on small whiteboards by children, as individuals or in pairs. These have the advantages, for example, of enabling children to: recognise letters by touch, sight and sounding out simultaneously; easily manipulate letters to form and re-form the same sets of letters into different words; compose words by manipulating letters even though children may not yet be able to write them, for example with a pencil; share the activity and talk about it with a partner; build up knowledge of grapheme phoneme correspondences systematically. These resources also provide practitioners and teachers with an easy means to monitor children’s progress.

**Teaching a four-part lesson**

The sequence of teaching is shown below:

Following an introduction where the learning outcomes and success criteria are shared, often accompanied by a ‘warm-up’ such as an alphabet song, the sequence of teaching is shown below:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Part of lesson** | **Type of Activity** |
| **1. Revisit** | Previous day’s learning and recent grapheme-phoneme correspondences taught |
| **2. Teach** | New grapheme-phoneme correspondence – visual search for position in words, blending skills for reading words, segmenting words for spelling  letter formation |
| **3. Practise** | Counting phonemes and spelling words,  magnetic boards and letters, mini-whiteboards, etc. |
| **4. Apply** | Ensure children have opportunities to hear/say/read/write the phoneme/grapheme |

A key part of the lesson is also to make careful note of children’s ongoing progress, as well as engaging the children in reviewing their learning of each lesson.

# **4. Assessing and tracking children’s phonic knowledge**

It is important to be aware of the expectations for children’s progress. To support this, you may find the tracking grid from Letters and Sounds helpful (Appendix 2).

|  |
| --- |
| **Review the phonics tracking grid and consider:** |
| * What age children would you expect to be working at phases 2 and 3? |
| * What is the expectation for children in Year 1? |
| * In what year group(s) do children work at phase 6? |

Whilst on your placements you should ensure that you find out how each school assesses and tracks children’s phonic knowledge.

**The Year 1 Phonics Screening Check**

A statutory phonics screening check for all pupils in Year 1, to take place in June each year, was introduced in 2012. The purpose of the Year 1 phonics screening check is to confirm whether individual pupils have learnt phonic decoding to an appropriate standard. Pupils who have not reached this standard at the end of Year 1, should receive support from their school to ensure they can improve their phonic decoding skills. Pupils will then have the opportunity to retake the screening check.

The screening check contains 40 words divided into two sections of 20 words. Both sections contain a mixture of real words and pseudo-words for children to decode.

Schools receive assessment and reporting arrangements (ARA) for the screening early each year. These are also available online and change each year. It is important that all teachers of early reading familiarise themselves with the content of those materials, to gain knowledge of national expectations.

Example screening check materials are available from the DfE website and there are associated documents which contain information about the screening check for schools and parents, along with evidence of the effectiveness of systematic synthetic phonics as the best way to teach young children to read:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/phonics-screening-check-sample-materials-and-training-video>

# Appendix 1

Overview of coverage

**SYSTEMATIC SYNTHETIC PHONICS: Letters & Sounds (DfES, 2007)**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Phase** | **Teaching & Learning:**  **broad content** | **Teaching & Learning:**  **specifics** | **READ ‘tricky’ words** | **SPELL ‘tricky’ words** |
| **1**  **FS** | * Vocabulary * Sound discrimination * Rhyme, rhythm * Alliteration * Language play |  |  |  |
| **2**  **FS:R**  *Up to 6 weeks* | * 19 GPCs (one set per week) * Oral blending & segmenting * Blending & segmenting using plastic letters | Set 1: **s** – **a** – **t** - **p**  Set 2: **i** – **m** – **n** – **d**  Set 3: **g** – **o** – **c** – **k**  Set 4: **ck** – **e** – **u** – **r**  Set 5: **h** – **b** – **f** – **ff – l – ll - ss** | **I the to go no** |  |
| **3**  **FS:R**  *Up to 12 weeks* | * Another 24 GPCs * Oral blending & segmenting CV & CVC words * Blending to read & segmenting to spell CV & CVC words * Letter names * Recite the alphabet / song * Read captions & questions | Set 6: **j** – **v** – **w** – **x**  Set 7: **y** – **z** – **zz** – **qu**  *Following GPCs can be taught in any order*.  Consonant digraphs:  **ch** – **sh** – **th** – **ng**  Vowel digraphs:  **ai** – **ee** – **igh** – **oa** – **oo**  **oi** – **ow** - **ar** – **or** - **ur**  Vowel trigraphs:  **ear** – **air** – **ure**  Schwa (unstressed):  **er** | **he she we me be was my you they her all are** | **I the to go no** |
| **4**  **FS:R**  *4-6 weeks* | * Practise to consolidate known GPCs * Blend to read & segment to spell adjacent consonants CCVC & CVCC * Blend to read and segment to spell polysyllabic words * Read and write sentences | e.g.  CVCC: **best; mend; soft; hand**  CCVC: **stop; smell; trap; flip**  CCVCC: **frost; twist; stamp**  CCCVC: **strap; street; scrap**  CCCVCC: **sprint; scrunch**  e.g. two-syllable words  **handbag; dustman; classroom** | **said so have like some come were there little one do when out what** | **he she we me be was you my they all are my her** |
| **5**  **KS1:Y1**  *Up to 30 weeks* | * New graphemes (ways to spell) known phonemes * Different ways to pronounce known graphemes (spellings) | Different ways to spell: e.g.  /ai/: **ay** – **a\_e** – **a**  /ee/: **ea** – **e\_e**  /igh/: **ie** – **i\_e** – **y**  /oa/: **oe** – **o\_e** – **ow** – **o**  /oo/: **u\_e** – **ue** – **ew** – **u**  /io/: **oy**  /ur/: **er** – **ir**  /or/: **aw** – **au**  /j/: **dge**  /ch/: **tch**  New GPCs: e.g.  /f/: ph [*Greek]*  */zh/:* trea**s**ure; vi**s**ion  /n/: gn – kn *[& other ‘silent’ letters]*  /c/: s *[soft c]* | **oh their people Mr Mrs looked called asked water where who again thought through work mouse many laughed because different any eyes friends once please** | **said so have like some come were there little one do when what out oh their people Mr Mrs looked called asked** |
| **6**  **KS1:Y2/3** | * Fluent reading * Strategies for commonly misspelled words **e.g. look–say–cover–write–check; mnemonics** * Verb tense suffixes: **-ed; -ing** [with relevant ‘rules’] * Noun plurals: **-s; -es; -ies** [with relevant ‘rules’] * Noun suffixes: **-ment; -ness** * Adverb suffix: **-ly** * Adjective suffixes: -**er; est; -ful; -y;** [with relevant ‘rules’] * Negative prefixes: **un-; dis-; mis-** [with relevant ‘rules’] * Using dictionaries | | Read and spell automatically 200 most common words. *Letters and Sounds* page 195 | |

# Appendix 2

# Appendix 3

**Glossary of terms**

**Adjacent consonants**

Consonants which are next to each other in words, often at the beginning or end, e.g. **sp**in, **pr**od, ju**st**, **spl**i**nt.** Also known as consonant clusters.

**Alliteration**

Words in a phrase which begin with the same sound, e.g. round the rugged rocks the ragged rascals ran.

**Alphabetic code**

In English, as in many other languages, sounds of words are represented by letters.

**Blending**

Blending consists of building words from their constituent phonemes in order, all through the word to read it.

**Consonant**

All the letters of the alphabet except a,e,i,o and u. Y can act as a consonant as in young, you and yacht and as a vowel as in baby, hymn and physics. Consonant literally means ‘sounding together’. To make a consonant sound we interrupt air flow with our lips or tongue: try saying at, ill, big, etc and notice what you do with your mouth.

**Consonant digraph**

Two letters representing a consonant phoneme, e.g. ph in graph, wh in why, gh in laugh

**CVC**

A word which has three phonemes: consonant sound, vowel sound, consonant sound, e.g. cat, church, soil.

**CVCC/CCVC**

Words with four distinct sounds: consonant sound, vowel sound, consonant sound, consonant sound/ consonant sound, consonant sound, vowel sound consonant sound. Typically taught in Phase 4.

**Digraph**

Two letters making one sound or phoneme, e.g. ch in chip, sh in shop, ea in eat. See also consonant digraphs and vowel digraphs.

**Double consonant**

A consonant digraph where the two letters are the same, e.g. better, bigger, hopping.

**Encoding**

Selecting graphemes to form a word when writing (see ‘Segmenting’)

**Enunciation**

Precise, clear speech. In this context, the clear articulation of phonemes.

**Grapheme**

A grapheme is a written representation of a phoneme, that is, a letter or group of letters representing a sound. There is always the same number of graphemes in a word as phonemes. The alphabet contains only 26 letters but we use it to make all the graphemes that represent the phonemes of English.

**Grapheme/phoneme correspondence (GPC)**

The relationship between the letters and the sounds they represent.

**High frequency words**

Words which occur frequently in a language. In English many are regular but some are irregular or ‘tricky’, e.g. said, their, one.

**Letter-sound correspondence (grapheme/phoneme correspondence (GPC))**

The relationship between the letters and the sounds they represent.

**Long vowel sounds or phonemes** There are 14 long vowel phonemes as shown below with their common spellings. Note also the schwa phoneme /e/ (an unstressed vowel sound which isclose to /u/) – spellings include: teach**er**, coll**ar**, doct**or**, **a**bout

Phoneme Grapheme Sample words

****

(Taken from Letters and Sounds, Notes of guidance, 00282-2007BKT-EN)

**Morpheme**

The smallest unit of meaning in language and consisting of one or more phonemes. For example, the word ‘walk’ is one morpheme, but ‘walked’ is two morphemes; walk plus the past tense marker ‘ed’.

**Morphology**

The study of the meaningful units of words.

**Onset**

The onset is the first part of a word, the consonant or adjacent consonant at the beginning and before the vowel, e.g. in ‘flat’, the onset is ‘fl’.

**Phoneme**

A phoneme is the smallest unit of sound in a word that can change its meaning (e.g. in /bed/ and /led/ the difference between the phonemes /b/ and /l/ signals the difference in meaning between the words *bed*, *led*). It is generally accepted that most varieties of spoken English use about 44 phonemes. In alphabetic writing systems (such as English) phonemes are represented by graphemes.

**Phonemic awareness**

The ability to perceive and manipulate the phonemes in spoken words.

**Phonetics**

A science studying the characteristics of human sounds, particularly speech sounds and methods for their description, classification and transcription.

**Phonological awareness**

The ability to perceive and manipulate the sounds of spoken words. It includes the smallest level, phonemes, but also larger units such as rimes and syllables.

**Prefix**

These are added before a root word, and change the meaning but rarely affect the spelling of a word (e.g. *replace*, *mistake).*

**Pronunciation**

The way in which words or sounds are spoken.

**Rime**

The rime of a word is the vowel and the rest of the syllable, e.g. in ‘flat’, the rime is ‘at’.

**Schwa**

An unstressed vowel sound which is close to /u/ – spellings include: teach**er**, coll**ar**, doct**or**, **a**bout. It is also used to denote the unintended /u/ sound we often say after certain letters, e.g. b/u/, instead of the purer sound /b/.

**Segmenting**

Breaking a word up into its individual phonemes in order to write a word. When spelling a word, the corresponding grapheme (letters) is selected for each phoneme.

**Short vowel sound**

Vowel sounds that are pronounced in a short form as shown below:



(Taken from Letters and Sounds, Notes of guidance, 00282-2007BKT-EN)

**Suffix**

These are added after root words, and change the spelling and meaning of a word (e.g. *hope – hoping*, *walk – walked, happy – happiness*);

**Syllable**

A word or part of a word consisting of a vowel phoneme with no, one or more consonant phonemes before or after it, for example, ‘telephone’ has 3 syllables: tel/e/phone.

**Synthetic phonics**

An approach to the teaching of reading in which the phonemes (sounds) associated with particular graphemes (letters) are pronounced in isolation and blended together (synthesised). Synthetic phonics for writing reverses the sequence: children are taught to say the word they wish to write, segment it into its phonemes and say them in turn and write a grapheme for each phoneme in turn to produce the written word.

**Systematic phonics**

A systematic approach to teaching phonics means that children are taught the phonemes in a clearly defined sequence, usually from simple, to more complex sounds and their representations.

**Tricky words**

Words in which letter sounds do not give a perfect or regular guide to pronunciation, e.g. once, their, said.

**Trigraph**

Three letters representing one sound, e.g. he**dge**, hair, sna**tch.**

**Vowel**

There are as many as 20 vowels in spoken English (the number depends on accent).

**Vowel digraph**

Two letters combine to represent one vowel sound, e.g. **ou**t, b**oa**t, **au**dit. Split vowel digraphs have a consonant separating the two vowels, e.g. b**i**t**e**, h**o**p**e**, t**u**b**e**.

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