

LETTERS AND SOUNDS – A BRIEF INTRODUCTION

Jim Rose's review of early reading confirmed that high quality phonic work should be the prime means of teaching children how to read and write. As a result, the government produced its own phonics programme, taking account of the best practice seen in successful settings

Letters and Sounds is a 6 phase teaching programme which is designed to run from FS1 to Year 2, but in our school (as in others) we are continuing the daily phonics session higher up the school. In our school, we teach phonics for 20 minutes first thing every morning, when pupils are most receptive and attentive.

Following phonic assessments of pupils, we put them into groups that best meet their needs. In order to run the separate groups, teaching assistants deliver phonics to one group whilst the class teacher takes the other. The two adults swap groups each half term. Phonics should be fast-paced, interactive and fun: "Taught well, spelling can be a magical way of interesting children in language, or it can be a mindless chore"

Phonics is.....

Segmenting and blending sounds and grapheme-phoneme correspondences

Basic and Advanced Codes

Basic Code (taught in Foundation Stage)

One way of representing each of 40+ sounds

/ee/ in mee**t**

Expect to see taught graphemes appearing in children's writing! (ta**ic** for ta**ke**)

Advanced Code (taught in Years 1 and 2)

Alternative ways of representing each of the 40+ sounds

tea

be

baby

babies

key
taxi
receive
Pete

The Six Phases

Phase Descriptors

- 1 Develop listening skills and awareness of sounds in The environment. Introduce oral blending and segmenting, and explore & experiment with sounds & words (through listening walks, drumming, sound stories, sound lotto etc.).
- 2 Teach at least 19 phoneme-grapheme correspondences, and move children on from oral blending and segmenting to blending and segmenting with letters. Children learn to read and spell some two and three letter words. The first 6 tricky words (I, go, no, the, to, into) are taught.
- 3 Teach the remaining 25 phoneme-grapheme correspondences, most of which comprise of 2 letters (digraphs). Continue reading and spelling CVC words and tricky words, and applying this knowledge to reading and writing simple captions and sentences. Learn the letter names (e.g. ay, bee, see, dee).
- 4 Consolidate knowledge of phoneme-grapheme correspondences in reading and spelling words containing consonant clusters and polysyllabic words.
- 5 Broaden knowledge of phonemes and graphemes for use in reading and spelling. They will learn new graphemes and alternative pronunciations for these and graphemes they already know (some of which may have already been encountered).
- 6 Children become fluent readers and increasingly accurate spellers, looking at suffixes, plurals, tenses and three-syllable words.

Nottinghamshire end of year expectations

Foundation Stage 2: secure in Phase 3, working on Phase 4

Year 1: secure in Phase 5

Year 2: secure in Phase 6

Assessment

Pupils are continually assessed informally during phonics. All pupils are engaged all the time (they might each have a different word to read, or each give a word starting with a certain sound for example), making it easier for continual assessment. Pupils are formally assessed at the end each term – we highlight and date phonemes and words known to check pupils are progressing through the phases and to re-arrange groups accordingly.

Phonic activities and games at school

- Silly Soup
- Phoneme fans
- Phoneme count
- Magnetic letters & boards
- Flashcards (voices)
- Quick-write
- Sound buttons
- Robot talk (Old Macdonald/Georgies's Gym)
- What's in the box?
- Buried Treasure
- Cross the river
- Phoneme frame
- Countdown
- Bingo (words & sounds)
- Yes/no sill questions
- Sentence substitution
- Hunt the word / phoneme
- Noisy sounds / pairs
- 4 corners
- Mnemonic
- Body parts / sky writing
- Pass the parcel
- Croaker
- Human sentences
- Full circle
- Sound sacks
- Phoneme finger puppets

- ‘Cheeky Chimps’ Velcro CVC words

Phonic activities and games at home

- Play ‘I spy’ (something beginning, or ending, with ..)
- Robot talk (give segmented instructions for your child to blend “Get Your s-o-c-k-s”. Or ask them to segment words for you j-u-m-p, h-o-p).
- Play hangman with them, or other spelling and word games
- Display tricky words, and letters/digraphs around the house
- Make letters and words out of playdough, or collage them
- Practise forming letters in sand, or draw them on their palm or back
- Practise sounding out and spelling words at every opportunity by writing shopping lists, cards, letters, invitations
- Play letter, digraph or word Snap or Bingo
- Learning or making up own mnemonics for tricky words (e.g. “because” butterflies eat cabbages and usually sit eating)
- Write and read words, questions, silly sentences with fridge magnets
- Write and read words in the bath with foam letters
- Read words on signs and labels in the environment (e.g.shops, roads)
- Read with them regularly, discuss spelling patterns and tricky words
- Explore rhymes, songs and make up nonsense words/sentences
- Play games on the internet (like BBC schools ‘words and pictures