



## Sound!Start Phonics for Letters and Sounds

### Rationale

A key part of the rationale behind Sound!Start Phonics is the importance of focusing attention on what we want children to know and remember.

We need children to know the sounds that are used within the English language and the way letters are used to represent these sounds. We also need them to master the skills of blending sounds to create words and segmenting words into separate sounds so that they can use their knowledge of the letters and sounds that go together to read and write words.

The organisation of phonics teaching within the timetable, the structure of lessons, the classroom resources, the teaching strategies outlined within the practice guidance and the practice opportunities provided within and beyond daily phonics lessons support children to remain focused on these things as they work at GPC level, word level, caption / sentence level and finally text level within each phase of the programme.

The approach outlined within the programme ensures adult attention also remains carefully focused; on the children and on what they know and can do.

<b>Reading</b>	GPC Knowledge ↓	<b>Spelling</b>
Recognition of GPCs	Word Level Work ↓	Segmentation Skills
Blending Skills	Caption / Sentence Level Work ↓	Recall of GPCs
Recognition of Tricky Words	Controlled Text Level Work ↓	Recall of Tricky Words
	Wider application of knowledge and skills across the curriculum	<b>PLUS:</b> Good handwriting habits: posture, pencil hold, paper
		Accurate letter formation

## Teaching Structure

As shown in the diagram above the processes of reading and spelling are different and involve different knowledge and skills and different vocabulary.

*When we read, we see the letters and say the sounds (GPC **recognition**) and then **blend** the sounds together to form the word.*

*When we spell, we **segment** the word into phonemes and then identify the graphemes needed for recording those spoken sounds (GPC **recall**). In addition, we need good handwriting habits and an understanding of how each letter is formed.*

It is essential that both reading and spelling are taught with precision and clarity and that children have sufficient opportunity to practise the knowledge and skills needed for both. For this reason, reading and spelling are taught separately within the Sound!Start Phonics for Letters and Sounds programme and each lesson has a clear phonic goal and outcome based on either a reading or a spelling objective.

In the early stages of the programme when the focus is on GPC knowledge and word level work, the lessons alternate between reading and spelling focus teaching and practice as follows:

<b>Weekly Teaching Structure</b>
Reading Focus (word level)
Spelling Focus (word level)
Reading Focus (word level)
Spelling Focus (sentence level)
Tricky Word Focus

This approach enables children to gain confidence at GPC and word level and begin to develop automatic recognition of a small number of high frequency words in preparation for caption / sentence level work.


At this point there is a slight change to the structure of teaching across the week as follows:

<b>Weekly Teaching Structure</b>
Reading Focus (word level)
Reading Focus (sentence level)
Spelling Focus (word level)
Spelling Focus (sentence level)
Tricky Word Focus

It should be noted that the Tricky Word Focus lesson provides an opportunity to consolidate the reading / spelling objectives taught earlier in the week by revisiting the words that have been taught and practised alongside newly taught Tricky Words. The lesson does not focus entirely on reading or spelling Tricky Words in isolation.

## Daily Lesson Structure / Five-part Teaching Sequence

The lesson structure outlined within the programme follows a REVIEW -> TEACH -> PRACTICE -> REFLECT cycle which will be familiar to most educators:

<b>Daily Phonics Lesson</b> 	<b>Revisit and Review</b> <i>Activating prior knowledge</i>
	<b>Teach</b> <i>Direct Instruction: Explaining and modelling</i>
	<b>Practise and Apply</b> <i>Securing learning: Guided and Independent practice (scaffolded and differentiated as required)</i>
	<b>Recap Key Learning</b> <i>Reflecting and Evaluating</i>
<b>Reading and Writing Tasks across the curriculum</b>	<b>Application of Knowledge and Skills</b> <i>Embedding knowledge and skills</i>

Application of phonics knowledge and skill at text level is included within the teaching sequence even though it will generally be taught at a separate time e.g. during a Guided Reading lesson or within a teacher-led writing / English lesson task. This emphasises the purpose of these lessons (application of the knowledge and skills taught and practised during and beyond the daily phonics lesson) and highlights the importance of ensuring consistency throughout the entire sequence.

The first four parts of the Teaching Sequence take place within the daily phonics lesson as follows:

Daily Lesson Structure Five-part Teaching Sequence		
Revisit and Review	Part 1: Knowledge	Practise <b>recognition OR recall</b> of previously taught GPCs
	Part 2: Skill	Rehearse / refine <b>blending OR segmentation</b> skills
Teach		Direct instruction to develop and extend <b>reading OR spelling</b> skills at word or caption / sentence level
Practise and Apply	Part 1: Guided Practice (scaffolded as required)	Practise <b>reading OR spelling</b> words matched to age-related learning objective OR Practise <b>reading OR spelling</b> sentences matched to age-related learning objective
	Part 2: Independent Practice (differentiated to match learning needs)	Practise <b>reading OR spelling</b> words matched to learning needs OR Practise <b>reading OR spelling</b> sentences matched to learning needs
Re-cap / Plenary		Re-cap learning objective and rehearse <b>reading OR spelling</b> focus words OR sentences to build automaticity
Application at text level		<b>Reading Focus:</b> Guided Reading with fully decodable texts matched to phonics phase and automaticity Further reading opportunities across the curriculum
		<b>Spelling Focus:</b> Teacher-led writing task or writing tasks within English lessons and across the curriculum

Please note:

There are two parts to the “Revisit and Review” part of the lesson during Reading and Spelling focus lessons to ensure children are tuned into both the knowledge and the skill needed for the lesson.

AND

There are two parts to the “Practise and Apply” part of the lesson to ensure children complete guided practice matched to the age-related teaching input that has taken place as well as independent practice matched to learning needs within every lesson. Guided practice may be scaffolded and support for some learners. Independent practice will be differentiated according to need. Carefully developed paper-based practice should be provided during this part of the lesson to ensure all children participate fully and gain sufficient practice in reading and spelling throughout the week.

## Ongoing Phonics throughout the Day

Phonic knowledge and skills should be taught through a high-quality daily phonics lesson from the third week in the Reception (F2) year, throughout Y1 and beyond as required. Lessons should be timetabled for 25 – 30 minutes but may take less time at the beginning of the programme.

Additional opportunities to practice the knowledge and skills needed for reading should also be built into the daily timetable, particularly in the early stages.

This should include:

*\* Additional practice at reading flashcards (GPC recognition)*

AND

*\* Additional blending practice (oral blending / word building / word reading)*

Although these ongoing practice sessions may appear incidental, they must be timetabled carefully to ensure they become part of routine daily practice.

## Learning a Letter Lessons

To allow sufficient time for children to quickly build up GPC knowledge and master the skills of blending and segmentation in the early stages of the programme, Phases Two and Phase Three GPCs are taught in a separate “Learning a Letter” lesson. This is timetabled daily in the autumn and spring terms of the Reception (F2) year **in addition** to the daily 20-to-30-minute main phonics lesson.

The final part of the Learning a Letter teaching sequence introduces the children to two or three words containing the new GPC which are added to the bank of “Core Words” used within and beyond the main daily phonics lesson. This ensures children gain sufficient practice at reading, re-reading and spelling a small collection of words containing familiar GPCs and begin to build automatic recognition from the early stages of the programme.

## Use of Mnemonics

The Sound!Start Phonics *for Letters and Sounds* programme outlines a clear four-part sequence for teaching the letter(s) used to represent sounds. Within each phase of the programme the sequence begins by focusing attention on the phoneme making links with vocabulary that is already familiar to many children. The children are then introduced to a focus grapheme which is used to represent the target phoneme within the English language drawing attention to its shape so that they can recognise it in reading and follow the sequence of movements used for writing it. In the final part of the sequence the children are supported to use the new GPC and are introduced to some new core words which are then incorporated into a range of reading and writing tasks.

Mnemonics are not used within this teaching sequence to ensure attention remains carefully focused on the target phoneme and the corresponding grapheme. There are no additional phrases, stories, songs, pictures, or actions which may distract children (and teachers) from the key learning and which some children may remember **instead** of the key learning.

Children are not required to learn something which they will later be encouraged to “drop” and teachers never run the risk of continuing to use artificial prompts for too long for some or all of their children. In addition, teaching time remains focused on letters and sounds ensuring all children have sufficient time to learn about the relationship between sounds, letters and words.

## Letter Formation Patter

The Sound!Start Phonics *for Letters and Sounds* Letter Formation Patter follows the same principles. It is based on the vocabulary of movement and does not involve children remembering additional (linked or arbitrary) visual or verbal clues - the focus is on what children need to know (the shape of the letter) and the movement needed for forming it correctly. The patter “builds” up within letter families so that children hear, feel and see the links between letters and learn a consistent vocabulary for describing their shapes, for example all “curly caterpillar” letters begin with a “**this way round** movement” and all “one armed robot” letters begin with a “straight down, **bounce back up and over**” sequence.

## Building up to the Main Phonics Lesson

During the very early stages of the programme, “Practise and Apply” tasks are timetabled as small-group adult-led tasks. Adults work with two groups per day straight after the direct teaching input within the “Revisit and Review” and “Teach” parts of the main phonics lesson focusing initially on word building tasks and then introducing the first Core Practice and Apply Task. This enables most children to participate independently in all parts of the main daily phonics lesson from the second half of the autumn term, allowing adults to prioritise interaction with the most vulnerable learners.

## Core Practice Guidance

The Sound!Start Phonics *for Letters and Sounds* programme outlines specific routines for teaching GPC knowledge and the skills of blending for reading and segmenting for spelling. These basic routines run through the activities in the Core Practice Guidance. A clear distinction is made between **modelling** and **scaffolding** within this guidance to ensure children practice the processes of reading and spelling from the early stages of the programme and do not merely repeat what the teacher has said.

The activities outlined in the Core Practice Guidance promote high levels of pupil-teacher interaction during the Revisit and Review and Teach parts of the lesson facilitating assessment for learning and ensuring all children remain actively involved throughout the lesson. The Sound!Start Phonics classroom resources enable teachers to maintain eye-contact as they are teaching which has a positive impact on memory / retention of learning as well as focusing children's attention and increasing engagement.

## Repetition

Repetition is key within the Sound!Start Phonics *for Letters and Sounds* programme. Children will quickly become familiar with the structure of lessons across the week as well as the daily lesson structure and this repetition ensures children know both what to expect and what is expected of them. The step-by-step instructions outlined in the Core Practice Guidance ensures consistency and enables children and adults to become very familiar with the activities described. Within a short space of time only minimal instructions will be required ensuring pupil and teacher attention remains focused on key learning and maximising the time available for the all-important practice.

The Planning Guidance also outlines a repetitive approach to the words used within lessons. A small number of new words are added to the Core Word Bank as each new GPC is introduced to the children and these words provide a bank of words which are revisited during and beyond the daily phonics lesson in order to build automatic recognition. Further enrichment words are provided for faster learners to ensure all children remain motivated and successful as they move through the programme.