

Letters and Sounds overview

The purpose of this document is to give an at a glance overview of the programme, particularly for KS2 & KS3 staff who might be less familiar with Letters and Sounds. All the content is taken from “Letters and Sounds: Notes of Guidance for Practitioners and Teachers”, Primary National Strategy, DfES, 2007. Other summaries and additional advisory documents are promoted by the Local Authority by Literacy and English consultants from Quality and Improvement (c: Heather Russell). In particular the "National Strategies Phonics: assessment and tracking guidance" document.

This document has been produced by the Rossett Enhanced Mainstream School for SpLD in response to difficulties experienced by pupils not able to cope with the speed and sometimes the sequencing of the programme. Solutions are stated in the guidance but this is not always acknowledged and the quotes at the end will hopefully be instructive. For pupils with persistent difficulties it is necessary to ensure very accurate Assessment for Learning and a realistic pace through the phases. Where the child has reached is exactly that – go as fast as you can, as slow as you need to e.g. If a child has to sound out “cat” then it is counter-productive to work on “rain” & “same”. All additional and different input needs to be thoroughly integrated with Universal Provision for these children (i.e. the teacher needs to be fully aware and differentiate accordingly). In the experience of this team, insufficient automaticity at Phase 2 (CVC) is a central cause of literacy acquisition failure and an over-reliance on (often faulty) visual recognition. We also find that the consistent and appropriate use of decodable reading schemes (we particularly favour Dandelion Readers / Launchers and the Totem / Talisman / Magic Belt series – available from “The Importance of Phonics Catalogue” [DfE]) puts the phonics into context for these children and helps to create the necessary engagement, enthusiasm and confidence for progress. One final point – DON’T FORGET PHASE ONE!! It isn’t here for practical reasons but oral segmenting and blending, playing with sounds, breaking words into syllables is ongoing throughout- “tune them in!”

(This draft, April 2013)

An overview focused on support for children with Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD)/dyslexia

Phase Two: (6 weeks during Reception)

Progression	Phonemes – 1 set to be taught each week	Two syllable words (reading)	Tricky words (reading)	High frequency words (reading and spelling) decodable	Simple captions (reading and writing)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 23 graphemes represented by 19 letters (1 reading/spelling choice per grapheme). Fast recognition of letters for reading and recall for spelling. Practise oral blending and segmentation of CVC words Blending and segmenting some VC and CVC words using magnetic letters or writing on whiteboards (to replace oral blending and segmentation as soon as possible). Two syllable words and simple captions introduced. 	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	sunset rocket carrot	I the to go no	(is) it in at and dad got on not can get up mum had him (his) but big back (of) if off am	a kid in a cap to the top of the hill

Phase Three – (up to 12 weeks in Reception)

Progression	Phonemes	Combination of two Phase 3 graphemes	Two syllable words – reading and spelling	Tricky words (reading)	Tricky words (spelling)	High Frequency Words (decodable) reading	Sentences for reading
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn letter names. Connect name with sounds of letter. • Pupils will learn that 42 phonemes can be represented by grapheme(s) • Give the sound when shown all or most Ph2 and Ph3 graphemes. • Find all or most Ph2 and Ph3 graphemes from a display when given the sound • Continue to practise CVC blending and segmentation • Write each letter correctly when following a model 	<p>Set 6: j v w x</p> <p>Set 7: y z,zz qu</p> <p>ch sh th ng</p> <p>ai ee igh oa</p> <p>oo ar or ur</p> <p>ow oi ear air</p> <p>ure er</p>	<p>teeth harsh waiter powder sheep porch sharp</p>	<p>farmyard carpark</p>	<p>he she we me be was my you they her all are</p>	<p>the to no go I</p>	<p>will with that this then them see for now down look too</p>	<p>I am in such a rush to get to the shops.</p> <p>The van will chug up the hill.</p> <p>Then we can all run to the park.</p> <p>The sheep are in the shed.</p>

Phase Four: (4 to 6 weeks at the end of Reception/beginning Y1)

Progression	CVCC/CCVC (including Ph 3 graphemes)	CCVCC (including Ph 3 graphemes)	CCCVC/ CCCVCC(including Ph 3 graphemes)	polysyllabic words – reading and spelling	Tricky words (reading)	Tricky words (spelling)	High Frequency Words (decodable) reading
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give the sound when shown any Ph2 or Ph3 grapheme. • Find any Ph2 or Ph3 grapheme from a display when given the sound • Blending for reading and segmenting for spelling words containing adjacent consonants and polysyllabic words. • Consolidation phase and can be run alongside Ph3 or Ph5 because pupils are not doing anything new. • There should not necessarily be separate Ph4 Wave 2 groups. • Write each letter, usually correctly 	<p><u>CVCC</u> best tent jump hand sink felt champ joint boost</p> <p><u>CCV/CCVC</u> spot frog sniff clap flag glass bring swim green growl float tree star</p>	<p>stand brand crisp stamp trend spend crunch shrink</p>	<p>scrap strap street spring string scrunch</p>	<p>lunchbox desktop softest champion melting thundering twisting</p>	<p>said so have some like come were there little one do when out what</p>	<p>he she we me be was you they all are my her</p>	<p>went it's from children just help</p>

Phase Five – (approx. 30 weeks throughout Y1)

Progression	New phoneme	New graphemes for reading – 4 per week	Alternative spellings for phonemes	Tricky words (reading)	Tricky words (spelling)	High frequency words (decodable) reading
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn new graphemes and alternative pronunciations for these (use HFWs when possible) • Learn alternative pronunciations for graphemes already known • Choose appropriate graphemes to represent spellings of phonemes. Spelling should be phonemically accurate • Learners can move from Ph5 to 6 as long as they can read all graphemes and can demonstrate that phonemes can be represented in at least 2 ways for spelling. • Read and spell phonically decodable two and three syllable words. • Read automatically 1st 100 HFWs • Accurately spell most of the 1st 100 HFWs • Form all letters correctly 	zh	ay ou ie ea oy ir ue aw wh ph ew oe au a__e e__e i__e o__e u__e	See p.144 Letters and Sounds	oh their people Mr Mrs looked called asked would should could 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	don't day here old house made saw I'm about came very by your make put time

Phase Six – (throughout Y2)

Progression	adding suffixes (spelling)	Spelling strategies	Words with unusual GPCs (spelling)	Knowledge of spelling system
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A transition phase designed to get pupils ready for the KS2 spelling programme. • Children become fluent readers and increasingly (phonemically) accurate spellers. • First half term focuses on reading. The rest of the year is focussed on spelling. • Learners learn some of the rarer GPCs • Texts become longer and there is a shift from learning to read to reading to learn. • The pace and phrasing of reading is increased. Most reading will be silent. Focus is on learning a range of comprehension strategies beyond just literal. • Introduction to self-editing • Develop a fluent joined handwriting style • If pupils are not secure at Ph6 by the end of Year 2 then they can still move onto the KS2 spelling programme as long as they are secure at Ph5. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -ed (teach understanding of past tense first) -ing -er -est -ful -ly -y -ment -ness -en plurals -s and -es 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Syllables for longer words Segment phonemes. Finding and learning difficult bits in words e.g. “beautiful.” base words analogy mnemonics classroom displays spelling logs dictionaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> beautiful laugh once two answer could there 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The position of a phoneme in a word can determine the grapheme e.g. “ai” and “oi” do not occur at the end of words. “ay” and “oy” do. English words do not end in the letter “v” unless they are abbreviations (e.g.Rev) Correct position of apostrophes in contractions Adding ‘s’ and ‘es’ to nouns and verbs. Doubling and dropping letters where necessary (e.g. hop/hopping, hope/hoping)

Why a phonics programme?

- “The purpose of high quality phonic teaching is for children to secure the crucial skills of word decoding that lead to fluent and automatic reading, thus freeing them to concentrate on the meaning of the text.” *p.10 L&S Notes of Guidance.*
- “Children who routinely adopt alternative cues for reading unknown words instead of learning to decode them, find themselves stranded when texts become more demanding and meanings less predictable.” *p.12 L&S Notes of Guidance.*

Automaticity – not sounding out.

- Beginner readers should be taught “... to apply the highly important skill of blending (synthesising) phonemes in the order in which they occur, all through the word to read it.” (i.e. not sounding out). *p.10 L&S Notes of Guidance.*
- Some children will need a lot of practice before they grasp CVC blending. *p.58 L&S Teaching Programme.*
- “It must always be remembered that phonics is the step up to word recognition. Automatic and effortless reading of all words – decodable and tricky – is the ultimate goal. By repeated sounding and blending of words, children get to know them, and once this happens, they should be encouraged to read them straight off in reading text, rather than continuing to sound and blend them aloud because they feel that this is what is required. They should continue, however, to use overt or silent phonics for those words which are unfamiliar.” *p. 134 L&S Teaching Programme but repeated throughout.*

Being secure with a grapheme includes:

- Recognising and articulating a phoneme associated with the letter shape.
- Selecting the letter when given its sound.
- Writing the letter correctly
- Naming the letter
- Identifying the letter from its name.

p.14 L&S Notes of Guidance

How flexible can teachers be with regard to moving between phases?

- “...the boundaries between the phases are deliberately porous so that no children are held back, or unduly pressured to move on before they are equipped to do so.” Some learners may need more time and support to secure their learning. Those who are less confident need more practise with graphemes of two or more letters, not alternative strategies to read unfamiliar words. *p.3 L&S Notes of Guidance.*

- “...the boundaries between the phases should not be regarded as fixed...practitioners and teachers will need to judge the rate at which children are able to progress through the phases and adapt the pace accordingly.” *p.4 L&S Notes of Guidance.*

Examples of this flexibility between the phases include *p.5 L&S Notes of Guidance*:

- The pace at which the 26 letters of the alphabet are taught.
- The introduction of digraphs.
- The introduction of adjacent consonants “...teachers may find that some children can benefit from learning about adjacent consonants earlier than is suggested in the phase structure.”

Introducing Letter Names

- “The Early Learning Goals expect letter names to be known by the end of the Foundation Stage. In phonics, letter names are needed when children start to learn two-letter and three-letter graphemes (Phase Three) to provide the vocabulary to refer to the letters which make up the grapheme. It is misleading to refer to the graphemes ‘ai’ as /a/-/i/. *p.15 L&S Notes of Guidance.*
- Teach letter names using an alphabet song but pick out a few letters each day and connect the names with the sounds of the letters. *p.80 L&S Teaching Programme.*

Teaching High Frequency Words Reading and Spelling

Very detailed description on *p.15-16 L&S Notes of Guidance* stating:

- Most of the first 100 HFWs are decodable.
- Letters and Sounds aligns the introduction of decodable HFWs as far as possible with each Phase (e.g. 26 in Phase 2).
- VC and CVC words such as ‘in’, ‘on’, ‘it’, ‘and’ appear very early in Phase 2. By repeatedly sounding and blending them children “...begin to read them without overt sounding and blending, thus starting to experience what it feels like to read some words automatically.”
- Attention should always be drawn to the grapheme-phoneme correspondences of HFW. Even “tricky” HFWs have at least one GPC that is familiar. Start with what is known and then focus on the tricky part of the word.

Why teach pure sounds?

“Many teachers have found that ...pronouncing the phonemes in, for example ‘cat’ as ‘cuh-a-tuh’ can make learning to blend difficult. It is therefore sensible to articulate each phoneme as cleanly as possible.” *p.14 Notes of Guidance*

When to introduce cursive handwriting

- “Learning handwriting – how letters join- involves a demanding set of skills but if teaching is appropriate and the handwriting programme introduces some early joins these are helpful for learning the union of the two letters in a grapheme (e.g. ‘ai’, ‘ch’ etc)” *p.15 L&S Notes of Guidance.*
- Developing a fluent joined style is an important part of learning to spell and the teaching of spelling and handwriting should be closely linked. *p. 186 L&S Teaching Programme.*

Should Letters and Sounds stop at the end of Key Stage 1?

- “Letters and Sounds is designed as a time-limited programme of phonic work aimed at securing fluent word recognition skills for reading by the end of Key Stage 1, although the teaching and learning of spelling, which children generally find harder than reading, will continue.” *p.3 L&S Notes of Guidance.*