



Stebbing Primary School Phonics Teaching Strategy

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What is Phonics?

Phonics is a way of teaching children how to read and write and is taught in the Early Years and Key Stage 1. At Stebbing we follow the Letter and Sounds resource published by the Department for Education. It sets out a detailed and systematic programme for teaching phonic skills and is divided into 6 different phases. It falls largely in line with the Communication and Language, and Literacy areas of learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Phonics aims to build children's speaking and listening skills as well as preparing them to read and write by developing their phonic knowledge and skills. Phonics supports children with hearing, identifying and using different sounds that distinguish one word from another in the English language. Knowing the sounds of the individual letters and how those sound when they are combined will allow children to decode words when they read. Understanding phonics will also help children know which letters to use when they are writing words.

In phonics lessons children are taught three main things:

GPCs

*They are taught GPCs. This stands for grapheme phoneme correspondences. This simply means that they are taught all the phonemes in the English language and ways of writing them down. These sounds are taught in a particular order. The first sounds to be taught are **s, a, t, p.***

Blending

Children are taught to be able to blend. This is when children say the sounds that make up a word and are able to merge the sounds together until they can hear what the word is. This skill is vital in learning to read.

Segmenting

Children are also taught to segment. This is the opposite of blending. Children are able to say a word and then break it up into the phonemes that make it up. This skill is vital in being able to spell words.

Phonics Phases

Phase 1

Phase 1 of Letters and Sounds concentrates on developing children's speaking and listening skills and lays the foundations for the phonic work which starts in Phase 2. The emphasis during Phase 1 is to get children attuned to the sounds around them and ready to begin developing oral blending and segmenting skills.

It is divided into 7 aspects that involve exploring sounds in songs, rhymes, **environmental sounds** not necessarily letter sounds:

Listening to sounds

- Learning how to discriminate sounds and knowing the difference between them
- Remembering sound patterns
- Orally segmenting and synthesising sounds
- Understanding how our mouth feels when we make that sound
- Recognising rhymes orally even if suggestions are not real words

Phase 2

There are 44 sounds in total for children to learn and these are known as phonemes. Various letters and letter combinations known as graphemes are used to represent the sounds. In Phase 2 children concentrate on learning the first 19 most common single letter sounds. Each week children will focus on approximately 4 or 5 new letter sounds to make learning them more achievable. The order in which they are taught is inline with the Letters and Sounds scheme. The purpose of this phase is to also move children on from oral blending and segmentation to blending and segmenting with letters. By the end of the phase many children should be able to read some VC (vowel-consonant) and CVC (consonant-vowel-consonant) words and to spell them either using magnetic letters or by writing the letters on paper or on whiteboards. During the phase they will be introduced to reading two-syllable words and simple captions. They will also learn to read some high-frequency 'tricky' words: the, to, go, no, I, into.

Phase 3

By the time they reach Phase Three, children should be able to blend and segment words using the phonemes taught in Phase Two. During this phase children will learn a further 26 phonemes which mostly consist of digraphs and trigraphs such as /ee/, /ch/, /igh/, /air/. They will also learn the letter names using an alphabet song, although they will continue to use sounds when decoding words. The next set of tricky words will also be taught to be read by sight and children will also move onto learning to spell some of these words. This phase is expected to last around 12 weeks and by the end of it children should be able to say the sound made by most, or all, Phase 3 graphemes, blend and read CVC words made from these graphemes as well as make phonetically plausible attempts at words, and read 12 new tricky words.

Phase 4

Phase Four doesn't introduce any new phonemes. The aim of this phase is to consolidate children's current phonic knowledge and to help them learn to read and spell words

containing adjacent consonants, such as **trap, string and milk**, and polysyllabic words. During this phase children will continue to practise reading and spelling high frequency words as well as learn more tricky words, including 'have', 'like', 'some', 'little'. It is important that children continue to build their confidence with reading and writing sentences. They should now be blending confidently to decode new words and continue to take that step towards automatic word recognition. When writing, children should be about to write most letters correctly. This phase usually lasts between four to six weeks and most children will complete it by the end of Reception.

Phase 5

Phase Five usually begins in Year One. The purpose of this phase is for children to broaden their knowledge of graphemes and phonemes. They already know ai as in rain, but now they will be introduced to ay as in day and a-e as in make. Alternative pronunciations for graphemes will also be introduced, e.g. ea in tea, head and break. Children should master these in reading first, and as their fluency develops use them correctly in their spelling. Children become quicker at recognising graphemes of more than one letter in words and at blending the phonemes they represent. When spelling words they will learn to choose the appropriate graphemes to represent phonemes and begin to build word-specific knowledge of the spellings of words.

By the end of Year 1, children should be able to:

- Say the sound for any grapheme they are shown
- Write the common graphemes for any given sound (e.g. 'e,' 'ee,' 'ie,' 'ea')
- Use their phonics knowledge to read and spell unfamiliar words of up to three syllables
- Read all of the 100 high frequency words, and be able to spell most of them
- Form letters correctly

Phase 6

By the beginning of Phase Six, children should know most of the common grapheme–phoneme correspondences (GPCs). They should be able to read hundreds of words, using one of three strategies;

- reading the words automatically if they are very familiar;
- decoding them quickly and silently because their sounding and blending routine is now well established;
- decoding them aloud.

During this phase, children become fluent readers and increasingly accurate spellers. You will find children find the spelling of words more difficult so it will take a little longer to grasp.

They will also learn, among other things:

- Focuses on spellings, including prefixes and suffixes, doubling and dropping letters etc.
- Making a word a plural
- Learning about the past tense
- Compound words e.g. everywhere
- Reading and spelling irregular high frequency words
- Spelling rules

Although formal phonics teaching should be completed by the end of Year 2, children continue to use their knowledge as they move through the school.

Teaching Strategy

At the beginning of the year children should be taught as a class. If needed other interventions should be organised in addition to the phonics lesson to accelerate the progress of pupils who are working towards the expected standard. Using half termly assessments and mock phonics screening checks will then allow the children to be grouped based on where they are currently working. These groups will need to be reviewed regularly to ensure that children are grouped appropriately. Weekly formative assessments will take place by the adult leading the group to make sure any misconceptions are addressed and to ensure the children are being challenged. The class teacher should be aware of what is happening in each group.

See year group expectations below;

	Autumn	Spring	Summer
Reception	Phase 1, begin Phase 2	Continue Phase 2, begin Phase 3	Complete Phase 3 and 4
Year 1	Recap Phase 3/4, begin Phase 5	Continue Phase 5	Complete Phase 5
Year 2	Phase 6/ Spelling	Phase 6/ Spelling	Phase 6/ Spelling

Year 2 Phonics Data Notebook

Phase 4		Phase 5a		Phase 5b		Phase 6	
Working towards	Expected	Working towards	Expected	Working towards	Expected	Working towards	Expected