



Phonics Policy

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And will be reviewed: March 2026

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Aims:

The National Curriculum 2014 states that 'high-quality phonic work' should be taught systematically and discretely as the prime approach used in the teaching of early reading. At Newbold and Tredington C of E Primary School, we use Unlocking Letters and Sounds which was validated by the DfE in December 2021.

1. ORGANISATION

1.1 Using the Unlocking Letters and Sounds Programme, discrete daily teaching of Phonics will take place in Reception and Key Stage 1.

1.2 The Unlocking Letters and Sounds lesson plans are used in conjunction with the corresponding lesson slides following the revisit, teach, practise, apply, revise structure.

1.3 Correct terminology is used as listed in the Unlocking Letters and Sounds glossary. (Appendix 1)

1.4 Phonics provision is fully inclusive. Phonics is delivered as a whole class or group session, matched to the needs of the children and staffing available. Precision teaching may be used for individual children if this meets their needs.

1.5 Staff receive training in using Unlocking Letters and Sounds so they can support children effectively.

1.6 Beyond the discrete daily lesson, the children will have decodable reading books that match their phonic knowledge. The Ransom Reading Stars Phonics reading books that we use are designed to support and complement the Unlocking Letters and Sounds Programme. The books support all Phases of the programme, from Phase 1 (books without words) through to Phase 5.

1.7 Progression through the Phases (Appendix 2):

- Nursery cover Phase 1 using activities from Unlocking Letters and Sounds and other phonic songs and games.
- Reception cover Phases 1-4.

- Year 1 cover Phases 4 and 5
- Year Two revisit Phase 5 to ensure mastery. Following this, children are taught spelling rules as set out in the National Curriculum. Any child who does not meet age related expectations will continue to receive phonics support through lessons using the Unlocking Letters and Sounds planning and slides and their interventions to close identified gaps.

3. ASSESSMENT

3.1 Assessments will be updated regularly using the Unlocking Letters and Sounds guidance and assessment spreadsheet or paper individual record sheets. Children in Year 1 (and Year 2 children who did not pass the screening in Year 1) will be assessed in the style of the phonics screening to prepare them.

3.2 Children requiring extra support will be identified and an intervention will be put in place. This can be: joining a different phonics group, using the Unlocking Letters and Sounds interventions and extra reading time to practise applying their phonic knowledge. Further concerns should be discussed with the SENDCO.

3.3 Class teachers will meet with the SLT to discuss pupil progress and attainment during Pupil Progress Meetings.

3.4 Children in Year 1 and those in Year 2 who did not pass the phonics screening in Year 1, are assessed in June using the Phonics screening check.



Unlocking Letters and Sounds

Glossary

A shared understanding and use of phonics and early reading vocabulary is essential to ensure consistency and fidelity to **Unlocking Letters and Sounds**. It supports teacher-subject knowledge and, by using consistent terminology, it also supports children's learning, especially amongst those in your lowest 20 per cent.

Term	Explanation
Phonics	Phonics is a way of teaching reading, writing and spelling based on hearing and identifying letter sounds and matching them to letters or letter patterns.
Grapheme	A grapheme is a letter or sequence of letters that represent a phoneme (one sound). When we read aloud, we decode written words by converting graphemes into phonemes.
Phoneme	A phoneme is a single spoken sound, e.g. / c / as in c-a-t , or / sh / as in sh-i-p . It is the smallest sound in the English language. There are approximately 44 phonemes in English, each made up of one or more letters.
Digraph	A digraph is a single sound (i.e. a phoneme) that is made up of two letters, e.g. ee as in t-r-ee or ie as in t-ie .
Trigraph	A trigraph is a single sound (a phoneme) that is made up of three letters, e.g. igh as in high .
Split digraph	A split digraph is a digraph that is separated by one or more consonants. For example, the / ee / sound in complete is split by the letter t .
Blending	Blending letter sounds (phonemes) together enables children to decode and read words. For example, h-a-t = hat . Children need to practise this so it becomes an automatic skill.
Segmenting	Segmenting is the opposite of blending. Segmenting a word is to break the word down into its component phonemes, e.g. hat = h-a-t . Segmenting enables children to break down words they are trying to spell.
Decode/decoding	Decoding is the key skill in reading words. Children use their phonics skills to blend the phonemes in a word to decode it.

Term	Explanation
Sound buttons	Sound buttons help children recognise where the phoneme/sound is in a word, and which letters in the word make that sound. A dot shows that the sound is made from a single letter and a line shows that the sound is made from a digraph or trigraph. For example, tree , kick .
Phoneme frame	A phoneme frame supports a child, enabling them to break a word into its individual sounds and identify which letters make this sound. For example t r ee
Phoneme fingers	An instruction to the children to count the number of phonemes in a word and show the number using their fingers.
Common exception words	Common exception words (CEW) are words that contain one or more irregular or unusual letter sequences, or phonemes that the children may not yet have been taught. It is important when teaching common exception words to highlight the parts of the word that the children have already been taught at that point.
Consonant	A consonant is a basic speech sound that is made by constricting or obstructing the air flow from the lungs to the mouth to form the sound. Apart from the five letters that are vowels, all letters in the English alphabet are consonants.
Vowel	A vowel is a basic speech sound formed with a relatively free air flow. The vowel letters are a, e, i, o and u .
Adjacent consonants	Many consonants contain similar consonant and vowel spelling patterns. Learning these patterns can support both reading and spelling. Words containing adjacent consonants have two consonant sounds before and/or after a vowel sound. They are known by these spelling/sound patterns: CCVC words e.g. <i>trap, drip, slip</i> . CVCC words e.g. <i>milk, pink, sand</i> . CCVCC words e.g. <i>black, grasp, stamp</i> .
Syllable	A syllable is a unit of speech that contains a vowel sound and that makes up part of a word. For example one-syllable word – hat two-syllable word – may/be three-syllable word – diff/i/cult
Alternative pronunciations	Some letters have multiple pronunciations. These must be recognised in reading. For example, ea appears in <i>sea</i> and <i>heard</i> , but is pronounced differently in each case.
Prefix	A prefix is added to the beginning of a word to change its meaning, spelling and/or word function in a sentence. For example, <i>un-happy</i> .

Term	Explanation
Root words	A root word is a core word that can have a prefix or suffix added to it. For example, <i>happy</i> is the root word in <i>unhappy</i> and <i>happiness</i> .
Suffix	A suffix is added to the end of a word to change its meaning, spelling and/or word function in a sentence. For example, <i>hat-s</i> or <i>happi-ness</i> .
Phase	Unlocking Letters and Sounds splits the progression of teaching phonics into phases. Each phase is a distinct stage and the phases are cumulative and progressive. It is important that children are only expected to read words from phases they have been taught.



Unlocking Letters and Sounds

Summary Progression

This summary progression shows the progression of GPCs and common exception words (CEW) that are taught in each term in **Unlocking Letters and Sounds**. The progression largely follows the progression contained in *Letters and Sounds 2007*, with some modifications, including refinements and clarifications of learning elements omitted from *Letters and Sounds*, and updated guidance, including requirements from the National Curriculum.

The progression is structured broadly to follow Phases 1 to 5 of *Letters and Sounds*, but some phases are subdivided into smaller sections, offering structured opportunities for revision ('Mastery') and for spelling development.

The detailed progression for **Unlocking Letters and Sounds** shows the GPCs and CEW that are taught on a week-by-week basis. A separate chart is also available showing how the **Ransom Reading Stars** programme of reading books matches the **Unlocking Letters and Sounds** progression. At least two new fully-decodable reading books are available to read every week, for all Phases.

Year group	Phase	GPCs taught	Common exception words taught
Preschool	One	Sound discrimination, phonological awareness, rhyme, oral blending and segmenting	
Reception Autumn Term 1	Two	s a t p i n m d g o c k c k e u r h b f ff l ll ss Read words with -s ending	the to into no I go
Reception Autumn Term 2	Three	j v w x y z zz qu ch sh th (voiced and unvoiced) ng ai ee igh oa oo oo ar or ur Read words containing -ing endings with no change to the root word	me we be he she was you they all
Reception Spring Term 1	Three	ow oi ear air ure er Reading and spelling words containing digraphs and trigraphs Assess and review Phase 3 work: j v w x y z zz qu ch sh th ng	are my her Revisit: me we be he she
Reception Spring Term 2	Three (Mastery)	Revisit Phase 3 work: ai ee igh oa oo oo ar or ur ow oi ear air ure er	Revisit: was you they all are my her
Reception Summer Term 1	Four	CVCC and CCVC words with adjacent consonants that contain graphemes taught in Phase 2 Read words containing -ed and -ing endings with no change to the root word	said have like so do some come were there little one when out what
Reception Summer Term 2	Four (Mastery)	CVCC and CCVC words with adjacent consonants that contain graphemes taught in Phase 3. Polysyllabic CVCC and CCVC words, CCVCC words, polysyllabic CCVCC words, CCCVCC words	Revisit all Phase 4 CEW
Year One Autumn Term 1	Four (Revision plus Y1 NC requirements)	Revisit Phase 4 work Adding -s and -es as a plural marker for nouns Adding -s and -es as a third person singular marker for verbs Adding the suffixes -ing and -ed to verbs Adding the suffix -er to verbs to change them to nouns Adding the suffix -er to adjectives Adding the suffix -est Adding the prefix un- to verbs Adding the prefix un- to adjectives Reading words with contractions	

Year One Autumn Term 2	Five a)	New graphemes for reading: ay ou ie ea oy ir ue aw wh ph ew oe au ey a-e, e-e, i-e, o-e u-e Teach the days of the week New phoneme /zh/	oh their people Mr Mrs looked called
Year One Spring Term 1	Five a) (Mastery plus Y1 NC requirements)	Revise new graphemes for reading Revise the days of the week Correct use of -nk ph -wh -tch -ve (NC)	
Year One Spring Term 2	Five b)	Alternative pronunciations of known graphemes for reading: a (as in acorn) a (as in fast) a (as in was) e (as in he) i (as in mind) o (as in no) u (as in unit) u (as in put) ow (as in snow) ie (as in chief) ea (as in head) er (as in her) ou (as in you) ou (as in could) ou (as in mould) y (as in by) y (as in gym) y (as in very) ch (as in school) ch (as in chef) c (as in cell) g (as in gent) ey (as in they)	water where who again thought through mouse work many laughed because different any eyes friends once please
Year One Summer Term 1	Five c)	Alternative spellings of phonemes: /ch/ (as in picture) /ch/ (as in catch) /j/ (as in fudge) /m/ (as in lamb) /n/ (as in gnat) /n/ (as in knit) /r/ (as in wrap) /s/ (as in listen) /s/ (as in house) /z/ (as in please) /u/ (as in some) /i/ (as in happy) /i/ (as in donkey) /ear/ (as in here) /ear/ (as in beer) /er/ (as in father) /ar/ (as in half) /air/ (as in there) /air/ (as in pear) /air/ (as in bare) /or/ (as in all) /or/ (as in four) /or/ (as in caught) /ur/ (as in learn) /ur/ (as in word)	

Year One Summer Term 2	Five c)	<p>Alternative spellings of phonemes:</p> <p>/oo/ (as in could) /oo/ (as in put) /ai/ (as in day) /ai/ (as in came) /ee/ (as in sea) /ee/ (as in these) /ee/ (as in happy) /ee/ (as in chief) /ee/ (as in key) /igh/ (as in pie) /igh/ (as in by) /igh/ (as in like) /oa/ (as in low) /oa/ (as in toe) /oa/ (as in bone) /y)oo/ (as in cue) /y)oo/ (as in tune) /y)oo/ (as in stew) /oo/ (as in clue) /oo/ (as in June) /oo/ (as in blew) /sh/ (as in special) /sh/ (as in station) /sh/ (as in sugar) /sh/ (as in chef)</p>	
Year Two Autumn Term 1	<p>Five a) (Spellings recap)</p> <p>Five b) (Mastery)</p>	<p>Phase 5a) spellings recap: choosing from alternative graphemes with the same sound: oi/oy, ow/ou, ur/er/ir, or/aw/au, ai/ay/a-e, ee/ea/e-e/ey, igh/ie/i-e, oa/oe/o-e, oo/ew/ue/u-e(oo), ew/ue/u-e(you)</p> <p>Revisit Phase 5b) (Mastery): Revisit alternative spellings of phonemes: /ch/ (as in picture), /ch/ (as in catch), /j/ (as in fudge), /m/ (as in lamb), /n/ (as in gnat), /n/ (as in knit), /r/ (as in wrap), /s/ (as in listen), /s/ (as in house), /z/ (as in please), /u/ (as in some), /ee/ (as in happy), /i/ (as in donkey), /ear/ (as in here), /ear/ (as in beer), /ar/ (as in father), /ar/ (as in half), /air/ (as in there), /air/ (as in pear), /air/ (as in bare), /or/ (as in all), /or/ (as in four), /or/ (as in caught), /ur/ (as in learn), /ur/ (as in word), /oo/ (as in could), /oo/ (as in put) /ai/ (as in day), /ai/ (as in came), /ee/ (as in sea), /ee/ (as in these), /ee/ (as in happy), /ee/ (as in chief), /ee/ (as in key), /igh/ (as in pie), /igh/ (as in by), /igh/ (as in like), /oa/ (as in toe), /oa/ (as in bone), /y)oo/ (as in cue), /y)oo/ (as in tune), /y)oo/ (as in stew)</p>	Revisit reading all common exception words
Year Two Autumn Term 2	Five c) (Mastery)	<p>Revisit Phase 5c) (Mastery): revisit alternative spellings of phonemes: /oo/ (as in clue), /oo/ (as in June), /oo/ (as in blew), /sh/ (as in special), /sh/ (as in station), /sh/ (as in sugar), /sh/ (as in chef)</p> <p>Assess and review all alternative spellings of phonemes.</p>	Assess and review all common exception words