

SERVICES FOR SCHOOLS

Inclusive Phonics Practice: Guidance Materials

Revised 2023

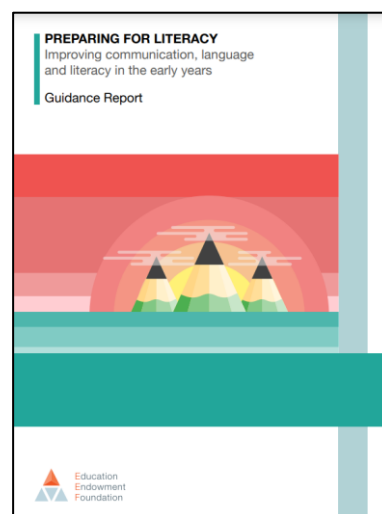
Inclusive Phonics Practice: Guidance Materials

Analysis of 2021/22 phonics outcomes, and those of recent years, has highlighted a need to focus on improving phonics outcomes, particularly for those pupils experiencing socio-economic disadvantage.

After this evaluation, Victoria Clarke (HIAS English Inspector/Adviser) and Victoria Flynn (HIAS Tackling Educational Disadvantage Inspector/Adviser) carried out a collaborative project aimed at identifying and sharing best practice.

Our findings build on research from EEF:

- [Preparing for Literacy](#)
- [Improving Literacy for Key Stage 1](#)

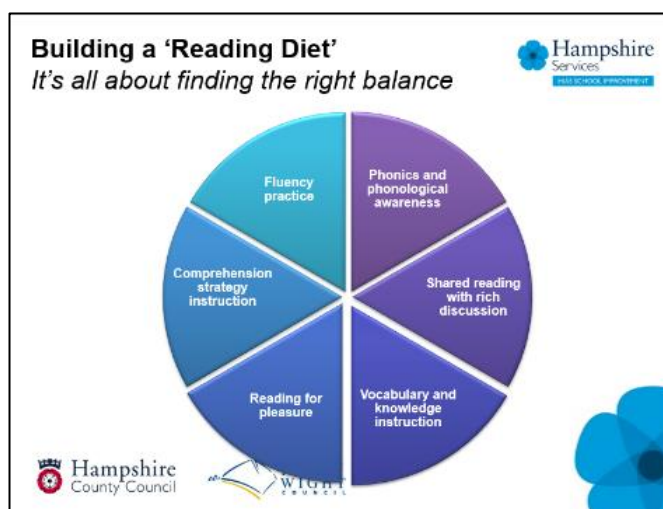


The project involved visiting schools that use different validated Systematic Synthetic Phonics (SSP) programmes including [Bug Club](#), [Essential Letters and Sounds](#), [Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised](#) and [Read Write Inc.](#) The key messages included in this resource are applicable to any SSP. The approaches are also relevant for children who are still accessing phonics in Key Stage 2.

This resource focuses particularly on phonics teaching in the primary phase. However, it also recognises that phonics is just one part of a rich reading diet and other elements are essential for a child.

The resource includes:

- 1) a summary of key messages
- 2) self-evaluation questions
- 3) video interviews with schools, sharing best practice.



Summary of Key messages

Culture

- Responsibility for the teaching and learning of phonics is shared across the school, with all staff understanding their role.
- Staff have high expectations around children's success in phonics, believing that all pupils can be successful.
- If pupils' attainment is low, there is a focus on accelerating learning so that current attainment does not predict future attainment.
- There is a relentless focus on ensuring all pupils access the full phonics curriculum to learn this fundamental foundation knowledge.
- Common challenges are identified for different cohorts, including pupils experiencing socio-economic disadvantage. Examples include: gaps in phonological awareness, speech, language and communication needs (SLCN), behaviours for learning and reading experiences.
- Schools use the language of 'attainment' rather than 'ability', emphasising the notion that 'ability' is not fixed.
- Staff provide opportunities to engage and support parents with phonics and ensure that resources are easily accessible. This might include the use of:
 - QR codes
 - physical resources
 - text messages/social media
 - workshops or opportunities for parents to come in and watch lessons
 - utilising other events in school to engage parents with conversations about their child's phonics' learning.

Leadership

- The leadership structure ensures capacity to lead phonics effectively. Depending on the size of the school, this may mean having a phonics lead and a separate English lead.
- The leader of phonics is an expert in the programme with knowledge of the scheme and of the children.
- Ongoing monitoring and evaluation is planned as an ongoing process.
- Leaders respond to findings, adapting responses for different teachers and at different points of the year. This may include peer observations, team teaching, modelling or coaching depending on need.
- Leaders have oversight of, and are often directly involved in the assessment process, ensuring assessment is regular, timely and accurate.
- Analysis is forensic and pupils with gaps are the focus.
- Interventions are timely with learning integrated into lessons. A leader has oversight of interventions and supports staff in implementing successfully.
- There is consistency and familiarity in the use of resources across the school including for children who are having interventions outside of the classroom space.
- Leaders take time to carefully consider pupil grouping and the staffing of these groups.

Training

- All staff, including those in Key Stage 2 have the necessary pedagogical skills and content knowledge to be able to deliver the school's phonics programme and to support children more widely with phonics.
- All staff, including those in Key Stage 2 have the necessary pedagogical skills and content knowledge to be able to develop children's phonological awareness.
- Training is ongoing and responsive to need. This may include: modelling, coaching, mentoring, observing each other and visiting other schools.
- New staff are supported and given training in phonics as part of their induction process.

Assessment for Learning (AFL) and Responsive Teaching

- Teachers *teach* the phonics programme rather than simply delivering it:
 - fidelity is upheld
 - sessions are timed to maximise engagement and attendance
 - pace is adjusted when needed to suit learners
 - questioning is effectively used to find out what pupils know, understand and can do
 - this information is used to respond to the children.
- All adults, including teaching assistants are used effectively to respond to need in phonics lessons:
 - adults are positioned in the classroom to observe and support children where needed
 - some pupils are clearly front and centre of each session, allowing staff to respond to individual needs
 - there is effective questioning to support teachers' knowledge of the children and evidence of teachers responding effectively to meet need
 - pupils with bigger gaps in learning have more time with the most expert staff.

Transitions

- Schools that have links to pre-schools are supporting staff in those settings in the teaching of phonological awareness
- There is a clear plan for how to support children in Key Stage 2 who still need phonics teaching
- Leaders respond to the needs of the cohort each year and make adjustments where necessary including in Key Stage 2. This includes:
 - the adults involved
 - the organisation of lessons
 - any interventions needed.