

Phonics Overview for EYFS, Semi-formal and Formal Departments

Key Points:

- At Severndale phonics is taught in EYFS, the Semi-formal department and the Formal department
- Our phonics programme is Letters and Sounds
- Phonics sessions begin the second week of the new academic year
- Phase 1 is taught in Nursery. This does not need to be a structured lesson but can be built into the day as and when needed. All other key stages can use the same approach for phase 1 if appropriate for their students
- Phases 2, 3 and 4 are taught in Personal Development time from Reception to Year 6 (the teacher should decide which students require ongoing phonics sessions in KS2; it is likely that most Semi-formal students will need to continue, while some Formal students may not)
- This is an annual rolling program: Phase 2 in autumn, Phase 3 in spring, Phase 4 in summer. This will ensure that by the time students reach the end of KS2 it is much more likely that they will have a strong understanding of phonics and the ability to decode. This also ensures that if staff or students are unable to attend the academy for extended periods of time, we know that students will not have missed out on learning a phase
- Phase 5 can begin in Year 1 if appropriate for students
- Phase 6 can begin in Year 2 if appropriate for students
- Depending on a student's needs and attention span, sessions can range from 5-30 minutes
- It is important to recognise that the needs of our students vary greatly, so it is necessary to be flexible in our approaches; length of sessions may differ across the academy, and class staff may choose to teach phonics during either the morning or afternoon Personal Development time
- Beyond KS2: it is also important to recognise that there may be students at Secondary age who would still benefit from phonics sessions; it may be that students did not have access to consistent phonics sessions at a younger age, or who are now more cognitively able; attention spans alter, as do behavioural tendencies; our students are often ready to learn at varying times during their education. If this is the case, the class teacher will link this to a student's EHCP targets and support them in Personal Development time
- Not all students will learn phonetically; the teacher, alongside internal and external professionals, should work together to identify alternative approaches to reading and communication
- We will complete termly STAR Reading or STAR Early Literacy reading assessments to identify progress, areas for development, and identify that knowledge is embedded in long term memory

Letters and Sounds – Phonics Teaching Overview

Letters and Sounds	Approximate stage/age	Phonics teaching	Tricky words
Phase 1	Nursery/Reception/Years 1-6: built in and accessed throughout the day, across the curriculum and during play: all terms.	Supports the importance of speaking and listening and develops children’s discrimination of sounds, including letter sounds. Activities are divided into seven aspects, including environmental sounds, instrumental sounds, body sounds, rhythm and rhyme, alliteration, voice sounds and finally oral blending and segmenting: a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, i, j, k, l, m, n, o, p, q, r, s, t, u, v, w, x, y, z.	
Phase 2	Reception to Year 6: autumn term.	Children to be taught the phase 2 phonemes in the following order alongside the written grapheme: (s, a, t, p) (i, n, m, d) (g, o, c, k) (ck, e, u, r) (h, b, f, ff, l, ll, ss). Children to be taught to orally blend and segment CVC words using the phase 2 phonemes.	the, to, I, no, go, into (plus the phase 2 high frequency word list)
Phase 3	Reception to Year 6: spring term.	Completes the teaching of the alphabet and moves on to sounds represented by more than one letter. The children will learn letter names and how to read and spell some tricky words. Children to be taught the phase 3 phonemes in the following order: (j, v, w, x) (y, z, zz, qu) (sh, th, ch, ng) (ai, ee, long oo, short oo) (oa, ar, or, igh) ur, ow, oi, ear) (er, air, ure).	he, she, we, me, be, was, my, you, they, her, all, are (plus the phase 3 high frequency word list)
Phase 4	Reception to Year 6: summer term.	The children learn to read and spell words containing adjacent consonants. Children to revise and recall all Phase 2 and 3 phonemes. Children to read and write CCVC and CVCC words. Adjacent consonant phonemes: st, nd, mp, nt, nk, ft, sk, lt, lp, lf, lk, pt, xt, tr, dr, gr, cr, br, fr, bl, fl, gl, pl, cr.	said, so, have, like, some, come, were, there, little, one, do, when, out, what (plus the phase 4 high frequency word list)
Phase 5	Years 1-6: for students who can access this level of learning. Year 1 Phonics Screening Check in June.	The children broaden their knowledge of sounds for use in reading and spelling. They will begin to build word-specific knowledge of the spellings of words. Sounds: ay, ou, ie, ea, oy, ir, ue, aw, wh, ph, ew, oe, au, ey, a_e, i_e, u_e, o_e	oh, their, people, Mr, Mrs, looked, called, asked (plus the phase 5 high frequency word list)
Phase 6	Years 2-6: for students who can access this level of learning. Year 2 Phonics Screening Check in June (if not passed or taken in Y1)	Working on spelling, including prefixes and suffixes, doubling and dropping letters etc.	Phase 6 prefix and suffix word lists

Glossary

Automaticity: Phonic knowledge is only the first step toward reading. If reading is to become fluent then children need to recognise words quickly. In order to gain meaning from a text, children must read it fluently – not needing to break each word down to the individual phonemes/sounds. Think about how you are reading this text; you are not breaking each word down into its phonemes/sounds – you have achieved automaticity when reading.

Blending: Blending is the process of synthesising words or syllables from their constituent phonemes/sounds in the correct order to read whole words.

Decoding: The process of reading a word with Synthetic Phonics has two stages. Firstly the individual grapheme-phoneme correspondence is recognised and then the phonemes/sounds are blended or synthesised into the word. Reading (decoding) and spelling (segmenting) are reversible processes that are taught simultaneously in Synthetic Phonics.

Digraph: A digraph is a two-letter grapheme that represent one phoneme/sound. For example /sh/ represents one phoneme/sound in ‘shop’ and the vowel digraph /oa/ represents one phoneme/sound in ‘boat’. Two letters come together to represent a new phoneme/sound.

Encoding: Synthetic Phonics teaches children that the English alphabetic code is reversible; if you can read a word you can spell it. Encoding involves listening for the phonemes/sounds and deciding which letters represent those phonemes/sounds. Also known as spelling!

Fidelity: Fidelity is an important component of your Synthetic Phonics program. It means that every one of the 44 phonemes/sounds are taught. You should not deviate from the sequence.

Grapheme-Phoneme Correspondences (GPCs): For reading and spelling children need to know which phonemes/sounds correspond to which letters (graphemes) and vice-versa.

High frequency words: Words that appear very often in written texts.

Homograph: Homographs are words that are spelled the same but have different meanings (and may or may not have different pronunciations). This is important because children need to use more than phonic knowledge to read these words. Homographs must be read in the context of a phrase or sentence. For example the word, ‘read’, how you pronounce it depends on the context: “He read that whole book!” compared to “I like to read in bed”.

Phoneme: A phoneme is the smallest unit of sound in a word. It is a term that children need to learn. At the beginning of your Synthetic Phonics program it will be represented by one letter; later on it may be represented by two, three or even four letters. For example /s/ is introduced as being represented by ‘s’, then ‘ss’ and eventually ‘ce’ and more...

Quadgraph: Four letters coming together to represent one phoneme/sound. The ‘eigh’ representing /ay/, in ‘eight’ is a quadgraph.

Schwa: When a vowel phoneme/sound is not stressed. For example, say the word “mother”. Hear how the ‘er’ is not pronounced.

Segmenting: “I want to spell frog, what phonemes can I hear, and what graphemes are those phonemes represented by?” This involves the breaking down of words into their constituent phonemes/sounds in order to spell the word. It is the reverse phonic skill to blending, and also called spelling.

Sight words: Words that a student can read quickly and automatically, or by ‘sight’.

Split Digraph: A split digraph is where another letter comes in between the two graphemes of a single phoneme/sound, for example, the ‘k’ in ‘make’ separates the digraph /ae/, creating split digraph /a_e/.

Synthetic Phonics: The ‘synthetic’ element refers to the blending or synthesising of phonemes/sounds to make a word. Synthetic Phonics emphasises the structure of the written language and teaches it in a systematic and thorough fashion.

Tricky words (or common exception words): Words that cannot be sounded out easily.

Trigraph: Three letters coming together to make one phoneme/sound is a trigraph. The /igh/ in ‘night’ is a trigraph.

N. B. Technical Abbreviations: In the Toolkit we include some common abbreviations. These include: VC, CVC, CCVC and CVCC. In these abbreviations, the V stands for a vowel and C for a consonant. For example: VC – ‘it’, CVC – ‘cat’, CCVC – ‘stop’, CVCC – ‘lamp’.

How to pronounce phonemes correctly (4-minute video): <https://www.phonicbooks.co.uk/2011/03/13/how-to-say-the-sounds-of-letters-in-synthetic-phonics/>

Letters and Sounds DfE handbook:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/190599/Letters_and_Sounds_-_DFES-00281-2007.pdf