



Introducing Sound!Start Phonics

The Sound!Start Phonics programme outlines a whole-class mastery approach to teaching phonics. It is designed to embed high-quality teaching, carefully focusing attention on the things we want children to know and remember whilst simultaneously building staff subject knowledge and expertise. The approach supports all children to keep pace with ambitious expectations for reading and spelling through systematic repetition and practice of taught knowledge and skills.

The Sound!Start Phonics progression is aligned to the progression of Letters and Sounds (2007) and updated in line with the expectations of the National Curriculum (2014) and the Early Learning Goals (2021). The programme materials support effective implementation of the recommendations for teaching and leading Phonics and Early Reading outlined in The Reading Framework (2021).

The Sound!Start approach has been used in schools in the Midlands area for a number of years and the complete programme was piloted during 2021-2022. It was added to the list of programmes validated by the Department for Education in January 2023.

The programme materials enable teachers to teach with enthusiasm, clarity, and consistency and support all children to learn to read and spell quickly and with confidence. Teaching follows a specific reading and spelling cycle which ensures lessons are not overloaded with content.

The programme promotes high levels of pupil-teacher interaction during daily phonics teaching. All learners are fully included and involved in whole-class lessons and knowledge and skills are systematically revisited allowing children to practice their learning until it “sticks”.

Effective delivery of the programme is supported by high-quality initial training and ongoing consultancy support which is delivered in-person in both face-to-face and online contexts.

Sound!Start Phonics provides everything needed to deliver high quality phonics teaching within mainstream primary schools and other educational settings as follows:

- * Detailed weekly planning for Reception and Year One with guidance for organising teaching to ensure all children are actively involved and successful within and beyond the daily lesson.
- * Clear and consistent strategies for teaching GPC knowledge, Tricky Words, and the skills of blending for reading and segmentation for spelling which are suitable for learners of any age.
- * Step-by-step guidance for delivering the Core Teaching Activities supported by a bank of “Embedding Effective Practice” (EEP) film clips.
- * A wealth of practice materials at word and sentence level including a printable “Practise and Apply” task for every lesson, additional “focus practice” materials, and homework activities for the early stages of the programme.
- * Guidance for teaching “Good Handwriting Habits” and correct letter formation alongside phonics instruction from the beginning of the programme, plus a range of support materials and resources including specific letter formation patterns linked to the basic letter formation families.
- * A complete range of classroom resources including flashcards, word cards, grapheme / spelling charts, and a wall frieze / poster.
These resources follow a colour coded design and do not include any additional detail or images which may pose a distraction for some learners. Colour coding breaks the content of each “phase” into manageable chunks and maximises progress for all learners.
- * A specific teaching sequence for Guided Reading Lessons (early reading practice) with clear guidance for supporting children to apply their growing phonic knowledge and skills at text level and for “matching” books to ensure challenge and success.
- * A carefully collated collection of fully decodable books matched to each stage of the programme.
- * Printed assessment booklets for each phase of the programme.
These follow a similar design to the PSC materials and are reusable year-on-year.
- * Easy-to-use “Attainment Tracker” software which identifies children at risk of falling behind and supports focused gap analysis.
- * Specific intervention activities following a streamlined catch-up / keep-up model.
- * Materials to promote parental engagement including an initial “Get Ready for Reading” workshop / information meeting.
- * Guidance for effective leadership of Phonics and Early Reading including a model for building staff expertise through regular coaching and practice opportunities.

Effective implementation of the programme requires fidelity to each of these components.

For more information and to register your interest in the programme please email our programme developer: alex.finn@soundstartphonics.co.uk