

Phonics teaching in Nursery

In Nursery we follow the government recommended programme of teaching phonics called Letters and Sounds. In Nursery we begin our teaching with Phase 1 of Letters and Sounds before moving on to the Read Write Inc. programme when children are ready - this may be in Nursery, or at the beginning of Reception. Phase 1 phonics

supports the children in linking sounds and letters and naming and sounding the letters of the alphabet. Phase 1 of Letters and Sounds concentrates on developing children's speaking and listening skills and lays the foundations for developing early reading.

Phase 1 is all about listening to different types of sounds and learning to tell the difference between them. Children will

- Explore and experiment with different sounds and words
- Distinguish between different sounds in the environment and letter sounds
- Show an awareness of rhyme and alliteration (words that start with the same sound)
- Learn how to sound simple words out (segment) and blend separate sounds together to make a word (blend).

How do we teach early phonic skills?

We play a variety of games and activities which encourage careful listening. Music plays an important part in developing children's ability to listen carefully. Some of these activities are adult led and take place in carpet time sessions, but singing, making music and listening to rhymes is part of our daily routine in Nursery.

Phase 1 phonics is divided into seven aspects. Each aspect contains three strands: Tuning in to sounds (auditory discrimination), Listening and remembering sounds (auditory memory and sequencing) and Talking about sounds (developing vocabulary and language comprehension).

Aspect 1 - General sound discrimination - environmental

The aim of this aspect is to raise children's awareness of the sounds around them and to develop their listening skills. Activities suggested in the guidance include going on a listening walk, drumming on different items outside and comparing the sounds, playing a sounds lotto game and making shakers.

Aspect 2 - General sound discrimination - instrumental sounds

This aspect aims to develop children's awareness of sounds made by various instruments

and noise makers. Activities include comparing and matching sound makers, playing instruments alongside a story and making loud and quiet sounds.

Aspect 3 - General sound discrimination - body percussion

The aim of this aspect is to develop children's awareness of sounds and rhythms. Activities include singing songs and action rhymes, listening to music and developing a sounds vocabulary.

Aspect 4 - Rhythm and rhyme

This aspect aims to develop children's appreciation and experiences of rhythm and rhyme in speech. Activities include rhyming stories, rhyming bingo, clapping out the syllables in words and odd one out.

Aspect 5 - Alliteration

The focus is on initial sounds of words, with activities including I-Spy type games and matching objects which begin with the same sound.

Aspect 6 - Voice sounds

The aim is to distinguish between different vocal sounds and to begin oral blending and segmenting. Activities include Metal Mike, where children feed pictures of objects into a toy robot's mouth and the teacher sounds out the name of the object in a robot voice - /c/-/u/-/p/ cup, with the children joining in.

Aspect 7 - Oral blending and segmenting

In this aspect, the main aim is to develop oral blending and segmenting skills. To practise oral blending, the teacher could say some sounds, such as /c/-/u/-/p/ and see whether the children can pick out a cup from a group of objects.

For segmenting practise, the teacher could hold up an object such as a sock and ask the children which sounds they can hear in the word sock. The activities introduced in Phase 1 are intended to continue throughout the following phases, as lots of practice is needed before children will become confident in their phonic knowledge and skills.