

Letters & Sounds – Phase 1

The EYFS curriculum states that practitioners are expected to focus on the prime areas of learning which are the basis of successful learning, these areas are: Personal, Social & Emotional Development, Physical Development and Communication & Language.

Although children have access to literacy activities each week, our phonic groups are an addition to the curriculum. During our groups we teach using guidance from Letters and Sounds; this is a systematic programme for teaching phonic skills with the aim of children becoming fluent readers by age seven.

There are six overlapping phases. The table below is a summary of how we teach phase 1 phonics based on the Letters and Sounds guidance.

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 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 sound/s they can hear in the word sock.
