



Department
for Education

Guidance

Choosing a phonics teaching programme

Updated 16 December 2021

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New validation process

By ensuring high-quality phonics teaching the government wants to improve literacy levels to:

- give all children a solid base upon which to build as they progress through school
- help children to develop the habit of reading widely and often, for both pleasure and information

In April 2021, we published the revised core criteria for effective systematic synthetic phonics teaching programmes and launched a new process to [validate complete systematic synthetic phonics teaching programmes](#). This process is for both previously assessed programmes and new applicants.

A number of publishers have completed a self-assessment process based on these criteria, which were then reviewed by independent evaluators. A total of 6 systematic synthetic phonics programmes have been validated in this round, 5 of which are newly validated for use in schools.

List of validated systematic synthetic

phonics (SSP) programmes

The following is the current list of validated SSP programmes:

- Anima Phonics: Letters and Sounds Updated
- Bug Club Phonics
- Essential Letters and Sounds
- Floppy's Phonics^[footnote 1]
- Jolly Phonics^[footnote 1]
- Letterland
- Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised
- Monster Phonics ^[footnote 2]
- No Nonsense Phonics
- Phonics International
- Read Write Inc.
- Reading Planet Rocket Phonics
- Sound Discovery^[footnote 1]
- Sounds Together^[footnote 1]
- Sounds-Write
- Success for All Phonics
- Supersonic Phonic Friends
- Twinkl Phonics
- Unlocking Letters and Sounds

There will be further opportunities for publishers to [submit their systematic synthetic teaching programmes for validation](#). The list will then be updated in late spring 2022 and then again in summer 2022, resulting in one final list of complete SSP programmes that meet the revised core criteria.

Programmes that feature on the previous validated lists will need to apply by 31 March 2022. If they do not apply, they will no longer feature on the list. Please note that this deadline for the third validation panel was previously set at 28 February 2022.

[Contact details and web addresses](#) for currently validated SSP programmes are available and are regularly updated.

Information for schools

There is no statutory requirement for schools to choose one of the SSP

programmes on the validated list. Ofsted does not have a preferred programme or approach. What's important is that schools take an approach that is rigorous, systematic, used with fidelity (any resources used should exactly match the Grapheme Phoneme Correspondence (GPC) progression of their chosen SSP approach), and achieves strong results for all pupils, including the most disadvantaged. Please refer to [this blog](#) for more information.

However, validation status indicates that a programme has been self-assessed by its publisher and judged by a small panel with relevant expertise and that both consider it to meet all of the [Department for Education \(DfE\) criteria](#) for an effective systematic synthetic phonics programme.

A complete systematic synthetic phonics (SSP) programme is one that provides:

- all that is essential to teach SSP to children in reception and key stage 1 years of mainstream primary schools
- sufficient support for children in reception and key stage 1 to become fluent readers
- a structured route for most children to meet or exceed the expected standard in the year one phonics screening check
- all national curriculum expectations for word reading through decoding by the end of key stage 1

For more guidance on choosing an SSP programme that is best for your school, speak to your local [English Hub](#). English Hubs can offer guidance on the details of each validated programme above, to help with your decision.

If you are or are about to become a partner school that is supported by one of our [English Hubs](#), contact your local English Hub to discuss which SSP programme to use in your school. The English Hubs programme will only support schools to implement an SSP programme from this updated validated list.

Support for schools

As well as this updated list of validated programmes, we have launched a supportive package of measures, designed to support schools in providing great reading provision and developing pupils' proficiency in, and love of, reading.

The package includes:

- guidance for schools on early reading - [the reading framework: teaching the foundations of literacy](#)
- £5 million additional funding for eligible schools to purchase complete SSP programmes from the validated list, including their associated training and resources

15 English Hubs working across the country will allocate the £5 million additional funding to eligible primary schools and support them to purchase one of the validated SSP programmes.

Eligibility for the additional funding

Eligible schools will have a minimum of 22% of their pupils eligible for pupil premium or service pupil premium and will be in one of the following local authority areas:

- Amber Valley
- Arun
- Ashfield
- Barking and Dagenham
- Barnsley
- Bolsover
- Bradford
- Bristol, City of
- Burnley
- Camden
- Chesterfield
- Coventry
- Derby
- Doncaster
- Dover
- East Lindsey
- Erewash
- Fenland
- Greenwich
- Halton
- Hartlepool
- Havant
- Hyndburn
- Ipswich
- Islington
- Kingston upon Hull, City of
- Knowsley
- Lambeth
- Leicester
- Lewisham

- Liverpool
- Luton
- Manchester
- Mansfield
- Middlesbrough
- Newcastle upon Tyne
- Nottingham
- Oldham
- Oxford
- Plymouth
- Portsmouth
- Preston
- Redcar and Cleveland
- Rotherham
- Salford
- Sandwell
- Scarborough
- Sedgemoor
- Sheffield
- Southampton
- Southwark
- St. Helens
- Stoke-on-Trent
- Sunderland
- Swale
- Tameside
- Tendring
- Thanet
- Wigan
- Wolverhampton

Find out more about the additional funding

To find out more about the funding, contact one of the following English Hubs:

- North: [Jerry Clay English Hub](#)
- Midlands: [Learners First English Hub](#)
- South: [New Wave English Hub](#)

Previous SSP programme validation routes

Between 2010 and 2014, we brought together a collection of phonics teaching programmes to help schools decide which was suitable for their school. We reviewed each programme against core criteria for effective systematic synthetic phonics teaching programmes.

Publishers could apply to have their programme featured through either:

- a self-assessment process
- submitting a tender to feature in the Importance of Phonics catalogue

Until this new validation process launched in April 2021, neither the list of self-assessed programmes or the Importance of Phonics catalogue list of programmes has been updated or reviewed since 2014.

Some SSP programmes are currently validated through previous self-assessment (2011 to 2014) and 'Importance of Phonics catalogue' (2011 to 2013) routes and will remain validated until March 2022, when the final list of validated SSP programmes will be published. Some SSP programme publishers have not yet chosen to submit a self-assessment for validation (and have until 31 March 2022 to do so).

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1. These programmes were previously validated by the Department for Education and will remain validated until they are successful in the spring 2022 validation rounds. If these programmes are not successful in these validation windows, they will be removed from the validated list. [↩](#) [↩2](#) [↩3](#) [↩4](#)
 2. Monster Phonics has been validated by the December 2021 validation panel and this footnote will be removed once the panel has reviewed and accepted final evidence from the Monster Phonics programme providers, regarding decodable material. This programme is validated and funding for the Hubs Programme (and Accelerator Fund) can be used to purchase this phonics programme. [↩](#)

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