

# 'Getting them reading early'

Distance learning materials for inspecting reading

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Guidance and training for inspectors  
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# Contents

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<b>Introduction</b>	<b>4</b>
How to use these materials	5
Distance learning 'site map' and overview of activities	8
<b>Part 1: Reading and phonics</b>	<b>12</b>
Module 1: Introduction and the 'simple view of reading'	12
Module 2: Principles of high-quality phonic work	17
<b>Part 2: Literacy – a non-negotiable</b>	<b>26</b>
Module 3 (Film 1): Introduction to the three schools	27
Module 4 (Film 2): Learning through play	27
Module 5 (Film 3): Establishing foundations	29
Module 6 (Film 4): Assessment and consolidation of vowel digraphs	30
Module 7 (Film 5): Guiding readers to become good readers	31
<b>Part 3: Inspecting reading</b>	<b>32</b>
Module 8: Inspecting quality	32
<b>Part 4: Contextual information</b>	<b>49</b>
Module 9: Background information on reading and phonics	49
<b>Part 5: Suggested responses to module tasks</b>	<b>55</b>
Activity 2.4: Listening to individual sounds	55
Activity 4.1: Learning through play	55
Activity 5.1: Establishing firm foundations	56
Activity 6.1: Assessment and consolidation	57
Activity 7.1: Developing comprehension	58
Activity 8.2: Analysing data from the phonics screening check	59
Activity 8.3: Tommy hates reading	60
Activity 8.4: Listening to Ayesha	61
Activity 8.5: Whole-school systems	61
Activity 8.9: Listening to children reading	62
<b>Further reading</b>	<b>64</b>
Publications by Ofsted	64
Other publications	64
Websites	65
<b>Annex. Letters and sounds</b>	<b>66</b>

## Introduction

This distance learning programme has been developed for all inspectors – HMI and Additional Inspectors – to prepare them to inspect reading. The programme is also published on Ofsted’s website so that it is available to schools and others.

This is a revised and updated version of the programme first published on the website in October 2011.

The purpose of the programme is to ensure that all inspectors:

- have a secure knowledge and understanding of how early reading is taught, particularly in primary schools
- are able to apply that knowledge and understanding to inspecting reading
- are aware of recent debates about the teaching of reading and Ofsted’s publications in this area
- are up to date with government initiatives, including the National Curriculum 2014 and the phonics screening check.

Part 1 gives a short introduction to the 2010 White Paper, *The importance of teaching*, and phonics, providing the context for this distance learning programme.<sup>1</sup> It looks in depth at specific aspects of teaching reading, especially phonics.

Part 2 uses five films from a series of films on Ofsted’s website, *Literacy – a non-negotiable* – to provide examples of the teaching and learning of reading.<sup>2</sup> The schools filmed were chosen because of their pupils’ high levels of attainment in reading. The films exemplify the content discussed in Part 1, illustrate the knowledge and skills pupils need to become enthusiastic, successful and confident readers, and provide an opportunity for discussion and evaluation of pedagogy. They also provide a context for Part 3.

Part 3 considers how to apply Parts 1 and 2 to inspecting reading. Part 3 uses a sixth film from Ofsted’s website, part of the series in Part 2.

Part 4 gives further contextual background and provides some international comparisons in terms of England’s performance.

Part 5 provides suggested responses to the training activities in the modules.

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<sup>1</sup> *The importance of teaching: the schools white paper 2010*; Department for Education, November 2010; Ref: ISBN 9780101798020; <http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-importance-of-teaching-the-schools-white-paper-2010>

<sup>2</sup> *Literacy: a non-negotiable - Building on firm foundations and Reading for meaning*; Ofsted; [www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/literacy-non-negotiable-building-firm-foundations-and-reading-for-meaning](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/literacy-non-negotiable-building-firm-foundations-and-reading-for-meaning)

The training does not purport to cover all aspects of reading comprehensively. There is a focus on early reading because high-quality teaching at that stage – from the Early Years Foundation Stage onwards – is essential to children’s progress and achievement. Inspectors need to be able to judge how well children are being set on the road to reading. They must be confident that they can evaluate the quality of teaching and assess the gains in children’s knowledge, skills and understanding. They will be gathering evidence of outcomes, not only from the test results at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 and from the phonics screening check but also from what children tell them about their attitudes towards reading and their knowledge of books and authors. The prime focus is on the outcomes in reading when children leave primary school.

Underpinning the focus on outcomes, however, is analysis of the quality of the teaching:

... how well the teaching methods secure optimum progress and high achievement for all beginner readers and writers (Rose Review, p.15)<sup>3</sup>

The material that relates to Key Stage 2 focuses mainly on children who, for whatever reason, are still struggling to learn to read. It may be because previous teaching, in their current or previous school(s), has not been effective. It may also be because they have special educational needs. However, Ofsted said in its review of special educational needs in September 2010:

Schools should stop identifying pupils as having special educational needs when they simply need better teaching and pastoral support.<sup>4</sup>

## How to use these materials

This programme is divided into nine modules. After this section, a four-page ‘site map’ of all the modules (pages 7–10) gives an overview. It would be useful to preview this before beginning to read the materials and perhaps to print it. It also provides a way of noting what sections of the training you have read and the activities you have completed.

You do not have to do all the activities in order: you may prefer to return to some later. There are hyperlinks from the site map to individual modules and there are other hyperlinks throughout the materials to ease navigation, including hyperlinks to the Responses section.

You are asked to read the materials and any follow-up references, watch illustrative video clips and complete activities.

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<sup>3</sup> *Independent review of the teaching of early reading - Final Report, Jim Rose, March 2006*; <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20100526143644/http://standards.dcsf.gov.uk/phonics/report.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> *The special educational needs and disability review – A statement is not enough (090221)*, Ofsted, 2010; [www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/special-educational-needs-and-disability-review](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/special-educational-needs-and-disability-review)

The modules have been designed to reflect and accommodate, as far as possible, inspectors' varying levels of knowledge and understanding.

Inspectors who have high levels of knowledge and expertise in this area should not find any surprises in the materials. Reading the main text is likely to provide enough revision and consolidation. These inspectors might still find it helpful to consider how what they know is reflected in the National Curriculum 2014, particularly in relation to early reading (word reading and comprehension) and spelling.

Inspectors for whom this is less familiar material may wish to follow up all or most of the examples and activities, including the visual and auditory illustrations – particularly important in teaching phonics.

Feedback from earlier versions of these training materials indicated that Part 1 is essential reading for inspectors who have little or no experience of phonics, while all inspectors should read Parts 2 and 3, focusing on inspection.

As well as Ofsted's own video material in Parts 2 and 3, material has been chosen from a range of publicly available online sources, including YouTube and commercial websites. The intention is to provide inspectors with a variety of effective and realistic illustrations at minimal cost to Ofsted. It is also hoped that the material provides a helpful balance for training purposes between text and exemplification.

All inspectors should make sure that they are familiar with Ofsted's recent publications on literacy and current government policy, including the National Curriculum 2014 and the phonics screening check.

Before this training, inspectors should read, as a minimum:

- J. Rose, *Independent review of the teaching of early reading: final report (0201-2006DOC-EN)*, DfES, 2006.<sup>5</sup>
- *Reading by six: how the best schools do it (100197)*, Ofsted, 2010.<sup>6</sup>
- *Ready to read? How a sample of primary schools in Stoke-on-Trent teach pupils to read (140130)*, Ofsted, 2014.<sup>7</sup>

The training materials conclude with a list of publications by Ofsted and others.

Note that in the sections on phonics, a phoneme (a single sound) is presented within slashes like this: /ay/; this is the case in the text and in the video clips. Letters of the

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<sup>5</sup> *Independent review of the teaching of early reading - Final Report, Jim Rose, March 2006*; <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20100526143644/http://standards.dcsf.gov.uk/phonics/report.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> *Reading by six: how the best schools do it (100197)*, Ofsted, 2010: <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/reading-six-how-best-schools-do-it>

<sup>7</sup> *Ready to read? How a sample of primary schools in Stoke-on-Trent teach pupils to read (140130)*, Ofsted, 2014: <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/ready-read-how-sample-of-primary-schools-stoke-trent-teach-pupils-read>

alphabet are presented in quotation marks: 'ay' or 'ai' or 'a-e'. The National Curriculum framework document also uses this system.

## Distance learning 'site map' and overview of activities

You might want to print this overview and keep it to hand.

Module number and title	Sub-section title	Tick if read ✓	Activities	Tick if done ✓
<b>Part 1 Reading and phonics</b>				
<a href="#">Module 1</a> Introduction and the 'simple view of reading'	'Getting them reading early'			
	The 'Simple View of Reading' in the Rose Review		1.1 Reading task – examples of outstanding practice	
			1.2 Reading task – the simple view of reading	
<a href="#">Module 2</a> Principles of high-quality phonic work	The alphabetic code		2.1 The alphabet and the alphabetic code (video clip)	
	The skills of blending and segmenting		Activity 2.2: The importance of blending (video clip)	
			Activity 2.3: blending and segmenting (video clip)	
	Phonemes		Activity 2.4: listening to individual sounds	
	Correct articulation		Activity 2.5: Illustrating correct articulation (video clip)	
	Segmenting			
	Common exception words			
	Multi-sensory approaches			
	Inclusion: deaf children and phonics			



<b>Part 2</b> Literacy – a non-negotiable				
<b>Module 3</b> (Film 1) Introduction to the three schools	The three schools		Activity 3.1: What works for pupils	
<b>Module 4</b> (Film 2): Learning through play			Activity 4.1: Learning through play	
<b>Module 5</b> (Film 3): Establishing foundations			Activity 5.1: Establishing foundations	
<b>Module 6</b> (Film 4): Assessment and consolidation of vowel digraphs			Activity 6.1: Assessment and consolidation	
<b>Module 7</b> (Film 5): Guiding readers to become good readers			Activity 7.1: How to develop comprehension	
			Activity 7.2: Guided reading (reading task)	
<b>Part 3</b> Inspecting reading				
<b>Module 8</b> Inspecting quality	Evidence-gathering		Activity 8.1: Gathering evidence	
	Using the phonics screening check data		Activity 8.2: Analysing data from the phonics screening check	
	Identifying children who are falling through the net		Activity 8.3: Tommy hates reading	
			Activity 8.4: Listening to Ayesha	
	Systems and leadership		Activity 8.5: Whole-school systems (video clip)	
	Assessment, grouping and intervention		Activity 8.6: Assessment and groupings for speedy progress (video clip)	
			Activity 8.7: Reading task: mixed-ability or homogeneous teaching groups?	

	Expectations			
	Teaching the higher levels of the alphabetic code		Activity 8.8: Teaching vowel digraphs	
	Listening to children reading (Film 6)		Activity 8.9: Listening to children reading	
<b>Part 4</b> Contextual information				
<b>Module 9</b> Background information on reading and phonics	Terminology related to teaching phonics			
	The NFER's longitudinal evaluation of the Year 1 phonics screening check			
	The DfE's 'criteria for assuring high-quality phonics'			
	International comparisons			
<b>Part 5</b> Suggested responses to module tasks				
Suggested responses to activities	Activity 2.4 : listening to individual sounds			
	Activity 4.1: Learning through play			
	Activity 5.1: Establishing firm foundations			
	Activity 6.1: Assessment and consolidation			
	Activity 7.1: How to develop comprehension			
	Activity 8.1: Gathering evidence			
	Activity 8.2: Analysing data from the phonics screening check			
	Activity 8.3: Tommy hates reading			
	Activity 8.4: Listening			

	to Ayesha			
	Activity 8.5: Whole school systems			
	Activity 8.9: Listening to children reading			
Annex <i>Letters and sounds</i> overview				

To return to 'How to use the materials', click [here](#).

## Part 1: Reading and phonics

### Module 1: Introduction and the 'simple view of reading'

#### 'Getting them reading early'

The government's White Paper, *The importance of teaching*, in November 2010 stated its case for phonics. It said that it would:

*ensure that all children have the chance to follow an enriching curriculum by getting them reading early. That means supporting the teaching of systematic synthetic phonics and introducing a simple reading check at age six to guarantee that children have mastered the basic skills of early reading and also ensure we can identify those with learning difficulties (para. 4.6).*

This intention is reflected in the 2012 Teachers' Standards.<sup>8</sup> Under the heading 'Developing good subject and curriculum knowledge' is the requirement for teachers who teach early reading to demonstrate 'a clear understanding of systematic synthetic phonics'.

The White Paper continued:

*Ofsted will enhance its inspectors' expertise in assessing the teaching of reading, so that their judgements reflect appropriate expectations and recognise particular features of systematic synthetic phonics teaching (para 4.17).*

This distance learning training deals with both the inspection of reading, especially early reading, and 'systematic synthetic phonics teaching'.

It should not need to be emphasised that, while Ofsted has to ensure that all inspectors are knowledgeable about inspecting reading (including phonics), inspection must focus on the *outcomes* for children. If reading and writing are good at the end of Year 2 and Year 6, inspectors do not need to look for additional evidence. If they are not good, inspectors need to have sufficient knowledge to ask and answer questions, to evaluate the teaching of reading (and writing) in depth, and to challenge leaders and managers where practice is not good enough in terms of children's progress. Teaching phonics is a means to an end (reading and spelling) and not an end in itself.

#### The 'Simple View of Reading' in the Rose Review

In 2005, Sir Jim Rose was commissioned to conduct 'an independent review of best practice in the teaching of early reading and the range of strategies that best support children who have fallen behind in reading to catch up'.

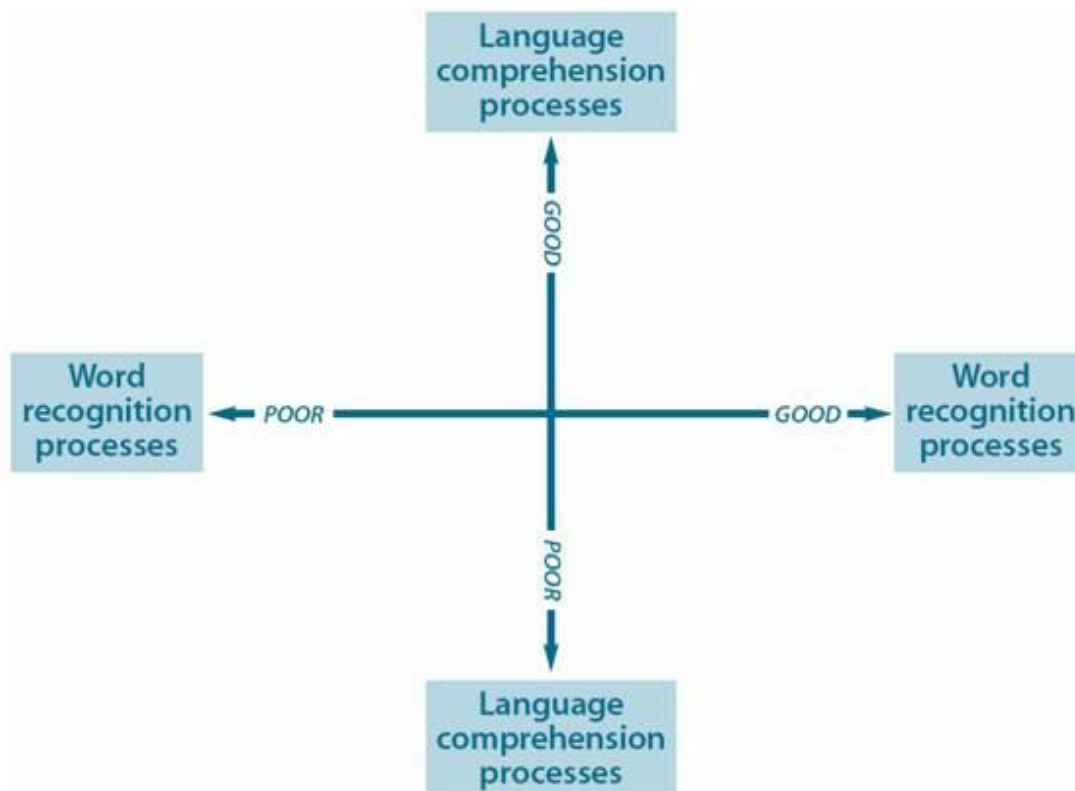
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<sup>8</sup> The new Standards apply 'to all teachers regardless of their career stage'. For further information, see: *Teachers' Standards* (DfE V1.0 0711), DfE, 2011; <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/teachers-standards>

The review published its final report in March 2006: *Independent review of the teaching of early reading* (referred to in these materials simply as 'the Rose Review'). The final report acknowledged:

...it is an obvious truth that the goal of reading is comprehension and that skilled reading involves understanding as well as decoding text. In short, learning to read progresses to reading, effortlessly, to learn. The teaching of beginner readers requires an understanding of the processes that underpin this progression (p.35).

Taking research findings on board, the Rose Review of early reading set out a model of reading that looks like this:



The model was designed to show that skilled reading requires two processes:

- recognition of the words on the page, free of context, with the ability to apply phonic rules as a critical factor in this decoding
- comprehension of language (i.e. not simply comprehension of written text but interpretation of language more widely)

This model provides the critical underpinning for the programmes of study for reading in the National Curriculum 2014. It refers to the two reading 'processes' as 'dimensions':

It is essential that teaching focuses on developing pupils' competence in both dimensions; different kinds of teaching are needed for each.

Skilled word reading involves both the speedy working out of the pronunciation of unfamiliar printed words (decoding) and the speedy recognition of familiar printed words. Underpinning both is the understanding that the letters on the page represent the sounds in spoken words. This is why phonics should be emphasised in the early teaching of reading to beginners (i.e. unskilled readers) when they start school.

Good comprehension draws from linguistic knowledge (in particular of vocabulary and grammar) and on knowledge of the world. Comprehension skills develop through pupils' experience of high-quality discussion with the teacher, as well as from reading and discussing a range of stories, poems and non-fiction.<sup>9</sup>

Children who are learning to read but who cannot decode the words on the page are prevented from understanding the text fully. However, even if they recognise and can say the words on the page, this does not mean that they will understand the text as a whole. The Rose Review report illustrates this vividly through the story of the blind Milton's daughters (p.76):

Wishing to read ancient Greek texts, but unable to do so because he could no longer see the words, Milton encouraged his daughters to learn to pronounce each alphabetic symbol of the ancient Greek alphabet. His daughters then used these phonic skills to read aloud the texts to their father. Their father could understand what they incomprehensibly read aloud to him. The daughters possessed word recognition skills, which did not enable them to understand the text; Milton, despite his ability to understand the Greek language, was no longer able to use word recognition skills and so was no longer able to understand Greek text without harnessing his daughters' skills.

The concept of two dimensions is useful because it:

- helps teachers to be clear about their objective(s) at any one time in terms of teaching reading
- makes it clear that teachers should not necessarily expect pupils to make equal progress across the two dimensions
- supports assessment, in that the two dimensions distinguish between the different elements of learning to read, that is, decoding and comprehension.

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<sup>9</sup> *The national curriculum in England: Framework document September 2013*, DfE, 2013; <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/national-curriculum>

### Activity 1.1: Reading task – examples of outstanding practice

*Excellence in English* provides high-quality examples of outstanding practice. The two illustrations quoted here demonstrate the complementary nature of the simple view of reading.

- Read pages 12–14 to see how Clifton Green Primary School in York turns 'average readers into keen ones'.
- Read pages 22–25 for accounts of opportunities for early literacy in Jump Primary School in Barnsley.

Click on the link below to find the report:

[www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/100229](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/100229)

Appendix 1 of the Rose Review gives a detailed, technical account of the 'simple view of reading,' supported by substantial research. This was provided to underpin the recommendation in the Rose Review that the 'searchlights model' proposed by the National Literacy Strategy (later, the Primary National Strategy) should be replaced. You may follow this up in more detail in Activity 1.2 that follows or leave it and use the activity as consolidation later.

### Activity 1.2: reading task – the Simple View of Reading

The detailed account of the 'simple view of reading' and the case for change in terms of the searchlights model can be found on pp.73–93 of the report's Appendix 1. The link is given below. The most useful paragraphs of the Appendix are listed below. (Note: the paragraph numbers refer to the Appendix, which starts at page 73 of the report, and not to the main body of the text.)

- paras. 1–3: description of the 'searchlights' model – now replaced
- paras. 12–20: a little more introduction to the simple view of reading
- paras. 29–40: four patterns of performance (see especially paragraph 39)
- para. 47: implications for teaching

Use either of the links below to access the full report of the Rose Review as a pdf file. (You may find one works better than the other.)

<https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationdetail/page1/DFES-0201-2006>

<http://media.education.gov.uk/assets/files/pdf/i/independent%20review.pdf>



## Module 2: Principles of high-quality phonic work

I wish commentators would make it clear that phonics is a body of knowledge we all need. No maths teacher would dream of expecting children to remember numbers as strings of digits – they teach the concept of place value. In the same way, children need to understand that letters represent sounds. This only becomes controversial when people compound phonics, the body of knowledge, with phonics as a teaching method.

Letter from Mary Kelly in the *Times Educational Supplement*, 10 June 2011

### The alphabetic code

Beginner readers should be taught four things:

- grapheme–phoneme correspondences (that is, the alphabetic code) in a clearly defined, incremental sequence
- to synthesise (blend) phonemes (sounds) in order all through a word to read it
- to segment words into their constituent phonemes for spelling
- that blending and segmenting are reversible processes.

As the letter that opens this module says, phonics is a body of knowledge, skills and understanding that children need in order to master an alphabetic language – English, in our case. Unlike Japanese, for instance, which uses ideograms to represent ideas visually, English represents the sounds of the language and uses an alphabet to do this. It is generally accepted that English has 44 sounds (although this number varies slightly, depending on regional accents).

The way the 26 letters of the alphabet are used in English (singly or in combination) to represent the 44 sounds is referred to as the alphabetic code. In the alphabetic code in English:

- a single phoneme can be represented (spelt) in different ways, using one, two, three or four letters. For example, the sound /aw/ can be represented as 'or', 'saw', 'haul', 'lore', 'fraught' and 'sought'
- one grapheme (that is, a letter or combination of letters) can represent different sounds. For example, the digraph (two letters) 'ow' sounds different in 'crowd' and in 'low'; the four letters combined in 'ough' are pronounced differently in 'through', 'rough' and 'bough'; the letter 'c' represents a /s/ sound at the beginning of 'circus' and a /k/ sound in the middle, and so on.

For teaching purposes, the alphabetic code is sometimes described in stages: 'simple' followed by 'complex' or 'higher-level'.

### Activity 2.1: The alphabet and the alphabetic code (video clip)

This short video clip from YouTube [2:46 mins.] illustrates the difference between 'the alphabet' and 'the alphabetic code'.

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=5FbdAENiRyI&NR=1](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5FbdAENiRyI&NR=1)

The lack of a one-to-one correspondence between a sound and a letter in English is frequently used as an argument against using phonics in teaching reading (and spelling). There are also phonically irregular words (referred to as 'common exception words' in the National Curriculum) such as 'the', 'some' or 'once'. Schools often refer to these as 'tricky words'. There is more about them later.

One reason for the irregularity of the English spelling system is the history of the language, that is, the many, many words that English has gained from being invaded (words from the Vikings and Norman French), from absorbing vocabulary from other countries (India, Australia, Africa) and from simply being a world language. Another factor is that pronunciation has altered over 500 years or so, so that the spelling of a word does not reflect its sound in the same way that happens in European languages, such as Spanish, Italian or German, or even Welsh. One reason why children in Finland learn to decode very quickly is that the sound-spelling system of Finnish is extremely regular. (Finnish grammar is rather more complex.)

However, much of English **is** regular. It can and should be taught systematically – hence, the frequent use of the description '**systematic** phonics' in the White Paper, the Rose Review, the White Paper and the National Curriculum.

The sounds are not taught in alphabetical order, but in order of usefulness, so that children can start to read and spell simple words as swiftly as possible. Success breeds success. A very common sequence begins by teaching children how to represent each of the following six sounds by a letter (as below):

Sound	Letter
/s/	s
/a/	a
/t/	t
/i/	i
/p/	p
/n/	n

If these sounds are learnt securely and the children are *also* taught the skill of blending sounds together to read whole words, they can then read (and spell, by segmenting) simple vowel-consonant (VC) words such as 'it', 'in', 'is' and 'at' and consonant-vowel-consonant (CVC) words such as 'sat', 'pin', 'nip', 'net', 'tip'.<sup>10</sup>

### Regional accents

One of the questions that arose during the piloting of this training concerned regional pronunciations – particularly where a teacher's accent is different from that of the children in her class. For example, some children in the north of England may pronounce 'but' to rhyme with 'foot' and not with 'cut'. Teachers need to be alert and sensitive to the differences. However, the key point is that teaching starts with *sounds* and not with letters. The teacher will know what letter(s) to teach to represent the sound the children say, even if it is not what she says.

The DfE's guidance on scoring children's responses in the phonics screening check says:

A child's accent should be taken into account when deciding whether a response is acceptable. There should be no bias in favour of children with a particular accent (p.21).<sup>11</sup>

### The skills of blending and segmenting

The previous section looked at the alphabetic code, that is, the **knowledge** children need about how the 44 sounds (phonemes) of the English language are represented by one or more letters (graphemes).

This section looks at two essential **skills: blending for reading and segmenting for spelling.**

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<sup>10</sup> If a child's blending skills were well advanced, she or he could also read CVCC words ('taps', 'pats'), CCVC words ('spin') and others, although in *Letters and Sounds*, blending of CVCC and CCVC words is not taught until later in the programme (Phase 4).

<sup>11</sup> *Assessment framework for the development of the Year 1 phonics screening check*, DfE, 2012.

Blending and segmenting are, in the words of the Rose Review, ‘reversible processes’: that is, if you can blend the sounds together to read a word, you should also be able to identify and break down (segment) the individual sounds in a word you hear to spell it. To spell the word, you need to represent each sound you hear by a letter – or more than one letter.

The skill of blending sounds together needs to be taught directly. Children may be able to say the sound a letter ‘makes’ when shown the letter (for instance, on a flashcard), but this does not necessarily mean that they can blend individual sounds together to make a whole word. (Letters do not actually ‘make’ sounds: they are just a way of representing that sound in writing.)

In Reception and Year 1 classes, you will often see this teaching being done with the aid of a puppet who is helped by the children to draw the sounds together to make the word. Alternatively, the teacher might refer to a robot who can make only the individual isolated sounds. The teacher might say, for instance: ‘The robot says “/l/-/a/-/m/-/p/.” How would we say it? Let’s put all the sounds together.’ Activity 2.2 illustrates blending:

### Activity 2.2: The importance of blending (video clip)

Notice progression in blending in the video clip below. The examples move from CVC words (cat, fix) to words using a digraph<sup>12</sup> (fish), CVC (chin) and CCVC (black) and CVCC (paint) words.

In the video clip, Mr Thorne is very clear in his articulation of the phonemes. The children in his class – he is a primary teacher – should have no difficulty in blending together the sounds that he pronounces for them. Also notice, at the start of the video, how he uses his hands, very precisely, to illustrate the ideas of blending and segmenting and his index finger to draw the letter-sounds together. You will notice teachers doing this in other clips of teaching.

Here is the link to the clip of Mr Thorne:

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=5wGfNiweEKI](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5wGfNiweEKI)

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<sup>12</sup> A digraph consists of two letters that represent one sound. Consonant digraphs include ‘sh’, ‘ch’, ‘th’ and ‘ng’; vowel digraphs include ‘ai’, ‘ee’ and ‘ea’; split vowel digraphs include ‘a–e’ (as in ‘make’), ‘i–e’ (as in ‘fine’) and ‘u–e’ (as in ‘tune’).

Use Activity 2.3 below for useful consolidation of blending and segmenting skills.

### Activity 2.3: blending and segmenting (video clip)

Watch this short video clip from YouTube on blending, segmenting and handwriting [2:46 mins.].

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=7pei0o-\\_cFc](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7pei0o-_cFc)

## Phonemes

A phoneme is the smallest unit of **sound** in a word.

The National Curriculum framework document (p.74) shows each symbol of the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA), one for each of the 44 phonemes in English. It also provides examples of the graphemes associated with each sound. You don't need to learn or use the IPA, either now or later, and nor do teachers. It is included in the National Curriculum only for reference.

It is important, however, that as an inspector you can identify clearly the separate sounds in individual words. You are then in a position to evaluate the quality of the teaching of phonics and to talk to children about the sounds *they* can hear in words. Listening to the individual sounds in words is a skill needed for spelling, not reading, but if a child can hear individual sounds and the differences between them, she or he is well on the road to reading.

### Activity 2.4: listening to individual sounds

To test out how well you can hear individual sounds, try to identify the individual, separate sounds in the word 'reading' and represent them with the symbols of the IPA. Identify each separate sound and then copy and paste the relevant symbol from the table on page 74 of the framework onto the line below.

To help you, consonant sounds (24) are listed in the left-hand column of the table and vowel sounds (20) on the right. Use the example words to check that you are choosing the correct symbol.

Here is the link you need:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/260481/PRIMARY\\_national\\_curriculum\\_11-9-13\\_2.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/260481/PRIMARY_national_curriculum_11-9-13_2.pdf)

Then click [here](#) to go to the Responses section to check your answer.

A dictionary that uses the IPA to give a guide to how a word is pronounced would be another way to check your answer.

## Correct articulation

Correct articulation is vital in helping children to learn to blend sounds together. This means making sure that the sound produced (each individual phoneme) is as precise and accurate as possible and that no additional sounds are added. For instance, the sound /m/ that starts 'mother' or is embedded in 'impress' needs to sound /mmm/ and not /muh/. (You'll hear this in the video clip for Activity 2.5). The clearer the sound, the easier it is for a child to blend together (synthesise) the individual sounds to read a word because there are no unnecessary sounds getting in the way. Mr Thorne's articulation in the video clip you watched (Activity 2.4) was an excellent example. Correct articulation is illustrated in more detail in the next video clip.

### Activity 2.5: Illustrating correct articulation (video clip)

This clip [2:33 mins.] has been chosen because it illustrates not only the careful articulation of phonemes again but also mouth movements. It is important for children to be able to see as well as hear how individual sounds are pronounced; this is especially true for any children who might have additional learning needs. When you are observing teaching, make sure that all the children can see properly as well as hear.

In this clip, look out for how Mr Thorne shows the different sounds of /th/. Remember, too, that the letters that come up on the screen are representing sounds; they are presented between slashes, like this /th/.

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=MOW3pB2KwGA](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MOW3pB2KwGA)

## Segmenting

Segmenting is the reverse of blending. In segmenting to spell a word, the teacher or the child is listening to a whole word, identifying the individual sounds (not letters) that make up the word – as you did with the 'reading' example earlier – and choosing a letter or more than one letter to represent each individual sound. You saw this at the end of the video clip on the alphabet and the alphabetic code earlier when the little girl at her table was setting out plastic letters to represent the sounds in the word she heard in the word 'boat' (/b/ /oa/ /t/).

You will also see examples of segmenting in the film of the Year 1 class in Part 2 (Activity 6.1).

## Common exception words

So far we have looked at words that are phonically regular.

Children should also be taught to read words that are not completely phonically regular. The National Curriculum refers to them as 'common exception words'; phonic programmes sometimes call them 'tricky' words.

Children need to be taught to read these words on sight, so that they do not have to spend time puzzling them out. You should expect to see teachers regularly helping children to practise their speedy recall of tricky words, often with something as simple as flashcards.

In terms of spelling, children need to remember the tricky parts of a word, that is, the letters that do not match the usual grapheme-phoneme correspondences they have learnt. For example, the word 'said' is not phonically regular in that the sound /e/ in the middle of the word is normally written 'e' as in 'bed' (or sometimes 'ea' as in 'bread', 'dread' or 'read' – past tense) and not 'ai' as in 'paid'. However, the sounds at the beginning and end of 'said' are represented with 's' and 'd', just as one might expect; it is only the middle of the word that is tricky.

### **Multi-sensory approaches**

The Rose Review referred to the importance of multi-sensory approaches in helping children to learn the alphabetic code:

Multi-sensory activities featured strongly in high quality phonic work and often encompassed, variously, simultaneous visual, auditory and kinaesthetic activities involving, for example, physical movement to copy letters shapes and sound, and manipulate magnetic or other solid letters to build words. Sometimes, mnemonics, such as a picture of a snake or an apple in the shapes of 's' and 'a', were used to help children memorise letters. Handwriting too was often seen as a kinaesthetic activity and was introduced early. This multi-sensory approach almost always captured the interest of boys as well as girls. A common feature of the best work was that boys' progress and achievement did not lag behind that of girls – an important outcome given the generally weaker performance of boys, especially in writing.

The multi-sensory work showed that children generally bring to bear on the learning task as many of their senses as they can, rather than limit themselves to only one sensory pathway. This calls into question the notion that children can be categorised by a single learning style, be it auditory, visual or kinaesthetic (p.21).

Such multi-sensory approaches are frequently very well-established in the various published phonic schemes. You will see multi-sensory approaches illustrated in the films in Part 2.

## Inclusion: deaf children and phonics

There are over 35,000 deaf children in England.

The response of the National Deaf Children's Society (NDCS) to the consultation on the phonics screening check provides useful insights into the role of phonics for deaf children who are learning to read.

Responding to the consultation question, 'Do you agree that this screening check should be focused on phonic decoding ...?' the society wrote:

NDCS welcomes, in principle, the screening check initiative. Deafness is not a learning disability, yet government figures from 2010 show that deaf children are 44% less likely than children with no identified special educational need to achieve the expected levels of literacy in the final year of their primary education. As the screening check initiative is scheduled to take place towards the end of year 1 (Y1), it could support the identification of deaf children who are not making progress in reading at an early age and so facilitate early intervention. NDCS supports the teaching (and implicitly the checking) of phonic knowledge to the majority<sup>13</sup> of deaf children but would ask the Department for Education (DfE) to be mindful of the following general issues related to the assessment of phonics in deaf children:

- Phonics, although a key tool in learning to read, is not the only skill that deaf children (and others) will need to apply in learning to read.
- Phonics will usually prove to be a bigger challenge for deaf children given their lack of 'normal' hearing. New and improved technologies can allow deaf children to perceive the full range of speech sounds, but not as clearly or as easily as hearing children, and there will still be some deaf children who will not be able to access all the sounds of speech. No hearing technology replaces normal hearing.
- Those deaf children developing BSL [British Sign Language] as their first language may be more delayed in learning English and consequently more delayed in accessing phonic knowledge.
- Many deaf children, including those with 'glue' ear (it is estimated that 20% of five-year-olds have a temporary hearing loss due to 'glue' ear), may take longer than their hearing peers to acquire phonic knowledge.
- Some deaf children may not have achieved mastery at the level thought appropriate for their chronological age by the end of Y1; however, they may be making appropriate progress through the different phonic stages, albeit at a slower rate.

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<sup>13</sup> The NDCS added this footnote: 'In Y1, some deaf children may still be developing their first language of BSL and be delayed in the development of their second language, English and so it may not have been appropriate to start a phonics programme at this stage.'



- It will be important for teachers to differentiate between those deaf children who are developing their phonic knowledge more slowly than their hearing peers and those deaf children who are finding the acquisition of phonic knowledge too much of a challenge.<sup>14</sup>

If you are in a mainstream classroom and you notice the teacher wearing a radio aid,<sup>15</sup> this alone should alert you to consider the reading provision for any deaf children, particularly younger ones, and also to find out how and in what ways the phonics teaching is being adapted to meet the needs of these children. For example, a deaf child cannot be expected to segment words into their individual sounds to spell them if she or he cannot yet discriminate between those sounds – although, as in so many cases, this is also true for children who are not deaf. The extent of adaptation the teacher needs to make will depend on the level of the child’s hearing. Inspectors should be alert to this in mainstream as well as special schools.

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<sup>14</sup> *Response to public consultation on the Year 1 phonics screening check*, DfE, 2011.

<sup>15</sup> A radio aid is in two parts: a transmitter that the teacher wears and a receiver worn by the child. It works by making the sounds the child needs to hear clearer in relation to other (unwanted) noise in the classroom.

## Part 2: Literacy – a non-negotiable

The main focus of Part 2 is on:

- the kinds of teaching and learning that might be seen in schools where outcomes in reading are high
- providing opportunities for inspectors to see real schools at work
- prompting reflection and evaluation in terms of inspection.

The five films in Part 2 chart the journey from Nursery to Year 2. The three very different schools in which the films were made were chosen because of pupils' high levels of attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. All pupils attain above national expectations, a large proportion attain well above, making rapid progress from their starting points. (Part 3 uses a sixth, concluding film.)

The films illustrate the knowledge and skills pupils need at each stage to become enthusiastic, successful and confident readers. Such outcomes are exemplified in the final film (used in Part 3) when the inspector talks to Year 5 pupils about their reading.

The films were not made to illustrate perfect lessons but to show real schools at work and to provide material for training. Therefore, when you watch the films, you might identify aspects that, as an inspector, you would want to discuss further with the teacher. Some of the activities below will ask you to identify what could be improved.

However, it is important to focus on the fact that outcomes for the pupils in all three schools demonstrate that the teachers are highly effective in teaching reading, including teaching phonics. Social deprivation is not used as an excuse for slow progress or poor outcomes in reading.

The filming took place on 9 and 10 July 2012, so the pupils were almost at the point of moving into their next year group. Note also that the films pre-date the National Curriculum 2014.

## Module 3 (Film 1): Introduction to the three schools

### The three schools

The first of the films provides an introduction to the three schools and to the inspector.

Here are brief statistics on each of the schools, as they were at the time of the filming, to provide a context for the film that follows:

School name	Free schools meals	Pupils speaking EAL	Deprivation index
Ilsham Church of England Academy	12.2%	6.8%	0.21
Oldway Primary School	16.6%	0.7%	0.18
Tollgate Primary School	47%	72%	5.6

#### Activity 3.1: What works for pupils

This first short film [5:14 mins.] introduces the four main films that follow.

You don't need to write anything. Simply watch the film to gain a sense of the three schools.

Here is the link:

[www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/literacy-non-negotiable-introduction](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/literacy-non-negotiable-introduction)

## Module 4 (Film 2): Learning through play

This film of Nursery children shows the Nursery teacher, Claire James, working with clear, purposeful objectives throughout, all linked to the story of *Mr Gumpy's Outing*. The teaching is based firmly on previous assessments of their needs and abilities. The adults are working directly with the children to promote their learning, with specific support for individuals. This is planned, focused, structured work.

Phonics is only part of learning to read. Engagement with stories is evident here, feeding into the children's oral language development, their knowledge of stories and of literary language, providing models for their own spoken and written language. A varied diet of stories listened to forms part of an overall rich curriculum.

### Activity 4.1: Learning through play

Watch this second film [6:37mins.].

#### *Focus on learning*

Focus on what these young children are learning.

Pause the film at the point at which the narrator says, 'So what conclusions did the inspector come to?' [4:46] Make brief notes on what conclusions you would have reached about the following.

- the aspects of language, communication and literacy you saw being promoted?
- how well the children were progressing towards the Early Learning Goals?
- what might have been better.

Finally, compare this with what you normally see in inspection.

You will find two films at the link below. Click on the first one (Nursery):

[www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/literacy-non-negotiable-learning-through-play-and-establishing-foundations](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/literacy-non-negotiable-learning-through-play-and-establishing-foundations)

Click [here](#) to compare your list with that given in the Responses section. Then watch the remaining two minutes of the film.

This film reflects the findings of Ofsted's 2011 report, *The impact of the Early Years Foundation Stage*. In the providers visited where outcomes for communication, language and literacy were good or outstanding (42 of the 68 visited), it was because 'practitioners were specifically planning opportunities to develop children's speaking and listening, and early reading and writing skills. This could often be traced back to specific training, for example, in developing children's language skills or in delivering phonics.'<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> *The impact of the Early Years Foundation Stage: a good start* (100231), Ofsted, 2011; [www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/impact-of-early-years-foundation-stage](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/impact-of-early-years-foundation-stage).

This was also noted in more recent reports by Ofsted in 2014, particularly in the Annual Report on the Early Years and a complementary report on school readiness, published at the same time.<sup>17</sup>

## Module 5 (Film 3): Establishing foundations

This second film shows Reception children, grouped by attainment and specific needs. They are applying to their reading and writing the phonic knowledge and skills they have already learnt. Other activities, including those outdoors, further reinforce their learning and positive attitudes.

The teacher, Danni Cooke, is very clear about the children's needs and has high expectations. Her questioning is sharply focused; resources are interesting (mini-beasts, magnifying glasses, well-prepared layout of page for writing) and all related to achieving the objectives.

Notice, in the film, one of the ways in which progress in writing is recorded. A piece of writing for each child is displayed, with a more recent piece of writing added on top, building up evidence.

### Activity 5.1: Establishing foundations

Watch this third film [12:05 mins.].

#### *Focus on learning*

Write brief notes on:

- how the adults are promoting the children's skills, as well as their enjoyment of and enthusiasm for learning
- what the children are learning
- what might have been better.

Note: the 'parachute activity' in the film went on for longer than would be usual because of the particular demands of filming it.

You will find two films at the link below. Click on the second one (Reception):

[www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/literacy-non-negotiable-learning-through-play-and-establishing-foundations](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/literacy-non-negotiable-learning-through-play-and-establishing-foundations)

Click [here](#) to compare your list with that given in the Responses section.

<sup>17</sup> *Ofsted early years annual report* (130237), Ofsted, 2014; [www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/130237](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/130237); *Are you ready? Good practice in school readiness* (140074), Ofsted, 2014; [www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/140074](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/140074)

## Module 6 (Film 4): Assessment and consolidation of vowel digraphs

There is a lot of ground to cover in Year 1 and vowel digraphs are critical for pupils' progress in reading and spelling.

In this film, the pupils are revisiting, as a result of the teacher's assessment, a variety of vowel digraphs to consolidate their understanding of how to represent (spell) the /oa/ phoneme, that is that 'oa', 'ow' and 'o-e' (split digraph) can all be used to represent that phoneme.

After the whole-class part of the lesson, the pupils are grouped by attainment in phonics. The teacher works with a lower-attaining group.

In the final film, which you will watch in Part 3, you will see two struggling readers from this class: Tariq (wearing the orange baseball cap) and Domenicas (white T-shirt, blond).

### Activity 6.1: Assessment and consolidation

Watch this fourth film [8:54mins.].

Look out for:

- multi-sensory teaching
- links between phonics for reading and phonics for spelling

Make a note of any development points that you would want to give this teacher.

You will find two films at the link below. Click on the first one (Year 1):

[www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/literacy-non-negotiable-building-firm-foundations-and-reading-for-meaning](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/literacy-non-negotiable-building-firm-foundations-and-reading-for-meaning)

Click [here](#) to compare your notes with those in the Responses section.

## Module 7 (Film 5): Guiding readers to become good readers

This film shows effective practice in guided reading in a Year 2 class. It focuses on the direct teaching of comprehension, genuinely guiding pupils to develop their understanding and to become good readers.

### Activity 7.1: Developing comprehension

Watch this fifth film [12:08 mins.].

Note that this was filmed on a Monday afternoon, so the pupils had not read the text earlier in the week. In this school, the whole class has guided reading at the same time. The session consists of reading and a follow-up activity, either linked to the text or linked to in-class work.

While watching, make notes on

- the strategies the teacher uses and the learning that results
- the skills that were being developed that the pupils are likely to use later in Key Stages 2, 3 and 4.

You will find two films at the link below. Click on the second one (Year 2):

[www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/literacy-non-negotiable-building-firm-foundations-and-reading-for-meaning](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/literacy-non-negotiable-building-firm-foundations-and-reading-for-meaning)

Click [here](#) to compare your responses with those suggested.

Timetabling guided reading will not, by itself, improve reading. Activities for pupils working independently have to be worthwhile and purposeful.

Before moving to Part 3, follow up the film with this short reading task:

### Activity 7.2: Guided reading (reading task)

As preparation for this training, you should already have read *Ready to read* (the report on reading in 12 primary schools in Stoke-on-Trent).

Having watched the film of guided reading, re-read the section in the Stoke-on-Trent report on guided reading (pages 20 – 22), including the case studies.

Reflect on the differences between the film and the practice described in the report. You can find the report at this link:

[www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/140130](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/140130)

## **Part 3: Inspecting reading**

### **Module 8: Inspecting quality**

#### **Evidence-gathering**

The first part of the distance learning materials considered the key knowledge and skills needed to teach early reading.

The second part provided the opportunity to consider the teaching of reading, including phonics, in three outstanding schools.

This third part looks at how inspectors might inspect provision and outcomes for reading. How will you secure evidence about quality?

The eight small sections that follow include video material. Some of it is optional and simply illustrative; other clips require responses. The aspects considered are:

- evidence-gathering
- using the phonics screening check data
- identifying children who are falling through the net
- systems and leadership
- assessment, grouping and intervention
- expectations (especially in terms of phonics)
- teaching the higher levels of the alphabetic code
- listening to children reading.

Inspectors report on 'the quality of education provided by the school' and 'give priority to':

- the achievement of pupils
- the quality of teaching
- the quality of leadership and management
- the behaviour and safety of the pupils



In Activity 8.1 below you are asked to reflect on how you might gather evidence about the quality of the teaching of reading under four main headings.

### Activity 8.1: Gathering evidence

Using what you read earlier in *Reading by six*, begin to formulate some questions about reading in the schools that you are going to inspect. Here are a few obvious starter questions under the four headings:

#### **Achievement**

What, if any, is the gap in achievement and attainment between boys and girls in reading?

What is the school doing to close that gap?

What proportion of pupils has failed to gain Level 4 in reading by the end of Key Stage 2? Is this proportion decreasing or not?<sup>18</sup>

#### **Quality of teaching**

How well does the Early Years develop children's spoken language, familiarise them with books and extend their vocabulary?

What is the quality of teaching for pupils who are failing to make sufficient progress – in mainstream lessons; in any interventions?

#### **Leadership and management**

To what extent does the headteacher engage herself or himself in provision for reading?

What steps are leaders and managers taking to ensure consistency in the teaching of reading?

#### **Behaviour and safety**

To what extent is any unsatisfactory behaviour you see attributable to pupils struggling to learn to read?

Questions need to be developed to reflect your key inspection trails. However, detailed observations of teaching and learning should be a priority. Some of the questions above can – and should – be answered in classrooms by evaluating teaching, talking to children about their reading, writing and spelling, and by listening to them reading (see later).

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<sup>18</sup> The National Curriculum 2014 does not use levels.

## Using the phonics screening check data

The purpose of this part of the training is to explore data provided in RAISEonline about a school's phonics screening check and to identify questions for inspection trails. Remember that when you use the results of the screening check during inspection, they do not provide an assessment of children's reading; the check assesses only phonic decoding.

If you come across concerns from schools, the following points may be helpful in allaying their concerns:

- Children need to be taught the alphabetic code – the relationship between sounds and letters in English – and the screening check is designed to assess how much of it they know.
- The non-words in the check are useful for identifying children who may **know** the alphabetic code (or at least parts of it) but are struggling with the **skills** of blending sounds together to make whole words. There may also be children who are finding it difficult to learn to read whose problems are not related to blending or knowing the alphabetic code. The screening check still acts as an important diagnostic tool in the first instance.<sup>19</sup>
- The check is intended as a test of phonic decoding – not as a wider test of reading – to assess whether children have learnt key knowledge and skills by the end of Year 1. Comprehension is a separate dimension and is tested at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2. Remind schools of the 'simple view of reading' in the Rose Review.

Since the purpose of the check is to identify pupils who need extra support and ensure that they receive help, it is particularly important for the success of the check that results from it are seen primarily as a starting point for a conversation with inspectors. Inspectors might consider asking questions, such as:

- What have you learnt about your Year 1 cohort's decoding skills?
- Did you notice any patterns in performance?
- Was there a pattern of performance across the Year 1 classes (where there is more than one Year 1 class)?
- What action, if any, are you taking as a result of your evaluation?

A DfE leaflet, *The phonics screening check – responding to the results. Departmental advice for Reception and Key Stage 1 teachers*, was written to support schools in taking action as a result of their findings and is available online.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> The check is not strictly diagnostic because it will not show reliably the particular grapheme-phoneme correspondences the children do not know. However, it should prompt teachers to consider which areas of decoding might require further assessment would be most valuable, such as the skill or blending or knowledge of split digraphs.

<sup>20</sup> *The phonics screening check – responding to the results:*

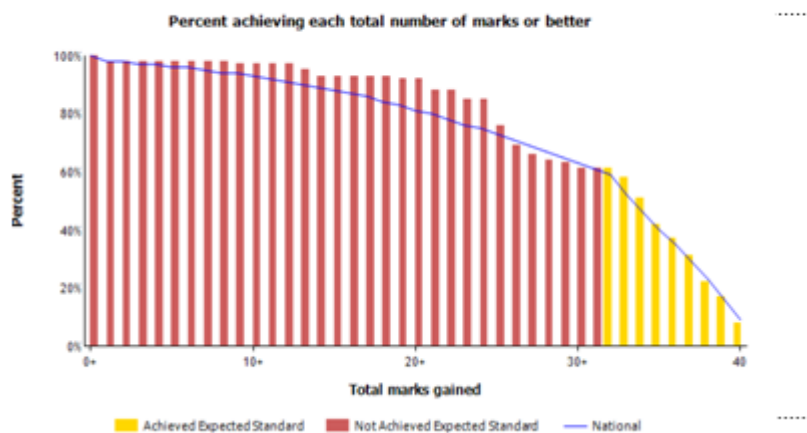
[www.education.gov.uk/schools/teachingandlearning/pedagogy/a00210354/phonics-screening-check](http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/teachingandlearning/pedagogy/a00210354/phonics-screening-check)

Pupils who do not reach the required standard in Year 1 take the screening check again in Year 2. This will be the same check as the one being used with the Year 1 pupils. Inspectors will therefore need to follow up results in Year 2 and, where necessary, in Year 3. The data are likely to provide useful information about the impact of any interventions that the school has put in place and the speed with which children were able to catch up with their peers.

Teachers and senior staff should therefore find the check helpful in:

- identifying children who may be struggling with phonic decoding early on (alphabetic code and/or blending) and who need speedy intervention to catch up
- pinpointing particular aspects of phonics (e.g. vowel digraphs) that a whole class or year group found difficult and where teaching needs to be improved
- moderating their own teacher assessments against the screening check results and following up any discrepancies
- considering whether they are setting appropriate expectations, by comparing their school's results with national benchmarks.

Below is an anonymised graph from a school's screening check:



It is important to understand that the national line on the graph, shown in blue, does not indicate the 'expected standard'. When this screening check was done, the threshold was set at 32/40; the blue line indicates the percentage of pupils nationally that, in fact, achieved this.<sup>21</sup>

While the data in the graph above look to be in line with the national average, questions that need investigating might include the following:

<sup>21</sup> With effect from the June 2014 check, the DfE does not provide the threshold score until schools have completed their checks. In fact, in June 2014, the threshold remained at 32/40 but this information was not published until 30 June 2014.

- What support do pupils receive in Year 2 if they did not reach the threshold in Year 1?
- Additionally, what support do pupils receive in Year 3 if, again, they did not reach the threshold in Year 2?
- Does further scrutiny of the tabulated data reveal any inequalities? (See Activity 8.2 below.)
- Has the school analysed its data and, if so, has it done anything about the findings?
- What is the impact of any support the school has put in place?

Schools that feel they are 'good' because they scored above the national percentage misunderstand what their own data indicate.

Inspectors should use the data from the screening check to follow through issues about reading, at a whole-school level and at the level of individual pupils. For instance, in listening to a sample of children reading, inspectors should listen to Year 2 pupils who have not achieved the expected level in the check in Year 1.

The following activity, 8.2, asks you scrutinise an anonymised school's tabulated data and come to conclusions about possible inspection trails.

### Activity 8.2: Analysing data from the phonics screening check

Scrutinise the data below and make notes on questions you might ask senior leaders when you are at the school:

	Cohort	Phonics Screening Check	
		Number achieving expected standard	% National
<b>All Pupils</b>	59	36	58
<b>Gender</b>			
Male	33	17	54
Female	26	19	62
<b>Free School Meals*</b>			
FSM	3	0	45
Non FSM	56	36	62

When you have made your notes, click [here](#) to compare them with the suggested response.

Inspectors must consider the reasons why pupils do not meet the required standard in the phonic screening check in Year 1. The next section builds on what you have just done to consider how you might identify children who are 'falling through the net'.

## Identifying children who are 'falling through the net'

All inspectors have met young people in primary and secondary schools who are floundering (and may be misbehaving) simply because they do not have the skills to cope with the reading and writing they have to do. Remember that *Reading by six* made this key judgement:

The best primary schools in England teach virtually every child to read, regardless of the social and economic circumstances of their neighbourhoods, the ethnicity of their pupils, the language spoken at home and most special educational needs or disabilities (p.4).

Recall, also, Ofsted's recommendation in the SEN review quoted at the beginning of this training: 'Schools should stop identifying pupils as having special educational needs when they simply need better teaching and pastoral support'.

The implications of these two reports for inspecting reading are clear. Inspectors need to find out what primary schools are doing for children who are in danger of 'falling through the net' and arriving at secondary school unable to read well enough.

Consider these two scenarios the first at Key Stage 2, the second at Key Stage 1 (Activities 8.2 and 8.3). Both are based closely on real events. The contexts of the two schools are not given, because the information is not relevant.

### Activity 8.3: Tommy hates reading

You are inspecting a school that was judged to be good at its last inspection. It's the second half of the summer term, a sunny morning on the first day of the inspection. You are in the playground at break-time, gathering evidence about behaviour and planning to talk to a few pupils informally about their reading habits. Tommy (Year 5) comes up to talk to you. You met him in maths before break and he is keen to talk to the inspector again! You praise him for the maths work you saw – he told you proudly he was 'good at maths' – and ask him about how he's getting on in reading. Rather to your surprise, he says that he only reads 'Horrid Henry' books, hates reading his work out loud in class and feels 'really embarrassed' at being asked to do so. He says he reads out loud to someone once a week.

How are you going to follow this up?

Write down some lines of enquiry. Then click [here](#) to compare yours with those given in the Responses section.

### Activity 8.4: Listening to Ayesha

It's the end of the first half of the autumn term and you are in a primary school, judged to be good at its last inspection. You are keen to evaluate

attainment in reading at the start of Year 1 to see what children have learnt during the Foundation Stage and what they have done since. You ask the class teacher to point out to you three 'average' readers, boys and girls.

Ayesha is learning English as an additional language, as are 80% of the children. She's quite shy, so you encourage her to get a book from her book-bag and, during the course of a quiet reading time, you listen to her reading it. This is a phonically regular text with pictures above the text on each page, such as 'The frog sat on the log'. Ayesha says it's a book she has read before. She reads each page accurately but very quietly and, slightly unusually, she does not follow each word with her finger. Something makes you want to probe further.

You praise her reading and say that you'd like to hear it again, this time without the pictures to look at. You quickly cover up the picture on the first page with your hand and ask her to read the page again. At this point, she stops reading completely. Further probing and encouragement reveal that Ayesha has no phonic decoding strategies at all and no alphabetic knowledge. She has been relying on memorising the pictures and knowing what to say for each page. She seems to have no concept that the print carries the meaning.

What do you do next?

Compare your ideas with those in Responses section [here](#).

## Systems and leadership

*Reading by six* highlighted the following common features across the schools visited:

- high-quality, committed and direct leadership of reading, especially from the headteacher
- clear agreement about what children needed to learn to be successful readers
- high-quality, consistent teaching, 'especially discrete phonics teaching'
- rigorous assessment of every child, especially identifying difficulties early on so that well-matched and timely support and intervention could be provided.

### Activity 8.5: Whole-school systems (video clip)

Watch this very short video clip [1:30 mins.] from a professional development video.

Apart from evidence of outcomes in reading, what might you look for to help you determine the consistency of a school's approach?

The video clip is also worth watching for its quick illustrations of very well-paced phonics teaching and learning.

Use the link below. Scroll down to select 'A Whole School Approach to Reading (video)' from the videos listed.

<https://global.oup.com/education/content/primary/experts/ruth-miskin/?view=ProductList&region=international#>

You can check your notes [here](#) against the suggestions in the Responses section.

## Assessment, grouping and intervention

One of the important judgements that inspectors will need to make will be about a school's provision for children who are falling behind in reading. One of the findings of *Reading by six* was that, in the schools visited:

The assessment of individual pupils' progress, phonic knowledge and skills is sufficiently frequent and detailed to identify quickly the pupils who are falling behind or in danger of failing to keep up with their peers. Effective provision for them to catch up is put in place early and there are high expectations of what all pupils should achieve.

Assessment, however, will be starting much earlier than this. In the Early Years, teachers should already be identifying children who find it difficult to distinguish between sounds and who may need additional support. Find out what provision is made for children who may not be ready to start on a systematic programme of phonics teaching by five, the age recommended by the Rose Review for this work.<sup>22</sup>

The introduction to the National Curriculum programmes of Study for Year 1 assumes that children will have been taught phonics in the Foundation Stage. It says:

During year 1, teachers should build on work from the Early Years Foundation Stage, making sure that pupils can sound and blend unfamiliar printed words quickly and accurately using the phonics knowledge and skills that they have already learnt. Teachers should also ensure that pupils continue to learn new grapheme-phoneme correspondences (GPCs) and revise and consolidate those learnt earlier.<sup>23</sup>

In terms of later intervention, you might expect to see:

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<sup>22</sup> 'For most children, high quality, systematic phonic work should start by the age of five, taking full account of professional judgements of children's developing abilities and the need to embed this work within a broad and rich curriculum. This should be preceded by pre-reading activities that pave the way for such work to start.' *Independent review of the teaching of early reading: final report* (0201-2006DOC-EN), DfES, 2006.

<sup>23</sup> *The national curriculum in England. Framework document. September 2013*, DfE, 2013.

- additional tutoring in small groups: before the lesson to prepare children or after the main lesson to help them catch up
- one-to-one work with a trained teaching assistant
- a group of children who are at the same level in reading being taught together so that the teaching can focus closely on their needs
- especially in Year R, a mixed-ability class being divided towards the latter part of the academic year for phonic work to enable the younger or less able children to make good progress before Year 1
- support for a child or a small group of children within a lesson.

Consider how well the provision being made enables children not just to catch up but also to reinforce the learning that the rest of the class is doing. Do they have opportunities for over-learning, that is, practising the necessary skills and knowledge sufficiently so that automaticity develops? Children who are struggling to learn to read need not only to catch up with their peers but also to continue to make progress.

How – and how well – does the school evaluate the impact of the interventions it makes and the value for money? Can the school give you evidence of the effectiveness of the provision it is making in terms of children’s progress?

The Rose Review summarised the features of effective intervention as follows:

... no matter which provision applied, the most successful intervention arrangements were planned as part of the total programme for teaching reading and monitored carefully. The driving and coordinating force was, more often than not, a well-trained, experienced member of staff, such as the coordinator for literacy or SEN; above all, the arrangements had the full backing of the headteacher (p.49, para. 162)

### **Activity 8.6: Assessment and groupings for speedy progress (video clip)**

Watch this next short clip. There are no activities to do but notice the important phrase in the video: children with special educational needs need to be supported ‘for however long it takes until they can read’.

Use the link below. Scroll down the list to select ‘Assessment and groupings for speedy progress’.

<https://global.oup.com/education/content/primary/experts/ruth-miskin/?view=ProductList&region=international#>



The video clip you have just watched (Activity 8.5) refers to grouping children for reading. Both the Rose Review and *Reading by six* referred to grouping. The next activity (Activity 8.6) follows up those references.

### Activity 8.7: Reading task: mixed-ability or homogeneous teaching groups?

Read the two extracts cited below. Be prepared to see both types of grouping across the schools you visit. Inspectors must not advocate a particular method but consider the impact of what they see on progress.

*Rose Review*: paragraphs 106–107

*Reading by six*: paragraphs 92–95, followed by the illustrations in paragraphs 89–90

## Expectations

The programmes of study for English in the National Curriculum 2014 set out the expectations for the end of Year 1, Year 2, the end of Year 4 and the end of Year 6. The expectations for Years 1 and 2 are set out for each of the two years to 'reflect the rapid pace of development in word reading during these two years'.<sup>24</sup> The framework goes on to say:

Schools are, however, only required to teach the relevant programme of study by the end of the key stage. Within each key stage, schools therefore have the flexibility to introduce content earlier or later than set out in the programme of study. In addition, schools can introduce key stage content during an earlier key stage if appropriate.

In terms of expectations for Year 1, the assessment framework published for the development of the Year 1 phonics screening test is helpful in terms of wider reading and phonics.<sup>25</sup> The framework specifically says:

The introduction of this phonics screening check in no way underestimates the importance of teaching wider reading skills. All children should be taught to read for meaning and pleasure throughout primary school. The evidence shows phonics teaching is most effective when taught as part of a language-rich curriculum. Introducing a check of phonic decoding in Year 1 does not mean that teachers should delay teaching children wider literacy and comprehension skills.

<sup>24</sup> *The National Curriculum in England. Framework document. September 2013.* DfE, 2013; <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/national-curriculum>

<sup>25</sup> *Assessment framework for the development of the Year 1 phonics screening check (STA/12/5709)*, DfE, 2012; [www.gov.uk/government/publications/assessment-framework-for-the-development-of-the-year-1-phonics-screening-check](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/assessment-framework-for-the-development-of-the-year-1-phonics-screening-check)

However, the assessment of comprehension will not be included in this check. Assessing only phonic decoding will help to limit the assessment requirements at the start of primary school. Key Stage 1 assessments will continue to cover wider aspects of reading and writing.

Since this phonics screening check is a decoding check, only words that are phonically decodable have been included. It is expected that teachers will ensure that elements of early reading not assessed in this phonics screening check are also taught, such as reading and discussing books. The following statements indicate additional skills that children should possess by the end of Year 1 but that will not be included in the phonics screening check.

By the end of Year 1 children should:

- apply phonic knowledge and skill as the prime approach to reading unfamiliar words that are not completely decodable;
- read many frequently-encountered words automatically;
- read phonically decodable three-syllable words;
- read a range of age-appropriate texts fluently;
- demonstrate understanding of age-appropriate texts.

It is vital that children are given the opportunity to develop these skills throughout Year 1, in addition to developing the phonic decoding skills that are assessed in the phonics screening check.

Section 3.2 of the assessment framework sets out in some detail the content that the check will draw from. It shows lists, with examples, of the grapheme-phoneme correspondences, which could appear in each section of the screening check. The annexes have not been designed as a curriculum for teaching and inspectors need to be acutely alert to schools that might be using them in this way.

A school is very likely to have a phonics programme, probably a commercial publication but possibly one of its own devising. It is important that teachers demonstrate what the Rose Review referred to as 'fidelity to the programme'. That is, once a school has determined the order in which letter-sound correspondences will be taught and the ways in which this will be done, the programme should be followed. If teachers dip in and out of different programmes, there is always a danger that key learning is missed out. Teaching phonics should be done *systematically*.

Also helpful in considering coverage of phonics is the publication *Letters and Sounds*, produced as a resource for schools following the Rose Review. The NFER's 2011 evaluation of the screening check noted: '*Letters and Sounds* was by far the most frequently used programme, used by 80% of [the pilot] schools as their main programme.'<sup>26</sup> You will therefore certainly come across schools using it. Although it

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<sup>26</sup> *Process evaluation of the Year 1 phonics screening check pilot* (DFE-RB159), DfE, 2011; <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/year-1-phonics-screening-check-pilot-evaluation>

does not set out what children are expected to have learnt each year, it provides guidance about the phonic knowledge and skills covered in each phase of the programme. The materials have been republished on the DfE website at this link:

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/letters-and-sounds](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/letters-and-sounds)

The Annex to these materials provides an overview of the content within each phase. The index included in the original materials<sup>27</sup> was accompanied by this statement:

'The Letters and Sounds sound index is based on what research into the teaching of early reading deems necessary. By the end of Phase 3 of Letters and Sounds, children should be able represent each of the 44 phonemes which covers basically all the spoken sounds in English. 'zh' as in 'vision' is the only remaining one left to be covered in Phase 5. There are some regional differences in pronunciation which can be dealt with on a common sense basis – but essentially everything is covered by the end of Phase 3.'

### Teaching the higher levels of the alphabetic code

Although the Rose Review described the teaching of phonics as 'time-limited', teachers should not stop teaching it too early. In the later stages of learning phonics, children encounter the challenge of alternative ways of writing the same phoneme or of reading words that have two possible pronunciations. They also meet more challenging vowel digraphs and trigraphs. It is important that children master the more complex letter-sound correspondences that they need for reading and for spelling.

#### Activity 8.8: Teaching vowel digraphs

This short video [3.39 mins.] shows a struggling reader learning to read vowel digraphs, working one-to-one with a teacher.

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=NRyiOcgyEs8](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NRyiOcgyEs8)

You do not need to make any evaluations.

Of course some children arrive at school already being able to read, but they can benefit from being taught a systematic approach to listening to the sounds in words in order to spell.

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<sup>27</sup> If you already have a copy of the full *Letters and sounds* pack, you can find the one-page summary on the final page of the slim booklet called *Letters and Sounds: Principles and practice of high quality phonics: Notes of Guidance for practitioners and teachers*.

The introduction to the appendix on spelling in the National Curriculum framework says:

Most people read words more accurately than they spell them. The younger pupils are, the truer this is.

By the end of year 1, pupils should be able to read a large number of different words containing the GPCs that they have learnt, whether or not they have seen these words before. Spelling, however, is a very different matter. Once pupils have learnt more than one way of spelling particular sounds, choosing the right letter or letters depends on their either having made a conscious effort to learn the words or having absorbed them less consciously through their reading. Younger pupils have not had enough time to learn or absorb the accurate spelling of all the words that they may want to write.

### **Listening to children reading**

Inspectors must judge how well children are learning to read, particularly in the Early Years and in Key Stage 1.

The end-of-key-stage data and the data from the phonics screening check tell you only so much. The test results cannot give you information about children's fluency, enjoyment, and their knowledge of books and authors; they cannot provide insights into the strategies younger readers are using to decode text. Listening to children reading is therefore an important inspection activity.

The *School inspection handbook* requires inspectors to listen to pupils read to assess their standard of and progress in reading, including their rate of progress:

Inspectors must listen to, among others, lower attaining pupils reading during the inspections of infant, junior, primary and middle schools and should discuss their reading with them. Inspectors will hear the weakest readers in Key Stage 1 and later years. ...

Inspectors should decide which pupils they will listen to, taking into account the school's progress data on reading and other information such as lesson observations. Inspectors should hear children read from books that are appropriate to their age, including from previously unseen books.<sup>28</sup>

Listening to them is one of the ways in which inspectors can evaluate:

- the impact of the teaching of reading that they have seen
- how well different groups of children are making progress, including those who are at risk of not learning to read
- the skills and knowledge that the weakest readers still need to learn.

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<sup>28</sup> *School inspection handbook* (120101), Ofsted, April 2014.

Decide which pupils you are going to listen to on the basis of the evidence you have gathered so far, both before the inspection and while you are in the school. This should include children who did not meet the threshold of the phonics screening check in Year 1 or in Year 2.

Activity 8.8 below uses the final film from the series of films you watched in Part 2. It draws together what you should have learnt in Part 2 from watching teaching and learning in the four different year groups: Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 2. It provides consistent messages about professional development and collaborative approaches, benefiting teachers, enhancing the quality of their teaching and subject knowledge with a consequent impact on pupils' learning and progress.

This sixth film also explores the purpose of listening to pupils reading. It shows the inspector with two different groups of pupils, Year 1 and Year 5, finding out about their reading.

### Activity 8.9: Listening to children reading

Watch 'The continuing story' [9:02mins.].

#### *Discussion with Year 5 pupils*

Focus first on the inspector's discussion with a group of Year 5 pupils as he evaluates their responses to what they have read. This begins at 1:41.

Stop the film at 4:19 and record what you would have written if you had been making the notes during that discussion. Then check your responses [here](#) before moving on to the second part of this activity.

#### *Listening to two lower-attaining boys reading*

Start watching again from 5:42 to 7:22. This is a short but very important sequence.

Stop the film at 7:22 and make a note of your answers to these questions:

- As far as you can tell from this short clip, are the texts well chosen to match the two pupils' reading levels?
- What is the level of the pupils' phonic knowledge and skill and are they able to apply this learning to decode unknown words?
- What additional support do you consider these pupils need?

When you have made some notes, check your responses [here](#).

Here is the link:

[www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/literacy-non-negotiable-continuing-story](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/literacy-non-negotiable-continuing-story)

It is really important that you should have a conversation with the child, along the lines suggested in the questions below, before the child starts to read. If it fits in with your inspection trails, choose children from a class that you have already observed, so that at least the children have seen you before; you may have talked to them about their work already. Remember that they will be nervous, particularly if the school has told them that inspectors will listen to some of them reading.

You should also draw on the information about pupils' reading that the school keeps: reading records, home-school diaries and so on. What is the quality (usefulness) of records that are being kept? If a pupil has an IEP, how precise are the targets (for example, for phonics)? Do assessments identify, in detail, the specific barriers which are holding back pupils' reading?

The questions suggested below have been grouped to test out different aspects of children's reading:

- independence and choice
- knowledge of books and individual authors
- word reading (decoding using phonics and knowledge of common exception words)
- comprehension (literal, inferential and evaluative)
- higher-order reading skills, including appreciation of an author's style, awareness of themes, similarity and differences between texts
- support from school and home
- enjoyment
- awareness of own progress and development as a reader
- teaching, expectations and the school's reading culture.

These will help you to reach judgements about the reading of individual children and about reading more generally in terms of standards and the progress that children are making.

In all the cases, adjust the questions for the child and the text. You can 'mix and match', using some of the Key Stage 1 questions for struggling readers at Key Stage 2 or some of the Key Stage 2 questions with more advanced readers at Key Stage 1. You don't need to ask all of them; they are just prompts.

## At Key Stage 1

Who chose this book? Did you choose it yourself or did someone choose it for you?  
 Have you read it before today or is it a new book?  
 Do you know anything about it already?  
 Do you know any of the characters/people in this story?

### *Decoding*

What do you do if you get stuck on a word?  
 [Return to a word that the child hesitated on and see how s/he tackles it.]  
 What part of the word would you look at first?  
 [Check that the child starts at the beginning.]  
 Can you show me what you do?  
 What sound does this letter make? And this one? And this one? [Point from left to right through the word, not randomly, making sure that you are not covering up the letter.]  
 What word is that when we put those sounds together?  
 Say the word for me.  
 Can you tell me what this word is?  
 [Check the child's fluent reading of common exception words, as they appear in the text, e.g. Year 1: *said, were, friend, here*; Year 2: *door, floor, people, busy, could*.]

### *Comprehension*

Why do you think X [a character] did that?  
 Why do you think Y [an event] happened?  
 What do you think will happen next?

Do you read to someone in school? How often?  
 Do you read with someone at home?  
 Do you have a reading record/diary? Please may I see it? [Check how often an adult listens to the child read? Which adults? Parent/teacher/teaching assistant?]

Do you like this book? Why?  
 What are your favourite (sorts of) books?  
 What books has your teacher read to the class that you enjoyed?

Do you feel you are a good reader? What's easy? What's difficult? How do you think you could get even better as a reader?

Do you enjoy reading?

## At Key Stage 2

Why did you choose this book? Did *you* choose it or did someone choose it for you?  
Did you know anything about it before you started reading it?  
Could you tell me what's happened so far [fiction] or what this book is about [non-fiction]?

What do you do if you don't know a word?  
[Return to a word that the child hesitated on or mispronounced, indicating perhaps that it was new to them.]  
Have you come across this word before?  
How did you know how to say it? Are there any clues in the word? Does it look like any other words you know?  
Do you know what the word means or can you work out what it means (in this sentence)?  
What other word could the author have used that means the same sort of thing?

Why do you think X [a character] did that?  
How do you think X is feeling at the moment? Show me what words/phrases tell us that.  
Why do you think Y [an event] happened?  
What do you think will happen next? What makes you think that?  
How do you think the author wants us to feel at this moment? What is she/he trying to do here?

Have you read any other books/poems by this author?  
Have you read books like this one by someone else? Which ones?  
What sorts of books do you enjoy the most/least?  
Who is your favourite author? Why do you like her/his books? What would you say to recommend them to other people?

Do you enjoy reading?  
Does the school have the sorts of books that you would like to read? If not, what sorts would you like more of?  
How do you find out about new books or authors that you might want to read?

How well do you think you're getting on as a reader?  
What do you think would improve your reading even more?  
What advice does your teacher give you about your reading?  
Does anyone check what books you are reading? Do you get help/advice with what sorts of books to read?

How many books have you read on your own this term/since you have been in this class?  
Do you read every day: at school? at home? If not, why not?  
How many books do you think you read in a week? Who checks how many you read? Do you write down the titles so that you know what you've read?  
How long do you think it will take you to finish this book?



## Part 4: Contextual information

### Module 9: Background information on reading and phonics

This short module gives some contextual information that might be useful if you are asked questions during inspection.

The four sections deal with:

- terminology related to teaching phonics
- the NFER's longitudinal evaluation of the Year 1 phonics screening check
- the DfE's 'criteria for assuring high-quality phonics'
- international comparisons in terms of England's performance in reading.

#### Terminology related to teaching phonics

This section briefly explains terminology related to teaching phonics.

**Systematic phonics** refers to phonics teaching which is done regularly, discretely, explicitly and in an agreed and rational sequence. As Jim Rose put it, 'It cannot be left to chance, or for children to ferret out, on their own, how the alphabetic code works' – particularly a code that is as complex as that of English. **Unsystematic** phonics would be taught incidentally, as and when, on the basis of need.

**Synthetic phonics** has nothing to do with the word 'artificial'; the reference is to the process of blending (synthesising) the individual sounds in a word together, working from left to right, to read them.<sup>29</sup> Synthetic phonics work can begin simply with oral blending, that is, the children listen to sounds and then blend them. They also learn to say sounds, in order, that are represented by individual letters and pronounce these together to say a word (e.g. the sounds /c/, then /a/ and then /t/, blended together to say /cat/). Synthetic phonics also teaches children to break down (segment) a word they hear into its individual sounds, starting from the first sound and working systematically through the word. For each sound they hear, they choose the letter (or combination of letters, such as 'ch' or 'ai' or 'th') to represent that sound in order to spell the word.

In **analytic phonics** the children are taught to identify (analyse) the common phoneme in a set of related words in which each word contains the phoneme which is the focus of the lesson. For instance, the teacher might ask the children to listen to the words 'mat', 'men', 'meat' and say in what ways the words sound alike. Later, the focus shifts to sounds at the end of the word ('lot', 'pat', 'wet') and then, later again, the focus shifts to sounds in the middle (these being more difficult for children to identify than sounds at the beginning or end). Analytic phonics was the

<sup>29</sup> Teachers should encourage children to pay attention to the order in which letters appear in a word, reading from left to right. If this does not happen and they rely on glancing quickly at a word, there is a danger of confusing even simple words such as 'on' and 'no' or 'was' and 'saw'.

approach adopted by the National Literacy Strategy when it was first introduced in 1998.

The Schools White Paper 2010 referred to 'the teaching of **systematic synthetic phonics** as the proven best way to teach early reading' (p.22). The DfE's 'matched funding' from 2011 to 2013 was for resources for teaching 'synthetic phonics' and inspectors are likely to encounter this phrase in schools.

However, the earlier Rose Review in 2006 was more circumspect. Although coming down on the side of synthetic phonics, it preferred to use the term 'systematic phonics', noting:

Research, inspection and leading edge work of settings and schools may inform best practice. However, findings from different research programmes are sometimes contradictory or inconclusive, and often call for further studies to test tentative findings. While robust research findings must not be ignored, developers of national strategies, much less schools and settings, cannot always wait for the results of long-term research studies. They must take decisions, based on as much firm evidence as is available from a range of sources at the time, especially from replicable and sustainable best practice (p.15).

The National Curriculum 2014 also uses the term 'systematic' phonics.

Ofsted's inspection framework refers only to reading (not phonics) and the inspection handbook simply refers to 'phonic' or 'phonics'.

To conclude, the research evidence for 'what sort' of phonics teaching is simply insufficient to provide a basis for choosing between 'analytic' or 'synthetic' phonics. It is better, therefore, to have systematic phonics teaching than unsystematic or no phonics teaching and to give children the knowledge, skills and understanding they need to move forward confidently as readers and (writers).

### **The NFER's longitudinal evaluation of the Year 1 phonics screening check**

The DfE has commissioned the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) to evaluate the phonics screening check. Two interim reports have already been published (in May 2013 and May 2014); a final report will be published in spring 2015.

The reports evaluate the teaching of phonics in the schools that are participating in the evaluation. The evaluations highlight any changes since 2012, when the check was rolled out nationally, following the 2011 pilot.<sup>30</sup> They provide key evidence of schools' responses to the screening check and the extent to which they have adjusted their practice.

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<sup>30</sup> The DfE piloted the screening check with 10,000 pupils in around 300 schools. A short evaluation of that pilot, commissioned from Sheffield Hallam University, was published in September 2011 and a longer one in December 2011.

The May 2013 report, including the technical appendices, is available here:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/evaluation-of-the-phonics-screening-check-first-interim-report>

The May 2014 report and the technical appendices is available here:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/phonics-screening-check-evaluation>

It is worth noting the following finding in the May 2014 report:

The findings ... indicate that the majority of those teaching phonics do so in the context of focused sessions. However, some confusion was evident among those who identified themselves as teaching phonics using a 'first and fast' approach. Of these schools, 87 per cent 'agreed' or 'agreed somewhat' with the contradictory statement 'A variety of different methods should be used to teach children to decode words'.

This contradiction in teacher responses was also apparent in 2012, and reflects a misunderstanding regarding what 'systematic synthetic phonics' means, and what 'first and fast' in this context implies. The guidance makes it clear that phonics alone should be taught initially, and that teaching other strategies alongside phonics is not recommended. It would seem that, as in 2012, the figure of 60 per cent of schools who claim to be teaching systematic synthetic phonics 'first and fast' is potentially misleading, and does not provide an accurate representation of actual practice in phonics teaching. A high proportion of schools are clearly teaching phonics, but not necessarily in the way a systematic synthetic approach would prescribe.<sup>31</sup>

The programme of study for word reading in the National Curriculum 2014, which applies to all maintained schools, is statutory. It requires pupils to be taught to 'apply phonic knowledge and skills as the route to decode words'. The NFER's finding therefore has important implications for inspectors, particularly in schools in which pupils are underperforming.

### **The DfE's 'criteria for assuring high-quality phonics'**

Following the Rose Review report in 2006, the then Department for Education and Skills (DfES) published 'Criteria for assuring high-quality phonics'. The DfE revised and re-published the criteria in October 2010 'to provide schools with clearly defined key features of an effective, systematic, synthetic phonics programme.' You can find the criteria on the DfE's website at this link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/phonics-teaching-materials-core-criteria-and-self-assessment>

In April 2011, the government announced 'matched funding' in order for schools to buy resources and training to support the teaching of 'systematic synthetic phonics', following the commitment in the White Paper:

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<sup>31</sup> *Phonics screening check evaluation. Research report. May 2014*, DfE, 2014;  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/phonics-screening-check-evaluation>

The evidence is clear that the teaching of systematic synthetic phonics is the most effective way of teaching young children to read, particularly for those at risk of having problems with reading. Unless children have learned to read, the rest of the curriculum is a secret garden to which they will never enjoy access. As this is an area of such fundamental importance, we will go further than in any other area in actively supporting best practice. We will provide the resources to support the teaching of systematic synthetic phonics in primary schools. We will support all schools with key stage one pupils to implement this approach by providing funding for high-quality training and classroom teaching resources (p.43, para. 4.16).

To be eligible for the matched funding, the materials had to be approved as meeting the DfE's 'core criteria'. The DfE matched the payment up to £6,000: that is, £3,000 from the school and £3,000 from the DfE. The funding was available from September 2011 until 31 October 2013. If they were to be eligible for the match-funding, schools had to select the products they were interested in from a catalogue published by the DfE.

In addition, the DfE provides a list of commercial products that have been assessed as meeting the core criteria, although this is separate from the catalogue of products and training. You may find it useful to cast your eyes over the list to familiarise yourself with the names of programmes you might meet during inspection:

<https://www.gov.uk/choose-a-phonics-programme>

The following link will take you to an overview of the DfE's work related to phonics:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/phonics>

## **International comparisons**

Behind the 2010 White Paper's focus on children's reading, lay England's performance in the regular international assessments of the performance of 10- and 15-year-olds.

Since the results from the 2009 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) were not available at the time, the White Paper quoted the 2006 results. It noted that England had fallen from 7<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> in literacy in terms of the performance of 15-year-olds. The 2012 results, published in 2013, showed that 17 of the other 64 participating countries performed at a significantly higher level in reading than England. England's attainment gap had widened since 2009: higher attaining pupils had improved their scores, but those of lower achieving pupils had declined slightly. As in PISA in 2006 and 2009, only 13 countries had a wider spread of overall attainment than England.

In the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) in 2006 – an assessment of 10-year-olds – England was ranked 15<sup>th</sup> out of the 40 countries that took part, a contrast to 2001 when England was ranked third out of 35 countries (after Sweden and the Netherlands). In PIRLS in 2009, England was ranked 25<sup>th</sup> out of 65. In 2011, PIRLS ranked England 11<sup>th</sup> out of 45, an improvement on 2006 and

2009.<sup>32</sup> However, while our highest attaining pupils were among the best readers, the lower attaining readers again did less well than the weakest readers in other high-scoring countries. This wide range of attainment also characterised England's performance in 2006 and 2001. As was the case in almost all other participating countries, girls performed significantly better than boys. However, the gap was greater in England than in many of the other countries.

The White Paper's concern that England was 'slipping back in the rankings as others improve faster' was not surprising. The achievement gap between England and other countries imposes 'an invisible yet recurring economic loss'. A summary report on PISA 2009 calculated the economic disadvantages for the United Kingdom:

A recent study carried out by the OECD in collaboration with the Hoover Institute at Stanford University suggests that a modest goal of having the United Kingdom boost its average PISA scores by 25 points over the next 20 years – which corresponds to the performance gains that some countries achieved between 2000 and 2009 alone – could imply a gain of US\$6 trillion for the United Kingdom economy over the lifetime of the generation born in 2010 ... The predictive power of student performance at school on subsequent successful education and labour-market pathways is also demonstrated through longitudinal studies (OECD, 2010a).<sup>33</sup>

Teaching phonics is not, alone, the answer to the UK's economic problems, but improving the teaching of reading, particularly at the earliest stages, should improve life-chances more generally. In a speech in April 2014 to the British Chambers of Commerce about literacy, numeracy and vocational education, the then Secretary of State for Education, Michael Gove, said:

I'd like to outline one simple national ambition we should set ourselves to ensure educational opportunity is genuinely extended to all. We need to ensure we eliminate illiteracy and innumeracy in Britain. In the same way as developing nations know they need to secure clean drinking water and eliminate malaria if their children are to flourish. And in the same way as our forefathers more than 100 years ago knew they had to eradicate polio and TB if children were to flourish. So we must ensure no child grows up in modern Britain with their futures irredeemably blighted by illiteracy and innumeracy. That is why I am introducing policies to make sure children leave primary schools literate and numerate. So by the end of year 1, every child is now checked to make sure they are decoding words fluently – helping teachers to make sure pupils are making progress in reading, and to identify any child who might need extra help.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Twist, L., Sizmur, J., Bartlett, S. and Lynn, L. *PIRLS 2011: Reading Achievement in England*, NFER, 2012; [http://www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/PRTZ01/PRTZ01\\_home.cfm](http://www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/PRTZ01/PRTZ01_home.cfm)

<sup>33</sup> *Viewing the United Kingdom school system through the prism of PISA*, OECD; [www.pisa.oecd.org/dataoecd/33/8/46624007.pdf](http://www.pisa.oecd.org/dataoecd/33/8/46624007.pdf)

<sup>34</sup> The full text of the speech can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/michael-gove-an-education-system-which-works-for-every-child>

As Ofsted's 2010 report, *Reading by six*, said:

Too many children do not read or write well enough by the time they leave primary school. The proportion of 11-year-olds that reach the expected level (Level 4 of the National Curriculum) in English has stalled at around 80% and the national average point score for reading at the end of Key Stage 1 has remained between 15.6 and 15.7 for the last four years.

It went on to say:

The best primary schools teach virtually every child to read, regardless of the social and economic circumstances of their neighbourhoods, the ethnicity of their pupils, the language spoken at home and most special educational needs or disabilities.

## Part 5: Suggested responses to module tasks

### Activity 2.4: Listening to individual sounds

There are five sounds in the word 'reading'. Row 2 shows how the sounds would be represented in the International Phonetic Alphabet. Row 3 shows how each sound is written down in English, sometimes with one letter and sometimes with a combination of letters (digraphs in this word).

1	2	3	4	5
/r/	/i:/	/d/	/ɪ/	/ŋ/
r	ea	d	i	ng

Click [here](#) to return to where you were.

### Activity 4.1: Learning through play

*What aspects of language, communication and literacy can you see being promoted?*

The children are becoming familiar with stories and literary language.

They are learning to listen and participate.

They are decoding phonically regular words (sheep, bee, cat etc.) from phase 2 and 3 level *Letters and Sounds* programme<sup>35</sup>.

They are developing fine motor control (brush, pencil).

*How well are the children progressing towards the Early Learning Goals?*

They are well within 40 to 60 months of the Early Years Outcomes.

'Can segment the sounds in simple words and blend them together and knows which letters represent some of them'.

'Links sounds to letters, naming and sounding the letter of the alphabet.'

*What might have been better?*

It might be better to have regularly shaped cards with a picture on the card. This would avoid the risk of children guessing the word from the strong visual clue given by the shape.

Click [here](#) to return to where you were.

<sup>35</sup> *Letters and sounds: principles and practice of high quality phonics* – (00282-2007BKT-EN), DfES, 2007. [www.gov.uk/government/publications/letters-and-sounds](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/letters-and-sounds)

### Activity 5.1: Establishing firm foundations

Your responses should have included some of the following:

*How the adults are promoting the children's skills, as well as their enjoyment of and enthusiasm, and what the children are learning*

In the classroom:

The children have been encouraged to listen to the sounds in words they want to spell and 'have a go'.

The children are able to use what they have learnt to write unfamiliar words (e.g. 'wonts' for 'once'), based on the sounds they can hear.

The children are writing sentences.

The children are learning to write neatly using a line guide.

They are writing for an audience, i.e. giving others clues about what animal they have chosen: 'What am I?'

The child in his independent play, drawing the centipede, is applying his knowledge of sounds and letters to write 'legs'; his letter formation is also good.

The children are developing fine and gross motor skills.

In the parachute activity:

The children are segmenting sounds in words to spell.

There is a focus on consonant digraphs and some vowel digraphs: e.g. in the words *crown*, *brown*. The teacher is not constrained by any age-related expectations; the provision meets the children's needs at this point. (The children who needed additional support were with a teaching assistant for this part of the activity.)

The teacher encourages the children to use descriptive language: 'Can we write "fluffy chick"?'

Notice Billie's speedy reading of 'farmyard' and teacher's response: 'That was quick!'<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> The National Curriculum 2014 says: 'Skilled word reading involves both the speedy working out of the pronunciation of unfamiliar printed words (decoding) and the speedy recognition of familiar printed words'. Billie speedily recognises 'farmyard'; she does not need to decode each sound individually.



### *What might have been better*

Suggestions for what could have been better should include at least some of the following:

The teacher should use letter names to refer to the letters in spelling 'have' (a 'tricky word'). The Year 1 programmes of study for spelling in the National Curriculum 2014 say that pupils should be taught to name the letters of the alphabet and should use letter names to distinguish between alternative spellings of the same sound.

In the parachute activity, the teacher could have asked pupils to construct and say a sentence to develop the concept. The Year 1 programmes of study for writing in the National Curriculum 2014 say that pupils should be taught to 'compose a sentence orally before writing it'. Composing in this context would have been ideal preparation for Year 1.

The marker pens should be smaller to fit the pupils' hands. The Year 1 non-statutory guidance for handwriting in the National Curriculum 2014 advises: 'The size of the writing implement (pencil, pen) should not be too large for a young pupil's hand. Whatever is being used should allow the pupil to hold it easily and correctly so that bad habits are avoided.'

Click [here](#) to return to where you were.

### **Activity 6.1: Assessment and consolidation**

#### *Multi-sensory teaching*

Visually: using the different coloured cards for the three different digraphs on the flip chart; the 'snow' that the teacher uses as part of the spelling

Physically: writing the digraphs on the whiteboard; the children's (and the teacher's) active demonstration of 'segment' and 'blend'; handling the physical objects in the lower-attaining group (e.g. the boat)

#### *Links between phonics for reading and phonics for spelling*

This is evident throughout the film but particularly in the relationship between the whole-class session and the writing session that follows.

#### *Development points*

The teacher should provide a good handwriting model for pupils; this was not always the case in this lesson. There are examples of pupils forming letters incorrectly as in the Reception film, the marker pens should be smaller to fit the pupils' hands (although these are narrower than the ones used in the Year R lesson).

Click [here](#) to return to where you were.

## Activity 7.1: Developing comprehension

### *The strategies the teacher uses and the learning that results*

The teacher knows the text really well, has prepared it effectively and knows what she wants the pupils to learn. Notice the difficulty that some of the pupils are having with even simple recall. She does not underestimate what they need to learn.

The teacher:

- gave time for clarifications, e.g. the pronunciation of 'obviously'
- dealt with misconceptions and reminded pupils to refer to the text as the source of information
- used careful and persistent questioning to support comprehension
- used technical vocabulary as part of her everyday dialogue with the pupils (*digraph, synonym, prefix*)
- gave Lauren opportunity to re-read sentence to develop fluency – an essential prerequisite for comprehension
- used drama as well as explanation to develop their understanding of the word 'stealthily' ('Show me,' Sam says.)
- encouraged the pupils to visualise what the story was telling them
- referred to the text all the time, encouraging the pupils to use the text as evidence, including
  - scanning for specific evidence
  - making inferences
  - using previous knowledge of the story (e.g. what they know about what the Sand Tiger would want to eat)
- made links in meaning across words (e.g. 'pre-dark': time was given to developing their understanding of the prefix 'pre', involving the entire group in the discussion)
- developed vocabulary (e.g. anxiously, stealthily)
- encouraged independent reading, asking them to read a passage quietly by themselves.
- encouraged the application of phonic knowledge, e.g. in decoding 'eagerly' and encouraged the pupil to focus on (and pronounce accurately) the initial vowel digraph of the word to support her decoding.
- emphasised the need to focus on the text and highlighted a possible confusion between the illustration and the words themselves.
- sustained a learning environment where the pupils could concentrate and persevere.

*The skills that were being developed that the pupils are likely to use later in Key Stages 2, 3 and 4.*

The comprehension skills being taught in this Year 2 video are required throughout primary and secondary education.

Older students may well need to be supported to comprehend increasingly challenging texts across a range of subjects.

Grammar (e.g. passive voice, more complex sentences), vocabulary and new or unfamiliar content in school subjects will all pose challenges for comprehension.

Click [here](#) to return to the training materials.

### **Activity 8.2: Analysing data from the phonics screening check**

- Girls performed better than boys: 19 out of the 26 girls in the cohort met the standard (73%) compared to only 17 of the 33 boys (52%)
- None of the three pupils in the cohort who were eligible for free school meals met the standard of 32/40
- The proportion of FSM pupils meeting the standard was worse than the national picture
- The proportion of pupils who were not eligible for FSM was about the same as the national picture (two percentage points above)

#### *Questions to be followed up*

- Was this cohort unusual and do the data for other years show a more positive picture?
- What is being done to improve the knowledge and skills of both boys and FSM pupils?
- Why did seven girls not meet the standard? Was there a pattern in their errors/gaps?
- What action has been taken across the cohort as a whole to improve their phonic knowledge and skills?
- What action is being taken in earlier year groups to improve performance?
- Are these inequalities replicated in other data and in outcomes in English, especially reading, at the end of key stages?

Click [here](#) to return to where you were.

### Activity 8.3: Tommy hates reading

1. How are you going to follow up Tommy's reading? Possible lines of enquiry might include the following:
2. Ask Tommy's class teacher about how well he is getting on in reading. What progress has he made and what provision is or has been in place (if any) to improve his fluency and confidence? Ask about the impact and how it was evaluated. Ask how much time Tommy spends reading during the day/week.
3. Ask to see his records and any other assessments about Tommy's reading, including tracking data, any optional test data, his reading record, a list of books read. Use these to inform the evidence you gather on assessment.
4. Scrutinise some of Tommy's writing for evidence of his wider literacy and the quality of his spelling.
5. Observe lessons in Tommy's class to evaluate the quality of teaching, including the opportunities to read and write. (You could evaluate both literacy and another lesson in which the children might be reading or writing.)
6. If there is an opportunity, observe Tommy reading aloud to an adult. What is the quality of the support and feedback he is getting? Is he making progress and gaining confidence? If not, what is getting in the way?
7. As an alternative, ask him to read to you. Listen closely for evidence of the strategies he uses to read and try to gauge the level of his phonic knowledge and skills. Put this evidence alongside what you have gleaned from a scrutiny of his books, including the standard of his spelling.
8. Find out whether there are others struggling like Tommy. Ask managers and Tommy's class teacher to tell you how many pupils in the school/class are in a similar position. Use their answers to draw together evidence on the leadership and management of reading and evidence for the quality of assessment.
9. Who manages the teaching of reading? Who is responsible for making sure that Tommy and others leave school able to read?

Click [here](#) to go back to where you were.

### Activity 8.4: Listening to Ayesha

Possible lines of enquiry about Ayesha might include the following:

1. Listen to some more children reading in this class – across the spectrum of attainment. Are there more children ‘reading’ like Ayesha?
2. Discuss Ayesha’s reading with the class teacher – who thinks she is an ‘average’ reader. What does her response tell you about assessment in this class? Gently probe how it is that Ayesha cannot match sounds and letters at this stage.
3. Ask to see all the records on Ayesha’s reading, especially any assessments of her phonic knowledge and skills and her Foundation Stage profile. What does the profile say about her knowledge and skills at the end of the Foundation Stage and, in your view, was the judgement accurate?
4. Observe phonics teaching across the Early Years and Year 1. Evaluate the quality of the teaching and the progress the children are making. Ask to see the individual records of a whole class and match these up with the planning for phonics. Are expectations high enough? To what extent does the school have a systematic programme for teaching phonics? Does teaching reinforce earlier learning?
5. Use your answers to draw together evidence on the leadership and management of reading and the quality of assessment. What is the quality of assessment during teaching?

Click [here](#) to go back to where you were.

### Activity 8.5: Whole-school systems

Apart from outcomes in reading, evidence from or about the following might also help you to determine the consistency of a school’s approach to teaching reading:

- the impact of the subject leader or reading manager across classes/year-groups, for example through her/his monitoring of progress and feedback to staff
- strong links between early language work in the Nursery and Reception classes and work in Key Stage 1
- a shared system for tracking children’s progress in reading across the school
- the quick and effective transfer of children from one reading group to another, determined through whole-school reading assessments, so that teaching is matched closely to need

- common features in teaching reading across different classrooms, such as mnemonics, shared multi-sensory approaches, common vocabulary, similar literacy displays (as appropriate to the age of the children) and other resources as reference points
- strong links between any intervention work and the teaching in the mainstream classroom – and between the staff involved (teaching assistants and teachers)
- the impact of whole-school continuing professional development (CPD) for reading that has involved teaching assistants as well as teachers
- a shared language for discussing reading – shared by children and staff
- common communication to parents about how the school teaches reading – and feedback from parents that this is so.

Click [here](#) to go back to where you were.

### Activity 8.9: Listening to children reading

*Year 5 pupils*

In recording your evaluation of the discussion with the Year 5 pupils, you might have written some or all of the following:

- enthusiastic readers
- able to use technical language to discuss their reading – genre, alliteration, metaphor
- gaining confidence and presentational skills from preparing and reading aloud
- showing stamina as readers (The wreck of the Zanzibar)
- using extended sentences in this discussion – a reflection of their experience as readers that feeds into their oral language
- displays around the walls reinforce a focus on reading and the range of reading and authors.

Click [here](#) to return to the second part of this activity.

Two lower-attaining boys (Domenicas and Tariq)

Although this is a very short sequence, you might have been able to respond as follows:

**Q.** Are the texts well chosen to match the two pupils' reading levels?

**A.** Yes, the text provides sufficient challenge for each of the boys and, importantly, they are able to decode successfully.

**Q.** What is the level of their phonic knowledge and skill and are they able to apply this learning to decode unknown words?

**A.** We know (from the earlier film) that both these boys are in Year 1. From the limited evidence we have, we can see that both of them know the sounds of the letters they see. This relates to the earlier point – that the texts are well-matched to the current level of phonic knowledge. In terms of their skill (blending), Tariq is more skilful in this respect than Domenicas, who has to be encouraged to look closely at exactly what is on the page. But they are both successfully in decoding.

**Q.** What additional support do you consider these pupils need?

**A.** Both boys, but particularly Domenicas, would benefit from plenty of practice in reading aloud. This would give them opportunities to apply their phonic knowledge and skill to reading and to increase their fluency. Domenicas would also benefit from as many opportunities as possible to talk and listen in English, so increasing his spoken vocabulary. The moment when Tariq decodes 'carnival' successfully and then says 'I been to carnival – in Central Park!' shows the importance of developing pupils' spoken vocabulary: the more words they know, the better their comprehension. (Recall the group in the Nursery at Tollgate, talking about the story.) It is important to note that Tariq decoded 'carnival' by himself, applying his phonic knowledge and skill of blending the sounds together to read the word independently. Once he hears himself say the word 'carnival', he recognises that he knows the word and what it means; his knowledge of what a carnival is then available to him to feed into his comprehension.

Click [here](#) to return to the materials.

## Further reading

### Publications by Ofsted

*Are you ready? Good practice in school readiness* (140074), Ofsted, 2014;  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/140074](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/140074)

*Excellence in English: what we can learn from 12 outstanding schools* (100229), Ofsted, 2011;  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/100229](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/100229)

*Ofsted early years annual report* (130237), Ofsted, 2014;  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/130237](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/130237)

*Reading by six: how the best schools do it* (100197), Ofsted, 2010;  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/100197](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/100197)

*Ready to read? How a sample of primary schools in Stoke-on-Trent teach pupils to read* (140130), Ofsted, 2014; [www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/140130](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/140130)

*Removing barriers to literacy* (090237), Ofsted, 2011;  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/090237](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/090237)

*The impact of the Early Years Foundation Stage: a good start* (100231), Ofsted, 2011;  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/100231](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/100231)

*The special educational needs and disability review: a statement is not enough* (090221), Ofsted, 2010;  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/090221](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/090221)

### Other publications

*Assessment framework for the development of the year 1 phonics screening check* (STA/12/5709), DfE, 2012:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/assessment-framework-for-the-development-of-the-year-1-phonics-screening-check>

T. Oates, *Could do better: Using international comparisons to refine the National Curriculum in England*, Cambridge Assessment, 2010;  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/international-curriculums-could-do-better-analysis-published>

J. Rose, *Independent review of the teaching of early reading: final report* (0201-2006DOC-EN), DfES, 2006;  
<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130401151715/http://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationdetail/page1/DFES-0201-2006>

Twist, L., Sizmur, J., Bartlett, S. and Lynn, L. *PIRLS 2011: Reading achievement in England. Research report, December 2012*, NFER, 2012;  
[www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/PRTZ01/PRTZ01\\_home.cfm](http://www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/PRTZ01/PRTZ01_home.cfm)



L. Twist, I. Schagen and C. Hodgson, *Readers and Reading: the National Report for England 2006* (PIRLS: Progress in International Reading Literacy Study), NFER, 2007.

*Process evaluation of the Year 1 phonics screening check pilot* (DFE-RB159), DfE, 2011; [www.gov.uk/government/publications/year-1-phonics-screening-check-pilot-evaluation](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/year-1-phonics-screening-check-pilot-evaluation)

*Teachers' standards* (DFE-00066-2011), DfE, 2011;  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/teachers-standards>

*Teaching reading in Europe: contexts, policies and practices* (ISBN 978-92-9201-179-6), European Commission, 2011;  
[http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/thematic\\_reports\\_en.php](http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/thematic_reports_en.php)

*The Importance of Teaching –The Schools White Paper 2010* (Cm 7980), DfE, 2010;  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-importance-of-teaching-the-schools-white-paper-2010>

*The national curriculum in England: Framework document September 2013* (DFE-00177-2013), DfE, 2013;  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/national-curriculum>

*The phonics screening check – responding to the results. Departmental advice for Reception and Key Stage 1 teachers* (DFE-00331-2013), DfE, 2013;  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/phonics-screening-check-responding-to-the-results>

## **Websites**

The British Association of Teachers of the Deaf (BATOD)

BATOD deals with all professional aspects of the education of deaf children and their teachers.

[www.batod.org.uk](http://www.batod.org.uk)

The National Deaf Children's Society (NDCS)

The society provides a range of publications and advice – both for families of deaf children and for professional working with them.

[www.ndcs.org.uk](http://www.ndcs.org.uk)

## Annex. Letters and sounds

### Overview of phonic knowledge and skills to be covered in Phases one to six

This is reproduced, with minor layout changes, from the original DfES publication: *Letters and sounds: principles and practice of high quality phonics*.<sup>37</sup>

<p><b>Phase One</b></p>	<p>Phase One paves the way for the systematic teaching of phonic work to begin in Phase Two. In this phase activities are included to develop oral blending and segmenting of the sounds of the spoken words. These activities are very largely adult-led. However, they must be embedded within a language-rich educational programme that takes full account of children’s freely chosen activities and ability to learn through play. Phase One activities are designed to underpin and run alongside activities in other phases.</p>		
<p><b>Phases Two to Six</b></p>	<p>Knowledge of grapheme-phoneme correspondences (GPCs)</p>	<p>Skills of blending and segmenting with letters</p>	<p>High-frequency words containing GPCs not yet taught</p>
<p><b>Phase Two</b> up to 6 weeks</p>	<p>19 letters of the alphabet and one sound for each.</p>	<p>Starting with a small set of GPCs and then increasing the number: Blend separate sounds together into whole words (for reading) Segment whole words into separate sounds (for spelling) (e.g. <i>in, up, cat, sit, run, and, hops, bell</i>). Optional: Simple words of two syllables using taught GPCs (e.g. <i>sunset, laptop, picnic, robin, camel</i>). Blending to read simple captions.</p>	<p><i>the, to, no, go, I</i></p>
<p><b>Phase Three</b> up to 12 weeks</p>	<p>7 more letters of the alphabet. Graphemes to cover most of the phonemes not covered by single letters.</p>	<p>Blend and segment sounds represented by single letters and graphemes of more than one letter, including longer words (e.g. <i>chip, moon, night, thunder</i> – choice of word will depend on which GPCs have been taught).</p>	<p><i>he, she, we, me, be, was, my, you, her, they, all, are</i>. Emphasise parts of words containing known correspondences.</p>

<sup>37</sup> *Letters and sounds: principles and practice of high quality phonics – Notes of guidance for practitioners and teachers* (00282-2007BKT-EN), DfES, 2007.

		Blend to read simple captions, sentences and questions.	
<b>Phase Four</b> 4 to 6 weeks	No new GPCs.	Blend and segment words with adjacent consonants (e.g. <i>went, frog, stand, jumps, shrink</i> ).	<i>said, so, have, little, some, come, were there, little, one, do, when, out, what.</i> Again, emphasise parts of words containing known correspondences.
<b>Phase Five</b> throughout Year 1	More graphemes for the 40+ phonemes taught in Phases Two and Three; more ways of pronouncing graphemes introduced in Phases Two and Three.	Blend and segment sounds represented by all GPCs taught so far.  Try alternative pronunciations for graphemes if the first attempt sounds wrong (e.g. <i>cow</i> read as /coe/ sounds wrong; <i>break</i> read as /breek/ or /breck/ sounds wrong).	<i>oh, their, people, Mr, Mrs, looked, called, asked, water, where, who, again, though, through, work, mouse, many, laughed, because, different, any, eyes, friends, once, please.</i>
<b>Phase Six</b> throughout Year 2  [Note that the teaching of spelling cannot be completed in Year 2. It needs to continue rigorously throughout primary schools and beyond if necessary.]	Word-specific spellings, i.e. when phonemes can be spelt in more than one way, children will learn which words take which spellings (e.g. <i>see/sea, bed/head/said, cloud/clown</i> ).	Increasingly fluent sounding and blending of words encountered in reading for the first time. Spelling of words with prefixes and suffixes, doubling and dropping letters where necessary (e.g. <i>hop/hopping, hope/hoping, hope/hopeful, carry/carried, happy/happiness</i> ). Increasingly accurate spelling of words containing unusual GPCs (e.g. <i>laugh, once, two, answer, could, there</i> ).	As needed.