Key Stage 3
National Strategy

Early phonics for secondary pupils
Handbook

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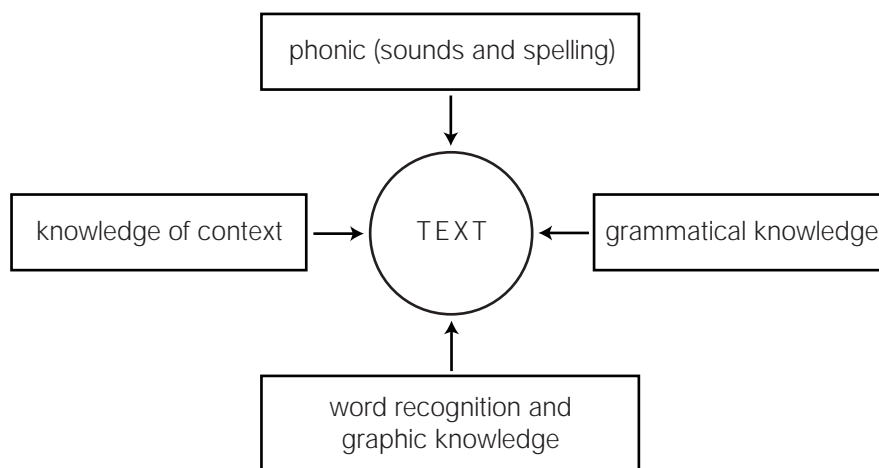# Contents

Introduction to phonics teaching

The phonics handbook

This phonics handbook is designed for Key Stage 3 teachers and outlines progression in teaching and learning phonics in seven steps. Activities for whole-class teaching are suggested for each step and instructions for these activities are provided so that phonics may be taught in a lively, interesting and interactive manner.

Rationale

It is widely accepted that successful reading depends on learning to use a range of strategies. The reader uses these as clues to the meaning by predicting the text, checking and cross-checking, identifying and correcting errors. Reading is by no means a passive process: it involves searching, problem-solving, active prediction and an ability to bring past knowledge and experience to bear.

We can represent this process as a set of searchlights, each shedding light on the text:

```
              ┌──────────────────────────────┐
              │  phonic (sounds and spelling) │
              └──────────────┬───────────────┘
                             │
                             ▼
┌─────────────────────┐   ╭───────╮   ┌──────────────────────────┐
│ knowledge of context│ → │ TEXT  │ ← │  grammatical knowledge    │
└─────────────────────┘   ╰───────╯   └──────────────────────────┘
                             ▲
                             │
              ┌──────────────┴───────────────┐
              │    word recognition and      │
              │     graphic knowledge        │
              └──────────────────────────────┘
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Successful teaching equips pupils with as many of these searchlights as possible. Each sheds a partial light, but together they make a mutually supporting system. The fewer searchlights the reader can switch on, the more dependent s/he is on a single one; if that one should fail, the reader will be stuck. The more searchlights we can teach pupils to switch on simultaneously, the less they will need to rely on any single one and the less it will matter if one fades or goes out. Thus, successful reading may be considered in terms of *maximising redundancy*: having as much information available, from as many searchlights, for as much of the time as possible. As pupils learn to read, they need to be taught how to draw on all this knowledge and orchestrate it so that each searchlight or clue is used to reinforce and check the others.

Most teachers understand the importance of teaching pupils to predict and check their reading with reference to the context and grammar of what they are reading. They need to check whether their reading makes sense and, if it does not, to recheck it, identify errors and try to correct them. These strategies are essential to comprehension. They also provide necessary support for learning

to decode words, i.e. to build them up from their spelling/sound patterns. The importance of comprehension has, rightly, been given much emphasis in the past. Comprehension must always be the primary purpose of reading.

This general model of reading is well known but it is not straightforward for, depending on what is being read, some searchlights may be brighter than others. Where texts are familiar and predictable, pupils can often rely heavily on contextual and grammatical knowledge, paying relatively little attention to the sounds and spellings of words. They may make progress in the early stages by reading and rereading familiar texts. Because the language and its context are predictable, pupils can get by with very limited phonic strategies and quickly become overdependent on remembering or guessing their way through the text.

However, these readers meet problems later when faced with unfamiliar and more complex texts because they have learned to be overdependent on contextual cues as the predominant strategy for reading. As the familiarity of the text diminishes, they need to rely more on their ability to decode individual words. They also experience significant spelling problems because they have inadequate knowledge of the sound/spelling system.

The arbitrariness of the spelling system
The systematic teaching of phonics and spelling is often treated with suspicion. However, pupils do not learn to distinguish the sounds of words automatically. Still less do they automatically understand the common conventions for representing them in writing. This skill is tied to our particular way of writing our language, with 26 letters to represent the 42 phonemes.

Most beginning readers will have, at best, only limited knowledge of how spelling patterns are used to represent words. The alphabetic nature of our spelling system does not reveal itself to pupils simply through repeated exposure to words, signs or storybooks. Beginning readers are likely to treat written words as images, each differentiated by its overall shape and pattern, rather than as letter strings corresponding to sounds. It is essential, therefore, that pupils learn that words have to be 'spelt', not merely 'drawn', that they are composed of letters set out in particular combinations to correspond with spoken sounds, and which letter combinations correspond with which sounds.

The power and economy of the spelling system
It is worth considering that everything that is said or written in contemporary English is encoded in approximately 42 sounds (phonemes) and represented by 26 letters in about 140 letter combinations. The power and economy of such a representational system is second to none. Pupils should learn to identify the phonemes in their spoken language and learn how each of these phonemes is commonly spelt. Some phonemes will correspond to a single letter while others, for example the long vowel phonemes, will have several common spellings, using one or more letters. Through phonics, we should be teaching pupils to:
■ identify sounds in spoken words (phonological awareness)
■ recognise the common spellings for each phoneme (phoneme-grapheme correspondence)
■ blend phonemes into words for reading
■ segment words into phonemes for spelling.

This systematic teaching gives pupils the essential key to the writing code and moves them a long way into fluent reading by enabling them to recognise words by their common spelling patterns. It also greatly facilitates their independent writing by providing the basic rules for most regularly-spelt words.

The most effective phonics instruction teaches pupils to identify phonemes in spoken language first, then to understand how these are represented by letters and letter combinations (graphemes). Phonics can be taught in appropriate and motivating ways and where it is engaging and enjoyable pupils will learn it more effectively. A further major benefit of this learning is that it releases mental capacity for attention to higher-order skills of comprehension and composition.

The alphabetic code
The phonemic system is a system of sounds represented by letters or combinations of letters. Starting from phonemes and learning the letters which can be used to represent them is a logical approach to mastering the alphabetic code.

There are four principles underlying the phonemic system.
- Sounds/phonemes are represented by letters
- A phoneme can be represented by one or more letters. There is not a simple one-to-one correspondence in our alphabetic code. There are not enough letters to represent all the phonemes so some are used in combination such as *sh*, *th*, *ee*.
- The same phoneme can be represented or spelt in more than one way. This is very common, particularly among the vowels, for instance in *rain*, *may*, *lake*. On the surface this appears to present problems with accuracy in spelling but, in fact, most vowel spellings have a particular position in words either at the end (*ay*) or preceding a consonant (*ai*). Even the spellings that appear interchangeable, such as *ai* and *a-e*, are more often than not associated with particular consonants. For instance, words ending in -*ake* and -*ate* are common, those ending in -*aik* and -*ait* are rare.
- The same spelling may represent more than one sound. Examples of this are the *ea* in *mean* and *deaf*, the *ow* in *crown* and *flown*, the *ie* in *field* and *tried*. So, in theory, there could be two pronunciations for the word *tried*. On the whole this does not present a problem for the reader as one pronunciation results in a word and the other does not. Where two words have the same spelling, such as *read* (present tense) and *read* (past tense), the sense of the text guides the reader to the correct pronunciation.

To sum up, there are approximately 42 phonemes in English represented by 26 letters in about 140 combinations. The consonant and vowel phonemes and their most common representations are listed overleaf.

Vowel phonemes and their more usual graphemic representations

vowels	representative words	vowels	representative words
/a/	cat	/oo/	look, would, put
/e/	peg, bread	/ar/	cart, fast (regional)
/i/	pig, wanted	/ur/	burn, first, term, heard, work
/o/	log, want	/or/	torn, door, warn (regional)
/u/	plug, love	/au/	haul, law, call
/ae/	pain, day, gate, station	/er/	wooden, circus, sister
/ee/	sweet, heat, thief, these	/ow/	down, shout
/ie/	tried, light, my, shine, mind	/oi/	coin, boy
/oe/	road, blow, bone, cold	/air/	stairs, bear, hare
/ue/	moon, blue, grew, tune	/ear/	fear, beer, here

Note: phonemes are shown between slashes / /.

Consonant phonemes and their more usual graphemic representations

consonant phonemes	representative words	consonant phonemes	representative words
/b/	baby	/s/	sun, mouse, city, science
/d/	dog	/t/	tap
/f/	field, photo	/v/	van
/g/	game	/w/	was
/h/	hat	/wh/	where (regional)
/j/	judge, giant, barge	/y/	yes
/k/	cook, quick, mix, Chris	/z/	zebra, please, is
/l/	lamb	/th/	then
/m/	monkey, comb	/th/	thin
/n/	nut, knife, gnat	/ch/	chip, watch
/p/	paper	/sh/	ship, mission, chef
/r/	rabbit, wrong	/zh/	treasure
		/ng/	ring, sink

Much of the focused teaching of phonics will need to take place away from texts, through direct teaching and using activities of the kind shown on this course.

Although the structure of the phonic code can sometimes be revealed through poems and word-play texts, in most texts phonic patterning occurs too randomly to be discerned. Most good-quality stories will not repeat sound patterns with sufficient regularity to serve this purpose. Most focused phonics teaching should therefore be done through play, games and activities and then applied alongside other reading cues to meaningful reading of appropriately matched, good-quality texts, particularly in shared and guided sessions with the teacher.

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Glossary of terms

phoneme – the smallest unit of sound in a word. A phoneme may be pronounced differently in different positions; for example, the first and last sounds in the word *little* are variants of the phoneme /l/. A phoneme may be represented by one, two, three or four letters. There are approximately 42 phonemes in English (the number varies depending on the accent), represented by 26 letters in about 140 letter combinations.

digraph – two letters representing one phoneme: b*ath*, tr *ai* n, ch, ur

trigraph – three letters representing one phoneme: h*igh*, fu *dge*

segment – break a word or part of a word down into its component phonemes, for example: *c-a-t*, *ch-a-t*, *ch-ar-t*, *g-r-ou-n-d*, *s-k-i-n*

blend – the process of combining phonemes into larger elements such as clusters, syllables and words; also refers to a combination of two or more phonemes, particularly at the beginning and end of words: *st*, *str*, *nt*, *cl*, *nd*

grapheme – written representation of a sound; may consist of one or more letters, for example the phoneme /s/ can be represented by the grapheme *s*, *se*, *sc* and *ce* as in *sun*, mou*se*, *city*, s*cience*

Step 1

Aims of Step 1
- To become more aware of sounds in speech
- To distinguish between sounds
- To hear patterns of sound in words, e.g. alliteration, rhyme

Activities to support Step 1

Copycat
- Copy animal sounds, e.g. *miaou*, *moo*, *bird tweeting*.

Guess the sound
- Behind a screen, play musical instruments and ask pupils to identify each one.
- Behind a screen, make familiar sounds, e.g. scrunching up paper, pouring water, and ask pupils to identify each one.
- One pupil hides behind a screen and listens for one of the class to call his or her name. The pupil behind the screen has to identify the pupil who called.

Keep the beat
- Clap, skip or march along to the beat of rhymes or songs.
- Clap out syllables in names, e.g. *Cath-er-ine.*

Explore your voice
- Say words or phrases in different 'voices', e.g. growling, whispering, squeaking.
- Say words quickly and say them very, very slowly. Try winding down.

Give me a sound for…
- surprise (Ooooooo!)
- be quiet (Shhhhh!)
- really disappointed (Oh…)
- hissing snake (Ssss)
- appreciation (Mmmm)
- steam train (Ch-ch-ch-ch)
- relax into a chair (Ahahahaha)
- out of breath (H-h-h-h)
- not fair (Aaawww)
- what's that you say? (E-e-e)
- oh no! (Uh-oh)
- salute, yes sir (Aye-aye)

Who can think of a rhyme?
- Who put the jelly into their … (belly)?
- Who put the mustard in the … (custard)?
- Who put the snake into the … (cake)?
- Who put the fish into the … (dish)?

Jingles and chants
- Repeat catchy jingles and chants, e.g. advertising jingles.

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Assessment checklist

Step 1
Can repeat a phoneme
Can identify whether two words are the same or different
Can recite a short rhyme
Can identify whether two words rhyme
Knows that phonemes are represented by symbols

When is the pupil ready to move on to Step 2?

There are two signs:

- The pupil can distinguish some obvious individual sounds in words.
- The pupil has a sense that writing is symbolic.

Step 2

Aims of Step 2

- To continue a string of rhyming words, e.g. *jelly*, *belly*, *smelly*
- To hear and say the initial phoneme in a word
- To know these phonemes and the letters that most commonly represent them:
  /s/ – s
  /m/ – m
  /k/ – c
  /t/ – t
  /g/ – g
  /h/ – h

Activities to support Step 2

Rhyming

- Singing and chanting well-known rhymes
- Creating rhymes, e.g. *Who gave the toy to the boy? Who put the fish in the dish?*
- Start a rhyme and ask pupils to complete it, e.g. *Who gave the pearl to the … ?*
- Try rhyming with pupils' names (but check first to avoid unfortunate rhymes), e.g. *John has gone, Wait Kate.*
- Collect rhyming pairs, e.g. *play day*, *itsy-bitsy*, *fun run*.
- *Pass-the-pebble* Start with a simple word such as *pat*, and pass the pebble when someone suggests a rhyme, e.g. *cat*, *rat*, *plait*, *sat*, *fat*.

Collect, group, match and sort

- Give a group of pupils a basket and send them to collect objects beginning with the chosen sound.
- Ask pupils to group cards or objects by initial sound.
- Ask pupils to 'post' objects into boxes, according to the initial sound.
- Ask pupils to pick out the 'odd one out' from a collection of objects according to the sounds in the names, e.g. *pen*, *pencil*, *paper*, *rubber*.
- Ask pupils to match letter cards to picture cards.
- Choose a theme, e.g. animals, then ask pupils to think of animals with names starting with the chosen sounds, e.g. *S – swan*, *snail*, *snake*.
- Give everyone an object or a picture card and ask them to find the others carrying the same initial sound. Alternatively, ask them to find one other person and swap their objects.

Show me

- Group pupils in pairs or threes. Distribute a set of letter cards, one for each sound. Now show objects one by one. Allow thinking time, then ask the pupils to show you the letter that the name of the object starts with.
- Show a letter card and ask pupils to hold up an object or picture card with a name that starts with that letter.

Handy objects to use in Step 2

sock	mirror	car
saucer	mug	cow
soap	magnet	candle
scissors	mouse	cup
salt	monkey	cardigan
stone	marmite	card
sweets	macaroni	cracker
seeds	map	cushion
star	matches	cat
spoon	mints	
game	hat	tap
grapefruit	hammer	tin
girl	hand	toothpaste
gate	head	toothbrush
goose	hen	telephone
goat	hoop	tin opener
glove	hook	twig
glue	horse	tie
grape		towel

Assessment checklist

Step 2
Can continue an alliterative list
Can hear and say initial phoneme in CVC words
Can sort, match and do oddity test based on initial phoneme
Can continue a string of rhyming words
Can sort, match and do oddity test based on rhyme

Step 3

Aims of Step 3
- To hear and say phonemes in the final position
- To know these phonemes and the letters that most commonly represent them:
  /l/ – l
  /n/ – n
  /d/ – d
  /k/ – k
  /sh/ – sh
  /ch/ – ch
- To write the individual phonemes they have learnt so far

Activities to support Step 3
Add these to the activities already mentioned in Step 2.

Show me
- Distribute to pairs or threes a limited number of letter cards. Have ready a number of words ending in those sounds. Say a word, allow thinking time, then ask pupils to show you the sound in the final position. Ask an assistant to note down the results so you know who needs extra help.
- Vary your questions to include first sounds as well.
- Show a letter card and ask pupils to hold up an object or card that ends with that letter.
- Say a word, then ask pupils to write down, on small whiteboards, the initial letter to show you. Ask an assistant to note down the results so you know who needs extra help. Add challenge by showing objects rather than saying words.

Grouping
- Ask pupils to group themselves with others whose names start with the same sound. Then ask them to group themselves by final sound.
- Ask pupils to group picture cards by final sound.

Quiz
- Challenge pupils to be the first to guess the word you have in mind. 'I'm thinking of word that starts with /sh/ and it's something that sails on the sea. It ends in this letter.' (Show P card.)
- Word races, e.g. 'Which group will be the first to think of four words ending in /sh/?'

Assessment checklist

Step 3
Final phonemes are evident in independent writing
Word divisions are apparent in independent writing
Can identify final phoneme in CVC words
Can sort, match and do oddity test based on final phoneme

Step 4

Aims of Step 4
- To hear and say vowel phonemes in the medial position
- To know and write the vowel letters, plus f, qu, b, r, j, p, th and ng
- To segment CVC words
- To blend CVC words

Activities to support Step 4

Show me
- Distribute to each pupil a number of letter cards. Say a number of CVC words which contain the same medial vowel. Pupils choose the correct letter card and show.
- Say a CVC word and ask pupils to write the correct medial vowel phoneme on small whiteboards.
- Write on the board the first and last letters in a CVC word and ask pupils to fill the gap for the word you say, e.g. p–g.

Sort
- Ask pupils to sort word cards by medial vowel phoneme.

Making and matching
- Give pupils two vowel and a number of consonant cards and ask them to make as many CVC words as possible by arranging the letters. Use medial vowels /a/ and /e/ Use consonants they have already met in Steps 1 and 2.

Wheels and strips
- Design a strip with a moving vowel strip so that the medial vowel can be changed, for example:

```
      a
      e
 p    i    t
      o
      u
```
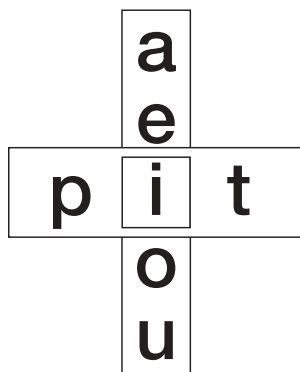
Assessment checklist

Step 4
Can hear and say medial vowels in CVC words
Can segment and spell CVC words
Can blend and read CVC words
Medial vowels are evident in independent writing
Can write letters in response to phonemes

Step 5

Aims of Step 5

- To hear the phonemes in a consonant cluster, e.g. *st*, *cl*, *gr*
- To know and write v, w, x, y, z
- To segment CCVC and CVCC words
- To blend CCVC and CVCC words

Activities to support Step 5

Reading and writing for real

The most effective activity at Step 5 is to use language for reading and writing to make meaning! Pupils have now learnt all the letters and they can make plausible attempts at most words.

- Help pupils to read aloud often. Give time and attention to decoding words, as well as making use of cues. Narrative contains most cues but don't forget that non-fiction books from modern reading schemes – especially those containing photographs – offer non-patronising text and images. Finding appropriate books for older beginners is a key task for the school.
- Create opportunities for pupils to read and write simple text, e.g. labelling drawers and displays, writing up the date and today's information on the board.
- Compose big books together, e.g. *Our Trip*, *Our Class*, *Our School*, *All about … .*
- Write simple instructions to be followed, e.g. for a simple treasure hunt, *Find Clue 3 in a big red box.* Get pupils to compose their own instructions.
- Lead shared writing so that pupils can see and join in the act of composition. Modelling of this sort gives insight into the process of writing. The teacher is, in effect, demonstrating what happens inside the head of a good writer during writing.
- Allow time for private writing, especially for real purposes, e.g. making birthday cards for friends, writing letters, making a list of things to do.

Fill the frame

- Offer strips with certain letters provided, but at least one gap. Ask pupils to identify the letters that could be used in the gap, e.g. *fl-sh* = *a*, *e*, *u.*
- Encourage pupils to complete simple crosswords.

Add, swap and take away

- Distribute a number of letters. For small groups these could be letter cards or magnetic letters. For a large group, the letters could be held up on A4 paper. Ask a pupil holding an *a* to start the word. Ask anyone if they are holding a letter they can add to make a word, e.g. *an.* Ask anyone else if they can add their letter to make a three-letter word, e.g. *and.* Continue, e.g. *sand*, *stand*, *strand.* Look for the longest word.
- Alternatively, start with a CVCC or CCVC word such as *send* and ask pupils if they can swap a letter to make another word. Look for the longest chain, e.g. *sand – band – bend – lend – lent – rent – rest – rust – gust – must.* You can limit the game by retiring letters once they have been dropped out of the word.

Counting

- Distribute a set of number cards 1–5 to pupils in groups of three. Say a word containing digraphs, clusters or both and, after allowing thinking time, ask them to show the number of phonemes. Ask those showing the correct answer to explain it.
- Try the same activity by giving the group word cards to sort under the correct heading.

Word races

- Race to list the most words beginning or ending with a particular cluster, e.g. *st*.
- Race to find the longest word you can think of beginning with a particular cluster, e.g. *pl*.

Assessment checklist

Step 5
Can sort, match and do oddity test based on number of phonemes
Knows phonemes can be represented by one or more letters
Can hear phonemes within consonant clusters
Can segment and spell CCVC and CVCC words
Can blend and read CCVC and CVCC words
Some consonant clusters are evident in independent writing

Step 6

Aims of Step 6
- To learn the main vowel digraphs: *ai, ee, ie, oa, oo, or, ar, ir, oi, ou*
- To segment and blend words containing these vowel digraphs

Activities to support Step 6
Add these to the activities already mentioned in previous steps.

Investigations
- Collect words using the same vowel digraphs onto display sheets, e.g. *moon, spoon, food.*
- Word races, e.g. 'One minute to come up with a list of words starting or finishing with *ar.*'

Dictionary work
- Teach pupils how to use a simple dictionary.
- Teach pupils how to use a spell checker.
- Show pupils shortcuts, e.g. knowing which letter appears when you open the dictionary halfway through, then which letters appear if you open at the quarter points.
- Help pupils to keep a list of useful words.

Assessment checklist

Step 6
Can segment to spell words containing vowel digraphs
Can blend to read words containing vowel digraphs
Knows one representation of each vowel phoneme
Spelling is phonetically plausible

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Step 7

Aims of Step 7
- To learn the split digraphs
- To learn other common vowel digraphs: *ay*, *ea*, *y*, *oe*, *ew*, *ue*, *oy*, *ow*, *er*, *ur*, *aw*, *air*, *ear*
- To start learning about trigraphs, e.g. *-dge*, *-tch*, *-igh*

Activities to support Step 7
Add these to the activities already mentioned in previous steps.

Help pupils to remember
- Create labelled friezes of homophones containing the same digraph, e.g. The AI frieze contains *mail*, *tail*, *pain*, *train*, *rain*, etc – to distinguish them from *male*, *tale*, *pane*, etc. on the A–E frieze.
- Collect and display word families containing similar letter strings, e.g. *light*, *bright*, *night*.
- Teach pupils to use 'look–say–cover–write–check' to learn words in which there are significant variables. A visual image of the word helps them to remember it.

Begin to teach spelling
- Begin to teach about spelling patterns, e.g. the spelling and meaning of simple prefixes, the most common suffixes such as *–tion*, choosing between *-s* and *-es* for a plural.
- Begin to teach further strategies for remembering spellings, e.g. look for words within words, say it as it is spelt, break it into syllables.
- Sort words to work out rules, e.g. 'Which is the most common way of spelling the /ie/ sound?' 'How is /ae/ spelt if it comes at the end of a word?'

Assessment checklist

Step 7
Can read and spell words containing vowel trigraphs
Can read and spell words using the split digraph
Can predict and choose the correct vowel digraph in common and regular words
Knows one representation of each vowel phoneme
Spelling is phonetically plausible and increasingly accurate

Assessment checklists

Step 1
Can repeat a phoneme
Can identify whether two words are the same or different
Can recite a short rhyme
Can identify whether two words rhyme
Knows that phonemes are represented by symbols

Step 2
Can continue an alliterative list
Can hear and say initial phoneme in CVC words
Can sort, match and do oddity test based on initial phoneme
Can continue a string of rhyming words
Can sort, match and do oddity test based on rhyme

Step 3
Final phonemes are evident in independent writing
Word divisions are apparent in independent writing
Can identify final phoneme in CVC words
Can sort, match and do oddity test based on final phoneme

Step 4
Can hear and say medial vowels in CVC words
Can segment and spell CVC words
Can blend and read CVC words
Medial vowels are evident in independent writing
Can write letters in response to phonemes

Step 5
Can sort, match and do oddity test based on number of phonemes
Knows phonemes can be represented by one or more letters
Can hear phonemes within consonant clusters
Can segment and spell CCVC and CVCC words
Can blend and read CCVC and CVCC words
Some consonant clusters are evident in independent writing

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Step 6
Can segment to spell words containing vowel digraphs
Can blend to read words containing vowel digraphs
Knows one representation of each vowel phoneme
Spelling is phonetically plausible

Step 7
Can read and spell words containing vowel trigraphs
Can read and spell words using the split digraph
Can predict and choose the correct vowel digraph in common and regular words
Knows one representation of each vowel phoneme
Spelling is phonetically plausible and increasingly accurate

Note about the assessments

A number of activities are suggested in the assessment checklists. They all use picture cards. Here are sample questions to illustrate the activities.

Matching
'This picture is a bun which starts with a /b/. Can you find me three other pictures that start with a /b/?'

Sorting
'Some of these objects start with a /b/and some with an /m/. Can you sort them into a /b/ and an /m/ pile for me?'

Oddity
'Look at these pictures. The name of one of them begins with a different sound from the others. Can you find it for me?'

This test can be repeated in relation to:
- final phoneme
- medial phoneme
- number of phonemes
- number of syllables
- rhyming/not rhyming.

Dealing with errors

Because phonics teaching is largely oral and interactive, it does mean that pupils sometimes make mistakes from which they can learn. There are a number of strategies for dealing with errors tactfully. To avoid a problem arising when pupils make errors:

1 Create a 'not sure' option if possible.
2 Allow thinking time.
3 Ask pupils to work out answers in pairs to avoid overexposure.
4 Don't put children on the spot before you have taught the point thoroughly.
5 Support insecure learners by differentiating questions, tasks and support to make success likely.
6 Create a climate in which errors are viewed constructively and pupils feel willing to take risks.

To deal with errors once they have been made:

1 Signal clearly if the answer is wrong. Don't dodge, fudge, pretend or ignore.
2 Decide on a course of action:
   – ask again in a different way, and give a stronger cue
   – explain the right answer
   – excavate the underlying problem
   – save it until later.
3 Focus on the answer, not the pupil.
4 Explain why right answers are right – unpack them in the way you would unpack a wrong answer.

Remember:

■ The importance of respecting pupils' dignity and not over-exposing them
■ The importance of establishing positive behaviour in the class
■ The use of professional judgement in deciding whether to excavate a problem there and then or to defer it for one-to-one work
■ The need to assess how many pupils have understood the point, so that you know when to reteach, consolidate or move on.

Key Stage 3 Strategy resources to take pupils further

Level 2 Handwriting Foundation unit	website
Level 2 Phonics Foundation unit	website
Level 3 Literacy Progress Unit: Phonics	publication or interactive CD Rom
Level 3 Literacy Progress Unit: Spelling	publication
Year 7 Spelling Bank	publication
Spelling Starters	website

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