

# Phonics: assessment and tracking guidance



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# Assessment in the Communication, Language and Literacy Development (CLLD) programme

Systematic daily phonics teaching is a key element of the CLLD approach to the teaching of early literacy. Teachers need to feel confident about assessing children's command of phonic skills and knowledge if they are to plan effectively to meet all children's needs and to support them in becoming fluent, independent readers and writers. By ensuring that teaching is adapted to support all children, teachers can be sure that all children make good progress and that vulnerable children are identified early and provided with support to enable them to catch up before the gap between them and their peers widens.

In deciding when children are secure at phonic phases, teachers need to be thinking about what children know and can do *when their attention is on phonics*. This can be during the discrete daily phonics session, but will also be apparent during shared guided and independent reading and writing sessions.

Writing samples provide useful evidence of children's phonic knowledge and ability to apply phonic skills, but evidence obtained through observation of children's approaches to reading unfamiliar words is of equal importance.

Some children need more encouragement than others to read and, particularly, write independently. It is important that teachers ensure that the environment is stimulating, resources inviting and adults ready to support children's independent reading and writing. However, it is not essential for children to demonstrate phonic skills and knowledge in independent contexts before moving on to the next phonic phase, as long as responses during the discrete daily phonics session and in guided reading and writing sessions confirm that they are confidently applying the skills and knowledge they have been taught.

*In Letters and Sounds the boundaries between the phases are deliberately porous so that no children are held back, or unduly pressured to move on before they are equipped to do so. It follows that practitioners and teachers will need to make principled decisions based on reliable assessments of children's learning to inform planning for progression within and across the phases.*

## **(Letters and Sounds Notes of Guidance for Practitioners and Teachers, p. 3)**

The following guidance materials will support teachers and practitioners in making judgements about children's progress through the phonic phases:

1. Letters and Sounds: phonic progress tracking sheet
2. Guidance on using the phonic progress tracking sheet
3. Assessment guidance for phonic Phases 2–5
4. Assessing children's phonic skills and knowledge
5. Assessing phonic skills and knowledge during shared, guided and independent reading and writing sessions
6. Assessing grapheme–phoneme correspondences – individual assessment for occasional use.

Teachers and practitioners should also be using assessments of phonic skills and knowledge to inform judgements against the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP) scale points and Assessing Pupils' Progress (APP) guidelines. While there is no direct correlation between phonic phase attainment and

EYFSP/APP, a judgement of 'secure at Phase 3', for example, would indicate that children should be able to apply the skills and knowledge associated with Phase 3 and this in turn should provide evidence towards certain EYFSP scale points/APP guidelines. Further guidance and suggested possible links between EYFSP and APP can be found in the following section:

**7.** Links between phonic phase assessment and EYFSP/APP.

All local authorities (LAs) should now have in post a dedicated CLLD consultant, so teachers and practitioners should be able to access further support and guidance on assessment at a local level.

# 1. Guidance on using the phonic progress tracking sheet

The phonic progress tracking sheet is designed to provide an overview of children's progress through the phonic phases. Regular monitoring of the tracking sheet will allow teachers and managers to ensure that all children make expected progress, including children in the most vulnerable groups (search for the Letters and sounds: phonic progress tracking sheet on The National Strategies area of the Standards site using [www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies](http://www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies) – ref 00617-2007DWO-EN).

## Working on

Teachers should enter children's names on the tracking sheet, under the appropriate half-term heading, as children begin **working on** a particular phase. For example, the names of those children who begin working on Phase 2 in September should be written into the box alongside the Phase 2 descriptors and in the first autumn column. As children begin working on Phase 3, their names should be written alongside the Phase 3 descriptors and in the appropriate 'term' column.

## Secure at

Children are judged to be **secure at** a particular phase once they know most of the phonemes associated with that phase most of the time, and can apply the skills of blending and segmenting using an appropriate range of grapheme–phoneme correspondences. Many teachers have adopted a strategy of highlighting children's names once they are judged to be secure at that phase. This provides a simple system for recording and reporting as necessary (for example, to the LA) the number of children secure at any given phase at any time.

As teachers highlight the names of children who are judged to be secure at one phase, it is likely that they will, at the same time, write these children's names in the box relating to the next phonic phase as children begin working on the knowledge and skills associated with that phase.

It is important to remember that boundaries between the phases should not be seen as fixed. For example, some children will be introduced to Phase 3 graphemes before they are secure at Phase 2, while continuing to practise the skills of blending and segmentation. Similarly, some children will learn to blend and segment words containing adjacent consonants during Phases 2 or 3, rather than waiting until Phase 4.

## 2. Assessment guidance for phonic Phases 2–5

### Making secure judgements about ‘secure at Phase 2’

The purpose of Phase 2 is to teach children at least 19 graphemes and move them on from oral blending and segmentation to blending and segmenting with letters. This phase should take up to six weeks.

Children are secure at Phase 2 when they can:

- give the sound when shown any Phase 2 grapheme, securing first the starter letters s, a, t, p, i, n
- find from a display any Phase 2 grapheme when given the sound
- orally blend and segment CVC words
- blend and segment in order to read and spell (using magnetic letters) VC words such as if, am, on, up and ‘silly names’ such as ip, ug, and ock.

The majority of the evidence for the four bullet points above can be gathered cumulatively during the daily discrete phonics sessions, particularly during the ‘revisit and review’ and ‘apply’ sections. Teachers/practitioners should also, of course, collect additional evidence from their observations of children reading independently – for example, in guided reading sessions or in the book corner, or from their writing, such as in guided writing sessions or in independent activities.

It is crucial that children have meaningful opportunities to practise, consolidate and extend their phonic skills and knowledge in a broad range of contexts, throughout the setting, indoors and outdoors and throughout the day. Observation of children’s achievements in self-initiated activities will reaffirm the observations made during adult-led phonics, reading and writing sessions. Recognising that some children, particularly boys, are more likely to choose to write outside than inside, teachers/practitioners should ensure that opportunities, resources and supportive adults are always available in the outdoor learning environment.

When observing a child reading, the question the practitioner should be asking in relation to Phase 2 is: *‘Is the child using his/her phonic knowledge and skills to identify the phonemes in a word and beginning to blend them in order to read words?’*

When observing a child writing, the question the practitioner should be asking in relation to Phase 2 is: *‘Is the child using his/her phonic knowledge and skills in his/her writing, for example, beginning to orally segment words and attempting to write, or use magnetic letters to form words, using the graphemes he/she knows?’*

In independent reading and writing, children should know most of the Phase 2 grapheme–phoneme correspondences most of the time.

### Frequently asked questions

#### ***Do children need to be able to read and write CVC words to be secure at Phase 2?***

Some children may be unable to read and spell CVC words independently by the end of Phase 2. However, as long as they are able to blend and segment CVC words orally and know most of the Phase 2 graphemes most of the time, they can progress to Phase 3 where they will continue to practise the skills of CVC blending and segmentation.

### **What about children who are unable to orally segment CVC words?**

Children who cannot orally segment CVC words, for example, children who say /p/ /i/ /t/ when asked to sound-talk 'pit' are not yet secure at Phase 2. Teachers and practitioners need to ensure that these children have plenty of opportunities to practise oral blending and segmentation both in phonics sessions and throughout the day, as without these necessary skills, children will not progress to become confident readers and writers.

## **Making secure judgements about 'secure at Phase 3'**

The purpose of Phase 3 is to teach children another 25 graphemes and further develop their ability to apply the skills of blending for reading and segmentation for spelling. This phase should take up to 12 weeks.

Children are secure at Phase 3 when they can:

- give the sound when shown all or most Phase 2 and Phase 3 graphemes
- find from a display all or most Phase 2 and 3 graphemes when given the sound
- blend and read CVC words consisting of Phase 2 and 3 graphemes
- segment and make a phonemically plausible attempt at spelling CVC words using Phase 2 and 3 graphemes.

The majority of the evidence for the four bullet points above can be gathered cumulatively during the daily discrete phonics sessions, particularly during the 'revisit and review' and 'apply' sections. Teachers and practitioners should also, of course, collect additional evidence from their observations of children reading independently, for example in guided reading sessions or in the book corner, or from their writing, either in guided writing sessions or in independent activities.

It is crucial that children have meaningful opportunities to practise, consolidate and extend their phonic skills and knowledge in a broad range of contexts, throughout the setting, indoors and outdoors and throughout the day. Observation of children's achievements in self-initiated activities will reaffirm the observations made during adult-led phonics, reading and writing sessions. Recognising that some children, particularly boys, are more likely to choose to write outside than inside, teachers and practitioners should ensure that opportunities, resources and supportive adults are always available in the outdoor learning environment.

When observing a child reading, the question the practitioner should be asking in relation to Phase 3 is: *'Is the child using his/her phonic knowledge and skills to identify the phonemes in a word and blending them in order to read single-syllable words consisting of Phase 2 and 3 graphemes?'*

When observing a child writing, the question the practitioner should be asking in relation to Phase 3 is: *'Is the child using his/her phonic knowledge and skills to segment single-syllable words and making phonemically plausible attempts at spelling using Phase 2 and 3 graphemes?'*

In independent reading and writing, children should know most of the Phase 2 and 3 grapheme–phoneme correspondences most of the time.

By the end of Phase 3, children will have been taught one representation for each of the common sounds in English (excluding /zh/). In order to be secure at Phase 3, they must be able to make phonemically plausible attempts at most of the words they wish to use, using the grapheme–phoneme correspondences they have been taught. Many children will also be able to read two-syllable words and simple captions. The skills of blending and segmenting should be well-established by the end of Phase 3.

## Frequently asked questions

### ***How many grapheme–phoneme correspondences do children need to know to be considered secure at Phase 3?***

Children should know one way of writing every sound they can hear in words (around 43 phonemes, depending on local accent) and should be able to apply this knowledge in their independent writing.

### ***A child in my class can give the sounds for all the graphemes she has been taught during the revisit and review part of the daily phonics session, but she doesn't seem to be able to use these graphemes in her writing. Do you think she is secure at Phase 3?***

Children who are unable to make a phonemically plausible attempt at writing using taught graphemes are not yet secure at Phase 3. These children need ongoing opportunities to practise oral blending and segmentation to ensure that they can hear all the sounds in words, and further consolidation of their knowledge of grapheme–phoneme correspondences in a range of contexts.

## Making secure judgements about 'secure at Phase 4'

The purpose of Phase 4 is to consolidate children's knowledge of Phase 2 and 3 graphemes and teach blending and segmenting of adjacent consonants and polysyllabic words. This phase should take four to six weeks.

Children are secure at Phase 4 when they can:

- give the sound when shown any Phase 2 and Phase 3 graphemes
- find from a display any Phase 2 and 3 grapheme when given the sound
- blend and read words containing adjacent consonants
- segment and spell words containing adjacent consonants.

The majority of the evidence for the four bullet points above can be gathered cumulatively during the daily discrete phonics sessions, particularly during the 'revisit and review' and 'apply' sections. Teachers/practitioners should also, of course, collect additional evidence from their observations of children reading independently, for example in guided reading sessions or in the book corner, or from their writing, either in guided writing sessions or in independent activities.

It is crucial that children have meaningful opportunities to practise, consolidate and extend their phonic skills and knowledge in a broad range of contexts, throughout the setting, indoors and outdoors and throughout the day. Observation of children's achievements in self-initiated activities will reaffirm the observations made during adult-led phonics, reading and writing sessions. Recognising that some children, particularly boys, are more likely to choose to write outside than inside, teachers and practitioners should ensure that opportunities, resources and supportive adults are always available in the outdoor learning environment.

When observing a child reading, the question the practitioner should be asking in relation to Phase 4 is: *'Is the child using his/her phonic knowledge and skills to identify the phonemes in a word and blending them in order to read single-syllable words consisting of Phase 2 and 3 graphemes and adjacent consonants?'*

When observing a child writing, the question the practitioner should be asking in relation to Phase 4 is: *'Is the child using his/her phonic knowledge and skills to segment single-syllable words including adjacent consonants and making phonemically plausible attempts at spelling using Phase 2 and 3 graphemes?'*

Some spellings may be inaccurate at this stage, but children's letter knowledge along with their ability to segment should allow them to make a good attempt at writing many of the words they wish to use.

In independent reading and writing, children should know and use correctly most of the Phase 2 and 3 grapheme–phoneme correspondences most of the time and read and write phonemically plausible representations of words containing adjacent consonants.

## Frequently asked question

### ***A child in my class can blend adjacent consonants for reading but he can't segment adjacent consonants at the end of words in his writing. Is he secure at Phase 4?***

Children who are unable to segment to spell words containing adjacent consonants at the beginning and end of words are not yet secure at Phase 4. These children need more practice in oral segmentation of adjacent consonants and then representing them in writing.

## Making secure judgements about 'secure at Phase 5'

The purpose of Phase 5 is to teach alternative pronunciations for known graphemes, and teach new graphemes and their alternative pronunciations. During Phase 5, children will learn to choose the appropriate grapheme to represent phonemes and begin to build word-specific knowledge of the spelling of words. This phase should continue throughout Year 1 (approximately 30 weeks).

Children are secure at Phase 5 when they can:

- give the sound when shown any grapheme that has been taught
- write the common graphemes for any given sound
- use phonic skill and knowledge as the prime approach to reading and spelling unfamiliar words, including those that are not completely decodable
- read and spell phonically decodable two-syllable and three-syllable words.

The majority of the evidence for the four bullet points above can be gathered cumulatively during the daily discrete phonics sessions, particularly during the 'revisit and review' and 'apply' sections. Teachers and practitioners should also, of course, collect additional evidence from their observations of children reading independently, for example in guided reading sessions or in the book corner, or from their writing, either in guided writing sessions or in independent activities.

It is crucial that children have meaningful opportunities to practise, consolidate and extend their phonic skills and knowledge in a broad range of contexts, throughout the setting, indoors and outdoors and throughout the day. Observation of children's achievements in self-initiated activities will reaffirm the observations made during adult-led phonics, reading and writing sessions. Recognising that some children, particularly boys, are more likely to choose to write outside than inside, teachers and practitioners should ensure that opportunities, resources and supportive adults are always available in the outdoor learning environment.

When observing a child reading, the question the practitioner should be asking in relation to Phase 5 is: *'Is the child applying his/her phonic knowledge and skills, including knowledge of alternative pronunciations, as the prime approach to reading unfamiliar words, including those that are not completely decodable?'*

When observing a child writing, the question the practitioner should be asking in relation to Phase 5 is: *'Is the child applying his/her phonic knowledge and skills in writing unfamiliar words, including those that are not fully decodable and is he/she beginning to consider correct spelling choices?'*

Some spellings may be inaccurate at this stage, but children's knowledge of graphemes, along with their ability to segment, should allow them to make a good attempt at writing most of the words they wish to use.

## Frequently asked questions

### ***Which graphemes do children need to be able to read to be secure at Phase 5?***

Children should be able to give the sound for the graphemes on page 134 of Letters and Sounds and the alternative pronunciations on page 136.

### ***How many graphemes do children need to know for each phoneme?***

Children should have been introduced to all the alternative spellings for each phoneme by the end of Phase 5. They should be able to write the common graphemes (though not necessarily all the rare alternatives) in independent writing and should be able to offer a common alternative, based on their growing knowledge of spelling choices, when prompted by an adult.

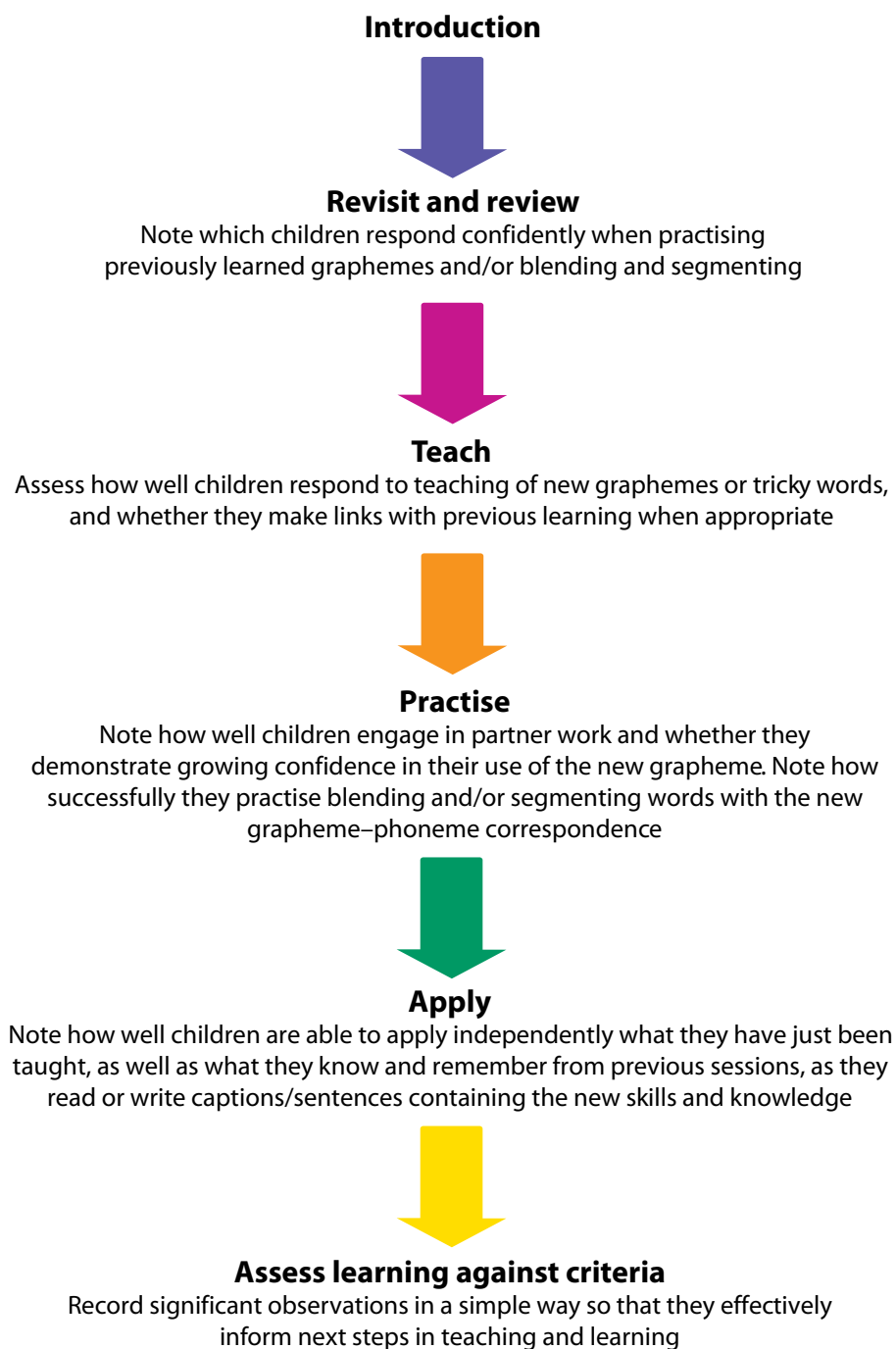
### ***Do children have to spell correctly to be secure at Phase 5?***

Children's spelling should be phonemically plausible by the end of Phase 5, for example, 'a noyzy trane at the stayshun' for 'a noisy train at the station'. Some unconventional spellings are to be expected while children are learning the correct spellings for an ever-increasing number of common words.

# 3. Assessing children's phonic skills and knowledge

Assessment of children's progress through the phonic phases should be based primarily on observation of their responses and the level of confidence they display in using and applying their phonic skills, knowledge and understanding in a range of contexts.

## During the discrete daily phonics session



## 4. Assessing phonic skills and knowledge during shared, guided and independent reading and writing sessions

Teachers should also be alert to evidence that children are applying their phonic skills and knowledge in shared, guided and independent reading and writing, across the curriculum, and in freely chosen activities both indoors and outdoors.

### ***Shared reading and writing***

During shared reading, for example, teachers might occasionally draw attention to words containing recently taught graphemes and note children's responses. In shared writing, children might be asked to 'help' the teacher spell words containing a new phoneme. Correct responses can be noted as evidence of successful application of phonic knowledge.

### ***Guided reading and writing***

Guided reading and writing sessions also provide a wealth of opportunities for assessing, as well as consolidating, children's knowledge of grapheme–phoneme correspondences and their blending and/or segmenting skills.

### ***Independent reading and writing***

Observations of children reading independently can provide the teacher with a great deal of information about their phonic knowledge and blending skills, as well as their reading behaviours and their views of themselves as readers. Teachers should watch out for examples of children reading text from fiction and non-fiction books, displays, role-play areas, menus, etc.

Examples of children's independent writing often provide very useful evidence of their ability to apply what they have learned during the discrete daily phonics session. It is crucial therefore that teachers provide a wide range of stimulating writing equipment and resources both indoors and outdoors to encourage all children to want to write independently. It is worth noting that some children who never feel the need to pick up a pencil in freely chosen activities indoors will become enthusiastic writers when given the opportunity to write using a pen and clipboard outdoors!

## 5. Assessing grapheme–phoneme correspondences – individual assessment for occasional use

Where you have not been able to gather sufficient information from observations to provide a clear picture of children’s achievements, or if you have concerns about a particular child, you may wish to undertake a more focused adult-led assessment, such as the one described here. You will need:

- the record sheet for the child’s responses (search The National Strategies area of the Standards site using [www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies](http://www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies) – ref 00576-2008FLR-EN, page 23)
- the individual grapheme cards (search The National Strategies area of the Standards site using [www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies](http://www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies) – ref 00576-2008FLR-EN page, 24–25).

### Procedure

Present the grapheme cards one at a time and ask the child to tell you what sound he or she says when he or she sees the letter or letters.

Record the child’s responses on the record sheet.

### Guidance

- Start with the graphemes from a letter group you have been using, for example s, a, t, p, i, n, then move on to another letter group. If children recognise all these single-letter graphemes, move on to simple digraphs, for example ‘sh’, ‘th’. Stop the assessment when you judge that the child has reached the limit of his or her knowledge.
- In subsequent assessments, there is no need to go through all the graphemes again. Focus on the graphemes the child did not know, or was unsure of, in the previous assessment.
- It is most important to allow children thinking time as you are presenting the graphemes outside their context as part of the whole word. This can make it more difficult to recall the association, even for successful readers.
- If children are not having much success with this assessment, an alternative is to lay out two or three cards at a time and invite them to identify any they know and to give you the card. Use your judgement about when to finish each child’s assessment.
- Children who are not able to identify any graphemes in this way could be asked to play a ‘sounds game’ where they select an object from a bag and identify the initial sound in the object’s name. They could then try to link the initial sound to the correct grapheme from a small selection.
- Some children will persist in saying the name of the letters rather than the sound. Reassure them that this is what we call the letter – its name. Remind them that you want them to tell you the sound. It can help to get them on the right track by asking what they would say if they saw that letter at the beginning of a word. Write it down if necessary. This is very important because a child who can only name the letters is unlikely to have an understanding that letters are the way we show the sounds in our spoken language or that letters have sound values.

## 6. Links between phonic phase assessment and EYFSP/APP

The table below shows potential links between phonic phase judgements and EYFSP/APP assessment.

While teachers and practitioners must observe the assessment guidance provided in the EYFSP handbook and APP guidelines before completing those assessments, phonic phase achievement should inform and support both EYFSP and APP judgements. There is no absolute correlation, but there is a clear relationship between the skills and knowledge related to phonic phases and the skills and knowledge which underpin achievement of particular EYFSP scale points/APP guidelines, as below:

Phonic phase assessment	Related EYFSP scale points	Related APP guidelines
Experience and engagement at Phase 1 Aspect 4 – Rhythm and rhyme	Linking Sounds and Letters (LSL) 1 – Joins in with rhyming and rhythmic activities	Reading AF5 Level 1 – Comments on obvious features of language, e.g. rhymes and refrains, significant words and phrases
Experience and engagement at Phase 1 Aspect 4 – Rhythm and rhyme Aspect 5 – Alliteration	LSL 2 – Shows an awareness of rhyme and alliteration	
Phase 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>give the sound when shown any Phase 2 grapheme, securing first the starter letters s, a, t, p, i, n</li> <li>find from a display any Phase 2 grapheme when given the sound</li> <li>orally blend and segment CVC words</li> <li>blend and segment in order to read and spell (using magnetic letters) VC words such as if, am, on, up and 'silly names' such as ip, ug, and ock</li> </ul>	LSL 3 – Links some sounds to letters LSL 5 – Hears and says sounds in words LSL 6 – Blends sounds in words Reading 2 – Knows that print conveys meaning Reading 3 – Recognises a few familiar words Reading 4 – Knows that, in English, print is read from left to right and top to bottom	

Phonic phase assessment	Related EYFSP scale points	Related APP guidelines
<p>Phase 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● give the sound when shown all or most Phase 2 and Phase 3 graphemes</li> <li>● find from a display all or most Phase 2 and 3 graphemes when given the sound</li> <li>● blend and read CVC words consisting of Phase 2 and 3 graphemes</li> <li>● segment and make a phonemically plausible attempt at spelling CVC words using Phase 2 and 3 graphemes</li> </ul>	<p>LSL 4 – Links sounds to letters, naming and sounding letters of the alphabet</p> <p>LSL 7 – Uses phonic knowledge to read simple regular words (EYFSP handbook examples – Meg, jam, eggs, sheep)</p> <p>Reading 6 – Reads a range of familiar and common words and simple sentences independently (EYFSP handbook example van, 20 common words in a range of contexts)</p> <p>Writing 2 – Uses some clearly identifiable letters to communicate meaning*</p> <p>Writing 3 – Represents some sounds correctly in writing*</p> <p>Writing 4 – Writes own name and other words from memory*</p> <p>Writing 5 – Holds a pencil and uses it effectively to form recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed*</p> <p>Writing 7 – Uses phonic knowledge to write simple regular words and make phonetically plausible attempts at more-complex words</p>	<p>Reading AF1 Level 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● some high-frequency and familiar words read fluently and automatically</li> <li>● decode familiar and some unfamiliar words using blending as the prime approach</li> </ul> <p>Writing AF8 Level 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● usually correct spelling of simple high-frequency words</li> <li>● phonetically plausible attempts at words with digraphs and double letters</li> <li>● sufficient number of recognisable words for writing to be readable, including, e.g. use of letter names to approximate syllables and words</li> </ul> <p>Writing – Handwriting and presentation* Level 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● most letters correctly formed and orientated</li> <li>● spaces between words</li> <li>● upper and lower case sometimes distinguished</li> </ul>
<p>Phase 4</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● give the sound when shown any Phase 2 and Phase 3 graphemes</li> <li>● find from a display any Phase 2 and 3 grapheme when given the sound</li> <li>● blend and read words containing adjacent consonants</li> <li>● segment and spell words containing adjacent consonants</li> </ul>	<p>LSL 8 – Attempts to read more-complex words using phonic knowledge (EYFSP handbook examples – crabs, jumper, handbag)</p> <p>Writing 7 – Uses phonic knowledge to write simple regular words and make phonetically plausible attempts at more-complex words (EYFSP handbook examples – fiyuweracs for fireworks, pc for park)</p> <p>Writing 8 – Begins to form captions and simple sentences, sometimes using punctuation (EYFSP handbook example – ‘I saw my Auntie Flo at the wedding’ – with some help from the practitioner)</p>	

Phonic phase assessment	Related EYFSP scale points	Related APP guidelines
<p>Phase 5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● give the sound when shown any grapheme that has been taught</li> <li>● write the common graphemes for any given sound</li> <li>● use phonic skill and knowledge as the prime approach to reading and spelling unfamiliar words, including those that are not completely decodable</li> <li>● read and spell phonically decodable two-syllable and three-syllable words</li> </ul>	<p>LSL 9 – Uses knowledge of letters, sounds and words when reading and writing independently (EYFSP handbook examples – beanstalk, beech for beach)</p>	<p>Reading AF1 Level 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● range of key words read on sight</li> <li>● unfamiliar words decoded using appropriate strategies, e.g. blending sounds</li> <li>● some fluency and expression (developing reading fluency is an ongoing focus at Letters and Sounds Phase 6)</li> </ul> <p>Writing AF8 Level 2 – usually correct spelling of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● high-frequency grammatical function words</li> <li>● common single-morpheme content/lexical words</li> </ul> <p>likely errors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● inflected endings, e.g. past tense, plurals, adverbs (teaching correct spelling of inflected endings is an ongoing focus at Letters and Sounds Phase 6)</li> <li>● phonetic attempts at vowel digraphs (children continue to acquire word-specific spelling knowledge at Letters and Sounds Phase 6)</li> </ul> <p>Writing – Handwriting and presentation* Level 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● letters generally correctly shaped but inconsistencies in orientation, size and use of upper/lower-case letters</li> <li>● clear letter formation, with ascenders and descenders distinguished, generally upper- and lower-case letters not mixed within words</li> </ul>

\* Although pencil control and correct letter formation are not included in phonic phase assessment, there is an expectation in Letters and Sounds that children should be able to write each letter correctly when following a model by the end of Phase 3; write each letter, usually correctly, by the end of Phase 4 and form each letter correctly by the end of Phase 5. Teachers need to ensure that children have daily opportunities for writing, as well as activities to promote gross and fine motor control as necessary.

Where close analysis of EYFSP outcomes or APP guidelines reveals that children are not achieving these scale points/guidelines, teachers need to reflect on the opportunities they provide outside the discrete daily phonics session.

In addition to daily phonics sessions, the weekly literacy provision for all Reception and Year 1 children should include daily speaking, listening, shared reading and/or shared writing opportunities; twice-weekly guided reading sessions; weekly guided writing sessions and ongoing opportunities for independent reading and writing through adult-directed and child-initiated activities across the curriculum.

Throughout all these activities, children should be encouraged to apply, practise and consolidate the phonic skills and knowledge they have been taught in their daily phonic sessions, so that the skills and knowledge become securely embedded and children begin to apply them automatically when reading and writing independently.

Teachers also need to ensure that they provide sufficient engaging resources to encourage all children to want to read and write independently. Classroom books need to be attractive to all children; writing resources, tools and equipment need to be readily accessible, indoors and outdoors and meaningful reasons to read and write must be supported by knowledgeable and encouraging adults. The CLLD audits for Nursery, Reception and Key Stage 1 are useful tools for ensuring that the learning environment and resources support the development of early literacy skills and encourage independence.

Audience: CLLD, EYFS and literacy advisers and consultants, EYFS and KS1 practitioners

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