## **TWOA Reading Curriculum and Phonics Programme**

"The best literature has a power that goes beyond words. Literature is too important to restrict to those who can read [in conventional ways]." Grove, N (2005)



### The key question for us at TWOA

How do we include all our children in an inclusive reading curriculum and ensure all our children are seen as 'readers'?

### Why is reading important for everyone?

We live in a world surrounded by print. Regardless of our ability to access it, it is part of the world we *all* inhabit and, we therefore have a moral duty to support our learners to be included in this world, however hard that may be.

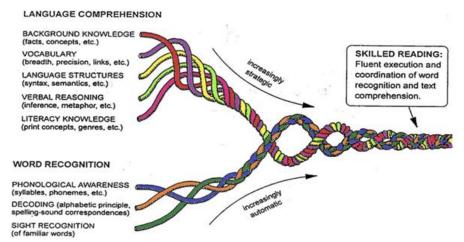
Reading is important. It is a key medium through which we find out new things, interact with others or experience things we may not have the chance to experience in real life. It is good for our mental health and improves our well-being.

### What exactly is reading?

Reading, in its purest sense is about accessing meaning from some form of symbol. This could be text, but it could also be objects, pictures or interactions with people.

### How does anyone learn to read?

Learning to read for anyone, is a highly complex process. It is a difficult skill to develop; it contains many strands which need to be both specifically taught and developed simultaneously. The 'reading rope' illustrates the reading 'process'.



Any reading curriculum should therefore include lots of interaction, speaking and listening and exposure to language, stories, drama, music and rhyme as a bare minimum.

What additional considerations need to

be made for our learners?

The barriers our children have when learning to read are **significant**.

These may be a result of their **disability**: difficulties with processing and integrating sensory information, poor recall and working memory, sensory or motor impairments, (e.g. inability to hear sounds, or move their mouths to form sounds).

These may be a result of **opportunity**: low aspiration of those around them, more limited life experience due to their disability, less opportunity to practice and perfect skills due to time away from learning as a result of higher care needs

These may be a result of **secondary barriers**: learned helplessness or low self-esteem

A key challenge for many of *our* children, (in addition to those outlined above) is the difficulty they have with **independent**, (or the ability to coordinate) movement. Movement plays a key role in learning. The development of motor skills (fine and gross) are closely connected to **cognitive** growth. Activities that develop motor skills, (like writing, drawing, running or jumping) are essential for cognitive functions such as attention, memory, and problem-solving. This is because physical activity stimulates brain development by promoting neurogenesis (the creation of new neurons) and synaptogenesis (the formation of new synaptic connections).

We generally comprehend and retain new information more effectively when we engage in physical activities related to the learning - think about how you learnt to ride a bike, to cut a carrot or knit a scarf – you didn't learn this by watching someone else do it, you learnt it through movement and practicing it over and over again. This is what is commonly referred to as **muscle memory**.

Supporting our children to access the world of literature, been seen as, see themselves as and become, 'readers' is as much of a challenge for us as it is for them. It is nonetheless, the essence of a truly inclusive reading curriculum and one we must continually strive to achieve.

The only true failure is when we walk away.

## What does the TWOA Reading Curriculum consist of?

At TWOA, the reading curriculum incorporates the development of a wide range of skills and access to experiences. As a result, it extends way beyond what would be considered a conventional 'reading curriculum'. It includes 'foundational learning skills' such as the ability to attend to stimuli or develop an understanding of object permanence or cause and effect. It factors in



'pre-reading skills' such as sound awareness and discrimination or communication, (including AAC). It recognises the roles that 'engagement' and 'working memory' play in literacy development. It acknowledges the 'social' aspect of sounds and words, (whether spoken or written) and how they communicate a shared human experience.

### What must we ensure our TWOA Reading Curriculum is?

A truly inclusive whole-school approach to reading must be:

**Consistent** (not uniformity). **Familiar** (characters, format, visuals etc) and **routine** (time and length of delivery). Many of our children struggle with their working (short-term) memory. This can be quickly overwhelmed if needing to focus on more than one thing. Opportunities to reduce this **cognitive overload** are essential and will allow pupils to pay attention to key information that will support their learning best. (This is why a whole-school approach to phonics is essential even if we have to adapt it to suit the individual needs of our children). Activities and experiences need to be predictable for our children. It helps their working memory but it also makes them feel safe to learn.

**Engaging** There is a direct correlation between engagement and learning. The **Engagement Model** breaks down engagement into 5 aspects: IPARE (**Initiation**, **persistence**, **anticipation**, **realisation**, **exploration**). Build these in when planning activities or use to measure the success of your activities in supporting learning. We often think of engaging activities being fun and interactive. They are. But engagement is also about creating calm, distraction-free environments too in which children are able to focus and succeed.

Emotions play a key role in learning, whether it is in the creation of psychologically-space environments to learn in or whether it is about creating experiences that touch us emotionally. Language and literacy are all about shared understandings. They are fundamentally social

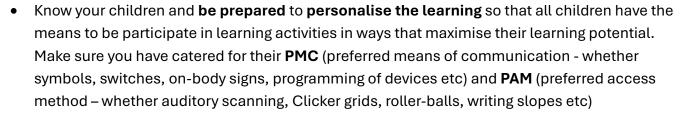
**Everywhere** Ensure language and literacy is everywhere. **Immerse** your children in the wonders and curiosities of language and literature. Promote **maximum exposure** and remember **'Every move is a chance to teach'** (www.project.core.com). Aim to create a rich, diverse and engaging language and literacy environment. Include types of language and literature to suit all tastes and needs: augmented reality stories, sensory stories, touchy-feely books, switch-operated books on bespoke AAC devices, participation in dramatic performances, watching a puppet-show, engagement in music and song...the list goes on...

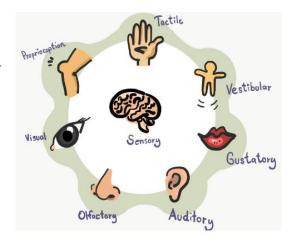
**Aspirational** Our job as educators is to **expand** our children's knowledge of the world and themselves. The reading curriculum offers countless opportunities to do this in so many ways. We need to **nudge our children out of their comfort zones**, **expose them to new ideas and concepts**. This is why we must endeavour to make the language and literature that they are exposed to **age-appropriate**, **rich and varied**. Whilst they have their place, we are doing them a disservice if we always resort to their favourite picture books, characters and rhymes.

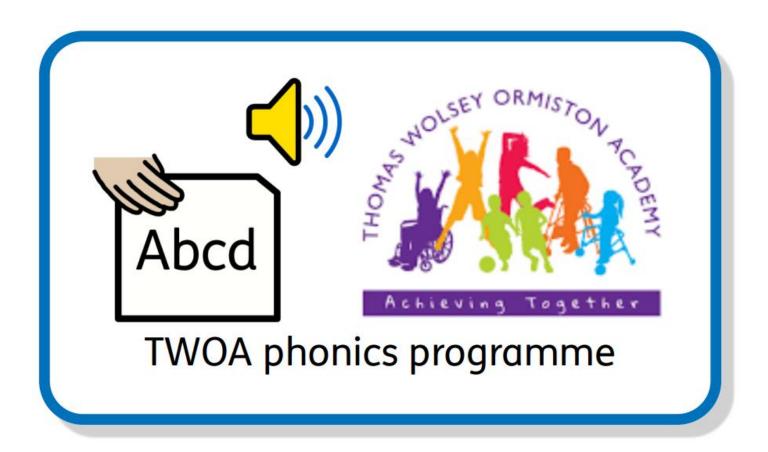
What we also know is that our children's needs are hugely complex. How many have untapped reservoirs of internal thought and ability that we have a responsibility to work out how to draw out. We must acknowledge that some may have the capacity to learn to read in more conventional ways, regardless of how they may present to the outside world. Exposure and opportunity is essential. If we never give them the chance, we will never know what they are truly **capable** of.

**Supportive** Our children find learning hard. Their disabilities make, what is already a difficult skill to acquire, especially difficult to learn. Top tips for supporting learning for children with additional needs:

- Remember the 80:10:10 rule (80% familiar, 10% something new, 10% seeing something else happen with that something new). Whether in spoken or written language, make sure most of what they encounter is familiar and known.
- **Repeat, repeat.** Give plenty of opportunities to hear the same information many times. Don't forget to keep it interesting and fresh though and present it in different ways.
- Give pupils plenty of time to process and wait with interest
- Help children **make connections** in their brains by linking information to prior learning. Link it to them, their experiences and their interests.
- Keep activities short and pacy: bite-sized chunks with lots of breaks; our children will have to
  work much harder to retain and process the information their mainstream peers may pick up
  quickly
- Make it multi-sensory, (this is particularly important for our children who may not be able to use some of their sensory systems at all to access information). All of them have impairment of some sensory systems. Remember, the more roots information takes to reach the brain, the more likely it is to be retained. Multisensory experiences provide extra information and help children link information to prior experience.
- Do assess regularly. This needn't be done in an onerous or threatening way but do remember that children with SEND will have gaps and learn in non
  - linear ways Identifying and back-filling skills gaps that have been missed or forgotten is really important.







### What is 'Phonics'?

By 'phonics' we mean the sounds and letters that make up the English language. Children learn which sounds (**phonemes**) are represented by which letters (**graphemes**). They learn how to blend these PGCs (**phoneme-grapheme correspondences**) together to form words, (**blending** – useful for reading) or break them down (**segmenting** – useful for spelling). The end goal is to be able to do this automatically.

There are different ways of teaching and learning this **phonetic code**, (which can be complicated as there are lots of exceptions to the rule). They are known as analytical, analogy, embedded and synthetic phonics. The first 3 start with whole words which are then 'broken down'. Spotting patterns of letters is a key feature of these approaches.

**Synthetic phonics** starts with teaching children isolated sounds which it then 'built up' into words. This is the approach that is favoured in the UK and all mainstream schools **must** teach reading using an approved synthetic phonics programme. Special schools do not need to follow an approved synthetic phonics scheme but do need a **fidelity of approach**.

Phonics is just *one* of the strands of the **reading rope** but it is an important one.

### **Phonemes and Graphemes**

There are approximately 44 phonemes in the English language and every word can be broken down into these *phonemes*. At TWOA we call phonemes, **sounds**.

These **sounds** are represented by a **grapheme**, in other words a letter or a group of letters. At TWOA we call graphemes, letters.

A **grapheme** can be a single letter, a pair of letters or sometimes, a group of three or even four letters.

An example is the **sound** 'a' as in the month of May. This can be represented by the following letters.

a: as in able or agent

a\_e: as in cake or name

ai: as in rain or train

ay: as in day or stay

ea: as in great or break

ey: as in they or prey

Graphemes or letters can also represent different phonemes or sounds.

An example is the grapheme c.

c: /k/ as in cat, cup or car

c: /s/ as in city, centre or cell

c: /ʃ/ as in ocean or special

### What does phonics look like at TWOA and why?

The barriers to learning that our children face make the teaching of phonics problematic. Children without any form of verbal communication cannot articulate words. They cannot form or 'feel' the sounds in their mouths and vocal chords. Although pupils can 'sound' out words and sounds using their '**internal voice**', assessing what they know is much harder. Making knowledge 'stick' will always take longer as they will not have the same opportunities as their verbal peers to 'learn through doing'.

The TWOA phonics scheme supports the children and young people learn phonics through the use of puppets: Tamsin, Pip and Sid. All three support each other to learn phonics. If older pupils consider the puppets too young for them, they can still use them to reinforce their learning by using them with younger children or playing the role of teacher.







Tamsin	Pip	Sld
Tamsin's profile:	Pip's profile:	Sid's profile:
Tamsin is visually impaired –	<b>Pip</b> has an invisible disability.	<b>Sid</b> is non-verbal and has a
she has excellent auditory skills	<b>Pip</b> lacks a bit of confidence	MIC-KEY button. Sid uses his
and is able to hear and	and needs Tamsin's, Sid's and	internal voice to 'sound out'
annunciate sounds well. She	the children's encouragement	phonemes and demonstrates
cannot see the shapes of the	and support to give things a go,	his understanding through eye-
letters very well though and	have things modelled etc.	pointing and nodding. He
needs to get up really close.	Select <b>Pip's</b> gender depending	demonstrates his
Tamsin relies on her	on what works best for the	understanding of PGCs through
proprioceptive and tactile	children in your class	picking up the correct
senses to recognise PGCs.		grapheme with his mouth
She's not yet ready for Braille		usually.
but might be one day		

We expose all our children to **some or all** (please seek further information and advice around which ones from Curriculum and Literacy Leads) of the letters and sounds in the TWOA phonics programme, in the anticipation that some will learn to read this way. We know we must never assume who will and who won't learn to read conventional text (see <u>Teach Us Too</u>) but we do know that many of our children are more likely to read **elements** of conventional text, (perhaps individual letters or small numbers of key words) supplemented with symbols, (we use Wigit symbols) or photographs.

Having a knowledge of basic phonetic skills may equip some children to decode words at a later stage. Alternatively, it may support others, especially AAC (augmentative and alternative communication) users to become more proficient in the use of their devices by helping them access banks of vocabulary stored alphabetically.

#### **Overview of Scheme**

In exactly the same way as the TWOA Reading Curriculum, the scope of the TWOA Phonics Scheme is much **broader** than a conventional phonics scheme. It supports the development of many other skills that we know our children find difficult as well as introducing children to letters and sounds in the same way that a conventional synthetic phonics scheme would.

The TWOA phonics scheme uses the 2007 Letters and Sounds document as a framework for the order of delivery of the letters and for the guidance it gives on pre-reading skills, known in the document as Phase 1. Letters and Sounds - DFES-00281-2007.pdf

## Foundational Learning Skills

Some of our children will be unable to access any form of conventional text. The TWOA phonics programme therefore simultaneously supports the development of other important learning skills. For our learners with the most complex needs, these include the development of 'foundational learning skills'. Key ones are:

- Attention (to stimulus, people & shared attention)
- Awareness (and tolerance) of others
- Imitation & repetition

- Turn-taking (and waiting)
- Exploration
- Anticipation
- Initiation
- Choice-making (attending to more than 1 as well as expressing preference)
- Tracking (visual, auditory & tactile especially)
- Developing an understanding of cause and effect
- Developing an understanding of object permanence
- Persistence and early problem-solving
- Haptic perception

# Pre-reading Skills (Sounds of Intent Framework and Phase 1 Letters and Sounds)

'Pre-reading skills' are another important feature of the programme. Whilst these cross-over with foundational learning skills, they link very directly to the development of reading. They include, e.g. auditory skill development, (awareness and tolerance of different sounds and the ability to discriminate between them) communication and developing an interest in the written word, (e.g. how books work).

At TWOA, we use the Sounds of Intent Framework, particularly levels 2, 3 and 4 and Phase 1 Letters and Sounds to support the development of these skills.

Further information about the <u>Sounds of Intent</u> framework can be found by clicking on this link.

In <u>Letters and Sounds</u>, Phase 1 takes an EYFS approach which we know works well for our children:

- Lots of modelling of good social communication skills
- The conscious building of vocabulary in meaningful, contextualized ways
- Pupil-led pacing and skillful scaffolding to move them on (this is what happens when we talk about 'continuous provision' and 'active learning')
- On-going continuous assessment based on knowing the children well ('teacher' judgement)

It is divided into 7 aspects. The TWOA Phonic Scheme divides resources for each aspect under these headings. <u>TWOA Phonics Scheme</u>

- Aspect 1: General sound discrimination environmental sounds
  - Tuning into Sounds Develops children's listening skills and awareness of sounds in the environment
  - Listening and Remembering Sounds Further development of vocabulary and children's identification and recollection of the difference between sounds
  - Talking about Sounds To make up simple sentences and talk in greater detail about sounds
- Aspect 2: General sound discrimination instrumental sounds

- Tuning into Sounds Experience and develop awareness of sounds made with instruments and noise makers
- Listening and Remembering Sounds To listen to and appreciate the difference between sounds made with instruments
- Talking about Sounds To use a wide vocabulary to talk about the sounds instruments make
- Aspect 3: General sound discrimination body percussion
  - Tuning into Sounds To develop awareness of sounds and rhythms
  - Listening and Remembering Sounds To distinguish between sounds and to remember patterns of sound
  - o **Talking about Sounds -** To talk about sounds we make with our bodies and what the sounds mean
- Aspect 4: Rhythm and rhyme
  - Tuning into Sounds To experience and appreciate rhythm and rhyme and to develop awareness of rhythm and rhyme in speech
  - Listening and Remembering Sounds To increase awareness of words that rhyme and to develop knowledge about rhyme
  - o Talking about Sounds To talk about words that rhyme and to produce rhyming words
- Aspect 5: Alliteration
  - o **Tuning into Sounds -** To develop understanding of alliteration
  - Listening and Remembering Sounds To listen to sounds at the beginning of words and hear the differences between them
  - Talking about Sounds To explore how different sounds are articulated, and to extend understanding of alliteration
- Aspect 6: Voice sounds
  - Tuning into Sounds To distinguish between the differences in vocal sounds, including oral blending and segmenting
  - Listening and Remembering Sounds To explore speech sounds
  - Talking about Sounds To talk about the different sounds that we can make with our voices
- Aspect 7: Oral blending and segmenting
  - o **Tuning into Sounds -** To develop oral blending and segmenting of sounds in words
  - Listening and Remembering Sounds To listen to phonemes within words and to remember them in the order in which they occur
  - o **Talking about Sounds -** To talk about the different phonemes that make up words

The boundaries between each aspect are flexible and not fixed: practitioners should plan to integrate the activities according to the developing abilities and interests of the children in their class.

Each aspect is divided into three strands.

- Tuning into sounds (auditory discrimination)
- Listening and remembering sounds (auditory memory and sequencing)
- Talking about sounds (developing vocabulary and language comprehension).

Activities within the seven aspects are designed to help children:

- Listen attentively
- Enlarge their vocabulary
- Speak confidently to adults and other children;
- Discriminate phonemes;
- Reproduce audibly the phonemes they hear, in order, all through the word;
- Use sound-talk to segment words into phonemes

# Introduction of Letters and Sounds (Phoneme-Grapheme Correspondences) Phases 2-5

The TWOA phonics programme introduces letters and sounds in a systematic way, building on previous learning to secure progress over time. Children are continually assessed to determine their progress to know what sounds and letters they may have learnt.

We know it takes time for our children to learn. We know they have many barriers to learning. The TWOA phonics programme has therefore been created with the following in mind:

- It is age-appropriate for a wide range of learners (from 3-16)
- It uses a range of sensory systems to help learning 'stick' and therefore introduces new letters and sounds in multi-sensory ways. It is interactive and fun
- It offers consistency rather than uniformity. It recognizes that not all children learn and progress in the same way. There is plenty of opportunity to tailor sessions to the needs of each child
- It supports many levels of skill development simultaneously. This recognizes the vast range of ability that may exist within any one group of learners

## Phonics sessions delivery

- Formerly assess pupils' phonic knowledge prior to starting the scheme. Note *how* you have assessed each child, (e.g. number of choices, symbols etc.) and store a hard copy of the assessment in their black file. Use <a href="Phases 1-5 Phonics Assessment Documents">Phases 1-5 Phonics Assessment Documents</a> Formerly assess annually and store score centrally <a href="Whole School Data">Whole School Data</a> and hard copy in their black file.
- Deliver phonics sessions 3 times weekly during am sessions.
- Follow order 1-3 or 1-4 outlined below.

### Overview delivery of a typical lesson

- 1. Phonics cue in
- 2. **Starter activities** Sound awareness and sound discrimination (Phase 1 activities) OR consolidation of HF words OR consolidation of previously practiced phonemes (see below for good sources of additional practice resources)

- 3. **Focused phoneme/s** 3 differentiated levels exposure / reading (& spelling) / spelling (& sentence building) (Phase 2-5 depending on level)
- 4. Seeing the phoneme in context. (This will be delivered by the rhyme for most pupils but must be supplemented with books from the reading scheme for those pupils that have the ability to read in more conventional ways). All established learners should always have a 'book on the go' that reflects the reading level at which they are secure. (80:10:10 is a good ratio to work at (80% familiar, 10% something new, 10% seeing something else happen with that something new). Their current reading books *must* be recorded in their yellow reading record.

### Precise delivery of a typical lesson

1. Phonics cue in

Expect: Focus and attention from pupils.

Present: Black phonics box.

Create: Anticipation and expectation through intonation and facial expression.

Say: 'Sounds and letters has begun, it's time to have some phonics fun. Let's take a look, let's not delay, let's see what's in the box today?'

Encourage: pupils to finish the rhyme at the end of each line where possible

Press: the 'drum roll' on the red sound machine

- 2. **Starter activity (level 1)** sound awareness and sound discrimination activities see PHASE 1 TWOA phonics scheme TWOA Phonics Scheme
- 2. **Starter activity (level 2)** sight word practice see HIGH FRQUENCY WORDS in TWOA phonics scheme TWOA Phonics Scheme
  - 3. Focus phoneme (level 1) Exposure / Reading
    - 3.1.1 Say sound (make sure you are using the pure sound) Phonics: How to pronounce pure sounds | Oxford Owl (youtube.com) Encourage children to repeat the sound. If helpful, encourage children to use the mirrors to watch how their mouth moves as they repeat the sound.
    - 3.1.2 Read the rhyme slowly (several times / broken down if necessary) emphasise each time the focus sound occurs
    - 3.1.3 Carry out the activity emphasise each time the focus sound occurs
    - 3.1.4 Show the pictures of words starting with the focus sound
    - 3.1.5 Show the letter card lower case
    - 3.1.6 If helpful, this is the point to reinforce the letter with Makaton fingerspelling <u>Makaton Topic FINGERSPELLING ALPHABET Singing Hands (youtube.com)</u> and visual phonics if pupils find this helpful (this is designed for people with hearing impairments who will struggle to hear the phonemes <u>Phase 2 Heathlands School</u>, <u>Phase 3 Heathlands School</u>, <u>Phase 5 Heathlands School</u>

- 3.2 Carry out gross and fine motor activities to make the shape of the letter (fully supported if necessary) (egs for fine make the shape in the air, write in sand / foam / coloured rice etc, practice forming the shape on the lightboard, with UV, with a variety of pens / paint etc.) (egs for gross make the shape of the letter with their bodies, if in a wheelchair wheel them around the shape of the letter)
- 3.3 Show the letter card again lower case trace around the shape use the words 'sound' and 'letter' to help build the connection that sounds can be represented graphically)
- 3.4 Show the pictures of words starting with the focus sound again (use the word 'sound')
- 3.5 Turn the pictures over and show them the letter written in a word (use the word 'letter')
- 3.6 (For early and established learners) Present the rhyme on screen (large group) or laminated version (small group). Point out the focus sound and letter. Encourage pupils to do the same.
  - 3. Focus phoneme (level 2) Reading (spelling) / Spelling (& sentence building)
    - 3.1 Consolidate and build on the focus phoneme using suitable activities depending on level and needs of pupils. Take activities from consolidation activities according to phase and any other suitable sources.
    - 3.2 Revise known PGCs.
    - 3.3 Blend and segment known PGCs to read and spell words.
    - 3.4 Read fully decodable sentences made up of known PGCs.
    - 3.5 Combine words to build fully decodable sentences.
  - **4. Known PGCs in context** Read pages of current Big Cat phonics scheme book, (or, when these are exhausted, further fully decodable reading books from reading scheme).

## **High Frequency Words**

- Many of our most common words (also known as high frequency words) are not phonetically decodable. Children need to learn to recognise them through their shape and other clues, e.g. initial letter / context.
- Some children find any type of decoding difficult and rely on learning to recognise all words by sight.
- TWOA phonics programme also incorporates the teaching and learning of high frequency words.
- The most common high frequency words are categorised differently according to different schemes. TWOA scheme uses Sets 1-5.
- Ensure you assess pupil knowledge at the beginning and end of the year, and ideally at the midpoint. Use the high frequency word assessments to do this. Make a note of how you assessed the pupil on the assessment. Store a copy of any assessments.

## Ideas for practicing high frequency words

• Select words to practice – speed read, race themselves against a timer, against each other

- Have 2 sets and match them
- Practice writing and spelling words using, e.g. light-up writing tablets, tactile materials such as flour or foam
- Look, cover, write, check
- ICT games Dinosaur Eggs <u>The Dinosaur's Eggs High Frequency Sight Words</u> (ictgames.com)
- ICT games Help a Hedgehog (enter own words) Help A Hedgehog (ictgames.com)
- ICT games High Frequency word bingo High Frequency Word Bingo (ictgames.com)
- Education City KS1 Yr1 Reading Common Exception Words activities and worksheets
- Twinkl resources see resources in high frequency word folder

#### **Phonics Starter Kit**

Every class has a phonics starter kit. The items in this kit must remain with the phonics scheme. The inventory for the phonics starter kit can be found in the appendices. Feel free to add to the kit with your own resources. Phonics Starter Kit.docx

### Letters and Sounds Resources that Accompany the Scheme

Some letters and sounds have physical resource packs. These are stored with the literacy resources. There are 2 packs for each letter. Resources need to be returned as found when you have finished using them. If items are consumable, it is your responsibility to re-stock or place an order.

Some letters and sounds require physical resources but these are commonly available in school. You will need to source these beforehand, often from the music cupboard, the PD cupboard, the dressing up cupboard or the sensory cupboard. Again, make sure you return shared resources promptly and as you found them.

Some letters and sounds have sound files and powerpoints. You will find these on OneDrive in the phonics scheme.

### **Reading Scheme**

The reading scheme we use is Big Cat Reading Scheme. Any pupils who are moving beyond the 'exposure only' level need to have a reading scheme book. They need to read from this and it needs to be recorded in their yellow reading record.

Many of our pupils will take a long time to progress to the next level so our Big Cat Phonics scheme will not have enough variety. Once you have exhausted the Big Cat Reading scheme, get them to explore and read other books at the same level. You will find these in the box.

### **Letters and Sounds Further Resources**

There are LOTS of excellent phonics resources available online. Some are paid. Some are free. Try starting with:

HelpKidzLearn Ready-Mades - <u>HelpKidzLearn Sign-in Server</u> Password: ThomasWolsey username Wolsey1

Education City – Paid – see Emily if you have forgotton your login details – lots in EYFS and Year 1 literacy

ICT games - ictgames || html5 English Games Page

Read with Phonics – free but will need to create an account - <u>Phonics Games for School and Home | ReadwithPhonics.com</u>

Twinkl

Rap songs – American English but age-appropriate for older learners <u>Phonics Song | Letter Sounds and Dances by PhonicsMan | Nursery Rhymes + Kids Songs (youtube.com)</u>