



# Case studies

Action research by local Portsmouth schools into using a phonics and spelling progression mapping tool



## CONTENTS

Page number	School	Case study title
2	Westover Primary School Y4/5	What impact does linking known grapheme patterns to new words have on year 4/5 engagement and confidence with spelling?
5	St Jude's C of E Primary School Y6	What is the impact of increased conversation and awareness of phonics on the metacognition of two year 6 pupils when correcting their own spelling?
7	Cottage Grove Primary School Y3	What is the impact of teaching the accuracy of spelling with 'y' in the middle as a short 'i' sound for lower ability year 3 children to achieve age related expectations?
12	Cottage Grove Primary School Y3	What is the impact of increasing visual strategies on lower ability year 3 children's confidence with spelling?
15	Cottage Grove Primary School Y6	What impact does the consistent and principle teaching of blended phonics have on year 6 teachers' planning and teaching of spelling?
18	Trafalgar School Y8	What impact do targeted phonics based intervention have on Year 8 SEN students to make accelerated whole school progress?

# WHAT IMPACT DOES LINKING KNOWN GRAPHEME PATTERNS TO NEW WORDS HAVE ON YEAR 4/5 ENGAGEMENT AND CONFIDENCE WITH SPELLING.

Ruth Worswick (Headteacher) and Jess Ferrier (Year 4/5 teacher), Westover Primary School

## INTRODUCTION

A significant proportion of our Y4/5 children are very weak spellers. We have focused on improving phoneme/grapheme correspondence to develop decoding skills, but have found children do not apply this when writing. Accurate spelling does not seem to be a priority for them and despite word banks, charts, flashcards to hand, they don't use them. We have found that children do not have any strategies when spelling a new word.

The spelling tool identifies all the sounds that our children need to learn in primary school and creates a progressive list of the matching graphemes and a hierarchy of words that illustrate that grapheme. By recognising graphemes in context, children can begin to link known words with new words that contain the same *tricky* bit. So if a child knows that the /ai/ sound in **locate** is the same as in **cake**, they will know to use the split digraph. We wanted to know that if we taught the children the different graphemes for one sound, could they apply this learning to different words and could they 'unpick' words by their grapheme code?

## METHODS

We chose to work with our weakest Y4/5 children. We have 3 4/5 classes who are already split by ability for spellings. A number of our children in the lower group have not passed the PSC and have daily boosters in order to achieve it. Historically, they have not had good quality teaching so do not have the foundations to build on. Our school has adopted the Little Wandle scheme this year and all staff have had phonics training; we have consistency now through the school of our terminology and the resources/visuals that we use.

To know where to start our teaching we checked first whether children were able to identify the different sounds in a word, both orally and by adding sound buttons. We quickly found that they could not but that gave us the baseline.

We the initial lessons together and in light of the above we went slowly. We modelled adding sound buttons to different /ai/ words and then asked the children to identify the common phoneme and the different ways in which we had written it. We modelled how to unpick **gateway**: to say it, sound it, add buttons.



/ai/

ai	ay	a-e	ey
			
train	play	cake	grey
a	ea	ei	ai
			
baby	break	eight	straight

We used the spelling tool to create a grapheme mat for /ai/ words and used this to identify the two-/ai/ spellings in the word. After a 'we do' practice, the children had six words to unpick independently. We finished with a game using the sound mat to practise identifying the given spelling pattern.

For the next few lessons we continued to play with the /ai/ sound, using the mats, adding sound buttons and progressing to spelling new words with the /ai/ sound, trying different options to see which one looked correct.

We moved on to different phonemes and were able to progress a little faster as the children now had the key skills of identifying phonemes in a word and understood how to use the word mats.

## **FINDINGS**

We have not used data to evaluate our project; rather we have assessed children's performance in class and their approach to spellings when they are back in general lessons.

**Skills:** children are now confident to sound button words and find the sounds we are concentrating on within a word. They are better at understanding and using phonics terminology. We start all lessons with a quick retrieval section and now the children speed through it (in our first lesson, it took the whole lesson and a huge amount of support). Children are also able to find words with a named sound in which they could not before and link words better to rhyming. Connections between words, sounds, spelling patterns is now much more secure with this group.

It is still inconsistent in non-phonics lessons whether children use the mats and the techniques we are teaching. Within the phonics lessons, they are becoming more fluent in their spellings.

**Engagement:** the general engagement of children has increased in the lesson since we have begun this approach. Because the spelling tool uses words that are part of the Y4/5 curriculum, they have more meaning to the children and therefore there is a greater sense of purpose. A recent class unit of work around poetry using nonsense words has led to the children using the mats to create rhyming words and then deciding which spelling pattern, they want to use.

**Confidence:** this has grown over the past 2 months, especially amongst those children who then use this learning outside of phonics lessons too. For children in Jess' class, when they are writing they now sound out the word on their fingers, then use word mats to support finding the correct grapheme. They also use the Little Wandle Grow the Code mat.

Children said - "I like spelling more now and I know what to do to help me." "I feel more comfortable spelling new words."

## **CONCLUSIONS**

**Implications:** this approach needs all staff to embrace it. We found that children whose regular class was not Jess' have benefitted less than her children have, as they have only had the input and then no follow up. In addition, because we only did this with our lower 4/5's, there is an element of self-consciousness back in class about using the word mats. We also need to look at how we use Little Wandle resources to ensure continuity, e.g. using their pictures/key words for sounds. We had to keep going back over previously taught sounds, to reinforce the connection between the different graphemes.

**Advice:** In isolation, this project showed promise, but it was hard to evaluate fully its success due to the time scale and also that the children had not had what we now accept as good phonics teaching when they were in KS1. Therefore, we would advise using this approach from the start – as Y2 start to learn spelling rules and patterns and then make it accepted practice in KS2. We have recently introduced 'Word of the

Day' from 'Vocabulary Ninja' and see this as a good opportunity for children to unpick a word and make the grapheme connections.







## **FINDINGS**

### **Result Analysis**

Given the small-scale of this study, it seemed beneficial to collect qualitative data. The study focused on collecting quotes from the two participants to ascertain their confidence in applying phonics to their spelling. Although no specific analysis of the quotes took place in this study, I was able to tentatively deduce the following information from the study:

1. Both participants were confident in identifying incorrectly spelt words - even when they were spelt with a plausible alternative phoneme.
2. In the first instance of the intervention, there were questions about terminology - "What is a phoneme?" This suggests that, despite being confident in phonics in year 1, neither participant had drawn upon this knowledge recently.
3. In the earlier interventions, the children were unable to isolate the individual phoneme 'ee' - "The wrong sound is ree."
4. As the intervention progressed, children were able to draw upon earlier discussions and apply them to different contexts - "That's a split digraph," "eau is a trigraph."
5. As the intervention progressed, children were able to correctly identify the difference between a digraph, and blended phonemes - "The w and n are two separate phonemes so we underline them separately."
6. Both children became increasingly confident with segmenting the words on the word list orally, in order to identify the spelling of the phoneme - "s-a-f-ar-i - the i makes the ee sound."
7. As the children progressed through the intervention, they were able to identify graphemes in the word list that they had not originally thought of, and added these to their list of plausible spellings.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

### **Lessons Learnt**

It was very apparent that, although the children had not previously used their phonics vocabulary in a spelling context, they were able to recall the language and skills required for phonics, once they had been prompted - it was in their long-term memory.

Administering the intervention as a pair meant that the participants could engage in effective discussion - with the more confident child explaining their reasoning to the least confident child. No specific quantitative data was recorded - this could be useful to see large-scale impact.

### **Research Question**

What is the impact of increased conversation and awareness of phonics on the metacognition of two year 6 pupils when correcting their own spelling?

The impact of increased conversation and awareness of phonics allowed children to consider phonics as an alternative strategy for spelling. The intervention did not explore applying this knowledge to correcting their own spelling.

### **Implications for Classroom Practice**

Teach phonics as a strategy for spelling. Encourage children to engage in discussion about phonics during reading lessons.

Encourage children to use phonics as a strategy for spelling unknown words, particularly when they have identified that the spellings are incorrect.

# WHAT IS THE IMPACT OF TEACHING THE ACCURACY OF SPELLING WITH 'Y' IN THE MIDDLE AS A SHORT 'I' SOUND FOR LOWER ABILITY YEAR 3 CHILDREN TO ACHIEVE AGE RELATED EXPECTATIONS?

Lorna Fletcher (Year 3 teacher), Cottage Grove Primary School

## INTRODUCTION

I have worked at Cottage Grove for nine years as either a year 3 or year 4 teacher and spelling in Key Stage 2 has been a recurrent issue. When children move from Key Stage 1 into year 3 most will have completed the phonics programme and will now be taught spelling rules. When teaching the children in year 3 there are sets of words where phonemes and graphemes are recapped but when it comes to teaching words from the year 3 and 4 curriculum list this becomes more difficult as there is a wide variety of spellings to learn.

## Phonics Spelling Tool

The words I chose for this teaching strategy, through my own experience, are some of the hardest to learn because they all contain the letter y in the middle but is pronounced as a short 'i' sound so therefore, children would write an i incorrectly. I designed a number of activities for my class of thirty year 3 children, which gave them the opportunity to learn the sound and spelling of the words.

## METHODS

I used the phonics spelling tool with my class of 30 children.

**Step 1:** I conducted a pre-test of following set of words:-

myth  
gym  
mystery  
mysterious  
system  
symptom  
gymnastics  
pyramid  
bicycle  
symbol

After the pre-test, I then wrote the spelling list on the flip chart explaining the y as a short i sound. The children then took the spellings home to learn as part of their homework that week.

**Step 2:** The first activity to be completed was all the words had the y missing. The children had to complete the word then write the spelling out in full.

**Step 3:** The second activity the children had to unscramble the words then write them correctly.

**Step 4:** Children had the opportunity to practise the spellings as a morning activity where they used the pyramid method, drawings, letter blocks etc.

**Step 5:** Children were given a word search with the spellings in it to complete.

**Step 6:** I conducted the end of teaching spelling test.



## **FINDINGS**

After marking the test, I put the results onto a spreadsheet using both the pre-test and end test data. I colour coded the children as to what level they are working on against the national standards for spellings:-

**Below age expectations - Red**

**Working towards age expectations - Yellow**

**Working at age expectation – Green** (See Appendix 3)

The comparison data shows that **all** children made an increase in their score from the pre-test. (None of the children scored 10/10 on their pre-test.)

- 10 children scored 10/10 on their end test.
- 6 children had an increase of 7 correct.
- One of the lowest children had an increase of 9 correct.
- 25% of children had an increase of 7 or more in their end test.
- Some EAL children with a low pre-test score made accelerated progress.
- Most lower ability children scored over 7 in the end test

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The results from this research show a positive impact from the teaching and learning of words with y in the middle of the word but sounding like a short i. I think that all the children really benefited from the discreet learning of the sound and I would thoroughly recommend teaching in this style for these words, not just lower ability children.

## APPENDIX 1 – Word unscramble

### Word with a y as a short 'i' sounds

Put the missing y into the words so they are spelt correctly.

Then write it out in your own writing.

m\_th \_\_\_\_\_  
g\_m \_\_\_\_\_  
m\_stery \_\_\_\_\_  
m\_sterious \_\_\_\_\_  
s\_stem \_\_\_\_\_  
s\_mptom \_\_\_\_\_  
g\_mnastics \_\_\_\_\_  
p\_ramid \_\_\_\_\_  
s\_mbol \_\_\_\_\_  
bic\_cle \_\_\_\_\_

Unscramble the words below and write them correctly.

motpmys \_\_\_\_\_  
myg \_\_\_\_\_  
yertsym \_\_\_\_\_  
temsyz \_\_\_\_\_  
iuomsysret \_\_\_\_\_  
eccylib \_\_\_\_\_  
dimrapy \_\_\_\_\_  
lobmys \_\_\_\_\_  
nasscitymg \_\_\_\_\_  
ythm \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX 2 – Word search

### Words with a y as a short 'i' sound

b w g f t p v m s v s b m o k  
n y l o t l y h o y i e y b m  
m x v f k o u r m t t x e i m  
n h h h m i c b a s p l c l r  
n k j c y t o k y m q m j a n  
u z y m t l a s k s i h y c s  
w r u c h e o t d u u d h s j  
k g n w o c j f r o z x i f c  
p w g y u u a s l i c s c y j  
y r e t s y m a z r q z y u j  
d l r c p b q c i e j y c z x  
d c g l k h k n i t p b l f v  
w n r o z q u q z s g z e j a  
p r b w w f x g u y u u y t v  
y z o p u g a b u m p z j x k

myth

gym

mystery

mysterious

system

symptom

gymnastics

pyramid

symbol

bicycle

## APPENDIX 3 – Spelling test data

### Words with a 'y' as a short 'i' sound

Pre-test scores out of 10      End of Week scores out of 10

Child 1	2	4
Child 2	9	10
Child 3	4	10
Child 4	1	7
Child 5	4	6
Child 6	9	10
Child 7	8	10
Child 8	0	9
Child 9	5	7
Child 10	1	8
Child 11	2	9
Child 12	3	4
Child 13	1	8
Child 14	3	9
Child 15	2	9
Child 16	9	10
Child 17	8	10
Child 18	1	5
Child 19	2	4
Child 20	5	9
Child 21	0	2
Child 22	3	10
Child 23	7	10
Child 24	8	10
Child 25	0	6
Child 26	3	10
Child 27	0	3
Child 28	6	8

# WHAT IS THE IMPACT OF INCREASING VISUAL STRATEGIES ON LOWER ABILITY YEAR 3 CHILDREN'S CONFIDENCE WITH SPELLING?

Hayley Wild (Year 3 teacher), Cottage Grove Primary School

## INTRODUCTION

In our Year 3 cohort, we know that spelling is a key area to be addressed, this is historical at KS2. Our children have not had a full school year since being in Reception due to Covid and therefore, in lower KS2 particularly, we have noticed many phonics and spelling rule gaps to fill from a whole key stage. The 11 children I work with (4 days a week for 20 minutes) were identified as the lowest readers in the cohort, which is two-form entry, with 60 children in it. In the group, the lowest reader was reading at phase 5 level at the start of the project.

The spelling tools that were implemented for a 6 week period for the research included, but were not limited to; weekly spellings and common exception words on flashcards, using letter frames and sound mats. These are key resources used in school regularly; however, by incorporating them into the sequence of my phonics lessons, my aim was that the visual and kinaesthetic learners would gain confidence in recalling spelling rules and letter patterns.

I hoped this confidence will be evidenced in their presentation of wanting to have a go, they would be more willing to listen to sounds and engage verbally and actively in lessons with increased assurance and to see an increase in their weekly scores for spelling tests. Behaviour can be challenging in this group and I intended to improve the sequence and delivery of lessons to improve their engagement and have a knock on effect with their confidence. Ultimately, this aimed to support them with confidence to improve their spelling skills.

The participants completed a quick survey at the start of the six week change to the sequence of my phonics delivery. The results are presented below:

Question	Yes	No
Do you enjoy your phonics lessons?	11	0
Do you enjoy reading together as a group?	11	0
Do you enjoy your spelling activities?	11	0
Do you think you are good at spelling?	5	6
Do you think you are a confident speller?	5	6
Do you know what would make you better at spelling?	9	2
If yes... what is it that would help?	All children said to practise spelling at home	

## METHODS

To begin with, we ensured that all of the three groups identified this time as 'phonics'. This meant that yes, we were all working on spelling but we were all expected to use our phonics regardless of ability. This was to raise the profile of phonics. When giving spellings in other areas of the curriculum, teachers in Year 3 responded to children by modelling how to blend and segment words rather than giving spellings as a string of alphabetical letters.

For my group, the daily methods included the use of flashcards showing the children's weekly spellings and incorporating flashcards of the previous spellings learnt together. We also used letter frames for children to



recognise the position of ascender and descender letters. Sound mats were readily available on the tables for children to share in pairs.

During an initial observation, the children were very keen to engage with the reading of the flashcards and keen to read them as quickly as possible. The use of flashcards started the sequence of the lesson, moving on to reading high frequency words in phonics books. We then read and responded to a guided reading text, write a modelled sentence and recorded words with our key grapheme in the letter frames.

## **FINDINGS**

This questionnaire was given out at the end of the 6 week change to the sequence that incorporated the new methods for teaching phonics. These are the results:

Question	Yes	No
Do you enjoy your phonics lessons?	11	0
Do you enjoy reading together as a group?	11	0
Do you enjoy your spelling activities?	11	0
Do you think you are good at spelling?	9	2
Do you think you are a confident speller?	9	2
Do you know what would make you better at spelling?	9	2
If yes... what is it that would help?	11 children responded to practise spelling at home	
Evidence of increased spelling work in homework books	9	2

Impact was analysed based upon:

- The children’s presentation in the lessons showed a greater, more excitable engagement where the children were keen to move through each of the sequenced parts of the lesson using the newly introduced resources.
- Increase in speed for the sight recall of the common exception words for all children, which were on laminated flashcards. The children loved the competitive nature of how we were playing the game once our confidence had increased.
- In a small sample of four out of the eleven children, they are now able to read all of the Year 2 common exception words, compared back to the start of the year when each child could read less than half.
- In a small sample of four out of the eleven children, they are now able to read most of the Year 3 common exception words.
- Evidence of correct spellings and the children using phonics for spelling in a range of their books.
- Children from this group offering to spell for their class in a shared write lesson and getting the spelling correct.
- On the contrary, children from this group were also observed offering to spell for their class in a shared write lesson and getting the spelling incorrect and being confident enough to fix it.
- Evidence of children from this group attempting to (and being successful at) spellings from the higher ability groups (using ‘y’ as an ‘i’ in words such as myth and mystery).
- Evidence of the children showing a greater commitment to the lesson
- Support staff being able to follow the sequence too and the children being enthusiastic to help direct the sequence they expected from the lesson.
- Children keen to have their phonics lesson.  
“Will I see you today for phonics?”

“What are our words this week?”

“Can I go first?”

“I know that one!”

“I can spell that one!”

“I learnt that one!”

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The ease of which I found it to add in the extra strategies was something that I felt to be very positive. With time tight, I was concerned that this would use up too much of the time I had allocated to follow the school-set sequence for my phonics group as well as testing out these activities. I had a phonics kit set up so that each day I had my group I could pick up the kit and get started. The children knew the resources we would need and would be ready.

The children identified that they knew their spelling success would improve if they practised phonics at home. They all have a homework book but on reflection, if I were to repeat the project I would give the children a book explicitly for spelling practise so that I could see they were committed to having a go at home. I would have engaged the parents too and set a homework expectation that they complete weekly activities with their children.

I was pleased to see that the results address my research question due to the feedback and presentation of the children. My advice to KS2 teachers who are unsure about how they will include phonics into their timetable and practise is that the results show such positive feedback for the confidence of the children. They loved the routine and structure and flourished through it.

# WHAT IMPACT DOES THE CONSISTENT AND PRINCIPLE TEACHING OF BLENDED PHONICS HAVE ON YEAR 6 TEACHERS' PLANNING AND TEACHING OF SPELLING?

Starlene George (Year 6 teacher), Cottage Grove Primary School

## INTRODUCTION

In my time as a Key Stage Two teacher, I have noticed the repeatedly low attainment of children in spelling paired with the perceived laborious strain of teaching spelling. The difficulty in 'getting it to stick' has unfortunately resulted in the idea that 'good practice' for some is just teaching spelling at all. Across the nation, spelling in Upper KS2 tends to be approached more as a formality – 'we have to because they are tested in SATS' – as opposed to an opportunity to further develop the fundamental reading skills that are established when children are taught phonics. As a result of this, teachers' planning and teaching of spelling in KS2 – specifically Year 6 – typically consists of the same elements: printing off lists of 10 words on a Monday morning; making a few flashcards to play 'pairs' with; showing a quick PowerPoint about the rule of the week (e.g. doubling consonants when adding a suffix to a variety of random root words); handing out a few word searches and cloze procedure activities and pray something clicks; rinse and repeat!

In the past, phonics has been thought of as unhelpful when it comes to teaching spelling due to there being a large number of different combinations of graphemes to spell phonemes. The Phonics in Five document contains a bank of words to accompany each of the 44 sounds and the alternative spellings for these phonemes. This document supports the planning and teaching of spelling through controlled exposure, increased application and varied repetition.

It is a well-established fact that phonics is central to reading in Key Stage 1, and because of this, children leave Year 2 with a wealth of knowledge and skills to support with decoding and reading of unfamiliar words. The use of the Phonics in Five tool in Year 6 was intended to support children to make links and connections between their prior knowledge and the spelling of the national curriculum words for Year 5 and 6.

## METHODS

This research was carried out in a Year 6 class which consisted of twenty-nine children using a blended phonics strategy. A medium-term plan was created to decide which and when each phoneme would be covered – starting with the vowel sounds as recommended by the Sound Reading System (*Diane McGuinness*).

The class teacher taught blended phonics lessons for 20 minutes a day, five days a week. Starting with 'setting' and exploring the spellings on a Monday and 'testing' them on a Friday. The following table shows the teaching order of the sessions:

Day	Practise skill	Description / notes
Monday	Highlight sound and sort into grid	Identify phoneme and sort corresponding graphemes  At the start of the lesson, children are introduced to the sound of the week via a sample of words that all share the same phoneme, but are represented by a variety of graphemes. They read the words aloud and work together to identify the sound of the week.  Children are then asked to identify the graphemes that make the sound before sorting the words into grapheme grid. This activity can be used to draw attention to any patterns that may occur, e.g. 'y' at the end of a

		word making a /i:/ sound, 'ei' occurring after 'c' making a /s/ sound. As an extension, children could find their own words to add to the grid.
Tuesday	Partner test	Children are provided with a word grid matching the phoneme of the week and in pairs, they test each other and highlight those they cannot yet spell. This is what they can then focus on throughout the rest of the week's lessons. It is suggested that this is capped at five words per child. Through direct instruction, they learn how to analyse those words and identify their 'tricky' parts.
Wednesday	Sound buttons	Using their knowledge of phonics, children identify the individual phonemes in each word – not just the one that they are focusing on. To begin with, this is done as a whole-class activity and then independently with their chosen words. The more complex the words become, the more discussion is generated around it! This is also a good opportunity to link to etymology for specific words if relevant.
Thursday	Sound sorting	Children are given a blank version of the grid from Monday's lesson showing the graphemes for that week's sound. The words are read aloud and the children write them in the correct section of the grid. Children are encourage to discuss these with a partner and test out different grapheme for the sound.  N.B. it is important to celebrate the children selecting the correct grapheme for that week's sound, and not whether the rest of the word is spelt correctly.
Friday	'Test'	This is another partner test where children's previously identified 'tricky words' are tested by a peer. Celebrate progress and correct spelling of the weeks focal phoneme.

## **FINDINGS**

Impact was analysed using both qualitative and quantitative methods.

Teachers' attitudes towards planning and teaching spelling were noticeably improved using the blended phonics system. The following were stated as benefits:

- Teachers are not recycling old planning and activities that they are aware are ineffective due to previous experience
- Teachers do not feel pressured to find or make new activities that realistically teach vocabulary (word meaning) and not spelling
- Teachers do not become frustrated by the apparent 'curve of forgetfulness' after pupils score nearly full marks on their Friday test; only to show no evidence of retention in the following weeks
- Teachers have embraced the routine of teaching blended phonics and fully embedded it into their weekly timetables; thus not skipping sessions or prioritising other lessons because they are not prepared to teach it
- By establishing that the blended phonics programme is a daily practice from the offset, pupils held teachers accountable for teaching when it appeared as though the session was not going to take place
- Pupils' commitment to the programme paired with increased attainment in spelling was an early indicator to teachers that it was worth progressing with
- Removes the accountability from parents to practise spelling at home as all the necessary practise is done at school. Of course, parents can consolidate this if they wish, but we make it clear that there is no need for this.



Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar Attainment												
		Autumn (2016 paper)					Spring	Summer (2019 paper)				
		ARE+		ON TRACK		ARE+		ON TRACK				
	No.	Ave.SS	No.	Perc.	No.	Perc.	8 week blended Phonics programme	Ave.SS	No.	Perc.	No.	Perc.
6G	29	88.4	13	45%	23	79%			103.6	27	93%	28

## CONCLUSIONS

Via the comparison of the children’s spelling scores before implementation of blended phonics and scores after, it has been concluded that this method of planning and teaching provides a strong foundation for the teaching of spelling in KS2.

Results have shown that the consistent and principled teaching of blended phonics has a noticeably positive impact on teachers’ planning and teaching of spelling in Year 6. Teachers enjoyed the reliable structure, which enabled them to focus on pupils’ understanding.

Although the programme was designed to be solely delivered at school, pupils were so enthusiastic about it that they asked to take their word lists home to practise independently or with parents. Year 6 teachers are advised to make this option clear to pupils from the offset; leaving the choice with them whether they would like to or not.

## APPENDIX – Example slides showing routine practise and prompts for discussion

**Mon** Highlight sound and sort into grid

**Mon** Highlight sound and sort into grid

	y	ui	u	ai	a	ia	ie
consider	gym	build	busy	bargain	average	marriage	sieve
different	myth	built	business	fountain	language	carriage	
difficult	mystic	minute	mountain	advantage			
disappear	Egypt		captain				
experiment	pyramid						
history	mystery						
imagine	bicycle						
increase	physical						
important	rhythm						
interest	system						
medicine	symbol						
minute							
notice							
opposite							
ordinary							
position							
promise							
compliment							
profit							
individual							
signature							

Can you add any of your own words that fit these graphemes to your grid?

Be sure to say them out loud to check they have the same phoneme!

**Tue** Partner test

In pairs, test each other on the spellings for the week and highlight you cannot yet spell.

Analyse and identify the 'tricky' parts of any words you spell incorrectly.

Record five words you are going to challenge yourself to spell correctly by the end of the week.

You will need to do this twice. Once in your spelling log and on a class record for me to see what you'll be focusing on this week.

**Wed** Sound buttons

Using your knowledge of phonics, work in pairs to identify the individual phonemes in each word. Record the total phoneme count at the end of each word as shown in the example.

committee = 6

ceiling = 5

forty = 4



# WHAT IMPACT DO TARGETED PHONICS BASED INTERVENTION HAVE ON YEAR 8 SEN STUDENTS TO MAKE ACCELERATED WHOLE SCHOOL PROGRESS?

Rebecca Davis (Deputy SENCo), Trafalgar School

## **INTRODUCTION**

We selected Year 8 as a focus group because they would have already completed a year of work at Trafalgar, as well as a year of literacy interventions. This allowed us to have a good understanding of their ability thus far. There were 15 students selected – all of whom complete small group interventions 3 x a fortnight.

The students selected all complete additional literacy work in place of a foreign language. All students are on the SEN register and have difficulties with Learning and Cognition. Some students have other needs alongside this, such as Speech and Language disorders and Autism.

Historically, students have engaged well with their literacy interventions and – overall – our progress for our SEN students is consistent and moving in the right direction. What we wanted to gain a deeper understand of is how were students engaging well with spelling and reading work but then unable to transfer these skills to other lessons.

We wanted to be careful with how we introduced the spelling tool and phonics work to the students. As teenagers, they would not have been particularly engaged if they believed they were carrying out “junior school work” or work that was recognisable to them as infant school work. For an older student, we believed this would work better integrated into other activities, rather than, like in Primary school, there was specific ‘phonics time’.

In order to assess the impact of the work, we would be looking at the students’ whole school progress as well as their progress with spellings and word recognition within their literacy intervention.

## **METHODS**

The Students have carried out a range of activities, interspersed with other interventions. Once the spelling tool was used to ascertain the key phonemes and graphemes they struggle with, students then worked on activities such as word searches, word ordering puzzles and reading books with a focus on the key grapheme.

We made sure that, although we were using language within the sessions such as phoneme, grapheme, split diagraph etc, we did not directly refer to the work as ‘phonics’ work. We did use the ‘Hear it, Say it, Read it, Write it’ method to structure the interventions.

We were also mindful of selecting words that would be relevant to them, particularly as they moved into KS4.

Over the course of the study, we have observed students, carried out pre and post assessments as well as carrying out an interview with students about their perception of the work. Students have not necessarily noticed when they have been carrying out phonics work as it has been blended in so well with other activities.

## **FINDINGS**

- Students have commented on the fact that they have noticed the difference in the activities they have completed this year compared to last year when they did not do phonics but that they weren't aware this was 'phonics' as it 'felt different' to primary school.
- Students are aware that they struggle with reading and could articulate when they noticed their difficulties – most commented on year 3 or 4 when they began to notice they were not progressing with reading in line with their peers.
- Students have really struggled with vowels. Several of our students cannot complete their alphabet in one go and cannot name the vowels.
- Students have been confusing the 'name' of the letter in comparison to the sound of the phoneme or grapheme E.G the letter 'E' and the sound 'e' in beach.
- Many of the students wrote beach as B.E.C.H because they associate the sound 'ea' with the letter 'E'.
- Beech as in beech tree was written the same way, showing that double vowels also cause difficulties.
- 'book' and 'took' were written as B.O.K.E and T.O.K.E or in some cases B.U.K or B.O.C.K
- Pupils could read these words when asked but struggled to spell them accurately.
- Students commented on the 'A' and 'E' sounds being the most difficult because they sound so similar.
- Students have learnt word recognition and ways to mask their difficulties.
- For example the word 'iPhone' they could all spell but the word 'telephone' was spelt T.E.L.L.Y.F.O.N.E or T.E.L.E.F.O.N.E or T.E.L.I.F.O.N.E so they knew the letters in the word 'iphone' as it was familiar to them but they did not know the grapheme 'ph' made the 'f' sound.
- Equally, with the word 'android' all students got this correct and were very proud of themselves for doing so but this seemed to be a word learnt by recognition rather than actually knowing the correct spelling.
- Later we were creating a story and to test the acquisition of the grapheme 'oi' as in 'android' I said how would we spell 'oi!' as in "oi, that's not where you put your bike". It is the same sound but they could not spell it, opting for 'oh' or not even including it and opting for 'excuse me' instead.
- For students that can 'read' words, they struggle so much to make sense of the meaning, that they do not understand the text they have read. For example, we watched a short film of Macbeth. All students could tell me that Lady Macbeth dies at the end of the story. However, when presented with a summary of the plot, the word 'Lady' presented students with a fair amount of difficult, but they did recognise the word 'Macbeth'. There was then some confusion over the characters and what had happened to them as they were opting not to read the word 'Lady' and just focusing on the Macbeth aspect of the sentence – therefore believing that the sentences in question were about the death of Macbeth, rather than his wife.
- From this, it was increasingly obvious how a student could find accessing their other lessons increasingly more difficult as they moved up the school to GCSEs.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

- Students reading has improved, which is evident in increased school progress. However, this is not as accelerated as we would have liked.
- It would appear more work needs to be done with helping students retain the skills taught.
- Students commented that they saw phonics and reading skills as 'its own thing' and had not considered using those skills in other subjects such as history or science.
- There is a need for this to become a whole school focus rather than 'just' an SEN issue or 'just' an English issue.
- We are considering the use of phonics stickers for teachers to put into students' books when marking. This will provide students with an opportunity to practice the missing skill when reflecting on the marking of their work. (See Appendix 1)

## APPENDIX 1 – Phonics Stickers

### Ph says /f/



- The /f/ sound is usually spelled with the letter f, or ff if after a short vowel.
- In some words, the /f/ sound is spelled using the digraph ph.
- 'ph' can be used in any part of a word - beginning, middle or end to make the /f/ sound.

Alphabet

Elephant

Sphere

Paragraph

Choreograph

Photosynthesis

- Extended writing must be written in para\_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_syn\_\_\_\_\_sis is the process by which plants use sunlight, water, and carbon dioxide to create oxygen and energy in the form of sugar.
- \_\_\_\_\_nix is an American city in the state of Arizona.
- In maths, you might use a g\_\_\_\_\_ to show your answers.
- Can you list other 'ph' words here:

Please login to [www.spellzone.com](http://www.spellzone.com) for more opportunities to practise.

### they're, their, or there?



- The word they're is always a contraction. Use it when you can substitute *they are*.
- The word their is always a pronoun. Use it to show ownership.
- The word there is used to show a place or a position, to tell of the existence of something, or when the verb comes before the subject in a sentence.

They're happy.

Their computer is broken.

Put the book over there.

- How do you know that grandfather clocks are shy? They always have \_\_\_\_\_ hands over \_\_\_\_\_ faces.
- Why do people consider flowers lazy? \_\_\_\_\_ always in beds.
- Why were the baby strawberries upset? \_\_\_\_\_ parents were in a jam.
- When does it rain money? Whenever \_\_\_\_\_ is change in the weather.
- Can you think of any jokes which include their, there or they're?

## APPENDIX 2 – Intervention Plan



### Trafalgar School Phonics Programme Intervention Plan

<b>Staff Member:</b>	<b>Year Group:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
<b>Different groups of learners to be catered for in the lesson:</b>	<b>1.</b>  <b>2.</b>	
<b>What is the grapheme/ phoneme to be taught?</b>	<b>Success Criteria:</b> By the end of this session students will be able to hear, say, read and write the target grapheme/phoneme in a variety of contexts.	
<b>Revisit and Review:</b> Teaching prompt: using precision teaching, ensure that students practise phonemes already taught. Is it kept lively and fast-paced? Are all children encouraged to participate?		
<b>Teach:</b> Teaching prompt: Check that your articulation of phonemes correct? Using the hear it, say it, read it, write it approach, ask students to articulate the phonemes and teach them the letter name. Model how to read and write the grapheme and blend/segment?		
<b>Practice:</b> Teaching prompt: Is the session multi-sensory but tightly focused on the learning objective? Ensure students are given opportunities to blend/segment and to write the letter/s?		
<b>Apply:</b> Teaching prompt: Is there evidence that children have opportunities to apply their phonic skills in purposeful reading and writing activities (inc HFW/Tricky Words)? Do activities promote all four interdependent strands of language: speaking, listening, reading and writing? Use the Talisman books or identify a text with the repeated phoneme. When reading, please encourage students to break words down into syllables. Create a word bank of words which include the phoneme. Using the story cubes, can students use the words in their writing?		
<b>Who has met the success criteria?</b> Hear it Say it Read it Write it	<b>What are the next steps?</b> Teaching prompt: please include the plan for students who haven't met the success criteria.	