

Year 1 Phonics Overview

Terms 1-6 | Phase 3/4 consolidation, Phase 5 progression and screening readiness

Core principle: Discrete phonics teaching prioritises GPC recognition, accurate blending and segmenting. Plurals and suffixes are taught through English and spelling rather than replacing core phonics teaching time.

Term 1

Consolidation and new Phase 5 graphemes

Week	GPC focus	Weekly word focus	Reading and blending focus
1	Phase 2 and 4 recap	Tricky spelling: l HFW reading: be	Complete the baseline assessment; secure single-letter GPCs and blend and segment CVC, CVCC and CCVC words.
2	Phase 3 and 4 recap	Tricky spelling: today HFW reading: like	Revisit digraphs and trigraphs; read CVCC, CCVC, CCVCC and two-syllable words.
3	ay, ou, ie, ea	Tricky spelling: of HFW reading: some	Read and segment real and pseudo-words containing the new GPCs.
4	oy, ir, ue, aw	Tricky spelling: says HFW reading: so	Develop accurate blending through the whole word without guessing from the initial sound.
5	wh, ph, ew, oe	Tricky spelling: is HFW reading: not	Apply new GPCs in words with adjacent consonants and less familiar vocabulary.
6	au, a-e, e-e	Tricky spelling: his HFW reading: then	Recognise split digraphs and blend through the whole word.
7	i-e, o-e, u-e	Review all Term 1 words	Consolidate and apply taught GPCs; complete the end-of-term phonics assessment.

Assessment and intervention cycle

When	Assessment and response
Every term	Complete a phoneme test for every child working below the expected level. Identify specific GPC gaps, create or update an individual phonics keyring and use it for targeted practice. Review progress at the next assessment point.
End of Terms 2 and 4	Complete a full phonics screening assessment with every child. Analyse performance in real and pseudo-words, update tracking and use the findings to adjust teaching groups, intervention and phonics keyrings.

Term 2

Alternative pronunciations and increasingly complex words

Week	GPC focus	Weekly word focus	Reading and blending focus
1	i, o, c, g	Tricky spelling: has HFW reading: were	Explore alternative pronunciations: fin/find, hot/cold, cat/cent and got/giant.
2	u, ow, ie, ea	Tricky spelling: l HFW reading: go	Explore alternative pronunciations: but/put, cow/blow, tie/field and eat/bread.
3	er, a, y	Tricky spelling: your HFW reading: little	Explore alternative pronunciations: farmer/her, hat/what and yes/by/very.
4	ch, ou	Tricky spelling: by HFW reading: as	Explore alternative pronunciations: chin/school/chef and out/could/you/shoulder.
5	Consolidation	Tricky spelling: my HFW reading: no	Select the pronunciation that produces a recognisable real word; revisit identified gaps.
6	Longer and two-syllable words	Tricky spelling: here HFW reading: mum	Blend words containing adjacent consonants, taught GPCs and more than one syllable.
7	Review and assessment	Review all Term 2 words	Read a mixed selection of Phase 3-5 real and pseudo-words; identify individual next steps.

Term 3

Alternative spellings for vowel phonemes

Week	GPC focus	Weekly word focus	Reading and blending focus
1	/ai/: ai, ay, a-e, a, eigh, ey, ei /ee/: ee, ea, e, e-e, ie, y, ey	Tricky spelling: love HFW reading: one	Compare alternative spellings of /ai/ and /ee/ and apply them when reading unfamiliar real and pseudo-words.
2	/igh/: igh, ie, i-e, i, y /oa/: oa, ow, o-e, o, oe	Tricky spelling: ask HFW reading: then	Recognise alternative spellings of /igh/ and /oa/ and blend accurately through the whole word.
3	/oo/: oo, ew, ue, u-e, ou, ui	Tricky spelling: friend HFW reading: do	Read alternative spellings of /oo/ and distinguish the long and short pronunciations of oo.
4	/or/: or, aw, au, al, oor, ore /ur/: ur, ir, er, ear	Tricky spelling: school HFW reading: me	Compare alternative spellings of /or/ and /ur/ in real and pseudo-words.
5	/ow/: ow, ou /oi/: oi, oy	Tricky spelling: put, push HFW reading: down	Read and compare alternative spellings of /ow/ and /oi/, including in longer words.
6	/ear/: ear, eer, ere /air/: air, are, ear	Review Term 3 words HFW reading: dad	Review mixed alternative vowel spellings. Complete the termly phoneme test for children working below the expected level and update gap keyrings.

Term 4

Alternative consonant spellings and screening preparation

Week	GPC focus	Weekly word focus	Reading and blending focus
1	/j/: j, g, ge, dge	Tricky spelling: pull HFW reading: big	Read and compare the principal spellings of /j/ in real and pseudo-words.
2	/s/: s, ss, c, ce, se /z/: z, zz, s, se	Tricky spelling: full HFW reading: when	Distinguish alternative spellings of /s/ and /z/ when blending unfamiliar words.
3	/n/: n, kn, gn /r/: r, wr	Tricky spelling: house HFW reading: it's	Recognise silent-letter spellings and blend through the whole word.
4	/f/: f, ff, ph /k/: c, k, ck, ch	Tricky spelling: our HFW reading: see	Compare alternative consonant spellings and apply them in real and pseudo-words.
5	/sh/: sh, ch, ti, ci, ssi /ch/: ch, tch	Tricky spelling: they HFW reading: looked	Read less common graphemes in longer words and continue mixed Phase 5 practice.
6	Mixed Phase 3-5 review	Tricky spelling: was HFW reading: very	Consolidate all taught GPCs and complete a full phonics screening assessment with every child. Analyse gaps and update teaching groups and keyrings.

Term 5

Precision teaching, fluency and phonics screening readiness

Week	GPC focus	Weekly word focus	Reading and blending focus
1	Mixed alternative vowel spellings	Tricky spelling: were HFW reading: look	Revisit alternative vowel spellings in mixed real and pseudo-words. Use assessment evidence to identify children needing immediate precision teaching.
2	Soft c and g; ge, dge; ph; kn, gn, wr	Tricky spelling: where HFW reading: don't	Revisit less common consonant spellings and silent-letter graphemes, with emphasis on accurate whole-word blending.
3	Split digraphs and mixed Phase 5 GPCs	Tricky spelling: all HFW reading: come	Build rapid recognition of split digraphs and mixed Phase 5 graphemes without guessing or over-relying on familiar vocabulary.
4	Adjacent consonants and pseudo-words	Tricky spelling: are HFW reading: will	Practise CCVC, CVCC, CCVCC and CCCVC structures. Teach children to identify every grapheme and blend once smoothly.
5	Two-syllable and less familiar real words	Tricky spelling: my HFW reading: into	Blend each syllable accurately, then combine the syllables. Continue short screening-style checks and respond immediately to errors.
6	Screening-style readiness check	Tricky spelling: by HFW reading: back	Complete a screening-style readiness check. Analyse errors by GPC and word structure and update individual keyrings.
7	Final gap closure	Review all Term 5 words	Deliver precise reteaching from the readiness check and finalise targeted groups for the first week of Term 6.

Targeted provision: Maintain the daily whole-class phonics lesson. Add short early-morning groups led by Fran before school and also the teacher/student when the children come into school, based directly on each child's assessment gaps and phonics keyring. Target these children to come in early at 8.30am so they can repeat their keyring sounds. Send home homework for June holidays based on gaps.

Term 6

Statutory screening, targeted catch-up and spelling application

Week	GPC focus	Weekly word focus	Reading and blending focus
1	All-phase rapid review	Tricky spelling: some HFW reading: what	Revisit individual gaps, common screening GPCs, adjacent consonants and two-syllable words. Keep practice familiar, positive and precise.
2	STATUTORY PHONICS SCREENING CHECK	Tricky spelling: come HFW reading: there	Administer the statutory check between Monday 14 and Friday 18 June 2027. Continue calm, normal phonics teaching; do not introduce new content.
3	Targeted Phase 2-5 catch-up	Tricky spelling: so HFW reading: out	Use screening and assessment evidence to reteach specific GPC and blending gaps. Children secure at Phase 5 move into spelling application.
4	Suffix -ed: /d/, /t/, /id/	Tricky spelling: little HFW reading: this	Read the root word, identify the suffix and blend the complete word. Explore the three pronunciations of -ed in fully decodable examples.
5	Suffix -ing	Tricky spelling: friend HFW reading: have	Identify the root word and suffix, then blend and apply the complete word in reading and spelling.
6	Suffixes -er and -est	Tricky spelling: school HFW reading: went	Read the root word before adding the suffix; compare meanings and apply the complete words in sentences.
7	Consolidation and Year 2 transition	Review all Term 6 words	Complete the termly phoneme test for children below the expected level. Update and pass on gap keyrings, intervention priorities and precise next steps.

Confirmed statutory check window: Monday 14 June to Friday 18 June 202.

Daily teaching sequence

- Revisit and review previously taught GPCs for rapid recognition.
- Explicitly teach the new GPC or alternative pronunciation.
- Model oral blending and blending through the whole written word.
- Practise reading both real and pseudo-words.
- Segment words for spelling using the taught GPCs.
- Apply learning through a sentence or fully decodable text.
- Correct errors immediately, return to the graphemes and reblend the word.

Assessment principle: Use pseudo-words little and often from the beginning. Also part of early morning work as regular practice.