



Pitcheroak School



Writing Guidance

Contents

Writing at Pitcheroak.....	4
Assessment	6
Early Years	6
Primary and Secondary	6
14- 19.....	7
Writing Aims.....	8
Writing Opportunities	9
Classroom Management and Procedures.....	10
Writing bookmarks.....	10
Big Write.....	10
Fine and Gross Motor Skills.....	10
Dough disco.....	11
Phonics	11
Write dance.....	11
Colourful semantics.....	12
Spellings.....	12
Handwriting.....	12
Word aware.....	14
Online programs and resources.....	14
Writing at home.....	14
Leadership and Monitoring.....	16
Appendix.....	17
English Organisation.....	18
Assessment and Moderation Timetable.....	20
Helping my child to write.....	21
Big Write Guidance	26
Gross and Fine Motor Skills	27
Postural Control and Shoulder Stability.....	27
Bilateral coordination.....	27
Finger and hand control.....	27
Activities to help develop postural control and shoulder stability.....	28



Activities to help support bilateral coordination.....	29
Fine Motor Skills.....	30
Finger and hand control	30
Pencil grip.....	30
Pre-writing skills	31
Visual Perception.....	32
Language	32
Activities to help a child to develop their finger and hand control	33
Activities to help a child with their pre-writing skills.....	35
Activities to help a child with visual perception skills	36
Activities to help with language skills	37
Helping your child at home	38



Writing at Pitcheroak.

At Pitcheroak, we consider it good practice to apply writing skills in other curriculum areas as well as in English. Our staff have the knowledge that enables them to use key, relevant terminology when working with pupils across other subjects so that again, literacy skills are being promoted and emphasised throughout the school in all areas. All of our pupils are encouraged to develop their fine motor skills, pen grip and control, and handwriting skills. Due to the differing needs of the individuals, these skills may occur into latter years of the school. Pupils are also given opportunities to incorporate ICT into their learning and can present written evidence through this form.

Functional writing is also an important aspect of our learning and is used to provide an individual with essential knowledge, skills and understanding that will enable them to operate confidently, effectively and independently in life and work. Across the school, students are encouraged to build on their writing skills through daily lessons linked to the National Curriculum. Students practice applying these skills in a range of contexts throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage, Key Stage 2 and 3 and within the 14-19 curriculum, where teachers challenge students to secure these skills by drawing on them to solve real life problems. The 14-19 curriculum allows for set functional skills lessons in order to promote independence in real life situations such as; writing invitations, letters, instructions, CV's, notices and filling in forms.

The writing the pupils do at Pitcheroak will include narratives, explanations, descriptions, comparisons, summaries and evaluations: such writing supports them in rehearsing, understanding and consolidating what they have heard or read.

Pupils will develop the following writing skills at a stage appropriate to them:

- Fine and gross motor development
- Phonic knowledge and whole word spelling
- Other word building spelling
- Transcription
- Handwriting
- Contexts for Writing
- Planning Writing
- Drafting Writing
- Editing Writing
- Performing Writing



- Vocabulary
- Grammar
- Punctuation
- Grammatical Terminology

All pupils, from Early Years to Post 16, take part in 'Big Write' writing, at the start of each term where they are asked to mark make, write a letter, word, caption, sentence or short piece about a given topic. This work is then collated by the English Subject Leader and marked alongside SOLAR (Special Online Assessment and Recording) and National Curriculum levels for Writing. Results are kept and monitored as a process of tracking progression throughout the year, and as a moderation exercise to help with levelling and accuracy of SOLAR assessment.

In accordance with our marking policy, we ensure that we offer feedback to each individual regardless of ability, whether this is verbal or through a short comment. Where a child spells a word incorrectly they should be encouraged to repeat the correct spelling and also write a sentence with the word in to help them to remember the spelling, dependent on their ability. This can also be followed up at home to enable parents the opportunity to work alongside their child in their development.



Assessment

Early Years

- Pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage are assessed through the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP) on a continual basis throughout the pupil's first year in education. Their learning and skills are recorded by use of note making, photographs, observations and any recordings appropriate to the pupil's level. Our pupils require a longer period of time to cover these areas and will continue to work on the EYFSP into Key Stage 1.
- Pupils at the end of Year 1 and 2 will be entered for the Phonics Screening Check, where appropriate.
- Parents are informed of progress on a termly basis in their Individual Education Plans (IEPs), through formal parent's meetings throughout the year, annually through a report to parents and then formally at the pupils Annual Review.
- Pupils will take part in the 'Big write' tasks and their 'mark making' will form the beginning of their personal written records for school.
- Pupil progress is tracked through SOLAR using criteria either from Early Years Foundation Stage Development Matters or Early Years Foundation Stage Development Matters Alternative, for pupils whose learning takes place in much smaller steps.

Primary and Secondary

- Staff comments are a little more formalised within Primary with the introduction of comments and feedback within their marking policy.
- Big Writes - Pupils take part in once a term writing assessment.
- Pupils are given targets for their IEPs on a termly basis, they also have targets set at their Annual Reviews. Specific detail is given at Parents meetings and also within the Annual Report to Parents.
- In addition to this, pupils are Teacher Assessed at the end of Year 6, End of Key Stage 2 against the Pre-Key Stage Standards.
- Pupil progress is tracked through SOLAR using a school generated assessment framework (Pitcheroak Steps – Writing or Pitcheroak Alternative Steps, within aspects of Physical – Fine motor and Cognition and Learning – Early Applying Skills for pupils not following a subject specific curriculum).



- Pupils complete termly phonics assessments.
- Pupils are also made aware of their targets within methods appropriate to their understanding, to continue the process of the pupils understanding their learning and development needs.

14- 19

- Students put their literacy skills into practical, meaningful and relevant scenarios so that they can see the importance that these have within post-school life.
- Students in 14-19 follow the OCN Qualification for Entry Level English or Personal progress. This is worked on and developed for the course of 5 years with pupils gaining an accreditation at the end of Year 11 or Year 14.
- BKS (Basic and Key Skill Builder) is used to benchmark students at the start of the year.
- Pupils are assessed using termly writing assessments based on the Entry Level descriptors.
- Students complete termly phonics assessments.

Phonics and Big Write assessment dates can be found in the appendix page 20.



Writing Aims

The National Curriculum states that pupils should:

- Develop the stamina and skills to write at length
- Use accurate spelling and punctuation
- Be grammatically correct
- Write in a range of ways and purposes including narratives, explanations, descriptions, comparisons, summaries and evaluations
- Write to support their understanding and consolidation of what they have heard or read

The 2014 Curriculum divides writing skills into two dimensions:

- Transcription (spelling and handwriting)
- Composition (articulating ideas in speech and writing)

We recognise that both these elements are essential to success and we support the acquisition of both sets of skills through various methods.

At Pitcheroak we aim to;

- Ensure that every child has the opportunity to succeed, progress and fulfil their full potential
- Promote a rich environment and culture that encourages the growth and development of Communication through Speaking and Listening, Reading and Writing
- Increase pupil's self-esteem and confidence within all Literacy skills
- Raise standards in all Literacy skills across the school
- Develop competence in the use of 'standard' English
- Use a variety of resources and techniques to access Communication for all pupils i.e. PECS, signing, symbols and colourful semantics.
- Ensure pupils further develop and use their Literacy skills in other areas of the curriculum
- Have opportunities to extend skills and improve development through the use of ICT
- Use writing as a means to communicate ideas and information to a reader.
- Understand the importance of audience and purpose
- Develop strategies to communicate effectively through the written word
- Recognise that drafting and redrafting is an essential part of the writing process



- Develop powers of imagination and inventiveness through writing.
- Develop fine and gross motor control to support writing.

Writing Opportunities

At Pitcheroak, the students have access to a range of opportunities to support their writing and composition, including;

- Fine and gross motor development activities.
- Dough disco
- Word aware
- Colourful semantics
- Write dance
- Phonics
- Individual writing (1:1 with a teacher)
- Group writing
- Writing across the curriculum
- Functional writing
- Independent writing
- ICT and cause and effect.



Classroom Management and Procedures.

Each class should have a copy of the Writing Handbook as well as copies of level descriptors and book marks.

Big Write

Termly 'Big Writes' provide the school with a definitive, comprehensive model that ensures both teachers and pupils can track progress and identify any gaps in order to accurately inform the next steps in teaching and learning.

All pupils, from Early Years to Post 16, take part in 'Big Write' writing at the start of each term where they are asked to mark, make, write a letter, word, caption, sentence or short piece about a given topic. This work is then collated by the English Subject Leader and marked alongside SOLAR Steps and National Curriculum levels for Writing. Results are kept and monitored as a process of tracking progression throughout the year, and as a moderation exercise to help with levelling and accuracy of SOLAR assessment. Big Write guidance and level descriptors have been devised to support staff when delivering and levelling the assessments (see appendix page 26 for description and drive – New English Curriculum – Big Write, for levelled descriptors).

Fine and Gross Motor Skills

'Well-developed fine and gross motor skills are an essential component of a child's readiness to write. These skills develop sequentially. Children learn to roll before they sit. They sit before they crawl. Then, typically, children crawl before they walk or run. These large motor movements form the foundation stability required to hold their pencil later on. Next, the children develop dexterity and hand control. They learn to drop, or release, objects. They learn to play with Duplo, bricks and beads. All of these activities help children to develop the hand skills required to hold their pencil.' *Griffin OT*

At Pitcheroak we use a range of sensory and structured play activities to support each child's fine and gross motor development dependent on their ability. Detailed information on fine and gross motor skills and lists of activities for each section can be found in the appendix page



27. We also use Fizzy's training games to aid development in specific areas, such as balance, ball skills and body awareness. These activities come in three different levels and can be used as an intervention strategy or with a small group (v drive – New English Curriculum – Fizzy's training games).

Dough disco

Dough disco is exercise for the fingers to help develop fine and gross motor skills, which in turn improves handwriting. It can be delivered as a whole group before writing tasks or as targeted intervention work. Gross motor movements include using the dough as a weight, so lots of lifting with straight arms, and round and round with extended arms. Fine motor skills include, pinching, poking, rolling and squeezing. This activity can be delivered to any age group and to any choice of music, be as creative as you like! Ideas and dough disco clips can be found on *youtube – spread the happiness tv*.

Phonics

At Pitcheroak, we make use of the Letters and Sounds Phonics programme and have a wealth of resources that can be accessed throughout the whole school age range. These resources, along with this programme, encourage pupil's speaking and listening skills as well as preparing children to learn to read and write by developing their phonic awareness. Pupils are taught to blend and segment taught sounds as well as develop the correct letter formation. Parents are also encouraged to support their child's development through homework tasks and a guidance booklet named 'Pitcheroak Phonics – Helping your Child at Home' (appendix, page 38) which includes information on each phonic phase and activities to support. This information can also be found on the school's website. Pupils are assessed each term on their phonic knowledge (vdrive – New English Curriculum – Phonics – Assessment). This information is then used by teachers to support next steps, groupings and interventions.

Write dance

Write dance can be used and adapted for any age group. It includes music, songs and movements to develop gross motor coordination. The combination of rhythmic pieces of music enable children to follow and learn specific movements to develop their balance, coordination, flexibility and stamina. These movements, along with the music can be adapted



to suit ability and age group, for example ribbons, sand trays, sensory play, outdoor mark making can be used in place of paper. Write dance can be found on the v drive –New English Curriculum – Write dance.

Colourful semantics

Colourful Semantics is an approach that aims to help children to develop their grammar. It is rooted in the meaning of words. We use a colour scheme which relates to the types of words in a sentence. 'Who' (subject) words are orange, 'what doing' words (verbs) are yellow and 'what' (noun) words are green, where (place) words are blue and 'what like?' adjectives are purple. This helps children to learn about word types and word order within a sentence. Using Colourful Semantics, pupils will become more confident and independent in their writing. It helps pupils who find sentence composition and structure difficult, by scaffolding their response to a text, picture or event. Colourful semantics resource folders are in classes with a pre-prepared assortment of 2/3/4 key word photographs for pupils to describe with AT/Teacher support, 1:1 or in a group. Teachers can also use the blank Colourful semantics templates on the V drive in the Colourful Semantics folder. Teachers can and should also use their own pictures from texts and pictures to make it more meaningful for pupils.

Spellings.

The planning, teaching and learning of spelling, punctuation and grammar begins in Key Stage 2 with the continuation of the Letters and Sounds program alongside the National Curriculum guidance. The National Curriculum makes it clear that learning vocabulary is the key to 'learning and progress across the curriculum,' since it allows our children to access a wider range of words when writing and to understand and comprehend texts efficiently. Teachers are responsible for determining whether repetitive learning of spellings is appropriate for their cohort. Where this is deemed appropriate, teachers should ensure they identify appropriate spellings using the named documents and their knowledge of each child's individual progress. Spelling requirements can be found in the Letters and Sounds document as well as the National Curriculum Guidance (v drive – New English Curriculum – Curriculum guidance)

Handwriting

The bullet points below show progress across the school at each phase, including links to National Curriculum requirements.



Early years/ KS1

- Pre- writing stage – mark making
- Individual letter formation.

Primary (based on Yr 1 NC)

- Sit correctly at a table, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly
- Begin to form lower-case letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the right place
- Form capital letters
- Form digits 0-9
- Understand which letters belong to which handwriting 'families' (i.e. letters that are formed in similar ways) and to practise these
- Make links with phonics and spelling

Handwriting is taught weekly in KS2 using 'Write Dance' and by working on specific letter families.

Secondary (based on Yr 2 NC)

- Form lower-case letters of the correct size relative to one another
- Start using some of the diagonal and horizontal strokes needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left not joined
- Write capital letters and digits of the correct size, orientation and relationship to one another and to lower case letters
- Use spacing between words that reflects the size of the letters

Further Development (based on Yr 3 NC Requirements).

- To begin to use the structure of a wider range of text types.
- To use a neat, joint handwriting style with increased accuracy.
- To increase the legibility, consistency and quality of their handwriting

Letter families:

- Curly caterpillar – c, d, e, a, g, s, o, q, f
- Ladder letters – l, i, t, u, j, y
- Zig zag monsters – v, w, x, z



- One armed robot – r, b, n, h, m, k, p

Word aware

Word Aware is a whole school multi-sensory approach to promote vocabulary development in children. It is a way to teach key concepts and vocabulary across the curriculum, and the techniques can be adapted and used from Early Years to KS5.

There is a set STAR process when teaching new vocabulary;

- * Select (1 – 3 words a topic)
- * Teach
- * Activate
- * Review

Each classroom should have a visible word wall, this can be individualised to suit specific needs and preferences within each class. There should only be 1-4 topic words at one time dependent on the ability of the group. Once teachers have finished teaching a topic word, that word can then move into a side pocket or pot to refer to over the coming days or weeks. Word mats should be used in classes where appropriate (see appendix for master copy). All staff should attend Word aware training, whether this is in house, or with external providers.

Online programs and resources.

There are many online tools to support writing, at Pitcheroak we currently use;

- Espresso
- Education City
- Symwriter (in budget to be purchased).
- Purple mash
- www.doorwayonline.org.uk
- www.topmarks.co.uk

Writing at home.



Parents are encouraged to support their child's development at home. Writing targets will be shared with parents via termly IEP's, at parent's evenings and review meetings. Activities and guidance for parents can be found in the appendix (page 21).



Leadership and Monitoring.

- Teachers should complete phonics, reading and writing assessments during three assessment weeks across the year (see appendix p. 20). Phonics assessments can be found on the v-drive – New English Curriculum – Phonics - Assessment.
- Observations of guided reading and phonics teaching and learning should take place by the subject lead or SLT team.
- Monitoring of planning should be each departments responsibility. The subject lead should monitor planning each term to ensure there is a broad coverage of objectives. It is the responsibility of the subject lead to ensure correct record keeping procedures are in place for phonics and 'Big Write' assessments.
- Learning walks to establish whether writing has been given a high profile within each classroom and expectations are being applied consistently across subjects.



Appendix.

English Organisation.

Curriculum coverage.

<u>Key stage</u>		<u>Curriculum</u>
Early Years/ KS1		EYFS
KS2	Bronze	Non-subject specific – Cognition and Learning and Communication
	Silver	Subject specific (Yr 1 NC)
	Gold	Subject specific (Yr 1 / Yr 2 NC)
KS3	Bronze	Non-subject specific – Cognition and Learning and Communication
	Silver	Subject specific (Yr 2 NC)
	Gold	Subject specific (Yr 3 NC - Lower KS2)
14-19	Bronze	OCN Personal Progress.
	Mixed ability groups	OCN English Entry Level 1, 2, 3

Phonics organisation.

Teaching and Learning:

The school follows the systematic approach laid out in Letters and Sounds (2007) and the jingles from Jolly phonics are used to support learning for Early years and KS2.

Discrete phonics lessons are taught weekly across KS2 and where appropriate KS3. They follow the structure of 'Review, Teach, Practice, Apply' to ensure that children are consolidating phonic knowledge and skills over time and that they are able to apply them in context.

Children are grouped according to their phonic knowledge which is assessed by the class teacher. These groupings are reviewed regularly.

Each Key Stage has a range of resources which are appropriate for the level at which the children are working. Each class should have their own set of letter fans.

Assessment

Teachers in KS2 and KS3 complete termly reading, writing and phonics assessments with their class in order to track progress, inform groupings and highlight additional support needed.

Written assessments should be levelled by the class teacher and moderated by the English Co-ordinator at set times throughout the year.

Phonics assessments should be completed by the class teacher, who should then inform the subject lead of any additional resources needed. Our current phonics assessment can be found on the vdrive.

Pupils who are able to, at the end of Year 1 or Year 2 take part in the Year 1 phonics screening check. The benchmark for this test will be pupils who are competently working at Phase 3 Phonics.

Reading assessments are completed by the class teacher using the York reading scheme.

Students who are following the 14-19 curriculum will be assessed using the school's Phonics assessment, BKSB benchmarking tool, OCN assessment and set reading comprehension tasks.

1:1 reading where the subject lead or other senior leader listens to a child read to establish the accuracy of the reading level awarded and suitability of the reading material.

Internal and external moderation to take place throughout the year.

Assessment and Moderation Timetable

	<u>Completion dates</u>		
	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3
Phonics assessment	To be completed by teachers TBC	To be completed by teachers TBC	To be completed by teachers TBC
Phonics moderation	Data to be handed in to subject lead.	English lead and SLT to assess for Phonics screening test (Yr 1 and 2 only). The benchmark for this test is completion of Phase 3 phonics.	Data to be handed in to subject lead.
Independent write - assessment	To be completed by teachers TBC	To be completed by teachers TBC	To be completed by teachers TBC
Writing moderation		Subject lead to attend external moderation.	
Reading assessment	To be completed by teachers TBC	To be completed by teachers TBC	To be completed by teachers TBC
Reading moderation	Reading scores to be checked by subject lead.	SLT or subject lead to moderate identified pupils reading levels.	Reading scores to be checked by subject lead.



Helping my child to write

Writing is more than putting words on paper. Your child needs to **think** about what to write; **say** what they want to write, **write** it down and **re-read** their writing. It is a balancing act between having wonderful ideas (creativity), organising their ideas and the ability to put these exciting ideas onto paper (handwriting and spelling).

What does Writing Need?



Clear thinking. Sometimes your child needs to have his/her memory refreshed about a past event in order to write about it.

Sufficient time. Children may have 'stories in their heads' but need time to think them through and write them down.

A Meaningful Task. A child needs meaningful, not artificial writing tasks. You'll find suggestions for such tasks in the section, "Things to do."

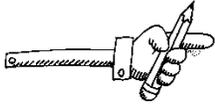
Interest. All the time in the world won't help if there is nothing to write, nothing to say. Some of the reasons for writing include: sending messages, keeping records, expressing feelings, or relaying information.

Practice. And more practice.

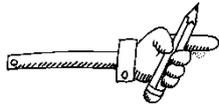
Revising. Children need experience in revising their work – for example, seeing what they can do to make it clearer, more descriptive, more concise.

Helpful pointers for writing at home!

In helping your child to learn to write well at home, remember that your goal is to make writing easier and more enjoyable.

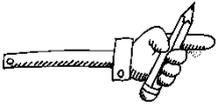


Provide a place & opportunities: It is important for a child to have a good place to write - a desk or table with a smooth, flat surface and good lighting.

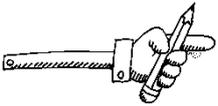


crayons.

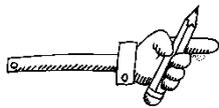
Have the materials: Provide plenty of paper - lined and unlined, card and folded paper to make booklets - and things to write with, including pencils, pens, and



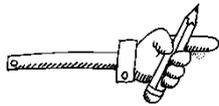
Allow time: Help your child spend time thinking about a writing project or exercise. Good writers do a great deal of thinking!



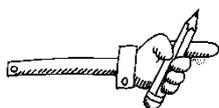
Respond: Do respond to the ideas your child expresses verbally or in writing. Make it clear that you are interested in the true function of writing which is to convey ideas. This means focusing on "what" the child has written (their ideas), not "how" it was written (spelling and handwriting). It's usually wise to ignore minor errors, particularly at the stage when your child is just getting ideas together. In school, we do not correct every spelling error as this is not the main focus of the writing task.



Praise: Take a positive approach and say something good about your child's writing. Is it Descriptive? Thoughtful? Interesting? Does it say something?



Write together: Encourage your child to help you with letters, even routine ones, such as ordering from an advert! It is important that your child sees that writing is important to adults.



Show yourself as a writer: give your child opportunities to see you write emails, or lists

Things to do!

- Mark making in sensory materials – water, beans, chalk, paint, sand, foam, cornflour.
- Put shaving foam on a tray and ask your child to mark make or write letters
- Have a bucket of water, small paint brush and write letters and words onto your patio or outside surface
- Exchange Post-it notes with your children. Put the notes on pillowcases or lunch boxes or any surprise location!
- Help your child assemble photo albums of family events and write captions.
- Ask children to put their wishes and wants into writing and suggest how they may work toward or contribute to getting what they want.
- Help your child create a family newsletter or website to share with family members near and far.
- Suggest that your children write postcards to themselves when they are away from home. When they receive their own postcards in the post, they will have a souvenir of their trip.
- Make writing practical and useful by having children write grocery and task lists, reminders and phone messages, instructions for caring for pets, or directions for getting to the park.

Online resources;

www.activityvillage.co.uk

www.doorwayonline.org.uk

www.topmarks.co.uk



Big Write Guidance

Assessment

I have taken some of the guidance from Ros Wilson to support the structure of the Big write session. This is written for mainstream and parts may need to be adapted to suit your group. I hope you find it useful and not confusing.

How does it work?

Topic titles and genres have been left for the class teacher to decide and should consider the ability of the class. The Big write session is split into **2 parts**. The piece of mark making or writing should be completed as independently as possible, however if a child is tracing shapes or words, support can be given to show their capabilities.

PART 1 –

The children play games, talk for writing and verbalise a plan for what they will write.

They discuss success criteria (steps needed to make a good piece of work).

This session is fast paced, active and fun!

BREAK TIME –

The children have a short break where they can stretch their legs, cool off and prepare for session 2.

PART 2 –

The children sit in a calm atmosphere and write.

The classroom has soft music playing or low-level lighting.

The children have 'brain breaks' where they can stretch their legs and make sure they have included punctuation etc. The teacher gives reminders at various intervals.

Completion.

Please make sure that you level each piece of work against SOLAR level descriptors (examples can be found on the vdrive – New English – Curriculum) and annotate work clearly so that the level of support is accurate and can be understood by moderators. Completed tasks should then be handed in to the Subject lead who will moderate.

Gross and Fine Motor Skills

Postural Control and Shoulder Stability

Before a child can hold their pencil effectively, they need to be able to sit up. Sitting requires adequate postural control. Postural control is our ability to keep our bodies stable when we are stationary and when we move. It is essential for us to be able to use our arms, hands and fingers with good control.

Our shoulders are the next layer of the foundation. Our shoulders support our arms and hands. When there is reduced shoulder stability, a child will have less control over their arms and hands.

Bilateral coordination

Bilateral coordination refers to the ability to coordinate both sides of the body at the same time in a controlled and organised manner; for example, holding paper with one hand while writing or cutting with the other. Crossing the midline" is an integral skill related to bilateral coordination. Crossing the midline refers to the ability to spontaneously cross over the midline of the body during motor completion or functional tasks- moving one hand, foot, or eye into the space of the other hand, foot, or eye (i.e. sitting with legs crossed, scratching the opposite elbow, successfully intersecting lines to draw a cross- without switching hands, reading left to right, etc.).

Finger and hand control

In order to hold their pencil with their fingers children first need to be able to isolate their fingers from their palm. Initially, when they hold a pencil, a child will grasp their entire hand around it. This is because they have not developed the hand control to isolate their fingers from their palm. As they have more experience with fine motor activities, children establish more control over their fingers. This is what allows them to hold their pencil with their fingers and eventually develop a dynamic pencil grasp.

Taken from Griffin OT

Activities to help develop postural control and shoulder stability

- Climbing activities
- Scooter board rope pull – pupils lies flat on the scooter board and pulls themselves with their arms.
- Hanging activities – monkey bars/ pull ups
- Pushing and pulling activities
- Weight bearing activities through arms (animal walks/ wheelbarrow walking/ crawling/ planks/ wall push ups).
- Yoga (you tube – cosmic kids)
- Large Art projects using vertical surfaces.
- Swings and slides
- Walking up and down unstable surfaces also helps with postural control.
- Use of tunnels and obstacle courses.
- Gymnastics
- Free movement songs (e.g. Go Noodle, Koo Koo Kanga Roo, The Learning Station)

Activities to help support bilateral coordination.

- Bopping a balloon back and forth
- Popping bubbles with both hands
- Tearing/ crumpling tissue paper
- Connecting/ separating construction toys; magnetic blocks, Mega blocks, pop-beads, Legos
- Playing catch/ throw games
- Playing with toy instruments; banging drums, triangle, symbols
- Pinching, pulling, squeezing, play-doh (finding hidden objects, etc.); as well as using the play-doh “tools”
- Lacing uncooked pasta onto ribbon or beads onto pipe cleaners
- Snipping/ cutting with scissors
- Threading
- Mr. Potato Head
- Icing biscuits with a butter knife
- Clothes line Uno – pin the cards up in front of the body and encourage pupils to use both hands.
- Opening/ filling jars and containers with lids.
- Tracing around templates
- Colouring
- Walking along a line – one foot in front of the other.
- Pivoting – using arms to swivel.
- Bat and ball activities
- Music and movement using scarves and ribbons
- Riding a bike
- Marching and clapping hands
- Jumping jacks
- Hopscotch.

Fine Motor Skills

Finger and hand control

In order to hold their pencil with their fingers children first need to be able to isolate their fingers from their palm. Initially, when they hold a pencil, a child will grasp their entire hand around it. This is because they have not developed the hand control to isolate their fingers from their palm. As they have more experience with fine motor activities, children establish more control over their fingers. This is what allows them to hold their pencil with their fingers and eventually develop a dynamic pencil grasp.

Pencil grip

There are five stages of pencil grip development. The following information has been taken from www.teachhandwriting.co.uk, although there are many resources on twinkl to support and develop a child's pencil grip.

1 Palmer Supinate grasp / fisted grasp.	 ©Teach Children Ltd	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Holds the crayon/pencil in fist (whole hand) like a dagger.• They use whole arm movements from the shoulder to mark-make.• Due to this whole arm movement they prefer to work on a vertical surface.
2 Digital pronate grasp	 ©Teach Children Ltd	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Holds a crayon/pencil with the palm of the hand facing down towards the paper.• The crayon/pencil is held by all the fingers and the thumb.• The movement comes from the shoulder and elbow.• Again, due to the way the arm moves a vertical surface is preferred.

<p>3</p> <p>Four finger and thumb grip</p>	 <p>© Teach Children Ltd</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holding the crayon/pencil between the thumb and four fingers with the crayon/pencil in a nearly vertical, upright position. • Movement comes from the elbow and wrist.
<p>4</p> <p>Static tripod grip</p>	 <p>© Teach Children Ltd</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holding the pencil in very nearly the correct position however the web space is narrower than it would be if held in a mature tripod grip. • The movement is coming from the wrist and large finger movements.
<p>5</p> <p>Dynamic tripod grip</p>	 <p>© Teach Children Ltd</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is traditionally considered the most appropriate handwriting pencil grip for both left and right-handed writers. • Holding the pencil between the thumb and index finger with pencil supported on the middle finger. The ring and little fingers are gently curled inwards. • This gives an open wide web space which means the movement comes from the fingers.

Pre-writing skills

Handwriting is a complex activity. Pre-writing skills are the things a child needs to be able to do before they are ready to write. This includes being able to colour and trace inside lines, and to draw certain shapes. Shapes such as vertical and horizontal lines and circles form the foundation of most letters. Think of the letter 'a' for example. It starts off as a circle, and then has a vertical line on the side. Additionally, a child needs to be able to draw their oblique lines for letters such as a 'k,' 'v,' 'w,' and x.'

A useful way to think about pre-writing skills is to call it 'mark making.' So, before a child writes they need to be able to use their pencil to make marks and colour. It can be really helpful let the child be as creative as they want to. There are no rules. You just want the child to be holding onto a marker, crayon or pencil and make some marks. This helps with their pencil control.

Visual Perception

Visual perception is the making sense of what we see. It's much more than having 20/20 vision. It relates to how the brain interprets the information that our eyes see. Before a child can write a letter, they need to be able to identify it. They need to remember what it looks like. This then lets them write it. If you don't know what the letter 'a' looks like, you can't write it. This is why reading is really important as it helps children to start to identify the letters, well before they start to write them. It's much easier to identify a letter and name it than it is to remember and write it. This is also why copying is easier than writing from memory.

Language

Whilst this may seem like a sideways step, language is also a critical component of handwriting. Like visual perception, if you can't imagine it, or say it, you're really going to struggle to write it.

Taken from Griffin OT

Activities to help a child to develop their finger and hand control

- Padlocks and keys – how quickly can you unlock them?
- Clothes pegs. How many can you peg around a box in 1 minute?
- Tweezers - How many small beads / peas can you pick up in a minute?
- Have mixtures such as dried pasta and peas. Can you separate the mixture using only tweezers?
- Scissor activities – ensure children have correct scissor grip at all times.
- Pipettes - ‘Melt monsters’. Draw monsters with felt tip pens and then using eye droppers drip water on them and watch the monsters ‘melt’.
- Playdough - Try to pull, squeeze, roll, twist it etc. Sometimes using the palms of your hands, other times using your fingertips. You can also prick out designs using toothpicks in the dough.
- Popping bubble wrap
- Threading beads/ pasta onto a string
- Joining paper clips
- Sticking string/wool onto outlines of drawings.
- Lacing activities
- Play games such as tiddly winks or the frogs where you press their backs.
- Doing up buttons and zips quickly.
- Upright surfaces promote fine motor skills so do things such as painting on easels, writing on chalk boards/whiteboards etc.
- Pegboards
- Scrunching up sheets of newspaper with 1 hand (to then stuff something with eg: a scarecrow or throw into a container)
- Play board games requiring children to turn over cards/counters BUT they cannot slide them to the edge of the table to do so.
- Tracing round stencils
- Using small hammers, bang golf tees into something like a pumpkin
- Taking lids on and off small Tupperware containers

- Online scissor and pencil control worksheets can be found on **Twinkl**
- Theraputty
- Walking a ball using your fingers
- Dough disco
- Construction toys such as Duplo, Sticklebrix and Popoids
- Drilling
- Peg boards.
- Messy play - Sand, shave foam and finger paint
- Mud kitchens
- Cooking
- Finger songs
- Musical instruments
- Many pretend play toys, e.g. doctor sets, dolls houses, trucks and cars, also encourage fine motor skills.

Activities to help a child with their pre-writing skills

- Colouring and drawing
- Drawing with chalk outside
- Activity workbooks with mazes and dot to dots
- Mark making on an iPad or electronic device
- Using whiteboards
- Chalkboards
- Easels
- Tuff spots – sensory materials
- Role play
- Using large brushes outside
- Sand tray
- Clip boards
- A range of writing tools (pens/ chinks/ paints etc) and surfaces
- Light boxes and sand
- Activity sheets to practice writing patterns.
- Practise pre-writing shapes as these are the foundation shapes for handwriting. They include vertical and horizontal lines, circles, squares and oblique lines (\ /) and crosses (+ x).

Activities to help a child with visual perception skills

- Reading
- Puzzles
- Matching games
- Identifying shapes and letter in the environment (e.g. I-spy)
- Spotting similarities and differences
- Sorting activities
- Picking named objects from a box
- Construction activities
- Pattern work
- Hidden objects games – Kim’s game
- Treasure hunts
- Sequencing pictures
- Word searches
- Bingo

Activities to help with language skills

- Talk talk talk!
- Reading out aloud.
- Nursery rhymes and songs
- Tell stories
- Observe and comment
- Language games – word searches, countdown, boggle, scrabble.
- Colourful semantics
- Word aware
- Writing worksheets – write, copy, trace, dot-to-dot.
- Class writing areas
- Creative storytelling prompts
- Sensory stories
- PECS
- Use of technology – writing games / Symwriter/ blogs etc.
- Communication games



Helping your child at home

An activity guide to support Early
Reading and Phonics



Phonics Phases

There are six overlapping phases. The table below is a summary based on the Letters and Sounds guidance for Practitioners and Teachers. For more detailed information, visit the [Letters and Sounds](#) website. If you are unsure which phase your child is working at show them each phoneme sound in order (see below). When they start to make mistakes stop and this should give you a starting point.

Phase	Phonic Knowledge and Skills	Letters
<i>Phase One</i>	Activities are divided into seven aspects, including environmental sounds, instrumental sounds, body sounds, rhythm and rhyme, alliteration, voice sounds and finally oral blending and segmenting.	
<i>Phase Two</i>	Learning 19 letters of the alphabet and one sound for each. Blending sounds together to make words. Segmenting words into their separate sounds. Beginning to read simple captions.	S, a, t, p, i, n, m, d, g, o, c, k, ck, e, u, r h, b, f, ff, l, ll, ss
<i>Phase Three</i>	The remaining 7 letters of the alphabet, one sound for each. Graphemes such as ch, oo, th representing the remaining phonemes not covered by single letters. Reading captions, sentences and questions.	J, v, w, x Y, z, zz, qu, Ch, sh, th, ng, Ai, ee, igh, oa, oo, ar, or, ur, ow, oi, ear, air, ure, er.
<i>Phase Four</i>	No new grapheme-phoneme correspondences are taught in this phase. Children learn to blend and segment longer words with adjacent consonants, e.g. <u>sw</u> im, <u>cl</u> ap, <u>ju</u> mp.	

<i>Phase Five</i>	Children learn more graphemes for the phonemes which they already know, plus different ways of pronouncing the graphemes they already know.	Ay (day), ou (out), ie (tie), ea (eat), oy (boy), ir (girl), ue (blue), aw (saw), wh (when), ph (photo), ew (new), oe (toe), au (Paul), a- e (make), e-e (these), i-e (like), o-e (home), u-e (rule)
<i>Phase Six</i>	Working on spelling, including prefixes and suffixes, doubling and dropping letters etc.	

(taken from letters-and-sounds.com)

Phonics Dictionary

Phoneme ----- The sound a letter makes (think like listening on the phone)

Grapheme ---- The written letter (think like graphite in a pencil!)

Digraph --- Two letters that make one sound e.g. 'sh' 'ch'

Trigraph ---- Three letters that make one sound e.g. 'igh'

Blend ---- Merging the sounds in a word together to read it e.g s-a-t 'sat'

Segment --- Breaking down the sounds in a word to spell it e.g. 'sat' 's-a-t'

Tricky word --- A word which can't be sounded out using phonics strategies. E.g 'the'

Phase 1 – Games and Activities

Most of these activities can be adapted to suit different age groups.

Name	Activity	Resources
Toy sounds	<p>When your child is playing with their toys encourage them to make the right sounds. Farm animals, train sets, vehicles, dolls etc are great for this.</p> <p>Adaptation – use household items (alarm clock, telephone, Hoover).</p>	Toys from around the home.
Listening walk (can be done inside or outside)	<p>Encourage your child to listen attentively to the sounds around them. Talk about the different sounds they can hear.</p> <p>Make a list of all the sounds they can remember. The list can be in words or pictures and prompted by replaying sounds recorded on the walk.</p>	Paper and a pen if you want to make a list of sounds.
Lost in the jungle	<p>Whilst your child isn't looking, hide a toy somewhere around the room/ garden. You can use clapping/ music/ vocal sounds to indicate to your child how near or far they are from the toy (sounds are louder the closer they get and quieter when they are further away).</p> <p>Adaptation – use a music channel / radio and turn the volume up and down.</p>	Any spare toy or teddy
Mrs Browning has a box	<p>Turn a box on its side with the opening facing away from your child.</p> <p>One by one place between four and six familiar noisy items (e.g. a set of keys, crisp packet, squeaky toy) into the box, pausing to name them and demonstrate the sound each one makes.</p> <p>Sing to the tune of 'Old MacDonald' but using your own name or your child's name: <i>Mrs...has a box ee ee i ee i o</i> <i>And in that box she has a...</i></p> <p>Stop. Gesture and ask your child to listen.</p> <p>Handle one of the objects in the box, out of sight, to make a noise. Allow your child to guess what is making the sound.</p> <p>Continue the song but imitating the sound using your voice.</p>	Box or bag Noisy items to go inside – crisp packet, keys, paper, squeaky toy)

	<p><i>With a zzz zzz here and a zzz zzz there...</i></p> <p><i>Adaptation – complete the same activity without the song.</i></p>	
Describe it and find it	<p>For example, set up a model farmyard. Describe one of the animals but do not say its name. Say, for example: <i>This animal has horns, four legs and a tail.</i> Ask your child to say which animal it is. Ask them to make the noise the animal might make. When they are familiar with the game you can try swapping roles.</p> <p>This activity can be repeated with other sets of objects such as zoo animals, toy sets based on transport (e.g. aeroplane, car, train, bus, boat) and musical instruments.</p> <p><i>Adaptation - It can be made more challenging by introducing sets of random objects to describe and name.</i></p>	<p>Any toys or random objects you have in the home – animals, transport, instruments, clothes, kitchen or household equipment, food etc.</p>
Socks and shakers	<p>Partially fill either opaque plastic bottles or the toes of socks with noisy materials (e.g. rice, peas, pebbles, marbles, shells, coins).</p> <p>Ask your child to shake the bottles or socks and identify what is inside from the sound the items make. From the feel and the sound of the noisy materials encourage them to talk about them. Ask questions such as: <i>Where might we find shells and pebbles?</i></p>	<p>Opaque bottles/ socks Rice, peas, pasta, pebbles, marbles, shells, coins.</p>
Enlivening stories	<p>Involve your child in songs and stories, enlivened by role-play, props and repeated sounds, for example acting out:</p> <p><i>Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall, Humpty Dumpty had a great fall (bump, crash, bang!)</i></p> <p><i>All the King's horses and all the King's men (gallop, gallop, gallop)</i></p> <p><i>Couldn't put Humpty together again (boo, hoo, boo, hoo, boo, hoo).</i></p>	<p>Any familiar story or rhyme.</p>
Rhyming soup	<p>Sit so everyone can see a selection of rhyming objects (e.g. rat, hat, cat) placed on the floor. Use a bowl and spoon as props to act out the song.</p> <p>In turn, choose an object to put into the soup and place it in the bowl. After each turn, stir the soup and sing the following song to recite the growing list of things that end up in the soup.</p>	<p>Rhyming objects/ pictures/ words.</p> <p>Bowl/ spoon</p>

	<p>Sing the first part of the song to the tune of 'Pop Goes the Weasel':</p> <p><i>I'm making lots of silly soup</i> <i>I'm making soup that's silly</i> <i>I'm going to cook it in the fridge</i> <i>To make it nice and chilly</i> <i>In goes... a fox... a box... some socks...</i></p>	
Playing with words	<p>Gather together a set of familiar objects with names that have varying syllable patterns e.g. pencil (pen-cil), umbrella (um-brel-la), camera (cam-er-a). Show the objects, name them and talk about what they are used for. Wait for your child to share some of their experiences of the objects; for instance, when you/ they have used a camera. Then encourage them to think about how the name of the object sounds and feels as they say it. Think about the syllables and clap them out as you say each word (cam-er-a). Then clap the syllables for a word without saying it and ask: <i>What object could that be?</i> As children gain confidence try some long words like <i>binoculars (bin-oc-u-lars)</i>, <i>telephone (tel-e-phone)</i>, <i>dinosaur (di-no-saur)</i>.</p>	Random objects from around the home.
I spy	<p>Start the game by saying <i>I spy something beginning with...</i> and give the sound of the first letter. If your child is confident at recognizing the first sound, swap roles.</p> <p><i>Adaptation – of you wanted to use familiar names try playing I spy with a family photograph.</i></p>	
Our sound box/bag	<p>Make collections of objects with names beginning with the same sound. Create a song, such as 'What have we got in our sound box today?' and then show the objects one at a time. Emphasise the initial sound (e.g. s-s-s-snake, s-s-s-sock, s-s-s-sausage)</p> <p><i>Adaptation – remove the song. Allow the children to make their own sound box/ bag.</i></p>	<p>Bag/ box.</p> <p>Objects or toys beginning with the same sound.</p>
Mirror play	<p>Sit in front of a mirror. Play at making faces and copying movements of the lips and tongue. Introduce sound making in the mirror and discuss the way lips move, for example, when sounding out 'p' and 'b', the way that tongues poke out for 'th',</p>	Mirror

	the way teeth and lips touch for 'f' and the way lips shape the sounds 'sh' and 'm'.	
Silly soup	<p>Provide a selection of items with names that begin with the same sound.</p> <p>Show how you can make some 'silly soup' by putting 'ingredients' (e.g. a banana, bumble bee and bug) into a pan.</p> <p>Allow your child to play and concoct their own recipes. Play alongside them without influencing their choices. Commentate and congratulate them on their silly recipes.</p> <p>Recite each list of chosen ingredients. Make the pattern clear by emphasising the initial sound.</p>	<p>Bowl/ pot</p> <p>Objects/ food items beginning with the same sound.</p>
Voice sounds	<p>Show how they can make sounds with their voices, for example:</p> <p><i>Make your voice go down a slide – wheee!</i></p> <p><i>Make your voice bounce like a ball – boing, boing</i></p> <p><i>Sound really disappointed – oh</i></p> <p><i>Hiss like a snake – ssssss</i></p> <p><i>Keep everyone quiet – shshshsh</i></p> <p><i>Gently moo like a cow – mmmoooo</i></p> <p><i>Look astonished – oooooo!</i></p> <p><i>Be a steam train – chchchchch</i></p> <p><i>Buzz like a bumble bee – zzzzzzz</i></p> <p><i>Be a clock – tick tock.</i></p> <p>This can be extended by joining single speech sounds into pairs (e.g. <i>ee-aw</i> like a donkey).</p>	
Making trumpets	<p>Make amplifiers (trumpet shapes) from simple cones of paper or lightweight card and experiment by making different noises through the cones.</p> <p>Model sounds: the up and down wail of a siren, the honk of a fog horn, a <i>peep, peep, peep</i> of a bird.</p> <p>Contrast loud and soft sounds. Use the trumpets to sound out phonemes.</p>	Newspaper, paper, card, tape.
Metal Mike	<p>Have ready a bag of pictures of objects (e.g. cat, dog, mug, sock) and sound out and blend the phonemes in their names.</p> <p>Ask your child to take out a picture or an object from a bag. Hold it up and tell them that Metal Mike is a computer and so he talks with a robot voice.</p> <p>Ask your child to name the object as Metal Mike would and demonstrate it for them in a robotic voice (e.g. 'c-a-t'). followed by blending the phonemes to make the word.</p>	<p>Pictures, toys, objects such as cat, dog, mug.</p>

	<p>Start with words containing 3 phonemes and build up throughout each phonics phase.</p> <p><i>Adaptation – remove the idea on Metal Mike and ask them to talk like a robot from an old video game.</i></p>	
Clapping sounds	<p>Think of words using the letters ‘s, a, t, p, i, n’ (e.g. sat, pin, nip, pat, tap, pit, pip) and sound them out, clapping each phoneme in unison, then blend the phonemes to make the whole word orally.</p>	
Which one?	<p>Lay out a selection of familiar objects with names that contain three phonemes (e.g. leaf, sheep, soap, fish, sock, bus). Check that they recognise each object.</p> <p>Bring out the sound-talking toy and ask your child to listen carefully while it says the names of one of the objects in sound-talk so they can help it to put the sounds together and say the word.</p> <p>The toy then sound-talks the word, leaving a short gap between each sound. Encourage them to say the word and identify the object. Your child can then repeat the sounds and blend them together – it is important that they do this and don’t simply listen to the adult doing so.</p> <p><i>Adaptation – remove the toy and move like a robot.</i></p>	<p>Sound-talk toy.</p> <p>Familiar objects.</p>
I spy	<p>Place on the floor or on a table a selection of objects with names containing two or three phonemes (e.g. zip, hat, comb, cup, chain, boat, tap, ball). Check that they know the names of the objects. The toy says <i>I spy with my little eye a z-i-p</i>.</p> <p>Then invite your child to say the name of the object and hold it up. Then say the individual phonemes and blend them together ‘z-i-p, zip’.</p> <p><i>Adaptation – remove the toy element</i></p>	<p>Objects containing 2 or 3 phonemes – zip, hat, cat, bag, ball etc.</p>
Song time	<p>Sing your child’s favourite songs, ones they have learnt at school, songs you remember from childhood or songs on CDs you have at home. Encourage them to use their bodies to make sounds to go along with their singing – stamping, clapping, patting knees etc.</p> <p><i>Adaptation – use current songs from the radio.</i></p>	<p>Radio/ CD</p>

Rhyming books	When your child is really familiar with a particular book, try pausing before the rhyming word. Encourage your child to fill in the missing word.	Rhyming books
Quick draw	When drawing together, try drawing a snake and a sock. Point out that these things both begin with a 's' sound. Make the hissing 's' sound. Add some more 's' pictures e.g. snail, spider etc. Your child may be able to suggest some ideas as well.	Paper, outside area, pencils, chalks, water, paint etc.

Phase 2 – 6

Games and Activities

These activities can be adapted to support phases 2 to 6.

Examples of practice words for each phase will be kept in a separate file.

Name	Activity	Resources
Robotic talking (Metal Mike)	Words are made up from sounds and children need to be able to hear these sounds individually. Sometimes when you are playing you can say words as if you were a robot (saying the sounds separately) and see if your child can work out what you are saying. Stick to short simple words that only have a few sounds in them. Make sure you are saying the letter sounds (p-i-g) not the letter names (pee-eye-gee). E.g. Pass that p-i-g to me. Sit d-ow-n. Point to your t-ee-th. Hop like a f-r-o-g. As your child becomes familiar with this robot talking, see if they can say words in robot talk themselves?	
I spy	Say the rhyme 'I spy with my little eye something beginning with _____' allow your child plenty of opportunities to guess what you have chosen, for example, 'something beginning with t ' could be a tree, toy, tent or train.	
Point out print everywhere	Talk about the written words you see in the world around you.	Books, magazines, newspapers, food packets etc.
Playing with words	Encourage your child to sound out the word as you change it from mat to fat to sat; from sat to sag to sap; and from sap to sip.	
Looking for letters	Ask your child to look for English letters. Can they find letters from their own name, letters they have learnt in school or letters that specific words begin with?	Books, magazines, newspapers, food packets etc.
Fast letter sorting	Choose 3 sets of letters – 2 which the child knows and one new one. Spread the letter tiles out on the table making sure they are all the correct way up. Encourage your child to sort the letters into the correct hoop/	12 small pieces of card with letters written on (4 sets of 3

	<p>bowl/ plate using both hands, saying each letter as they move it.</p>	<p>letters) You could also use magnetic letters if you have these at home or cut out letters from a newspaper.</p> <p>Three plates/ hoops/ bowls for your child to sort into.</p>
Ladder letters	<p>Make a pile of letter tiles (use a mixture of known and new letters). Place a counter at the bottom of the ladder and move up a rung for every letter they can read correctly.</p> <p><i>Adaptation – this game can be changed to covering spots on a ladybird, petals on a flower – go with your child’s interests if possible.</i></p>	<p>A ladder template / cut out ladybird, petals on a flower, leaves on a tree etc.</p>
Letter sound bingo.	<p>Write some of the letters into the spaces on each card, making each card slightly different. The ‘bingo caller’ says each letter in turn and the players cover the letter up. The winner is first to fill their board. To make this game easier for new readers, show them the letter for them to match.</p> <p><i>Adaptation – you could use words rather than letters.</i></p>	<p>A 3x3 grid for each player & counters or coins.</p> <p>Twinkl template option.</p>
Matching pairs	<p>Turn all the cards face down on the table. Take turns to turn over two. When a matching pair is found that player can keep them. The winner is the person with the most pairs at the end of the game.</p>	<p>Small pieces of card or paper with the words your child is currently learning written on each. Each word will need to be written twice so you can search for a matching pair.</p>
Snap	<p>Make a set of cards with words your child is learning written on. Ensure that each word is written on two separate cards. Shuffle up the cards and share them out. Each player takes turns to turn over their card, put</p>	<p>Matching cards.</p>

	<p>it down and read the word. If it matches the previous card played, the first person to notice shouts 'snap!' and wins the pile. This game is best used to practice words your child knows fairly well, rather than new ones, as it's quite fast-paced.</p>	
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Once your child knows a word reliably, you can take it out of the current pack of cards and bring in a new word. Every so often, play a game with the 'old' cards, so that your child doesn't forget them. It's a good idea to try and discard a known word and add a new word every day, once your child is getting the hang of learning new words.

Websites

If you're not sure how to say the letter sounds correctly or how to 'blend' the sounds together go to: www.oxfordowl.co.uk

More specifically

<https://www.oxfordowl.co.uk/home/reading-site/expert-help/phonics-made-easy>

There is also lots of information on this website about early reading and how to use phonics to support this.

There are interactive games to play on:

<http://www.phonicsplay.co.uk>

<http://www.topmarks.co.uk/english-games/3-5-years/letters-and-sounds>

http://www.familylearning.org.uk/phonics_games.html - Some more advanced games

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/shows/alphablocks> - Games for children and information for parents

Twinkl is also a great website for resources!