

## Training Focus

An Introduction to Phonics for Pupils with Special Educational Needs. An evidence-led systematic, synthetic, linguistic phonics programme developed and written by Ann Sullivan.

## Training Overview

**Video presentations provide training content**  
**Follow up Hands-on Activities / On-Screen Activities for participants**  
**Discussions led by School Lead**  
**Optional additional online Q&A session with Ann Sullivan**

This flexible and sustainable training model offers schools the opportunity to organise training to meet their individual needs and time constraints.

There are twelve units, with content presented in video packages varying in length from 20 – 45 minutes. Units also include hands-on and on-screen activities. All units include time for staff to reflect on and discuss the material presented. This model ensures long term sustainability and fidelity to the programme as the school retains all the video and training materials so refresher and induction training can easily be carried out.

### **How is the training organised?**

It is expected that a member of staff from the school will take the lead for managing and delivering the training, taking time to familiarise themselves with all the materials *beforehand*, supported by Ann. On the day it's just press play and take it from there!

Schools have the flexibility to schedule training sessions to meet their needs, e.g. as a series of twilight sessions, half day or full day sessions or staff are given time to watch the videos individually or in small groups such as class teams or year groups.

Depending on their role in school, not all staff may need to take all units. Some staff may only need basic phonics awareness training whereas those who will teach and deliver the programme will need all units. A useful table is provided to assist with this aspect of organisation.

The Teaching Pupils with Complex Needs video focuses on pupils with autism, speech, language and communication needs, cognition and learning needs, nonverbal pupils and pupils with significant physical disability such that they are unable to record work by writing or typing. If you do not have pupils with these needs in your school, then you may opt to leave this video out.

Included in the training package are all the materials required for each unit, e.g. training activities, Reflect-Respond-React sheets, handouts and additional materials in electronic format.

A wide range of teaching and assessment materials, additional to the core materials in the Phonics for Pupils with SEN books, are also included for sharing with staff in school. These include decodable readers, games, spelling practice booklets, posters, teacher/TA charts and much more.

## Outline of the Content

### Unit 1 – The Science of Reading

Video presentation followed by discussion led by school lead.

Timing: 43 minutes plus discussion time – estimated delivery time 1 hour.

**When we consider how to teach reading, spelling and writing, the key question we should be asking is, “Why do we do it like that?” The answer should be that there is research-based evidence that this is the best way to do it. This session gives a background and context to linguistic phonics and the academic research from the past 30 years plus that underpins the Phonics for SEN programme. Ann presents an overview of key findings from education, psychology and neuroscience and their implications for programme design and hence instruction in class, with reference to the Reading Framework – Teaching the Foundations of Literacy DfE 2021.**

Activity: Discussion led by school lead.

Reflect-Respond-React sheet available for individual or group responses and actions.

#### Learning Objective:

1.1 Staff will have an understanding of the academic research on reading (and spelling) acquisition.

1.2 Staff will understand how the Science of Reading informs teaching reading via a systematic synthetic linguistic phonics programme.

1.3 Staff will understand the wider picture of reading as described in the Simple View of Reading and the Reading Rope.

1.4 Staff will understand the implications of the guidance given in the Reading Framework – Teaching the Foundations of Literacy DfE 2021.

#### Success Criteria:

1.1 Staff are able to reflect on and discuss how academic research informs reading instruction.

1.2 Staff will understand the role of phonics in teaching decoding as part of The Simple View of Reading.

1.3 Staff understand that phonics is one part of a wider picture of the child as a reader (and speller).

1.4 Staff are aware of the Reading Framework and it’s guidance that children with SEND, including those with moderate to severe and complex needs are taught using an SSP programme.

### Unit 2 – The Alphabetic Code – An Overview of Phonics

Video presentation followed by discussion led by school lead.

Timing: 40 minutes plus 2 activities and discussion time – estimated delivery time 1 hr 15 mins.

Additional video 2a: Teaching the Split Sound Spelling (split vowel digraph) 10 mins

**Phonics has a reputation for being complicated, but in reality, it is quite straightforward. Ann presents an overview of the concepts, skills and knowledge related to the English alphabetic code and what pupils need to learn to be able to manage and use written language effectively. Includes ‘how to’ teach the alphabetic code with an additional video 2a on teaching the split sound spelling (split vowel digraph).**

Activity 2.1: Investigating a Sound /ar/ - Teaching Variation in the Code  
 Activity 2.2: Investigating a Sound Spelling y: Teaching Overlap in the Code  
 Activity: Discussion led by school lead.  
 Reflect-Respond-React sheet available for individual or group responses and actions.

**Learning Objective:**

2.1 Staff will understand the nature of the English language code and the four concepts, three skills and body of knowledge that children need to learn, master and build up to be efficient readers and spellers.

2.2 Staff will learn how to introduce the code, teach variation and overlap and work on the split sound spelling (split vowel digraph). Staff should be given an opportunity to look over the teaching resources in all the books.

**Success Criteria:**

2.1 Staff are able to appreciate and discuss how 'the code' works, how written language is less complicated than many people think and how this new perception enables us to present reading to pupils in an easy to access format.

2.2 Staff feel confident in using the materials in the books to teach the alphabetic code, understanding the progression through the programme.

**Unit 3 – Blending for Reading**

Video presentation followed by practice in teaching blending techniques / activities at all levels of the programme.

Timing: 38 minutes plus 3 activities and discussion – estimated delivery time 1 hour 30 mins.

**How do we teach blending? Ann explores how it is taught and looks at the Dynamic Blending technique. There is further exploration of the common reasons why pupils find blending difficult and strategies to overcome this.**

Activity 3.1: Practising Dynamic Blending

Activity 3.2: Practising Speed Blending – The Blending Speed Game

Activity 3.3: Practising Blending support

Activity: Discussion led by school lead.

Reflect-Respond-React sheet available for individual or group responses and actions.

**Learning Objectives:**

3.1 Staff will understand and practise the Dynamic Blending technique to decode words.

3.2 Staff will understand a range of reasons why pupils find blending difficult and explore strategies for overcoming these.

**Success Criteria:**

3.1 Staff are able to demonstrate the Dynamic Blending technique and model it to pupils. Staff are able to explain the relationship between blending and reading.

3.2. Staff are able to analyse errors that pupils make and how to support them to improve their blending.

**Unit 4 – Segmenting for Spelling**

Video presentation followed by practice in segmenting techniques and activities at all levels of the programme.

Timing: 14 minutes plus 2 activities and discussion – estimated delivery time 45 minutes.

Additional Video 4a: The Word Build Activity 16 mins.

**Segmenting is an important key to spelling but how should we teach this? Ann explores how to scaffold your pupils' experience and practice of segmenting to work towards oral segmenting for spelling. Video 4a looks in detail at the Word Build activity which is present in all books and the link with both blending and segmenting.**

Activity 4.1: Practising the 'A Place to Listen' Activity

Activity 4.2: Practising working on the Spelling Practise Booklets

Activity: Discussion led by school lead.

Reflect-Respond-React sheet available for individual or group responses and actions.

**Learning Objective:**

4. Staff will understand how to teach segmenting and how this is used as a strategy for spelling.

**Success Criteria:**

4.1 Staff are able to demonstrate the segmenting technique and model it to pupils.

4.2 Staff are able to support pupils to improve their segmenting.

4.3 Staff are able to explain the relationship between segmenting and spelling.

## **Unit 5 – Phoneme Manipulation**

Video presentation followed by practice of a phoneme manipulation activity.

Timing: 15 minutes plus 1 activity and discussion – estimated delivery time 40 mins.

**Phoneme Manipulation is the 'Cinderella' skill as it is unfortunately often overlooked. Ann looks at the importance of phoneme manipulation in reading and spelling instruction.**

Activity 5.1: Practise Sound Swap

Activity: Discussion led by school lead.

Reflect-Respond-React sheet available for individual or group responses and actions.

**Learning Objective:**

5. Staff will understand the significance of and practice phoneme manipulation.

**Success Criteria:**

5. Staff are able to demonstrate phoneme manipulation and are familiar with activities to teach this to pupils.

## **Unit 6 – Orthographic Mapping**

Video presentation followed by discussion led by school lead.

Timing: 22 minutes plus discussion – estimated delivery time 45 mins.

**Orthographic mapping is the 'Missing Link' of phonics. Ann explores how this leads to the development of reading and spelling automaticity and a 'sight word' vocabulary.**

Activity: Discussion led by school lead.

Reflect-Respond-React sheet available for individual or group responses and actions.

**Learning Objective:**

6. Staff will understand orthographic mapping and its importance in the development of a 'sight word' vocabulary.

**Success Criteria:**

6. Staff are able to explain orthographic mapping and incorporate it into phonics work and reading and spelling across the curriculum.

**Unit 7 – High Frequency Words**

Video presentation followed by a coding activity (identifying the phonemes and graphemes in words).

Timing: 18 minutes plus 1 activity and discussion – estimated delivery time 40 mins.

**Are high frequency words really 'tricky'? Can they be decoded? Should we teach them as words to be learnt as whole words on sight? How do we manage reading and spelling high frequency words? Ann explores how high frequency words can be managed throughout the programme, as the pupils gain knowledge of the alphabetic code.**

Activity 7.1: Coding Words – Know the Alphabetic Code

Activity: Discussion led by school lead.

Reflect-Respond-React sheet available for individual or group responses and actions.

**Learning Objectives:**

7.1 Staff will understand that high frequency words are phonically decodable and can be taught within the programme rather than as a distinct group of 'tricky words'.

7.2 Staff will learn strategies to deal with reading and spelling high frequency words, as need arises before the pupil has the knowledge to deal with them.

**Success Criteria:**

7.1 Staff can demonstrate an understanding that high frequency words are decodable rather than 'tricky' by coding words.

7.2 Staff are aware of the 'incidental phonics' strategies to deal with reading and spelling high frequency words as they arise.

**Unit 8 – Multisyllable Words**

Video presentation followed by syllable splitting and identifying the schwa activities.

Timing: 27 minutes plus 2 activities and discussion – estimated delivery time 1 hour.

**As pupils' reading and spelling develops, they need to learn how to manage longer and more complex multisyllable words. Being able to read and spell multisyllable words involves extending the dynamic blending for reading and sequential segmenting for spelling strategies that the pupils learnt when working through books 1-6.**

Activity 8.1: Syllable Splitting

Activity 8.2: Spot the Schwa

Activity: Discussion led by school lead.

Reflect-Respond-React sheet available for individual or group responses and actions.

**Learning Objective:**

8.1 Staff will understand the relationship between speech and syllabification.

8.2 Staff will understand the schwa and its impact on reading and spelling.

8.3 Staff will understand the 'syllable by syllable - dynamic blending strategy' for reading and the 'syllable by syllable - sequential segmenting strategy' for spelling.

**Success Criteria:**

8.1 Staff will demonstrate how to split words into syllables in response to how the word is said.

8.2 Staff will be able to identify the schwa in words.

8.3 Staff feel confident to use the 'syllable by syllable - dynamic blending strategy' for reading and the 'syllable by syllable - sequential segmenting strategy' for spelling.

**Unit 9 – What Not to Teach and Why**

Video presentation followed by discussion.

Timing: 25 minutes and discussion – estimated delivery time 50 mins.

**In the presentations so far, there have been glimpses of strategies and approaches that are not supported by the Science of Reading which are used when teaching pupils to read and spell. This section takes the time to explore them all (and more), so that teachers can analyse their practice and focus on strategies that are effective.**

Activity: Discussion led by school lead.

Reflect-Respond-React sheet available for individual or group responses and actions.

**Learning Objectives:**

9.1 Staff will explore the strategies that are not recommended and why they are not supportive of reading and spelling acquisition.

9.2 Staff will reflect on the impact of this on their practice.

**Success Criteria:**

9.1 Staff understand why some strategies, which are still used in classrooms today, are not supportive of reading and spelling acquisition.

9.2 Staff feel confident to focus on phonics and discuss how they are to change their practice, if necessary.

**Unit 10 – Listening to Pupils Read**

Video presentation followed by practice in techniques covered.

Timing: 28 minutes plus 1 activity and discussion – estimated delivery time 1 hour.

**Listening to a pupil read out loud is easy, right? Actually, it's highly skilled and nuanced. Ann presents a pragmatic approach to listening to readers and unpicks the common errors that pupils make and how to support them to correct them.**

Activity 10.1: Practise listening to pupils read through an activity that simulates common errors and how to correct them through a paired 'teacher-pupil' task.

Activity: Discussion led by school lead.

Reflect-Respond-React sheet available for individual or group responses and actions.

**Learning Objectives:**

10.1 Staff will understand that listening to pupils read out loud is a powerful tool in supporting pupils' reading development.

10.2 Staff will understand the common errors pupils make when reading and how to support pupils to correct those errors.

**Success Criteria:**

10.1 Staff are aware that listening to a pupil read out loud is an important activity that is in itself an opportunity to provide specific and individualised feedback and instruction.

10.2 Staff are able to demonstrate error correction techniques to intervene when pupils make mistakes when reading out loud.

**Unit 11 – Assessment, planning and delivery**

Video presentation followed by discussion led by school lead.

Timing: 22 minutes plus 3 case studies and discussion – estimated delivery time 50 mins.

**Ann looks at individual pupil assessment to baseline pupils and make informed decisions about their starting point within the programme. She also looks at how to structure lessons and use the simple weekly planning format included in the programme.**

Activity: Three Case Studies on placing pupils on the programme.

Activity: Discussion led by school lead.

Reflect-Respond-React sheet available for individual or group responses and actions.

**Learning Objectives:**

11.1 Staff will have the skills and knowledge to assess pupils and make appropriate decisions about where to start individual pupils on the programme.

11.2 Staff will understand how to plan, structure and deliver lessons.

11.3 Staff will understand the need for flexibility in planning in relation to pupils' individual needs.

**Success Criteria:**

11.1 Staff feel confident to use the results of assessment materials to place pupils on the programme.

11.2 Staff feel confident in planning lessons for effective delivery.

11.3 Staff are able to plan to meet individual pupil need. Staff feel confident in building in flexibility for pupils with complex needs who have limits to attention, focus and engagement.

**Unit 12 – Teaching Pupils with Complex Needs**

Video presentation followed by practice using a visual place marker as an alternative pupil response strategy.

Timing: 38 minutes and discussion – estimated delivery time 1 hour 15 mins.

**What is the best way to teach pupils with multiple and complex needs to read and spell? Is it possible to teach these pupils using phonics? What does the research tell us? This section answers these questions and explores strategies to enable access to the programme for all pupils, including those with severe and complex needs.**

Activity 12.1: Using a Visual Place Marker to teach preverbal and nonverbal pupils.  
Activity: Discussion led by school lead.  
Reflect-Respond-React sheet available for individual or group responses and actions.

**Learning Objective:**

12.1 Staff will understand how the programme can be delivered to pupils with a range of moderate to severe and complex needs.

12.2 Staff will be aware of generic adjustments that can be made to enable pupils with a range of moderate to severe needs to access the programme.

12.3 Staff will be aware of specific adjustments that can be made to enable pupils with a range of severe and complex needs to access the programme.

**Success Criteria:**

12.1 Staff feel confident to implement the programme with pupils with a range of moderate to severe and complex needs.

12.2 Staff feel confident to implement general adjustments for pupils with a range of moderate to severe needs.

12.3 Staff feel confident to implement specific adjustments for pupils with a range of severe and complex needs.

**Q & A with Ann**

Optional post-training online conference time with Ann – 1½ hour (additional charge).  
After staff have completed the training, this gives them an opportunity to ask Ann questions about any aspect of Phonics for Pupils with SEN or, indeed, phonics in general.

**Preparation in Advance of the Training**

**Lead Teacher:** Lead teacher watches all the video presentations and reads all the accompanying materials prior to the training to become familiar with the content. Lead teacher meets with Ann (online) as many times as required (but at least once) to ensure they have a good understanding of the materials and are confident to facilitate delivery of the training and lead discussions.

**Set-up:** Participants require access to a table on which to carry out the activities. Materials and resources for the activities should be printed out and prepared in advance and be available for use when required.

**Pre-training tasks:** Participants are requested to read the 'Working Through the Programme' section of the programme books and look over the teaching materials prior to training beginning.

**Post-training tasks:**

- Close of training – led by school lead teacher.
- Participants to consider the 'Further Reading' recommendations on the Handout.
- Participants to implement any personal or group actions from Reflect-Respond-React discussions.
- Lead teacher to make staff aware of the additional assessment and teaching resources available to them alongside the core books.
- School lead teacher to provide support and mentoring during implementation.



## Evaluation

A training Evaluation Form is provided for each participant. This contains a pre- and post-training confidence rating, a rating of each unit of the training and an opportunity to provide individual feedback.

## Post Training

After the training you will receive:

- regular updates from Phonics for SEN about the programme,
- copies of new teaching resources or materials produced by Phonics for SEN,
- information relevant to teaching phonics nationally.

**The training was reviewed and updated in July 2021 and this new v2.0 version offered free of charge to schools who had previously accessed training.**

## Contact Information

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