

Phonological Awareness

Beechdale Nursery School

What is phonological awareness?

Phonological awareness is conscious sensitivity to the sound structure of language. It is the awareness of the units of sounds - which may be phonemes - but may be rimes, onsets or syllables. Children who have good phonological awareness skills can identify that when the teacher says b-a-t that the word is 'bat'; they can say all the sounds in the spoken word 'dog' and know that if the last sound in the word 'cart' is removed the word would then change to 'car'.

Why teach phonological awareness?

Phonological awareness is not only linked with learning to read, but research indicates that it appears to help children develop reading skills. Phonological awareness is a foundation for matching sounds to letters (Stanovich, 1994).

Once beginning readers have some awareness of phonemes and their graphic representations, further teaching of reading develops awareness of language, which then goes on to help children learn the later stages of phonological awareness.

Phonological awareness is both a prerequisite for, and a consequence of, learning to read (Yopp, 1992). Phonological awareness is not phonics. Phonics is the relationship between sounds and letters. Phonological awareness needs to be taught independently of phoneme-grapheme correspondence

Stages of development.

Before a child can make good progress in learning the written representation of sounds he/she needs to be able to:

- Recognise speech sounds as distinct from other environmental sounds
- Isolate individual words in speech flow
- Recognise that words can rhyme
 - Recognise that words have syllable structure
- Recognise onset and rime
- Recognise that words can begin and end with the same sound and have the same medial sound(s)
- Recognise that words can be broken down into individual phonemes orally
- Blend and segment the sounds orally

The activities across our school year will support the stages of development for phonological awareness. The order in which the child develops skills in each stage may vary. We have divided Phase one into different Aspects of learning that progress across the school year:

Aspect 1 Sound Discrimination

- 1.1 General sound discrimination – recognise non-speech sounds - Environmental Sounds
- 1.2 General sound discrimination – recognise non-speech sounds - instrumental sounds
- 1.3 General sound discrimination – recognise speech sounds from other sounds

Aspect 2 Syllable Awareness

- 2.1 Syllable segmentation and blending

Aspect 3 Rhythm and Rhyme

- 3.1 Onset and rime – recognise that words can be broken down into onset and rime
- 3.2 Rhyme Detection – recognise that words can rhyme

Aspect 4 Initial Sounds

- 4.1 Recognise that words can begin with the same sounds
- 4.2 Production of words with the same sound

Aspect 5 Oral Blending and Segmenting

Autumn Term	Spring Term	Summer Term
Aspect 1 Aspect 2	Aspect 2 Aspect 3	Aspect 4 Aspect 5

In partnership with Consett Infant school who follow Little Wandle Revised Letters and Sounds, we share and follow key features of effective phonics practice:

- Direct teaching in frequent, short bursts (Nursery play based)
- Consistency of approach
- Secure, systematic progression in phonics learning
- Providing repeated practice
- Early identification of children at risk of falling behind, linked to the provision of effective keep-up support

