



Phonics to Fluency Handbook

“Reading fluency is the bridge between a readers phonetic skills and their comprehension” Pikuklski and Chard 2005

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Overview

Phonics to Fluency is an research informed 'next step' to support a child in their reading journey after they've secured their phonetic knowledge. This approach has been developed to support children as they transition from relying on “sounding out” to reading smoothly with automaticity, accuracy and prosody.

The aim of *Phonics to Fluency* is to develop and embed early reading skills in children in Key Stage One, enabling them to develop fluent reading as well as a reading intervention in KS2 for whole classes and targeted pupils. The approach has been trialled within our school with excellent impact on reading accuracy and speed, which in turn impacts positively on comprehension skills.

The Research

The Phonics to Fluency approach was established as a result of our school wanting to create a supporting framework between phonics and children reading fluently. Within our Year 1 class, we identified a group of children that had developed strong and embedded phonetic understanding. Whilst these children had a strong phonetic understanding and ability, children still segmented each word, lacking the automaticity that is crucial for enjoyment of reading and comprehension. We identified this as area that is crucial to develop as early as possible to establish these strong reading skills early in a child’s educational journey allowing them to access a wealth of books, text and the wider curriculum. As a result, of the success in Year 1 we adapted the programme to support children across the school in KS2, this included children that were working below age related expectations. The programme can be adapted to become a measurable reading intervention for other year groups.

The programme is based on the long-standing and widely researched repeated reading approach that is proven to have a positive impact on reading fluency (Dahl (1974), Chomsky (1976) and Samuels (1979). From these studies, they found that children who engaged with repeated reading of the same text improved their reading fluency (accuracy and speed). Phonics to Fluency builds on this approach and draws on recent research that identifies the need to add additional components (explicit vocabulary teaching, high quality adult models, feedback etc.) in order to maximise the impact it can have on reading accuracy and speed (Wu et al. 2019). As a result, children begin to read with automaticity. LaBerge & Samuels (1976) identified that when children were able to read without having to really ‘think’ about decoding (automaticity) they had a reduced cognitive load and as a result, greater cognitive space to develop their understanding of the text read.

In addition, the research conducted by Lee et al. 2015 identified how this approach can also have great impact on the fluency of children identified as having reading difficulties. Consequently, the Phonics to Fluency approach has been developed drawing on this research to ensure it is a well-structured approach to teaching reading fluency to not only children in KS1 but also those across the school as a reading intervention.

What do I do before I begin?

Reflecting on Phonics

Before you begin Phonics to Fluency it is important that you reflect on your current phonics practise within school. Phonics to Fluency requires a strong phonetic foundation to progress from. When reflecting on phonics within your setting these questions are a good starting point:

1. Are there clear expectations for lessons and learning environments?

For example, What are your non-negotiables for phonics lessons to ensure learning? Does the learning environment reflect phonics? Sound charts on the tables, sounds displayed etc.

2. Are there clear expectations for end of year expectations for children's phonic knowledge?

For example, what sounds do you want Reception to know before they enter Year 1?

3. Is the teaching of phonics good? How do you know?

For example, have you observed phonics teaching in your school recently? Can you hear the children apply their knowledge when reading? Can you see their knowledge in their writing? Have you allocated certain staff to particular groups because of their skillset or need?

4. Are children making expected progress? How do you know?

For example, is there regular and purposeful assessment to ensure children are making expected progress?

5. Are vulnerable children identified and is there support in place to ensure gaps don't widen?

For example, how do you identify children that are not making expected progress? What support is in place to support these children?

What Books do I use?

Once you have reflected on your phonics teaching and learning you will need to identify the resources you will use for your Phonics to Fluency programme. The idea is that this programme can be used with the resources you already have in school for example, guided reading group texts.

For the purpose of this explanation, it is assumed that this programme is being delivered in Year 1. If you are using this as an intervention for another year group please change accordingly.

Assessment:

1. Identify the level of text that will be your end of year group expectation, or if using the programme as an intervention, meets current expectations for reading. This can be a colour banded book.
2. Once you have chosen your text level identify three high quality texts that you will use as assessment texts. Three will need to be chosen to ensure that the assessment and data collected is a true representation of the child's ability. These three texts will be named assessment 1, 2 or 3 and will be rotated throughout the year. For example, Assessment 1 book will be used as the baseline, Assessment 2 book will be then used for the next assessment stage and the Assessment 3 book will then be used for the next assessment. If another Assessment is required Assessment 1 will be used again.

Books for the sessions:

1. Identify groups of books that can be used during the Phonics to Fluency sessions. These will probably be guided reading books. Ideally, a child will have a book each but at the very least there will need to be a book between two. These books should be at the child's frustration level (see table below) however professional judgement is encouraged, if you feel your group of children will respond best to books at an instructional level then begin with these.

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| Independent Level | Relatively easy for the student to read (95% word accuracy). |
| Instructional Level | Challenging but manageable for the reader (90% word accuracy). |
| Frustration Level | Difficult text for the student to read (less than 90% word accuracy). |

2. Ensure that you have enough texts to cover at least 8 weeks (longest term) as the children will need a new text each week.
3. Make sure that the texts are progressive. For example, the first Year 1 group may begin reading orange books and after the first assessment cycle will be ready to use the turquoise.
4. Reading sticks (lollypop) sticks can be used to support children following the text.

How do I know a child is ready for Phonics to Fluency?

A child is ready for Phonics to Fluency once they know all taught sounds. These sounds can be recognised within words and can be blended, independently. Their phonics knowledge is secure and can be applied.

How do I assess?

Each child is assessed termly. Their reading rate, accuracy and prosody are assessed and recorded on the Phonics to Fluency Assessment document. When assessing expression, pace, smoothness etc. a best-fit approach is adopted. This information is recorded on the tracker. The tracker and supporting notes can be found below. When entering the programme the children will complete a baseline assessment. When assessing, the books identified from the previous section will be used in numerical order. If your school has access to a YARC assessment this could also be used as an on entry and exit assessment.

It is advised that the assessments take place termly. If the baseline assessment (assessment 1) is used in September at the beginning of the term, assessment 2 would then be used in November. Assessment 3 used in March and a final assessment would take place in June.

Each time a child is assessed their reading will be recorded on the assessment sheet and the tracker is updated. This will give a clear indication as to the progress made in these areas, the impact the programme is having and also identify any needs that may need to be addressed in the next cycle of sessions.

Summary

START
Does the identified child know all the taught sounds? Can they identify and blend these within words?

NO
The identified child is not ready for the Phonics to Fluency approach. The next step for this child is to focus and embed the sounds they do not know.

YES
The identified child is now ready to begin the Phonics to Fluency approach. The child will now complete a baseline assessment (assessment 1). The child will read the agreed age appropriate text. An adult will time one for one minute and record the number of words read per minute and the number of errors made. Adults can also make notes on prosody.

THEN
At the end of the half term re-assess the child using a different assessment to the baseline (assessment 2) and record results. Use results to identify progress, concerns and use to inform groupings and next steps. At this point phonics assessment should also take place and identify any of those children that can join the programme.

NEXT
The child then follows the Phonics to Fluency approach for the half term (this can range between 5-8 weeks).

FINALLY
Continue with the programme repeating assessments at the end of each half term recording and using the assessment information to inform groupings and next steps.
Once the children are secure in reading the book level chosen they can then move onto the next book band *this change in book band will require a new baseline and assessment grid.

Planning Template

Monday

Starter (KS1): recap a mixture of sounds for retrieval practise and focus on multisyllabic decodable words/alternative sound spellings. These sounds and words can then be used as a very quick warm up focus at the beginning of each session and can change weekly.

Starter (KS2): identify tier two vocabulary, spellings or punctuation that can act as a teaching and learning point for the week.

High quality adult model: an adult is to read the passage to the group of children using the correct prosody (emphasis and expression). Children are given the text and a reading stick to help them follow the passage as the adult reads. Before beginning, introduce any “tricky” words, punctuation or **tier two vocabulary** that arise in the text and discuss the meaning. **No comprehension questions are asked during this time, no children read.** High quality adult model only.

Tuesday

Echo Reading: adult models fluent reading of a short segment, usually one sentence. The children then repeat or echo the segment read copying the pace and prosody modelled. The adult reads the next sentence, the children echo... repeat until the text is completed.

Wednesday

Choral reading: adult reads a section using a high quality model and the children read it with them at the same time with the same pace and prosody.

Thursday

Partner reading: children need to be strategically grouped. A stronger reader will be paired with a weaker reader. The former must always read first to ensure that they correctly model to their partner. Adult to *float* around the group, facilitate and offer live feedback- when hearing an error discuss with the children.

Friday

(Optional): the children can spell the identified words from the beginning of the week.

Performance: The children will read the text for the final time to their partner. They will read aloud with the best expression, they ‘perform’ it to their partner. The adult floats around the group offering live feedback relating to expression and any mistakes made. Address with sensitivity.

Every day refer back to the vocabulary identified at the beginning of the week. After Monday, comprehension questions can be introduced after the reading element of the lesson.

Whenever possible the adult leading the group will float around the group offering live feedback to the group. They will address any reading mistakes made, ensure understanding of key vocabulary and that children are responding to the punctuation in the text.

Phonics to Fluency Assessment

Adapted from Zutell, J. & Rasinski, T. V. (1991). Training teachers to attend to their students' oral reading fluency in. *Theory to Practice*, 30, 211-217.

Use the grid as a best-fit approach. Use the same assessment sheet for the full year, highlighting statements with a different colour for each assessment. Baseline = yellow, Assessment 1 = pink, Assessment 2 = green and Assessment 3 = blue.

2 = green and Assessment 3 = blue.

Name: _____

Year: _____

Assessor: _____

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | |
|------------------------------|--|---|---|--|----------------------|
| Expression and Volume | Reads in a quiet voice as if to get words out. The reading does not sound natural like talking to a friend. | Reads in a quiet voice. The reading sounds natural in part of the text, but the reader does not always sound like they are talking to a friend. | Reads with volume and expression. However, sometimes the reader slips into expressionless reading and does not sound like they are talking to a friend. | Reads with varied volume and expression. The reader sounds like they are talking to a friend with their voice matching the interpretation of the passage. | |
| Phrasing | Reads word-by-word in a monotone voice. | Reads in two or three word phrases, not adhering to punctuation, stress and intonation. | Reads with a mixture of run-ons, mid sentence pauses for breath, and some choppiness. There is reasonable stress and intonation. | Reads with good phrasing; adhering to punctuation, stress and intonation. | |
| Smoothness | Frequently hesitates while reading, sounds out words, and repeats words or phrases. The reader makes multiple attempts to read the same passage. | Reads with extended pauses or hesitations. The reader has many "rough spots." | Reads with occasional breaks in rhythm. The reader has difficulty with specific words and/or sentence structures. | Reads smoothly with some breaks, but self-corrects with difficult words and/or sentence structures. | |
| Pace | Reads slowly and laboriously. | Reads moderately slowly. | Reads generally at an appropriate rate throughout reading. | Reads at an appropriate conversational pace throughout the reading. | |
| Assessment | WPM | | Errors | WCPM (WPM-Errors) | Prosody (/16) |
| Baseline | | | | | |
| Assessment 1 | | | | | |
| Assessment 2 | | | | | |
| Assessment 3 | | | | | |

Hasbrouck & Tindal (2017)

From Hasbrouck, J. & Tindal, G. (2017). *An update to compiled ORF norms* (Technical Report No. 1702). Eugene, OR. Behavioral Research and Teaching, University of Oregon.

| Grade | Percentile | Fall WCPM* | Winter WCPM* | Spring WCPM* |
|----------|------------|------------|--------------|--------------|
| 1 | 90 | | 97 | 116 |
| | 75 | | 59 | 91 |
| | 50 | | 29 | 60 |
| | 25 | | 16 | 34 |
| | 10 | | 9 | 18 |
| 2 | 90 | 111 | 131 | 148 |
| | 75 | 84 | 109 | 124 |
| | 50 | 50 | 84 | 100 |
| | 25 | 36 | 59 | 72 |
| | 10 | 23 | 35 | 43 |
| 3 | 90 | 134 | 161 | 166 |
| | 75 | 104 | 137 | 139 |
| | 50 | 83 | 97 | 112 |
| | 25 | 59 | 79 | 91 |
| | 10 | 40 | 62 | 63 |

| Grade | Percentile | Fall WCPM* | Winter WCPM* | Spring WCPM* |
|----------|------------|------------|--------------|--------------|
| 4 | 90 | 153 | 168 | 184 |
| | 75 | 125 | 143 | 160 |
| | 50 | 94 | 120 | 133 |
| | 25 | 75 | 95 | 105 |
| | 10 | 60 | 71 | 83 |
| 5 | 90 | 179 | 183 | 195 |
| | 75 | 153 | 160 | 169 |
| | 50 | 121 | 133 | 146 |
| | 25 | 87 | 109 | 119 |
| | 10 | 64 | 84 | 102 |
| 6 | 90 | 185 | 195 | 204 |
| | 75 | 159 | 166 | 173 |
| | 50 | 132 | 145 | 146 |
| | 25 | 112 | 116 | 122 |
| | 10 | 89 | 91 | 91 |

*WCPM = Words Correct Per Minute

Grade

Grade 1 (6-7years) = Year 2, Grade 2 (7-8 years) = Year 3, Grade 3 (8-9 years) = Year 4, Grade 4 (9-10 years) = Year 5, Grade 5 (10-11 years) = Year 6 and Grade 6 (11-12 years) = Year 7

Conversions:

Book Bands

| <u>Phonics Phase</u> | <u>Book Band</u> | <u>Year Group Expectations</u> |
|----------------------|------------------|--------------------------------|
| Phase 1 | Lilac | EYFS |
| Phase 2 | Pink | EYFS |
| Phase 2/3 | Red | EYFS |
| Phase 3 | Yellow | EYFS |
| Phase 3/4 | Blue | EYFS/Year 1 |
| Phase 4 | Green | Year 1 |
| Phase 4/5 | Orange | Year 1 |
| Phase 5 | Turquoise | Year 1 |
| Phase 5 | Purple | Year 1 |
| Phase 5/6 | Gold | Year 2 |
| Phase 6 | White | Year 2 |
| Phase 6 | Lime | Year 2 |
| | Brown | Year 3 |
| | Grey | Year 4 |
| | Blue | Year 5 |
| | Red | Year 6 |

Phonics Reflection

| | Reflection | Next Steps | Evaluation |
|--|------------|------------|------------|
| 1. Are there clear expectations for lessons and learning environments? | | | |
| 2. Are there clear end of year expectations for children's phonic knowledge? | | | |
| 3. Is the teaching of phonics good? How do you know? | | | |
| 4. Are children making expected progress? How do you know? | | | |
| 5. Are vulnerable children identified and is there support in place to ensure gaps don't widen? | | | |

Terminology

Analytic phonics: In this approach, children learn to analyse letter-sound relationships in previously learned words. They do not pronounce sounds in isolation.

Automaticity: Automaticity is a general term that refers to any skilled and complex behaviour that can be performed rather easily with little attention, effort, or conscious awareness. These skills become automatic after extended periods of training. Examples of automatic skills include driving a car through traffic while listening to the radio, sight reading music for the piano, and reading orally with comprehension. With practise and good instruction, students become automatic at word recognition, that is, retrieving words from memory, and are able to focus attention on constructing meaning from the text, rather than decoding.

Baseline Assessment: A baseline assessment provides information on the situation the campaign aims to change. It provides a critical reference point for assessing changes and impact, as it establishes a basis for comparing the situation before and after an intervention, and for making inferences as to the effectiveness of the campaign.

Cognitive Load: the types of information held in working-memory at any one time. These are known as intrinsic load, extraneous load and germane load and, added together, make up the capacity of the working memory

Cognitive Overload: Cognitive overload occurs when the capacity of the working memory is exceeded. Once this happens, we are unlikely to be able to transfer the new information into our long-term memory. In essence, we learn very little

Fluency: Fluency is the ability to read a text accurately, quickly, and with proper expression and comprehension. Because fluent readers do not have to concentrate on decoding words, they can focus their attention on what the text means.

Intonation: The rise and fall of the voice in speaking. Intonation is about how we say things, rather than what we say. Without intonation, it's impossible to understand the expressions and thoughts that go with words. Listen to somebody speaking without paying attention to the words: the 'melody' you hear is the intonation.

Metacognition: Metacognition is the process of "thinking about thinking." For example, good readers use metacognition before reading when they clarify their purpose for reading and preview the text.

Orthographic Reading: refers to the ability to identify patterns of specific letters as words, eventually leading to word recognition. With development of these skills, reading becomes an automatic process.

Phonics: Phonics is a form of instruction to cultivate the understanding and use of the alphabetic principle, that there is a predictable relationship between phonemes (the sounds in **spoken** language) and graphemes, the letters that represent those sounds in **written** language and that this information can be used to read or decode words.

Phonological awareness: Phonological awareness covers a range of understandings related to the sounds of words and word parts, including identifying and manipulating larger parts of spoken language such as words, syllables, and onsets and rimes. It also includes phonemic awareness (see above) as well as other aspects of spoken language such as rhyming and syllabication.

Phoneme blending: In this activity, children learn to listen to a sequence of separately spoken phonemes, and then combine the phonemes to form a word. (Teacher: What word is /b/ /i/ /g/? Children: /b/ /i/ /g/ is **big**.)

Phoneme segmentation: In this activity, children break a word into its separate sounds, saying each sound as they tap out or count it. (Teacher: How many sounds are in **grab**? Children: /g/ /r/ /a/ /b/. Four sounds.)

Prosody: In reading, prosody refers to the expressiveness with which a student reads. It is the intonation, rhythm, and emphasis given to words and sentences when reading out loud. Prosody is a key component in reading fluency.

Syllable: A syllable is a word part that contains a vowel or, in spoken language, a vowel sound (**e-vent, news-pa-per**)

Tier 2 Vocabulary: High frequency words used by language users across content areas. Because they are not used in spoken language as frequently, Tier 2 words can present challenges to some students when they are used in text. Examples: measure, fortunate, benevolent and merchant.

