

Introduction

This book provides clear guidance on teaching phonics in accordance with the latest recommendations from the *Primary National Strategy* and the *Rose Review* of the teaching of reading. Research has shown that daily systematic phonics teaching has a significant impact on children's reading ability. However, to be effective, the teacher should first assess that children have developed the ability to hear and discriminate individual sounds. This can be supported through the use of rhyme, rhythm and alliteration – and, in addition, children need to learn the alphabet sequence and letter names. Teaching alphabet songs (for example, to the tune of 'Twinkle Twinkle Little Star') can also be very beneficial. Children need to know that letters have names as well as representing sounds, so the letter 'B' has a name and makes the sound /b/. Alphabetic awareness is an important factor in becoming a proficient reader and therefore should be included within the early stages of phonics teaching.

As soon as children have acquired the ability to discriminate sounds, phonics should be taught quickly. The teaching should be lively and multi-sensory, and provide regular practice of applying the phonemes learned to reading and spelling. Tracking children's progress is vital to ensure that those needing reinforcement are supported when necessary. *You Can... Teach Phonics* supports all of these and covers the following key aspects:

- developing phonological awareness
- learning all consonant, short and long vowel phonemes and their common spellings
- linking phonics to work on speaking and listening, reading and writing.

You Can... Teach Phonics is linked to *Phonics: A Complete Synthetic Programme* by Wendy Jolliffe (Scholastic Ltd), but while it complements this detailed programme, it also provides stand-alone guidance that will support both experienced and less-experienced teachers in ensuring effective teaching of phonics. As recommended by the *Rose Review*, the key aspects of synthetic phonics are that all phonemes are taught systematically alongside learning to blend the letters for reading and to segment words into the corresponding phonemes, which is needed for spelling.

How to use this book

You Can... Teach Phonics provides guidance and activities for all aspects of effective phonics teaching. This will be useful for teachers, teaching assistants and for parents and carers. The activities within each chapter can be selected, as appropriate, to reinforce other teaching and will be particularly useful to

support those with limited experience of teaching phonics. Each page begins with an italicised introduction that provides background information and places the activities in the context of an effective phonics programme.

- The 'Thinking points' raise issues of resources and provide general advice and pointers or questions to support the teaching of phonics.
- The 'Tips, ideas and activities' section provides a range of activities and ideas for use with children.
- Finally, the photocopiable pages at the back of the book provide resources to support teaching as well as assessing children's progress.

This book is not a complete phonics programme and is intended to support work alongside such a programme. Commencing with support on ensuring phonological awareness – the essential pre-requisite of being able to hear and discriminate sounds – *You Can... Teach Phonics* provides guidance on teaching all phonemes systematically using a synthetic approach. Guidance is also provided on the correct pronunciation of sounds. The importance of ensuring that children develop good oral skills is emphasised throughout and much of this is supported by encouraging partner work. A further key aspect of this book is to ensure tracking of children's progress by providing a range of diagnostic assessment tools.

Key terms

The following terms are used:

- **Phoneme:** a phoneme is the smallest single identifiable sound, eg the letters 'ch' representing one sound /ch/
- **Grapheme:** a grapheme is a letter, or a series of letters that represents a phoneme (the spelling)
- **Graph:** one letter representing a phoneme (h/a/t contains three graphs)
- **Digraph:** two letters representing a phoneme (l/i/ck contains two graphs and one digraph)
- **Split digraph:** two letters making one phoneme, split by a consonant, eg '/m/a/k/e'
- **Trigraph:** three letters representing a phoneme (l/igh/t contains one graph, a trigraph and a graph)

Useful reading

- *Beginning to Read: Thinking and Learning about Print* by Marilyn Jager Adams (The MIT Press).
- *Phonics: A Complete Synthetic Programme and All New 100 Literacy Hours, Year R* by Wendy Jolliffe (Scholastic Ltd)
- *Independent Review of the Teaching of Early Reading, Final Report* by Jim Rose (DfES, Ref: 0201-2006DOC-EN)