

Nursery Phonics Progression 2025-26

Autumn Term: Develop Language Through Talk and Stories

Focus: Talk-a-lot, Read-a-lot

- The primary focus is on **developing children's language** through rich talk, storytelling, and nursery rhymes.
- Adults spend **three times as much time reading stories** to children as teaching formal phonics.
- Carefully planned set of core **nursery rhymes and stories** to revisit frequently. Use of consistent actions, repetition, and emphasis to support memory and engagement.
- Regular opportunities for **story-based role play**. Once children are familiar with a story they are encouraged to take on roles (e.g. all children as one character, adult as interviewer).
- Follow the **"Ten Top Tips for Reading Stories"** and share these strategies with parents to support reading at home.
- Daily literacy sessions follow the Talk for Nursery approach, placing oral language development at the centre of learning.
- Sessions carefully structured using Rosenshine's Principles of Instruction:
 - I do – Adult models language, storytelling, and key vocabulary.
 - We do – Adult and children practise language together through repetition, actions, and shared storytelling.
 - You do – Children independently rehearse and use language through talk, role play, and retelling.

Spring Term: Develop Talk, Vocabulary and Early Sentence Structure

Focus: High-quality interactions and structured talk

- Plan for **purposeful talk throughout the day** across all areas of provision.
- Identify and display key **vocabulary and language prompts** in each area of learning to support adults in modelling language effectively.
- Support children to develop **grammar and vocabulary** by building sentences orally in meaningful contexts (e.g. pictures, real objects, artwork).
- Use **Talk Out Loud (TOL)** to model sentence construction, followed by **My Turn, Your Turn (MTYT)** for repetition and practice.
- Use **forced alternatives** to extend children's language (e.g. "Is it big or tiny?") rather than simply accepting limited responses.

Literacy Sessions

- Begin each session with **3–5 key vocabulary words**, explicitly taught and explained.
- Include a **“hold a sentence” activity** using visual prompts. Children to identify sentence parts using **Colourful Semantics** (Who, What doing, What) and repeat orally using MTYT.

Phonics

- **Daily phonics session** delivered following *Letters and Sounds*, covering:
 1. Environmental sounds
 2. Instrumental sounds
 3. Body percussion
 4. Rhythm and rhyme
 5. Alliteration
 6. Voice sounds
 7. Oral blending and segmenting

Summer Term: Introduce RWI Nursery

Focus: Early sound recognition and blending

Use the Read Write Inc. (RWI) Nursery programme:

- Teach children to:
 - Use **pure sounds** correctly
 - Blend sounds orally using **Fred Talk**
 - Recognise and **name familiar pictures**
- Teach **one new sound daily** (approximately 15 minutes per session).
- Ensure phonics teaching **does not interfere with other areas of learning**. Avoid activities that dilute learning (e.g. painting letters or searching for letters in sand during play).
- Begin **small group blending sessions** once children can recognise Set 1 single letter sounds with increasing speed.

Letter Formation and Mark Making

- Model and practise **letter formation in the air** during Speed Sounds lessons.
- Provide:
 - **Daily name writing practice** on whiteboards
 - **Weekly name writing** using pencil in a name-writing book
- Emphasise 3 Ps (Posture, Position of Paper, Pencil grip) and **muscle memory development**.
- Ensure **mark-making opportunities** available across all areas of provision.