

What is Synthetic Phonics?

Synthetic phonics is a method of teaching reading and writing in which words are broken up into their smallest units of sound or 'phonemes'. Children learn to associate a written letter or group of letters, known as 'graphemes', with each phoneme. Sounds are then joined or 'blended' together into words for reading or, conversely, whole words are broken down or 'segmented' into their sounds for writing. Our school uses the Twinkl Phonics scheme.

Terminology

Phoneme - the smallest unit of sound in words

Grapheme - the written representation of a sound

Blending - joining individual speech sounds together to read a word

Segmenting - breaking down words into individual speech sounds to spell a word

Digraph - two letters making one sound, e.g. 'sh'

Trigraph - three letters making one sound, e.g. 'igh'

Split digraph - two letters making one sound which are divided by a consonant, e.g. the i_e sound in the word 'side'

Tricky/Common Exception Words - words that are not fully decodable, such as 'the' and 'was'

Sound buttons - circles or spots that can be written underneath a sound to support reading

Sound bars - lines that can be written underneath digraphs or trigraphs to show that the letters make one sound

Mnemonic - a visual prompt to help children remember a sound

What is taught when?

Twinkl Phonics Level	Number of Teaching Weeks	Recommended Year Group (UK schools)	Age of Children
Level 1	36	nursery/preschool	3-4 years
Level 2	7	reception	4-5 years
Level 3	12	reception	4-5 years
Level 4	5	reception	4-5 years
Level 5	30	year 1	5-6 years
Level 6	30	year 2	6-7 years

Year 1 Phonics Screening Check

Between Monday 9th June to Friday 13th June 2025, all Year 1 children are expected to complete the Year 1 phonics screening check. The aim is to check that a child is making progress in phonics. They are expected to read a mixture of real words and "nonsense words" (nonsense words can also be referred to as "pseudo" or "alien words"). If a child has not reached the expected standard, schools must give additional support to help the child to make progress in Year 2. Children who have not passed the check in Year 1 will have the opportunity to retake it in Year 2. For more information, take a look at the Twinkl Phonics Year 1 Screening Check Guide for Parents.

End of Year One Expectations for a child working at the expected standard

English - Reading
Can respond speedily with the correct sound to graphemes (letters or groups of letters) for all 40+ phonemes, including, where applicable, alternative sounds for graphemes.
Can read accurately by blending sounds in unfamiliar words.
Can read most Year One common exception words (tricky words that cannot be sounded out).
Can read aloud accurately books that are consistent with their developing phonic knowledge expected in Year One (a Rhino Reader 5C book).
Develops pleasure in reading by listening to and discussing a wide range of poems, stories and non-fiction at a level beyond that at which they can read independently.
Develops pleasure in reading by becoming very familiar with the Year One taught texts.
Understands books they read or hear by checking that the text makes sense to them as they read.
Understands books they read or hear by correcting inaccurate reading as they read.
Understands books they read or hear by discussing the significance of the title and events.
Understands books they read or hear by predicting what might happen on the basis of what has been read so far.

English - Writing
Is beginning to form lower-case letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the right place.
Can write and sequence sentences to form short narratives.
Can re-read what has been written to check that it makes sense.
Can spell words containing each of the 40+ phonemes already taught.
Can spell most Year One common exception words (tricky words that cannot be sounded out).
Can write, from memory, simple sentences dictated by the teacher that include words using the grapheme phoneme correspondences and common exception words taught so far.
Is beginning to punctuate sentences using a capital letter and a full stop.

Mathematics
Can count within 100, forwards and backwards, beginning with 0 or one, or from any given number.
Can partition numbers into tens and ones up to 50.
Can recall, from memory, addition and subtraction facts within 10.
Can count, read and write numbers to 100 in digits.
Can count in multiples of twos, fives and tens.
When given a number, can identify one more and one less.
Can represent and use number bonds and related subtraction facts within 20.
Can recognise, find and name a half as one of two equal parts of an object, shape or quantity.
Can solve practical problems for length and height.
Can solve practical problems for mass and weight.
Can solve practical problems for capacity and volume.
Can recognise and name common 2-D shapes e.g. rectangles (including squares), circles and triangles.
Can recognise and name common 3-D shapes e.g. cuboids (including cubes), pyramids and spheres.



Please scan this QR code which will take you to our school website where you can download further useful information about assessment in Year One and supporting your child at home. Please scroll down to the Year One Assessment Information section to view the supportive materials and find a copy of the presentation to parents.