

Welcome to the Success for All

First Steps to Phonics Programme!

The First Steps to Phonics programme provides a progressive and flexible approach to initial phonics teaching and learning. Schools already using Success for All Phonics can use the programme to teach phonics skills to two groups of children:

- Nursery children to prepare them for phonics in Reception
- Children who have SEND or other needs that prevent them from accessing the complete Success for All Phonics lessons.

The First Steps to Phonics programme is designed to gradually introduce children to phonics by first embedding phonological awareness before moving on to teaching Grapheme Phoneme Correspondences (GPCs). The entire Autumn term is spent teaching all seven aspects of Phase 1 of Letters and Sounds:

- General Sound Discrimination (Environmental, Instrumental and Body Percussion)
- Rhythm and Rhyme
- Alliteration
- Voice Sounds
- Oral Blending and Segmenting

The aim is that children should become attuned to the sounds around them and start to develop their oral blending and segmenting skills before formal phonics sessions are introduced during the Spring term.

The programme seeks to reduce the cognitive load for children by gradually introducing more phonics skills during the year. This keeps early sessions short, which is appropriate for young children. It also enables them to understand and master initial skills before moving on to apply them for reading and writing.

Throughout First Steps to Phonics, each GPC is taught over two days, instead of one day as in SfA Phonics lessons. This provides more opportunity for consolidation, helping children to remember the GPCs they are taught. There are also no aligned Partner Practice Booklets or Shared Reading lessons in First Steps to Phonics, with both not being introduced until Reception.

First Steps to Phonics covers the first 35 GPCs taught in SfA Phonics, equivalent to the end of Step 9. The intention is that when children start SfA Phonics, they will have existing phonics skills. As before, this reduces the cognitive load, enabling children to successfully apply their skills for reading and writing.

First Steps to Phonics uses the same resources as SfA Phonics and lesson plans follow the same design and routines. This ensures a seamless transition from one programme to the other. Staff who have received training in SfA Phonics will also be able to pick up and teach First Steps to Phonics with ease.

The following table provides an overview of the GPCs and phonics skills taught at each level of the programme. Skills highlighted in green indicate when the activity is first introduced.

Term	Unit	GPCs	Phonics Skills
Autumn 1 & 2	Unit 1 Weeks 1–12	N/A	Phonological Awareness (Phase 1 Letters and Sounds)
Spring 1	Unit 2 Weeks 1–6	s, a, t, p, i, n, m, d, g, o, c, k	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alphabet Chant Hear Phonemes Read GPCs Present New GPC Model Phoneme Say it Fast Write New Grapheme
Spring 2	Unit 2 Weeks 7–12	e, u, r, h, b, f, l, j, v, w, x, y, z	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alphabet Chant Hear Phonemes Read GPCs Present New GPC Model Phoneme Say it Fast Break it Down Write New Grapheme
Summer 1	Unit 3 Weeks 1–6	s, a, t, p, i, n, m, d, g, o, c, k, ck, e, u, r, h, b	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alphabet Chant Hear Phonemes Read GPCs Stretch and Read (with previously taught GPCs) Present New GPC Model Phoneme Say it Fast Break it Down Stretch and Read (with new GPC) Write New Grapheme
Summer 2	Unit 3 Weeks 7–12	f, ff, l, ll, ss, j, v, w, x, y, z, zz, qu, ch, sh, th, ng	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alphabet Chant Hear Phonemes Read GPCs Stretch and Read (with previously taught GPCs) Present New GPC Model Phoneme Say it Fast Break it Down Stretch and Read (with new GPC) Write New Grapheme Stretch and Count / Stretch and Spell