

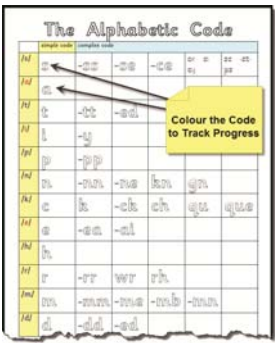
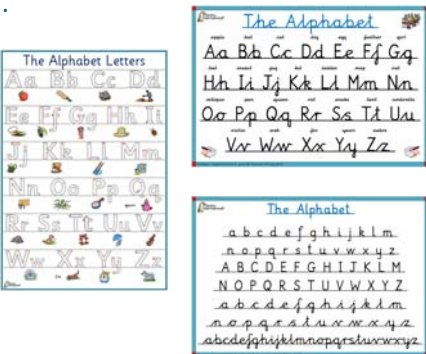
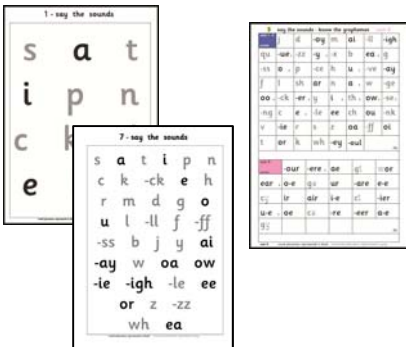
Setting-up, and use of, the essential **Phonics Folder** for every learner

This is suggested **best practice** for the *Phonics International* programme (author: Debbie Hepplewhite) and the *Oxford Reading Tree Floppy's Phonics Sounds and Letters* programme (phonics consultant: Debbie Hepplewhite).

Establishing an easy-to-use **phonics folder** (such as a ring binder) and a **phonics work-in-progress book** (an exercise book with writing lines) for every learner as essential resources and concepts will **maximise the teaching and learning effectiveness** underpinning Debbie's 'two-pronged systematic and incidental phonics teaching approach'.

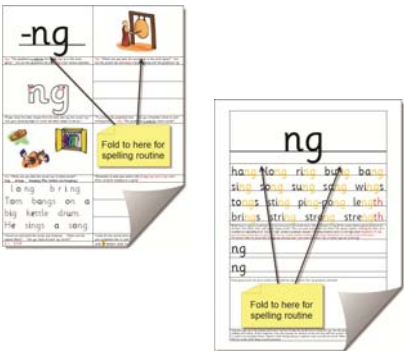
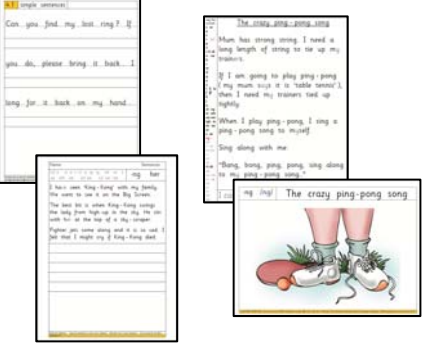
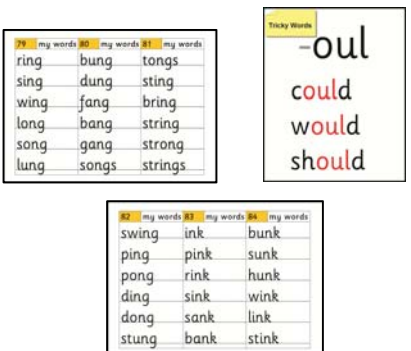
Core resources for setting up the phonics folder:

1. a **mini Alphabetic Code Chart** to provide the overview of the English alphabetic code and to track the code introduced
2. a **mini Alphabet Poster** with print or the school's preferred joined handwriting style
3. a series of **Say the Sounds Posters** as required (cumulative alphabetic code letter/s-sound correspondences)

<p>1.</p> 	<p>2.</p> 	<p>3.</p> 
<p>mini Alphabetic Code Charts many variations free at: www.alphabeticcodecharts.com</p>	<p>mini Alphabet Posters many variations free at: www.debbiehepplewhitehandwriting.com</p>	<p>Say the Sounds Posters – provided in Phonics International and in ORT Floppy's Phonics Sounds and Letters</p>

Core resources for collating cumulatively in the phonics folder:

- **Sounds Book Activity Sheets** (multi-skills practice from code to word level with essential banks of cumulative words to practise sounding out and blending for reading; earlier Activity Sheets include letter formation; all Activity Sheets include a spelling-with-editing activity on the folded up part of the sheet)
- **Cumulative Sentences or Texts** (alternate these with their parallel Activity Sheets to 'apply and extend' the code and word level learning)
- **Spelling Word Banks** (additional material to build up knowledge of words spelt with the same letter/s-sound correspondences)

		
<p>Sounds Book Activity Sheets many variations in Phonics International and in Floppy's Phonics Sounds & Letters</p>	<p>Cumulative Sentences and Texts many variations in Phonics International and in Floppy's Phonics Sounds & Letters</p>	<p>Spelling Word Banks resources many variations in Phonics International and in Floppy's Phonics Sounds & Letters</p>

Additional Guidance: Debbie Hepplewhite's suggestions for effective and supportive phonics provision (may be useful as an audit or check list): http://www.phonicsinternational.com/Audit_Debbie%20Hepplewhite.pdf

Why is the use of Phonics Folders as part of the school's 'book-bag routine' such important practice?

Building up paper-based resources per learner:

Building up paper-based material in each learner's personal phonics folder engages the learner fully and provides **content-rich** 'revisit and review' opportunities *beyond* just once-a-day teacher-led 'revisit and review'. In effect, a copy of a mini Alphabetic Code Chart, a mini Alphabet, a Say the Sounds Poster and any core cumulative phonics resources (code, words, sentences, texts) belong to the learner and place the opportunity for **permanent visual support** and for **extra practice** in the **hands of the learner in school and at home**.

Not only can the phonics folders include the learners' own practice-resources, but also the *range of printable or photocopyable posters and charts* in Debbie's programmes can be *utilised creatively* – for example, options for reducing their size (via the 'multiples per page' printer facility or via photocopying) and including them in the phonics folders – *which may be especially helpful for additional intervention or special needs support*.

'Little and often' multi-skills practice:

Most learners require repetition of many aspects of phonics and language work. Knowledge to be acquired includes the letter/s-sound correspondences of the alphabetic code, knowledge of the alphabet (alphabetical order, the lower case and upper case letters and how to form them correctly on a writing line for print and joined handwriting styles), knowledge of specific word-spellings and spelling word banks. Multi-sensory practice is often referred to as VAK (visual, auditory, kinaesthetic) and relevant *VAK multi-skills practice* should be as **little and often** as possible **to enable learners to actually learn and embed the learning!** Without a visual bank of material belonging to each learner, it is impossible to provide the little and often practice essential for many learners – and difficult to provide a tangible record of *learning to date and next steps* for all supporting adults and the learners **to understand and share commonly**. Words, sentences and texts provided in content-rich phonics programmes inevitably include vocabulary not within the spoken language of learners. New words and ideas need re-visiting as much as possible (reading, speaking and writing) **to develop language comprehension** – and to develop **greater automaticity** of the *sub-skills* and the *three core skills* of decoding (reading), encoding (spelling) and handwriting.

The '**phonics folder in the school's book-bag routine**' informs parents and guardians regularly. It *facilitates collaboration* between teachers, parents, teaching assistants, supply staff and tutors as required and when possible.

Intervention and personalisation:

The phonics folder's **cumulative** contents provide the '**intervention**' material for learners who need **extra little and often** practice and *over-learning*. **No other phonics programmes or practices are required** – in fact slower-to-learn pupils should not be confused with a plethora of additional games or activities of different programmes or phonics practices for decoding (reading) and encoding (spelling). Of course learners will benefit from additional reading material in the form of cumulative, decodable reading books and other literature. **It is vital, however, that all supporting adults are consistent with the phonics language and phonics skills' routines they present to the learner.**

Supplementary Phonics International resources can be included in the phonics folders for groups and individuals who require them – for example, any letter/s-sound correspondences which address **gaps in code knowledge** or additional words or sentences based on specific letter/s-sound correspondences, or where some learners need regular **over-learning** to embed the phonics knowledge and skills or noting words causing extra difficulty for spelling.

Learner's engagement and assessment of his or her own learning:

Essentially, every learner is enabled to be **fully engaged** with his or her own content and learning *because* it is **paper-based and in the hands of the learner** - enabling the learner to appreciate **tangibly** his or her own progress and achievement (clarified by the input of the supporting adults as required). In effect, the work is **high-profiled** via paper-based cumulative resources collated in the phonics folder and regularly sent home (and back) as a continuum.

It is recommended that, using a pencil, learners routinely **'tick'** the graphemes (letters or letter groups) for which they can *say the sounds*, and **'tick'** the words they think they have blended accurately. In contrast, they can **'circle'** the graphemes and words of which they are not sure and/or of which they *don't know the meaning*.

For teacher-led **spelling-with-editing** activities, the supporting adult needs to ensure that any attempted spelling is correct *before* the learner can 'tick' the word as this is not about *invented* spelling but **accurate spelling**.

Guidance for the Phonics Routines: http://www.phonicsinternational.com/FR_PI_Posters_for_phonics_routines.pdf

Marking and annotating:

It is very important that supporting adults **mark the paper-based work** incorporating methods of praise and appreciation - noting landmark and 'wow' moments to fully acknowledge each learner's effort.

With personal paper-based resources, teachers *and* learners can annotate the work freely including any relevant **'next steps'**. This creates ongoing tracking and monitoring documents – **informative and constantly accessible** for **learners**, any **supporting staff** in a school context, for **literacy or phonics coordinators** and **senior management**, and for the **learners' parents or guardians**. It is, in effect, an *accountability and planning record* for teachers and teaching assistants in school contexts, for special needs teachers or for tutors in a personalised learning context.

The phonics 'work-in-progress' exercise book:

This is an ordinary exercise book with writing lines which learners can have with them at all times, for focus or practice activities, as a **work-in-progress** resource. It may be used as part of the *main phonics lessons* (decoding, spelling and handwriting) and for use in the *wider curriculum* whenever learners are required to read and write. The teacher or supporting adult can direct the learners to use the books for any phonics activities, for example: sticking-in paper grapheme tiles or word lists or cumulative texts, for drawing and matching pictures to words or captions – according to the instructions for use at the time. In addition, any extra handwriting or spelling practice, any listing of words in spelling word banks, any additional spelling practice of common words with unusual or tricky spellings, or any modelling by the adult, or working out a spelling by the learner – or feedback and next steps as appropriate.

The 'phonics folder in the school's book-bag routine' and the free use of a phonics exercise book facilitate very effective teaching and learning. Whilst these are regarded as essential features in the two phonics programmes mentioned above, this is actually sensible, generic practice which everyone can consider adopting if possible.

Please note: The **mis-use or over-use of mini whiteboards** by learners sitting on the floor is leading teachers away from more *fit-for-purpose* paper-based activities where learners sit comfortably and sensibly at tables to practise the three core phonics skills and their *sub-skills*. **The popularity of using mini whiteboards to displace paper-based practice for teaching foundational literacy skills is very worrying.** Further, no pre-printed content is provided via this medium. Mini whiteboards are therefore *only* suitable for quick-fire 'show me' **sound-to-print** spelling activities.

The use of mini whiteboards is *not conducive to good handwriting*, is not a rewarding activity which can be shared with home, does not provide any words or sentences for further little-and-often practice and embedding learning.

The use of mini whiteboards *does not cater for print-to-sound* decoding activities which require many cumulative words/sentences for every learner to practise reading independently, nor any true personalisation of teaching and learning, nor does it provide a permanent tracking/monitoring system, nor a reward or sharing information system.