

Felton C of E Primary School

'Loving, Learning, Living as we journey together to enable everyone to flourish'

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What is Rocket Phonics?

Rocket Phonics is a next-generation phonics programme. It builds upon previous phonics provision and encapsulates the formula we need to ensure foundational literacy success at Felton C of E Primary School. It combines the alphabetic code knowledge and skills that are needed to learn to read and write, with language-rich children's literature. This approach will embed phonics in context, and support a love of reading and writing from the outset.

It is a fully resourced, systematic synthetic phonics programme and provides a combination of digital and printed resources to help your child to gain phonetic knowledge. It also includes a fully matched series of decodable reading books. As the resources are provided digitally it is an ideal resource for school-based learning and is complemented by the Rising Stars reading scheme which we use in school.



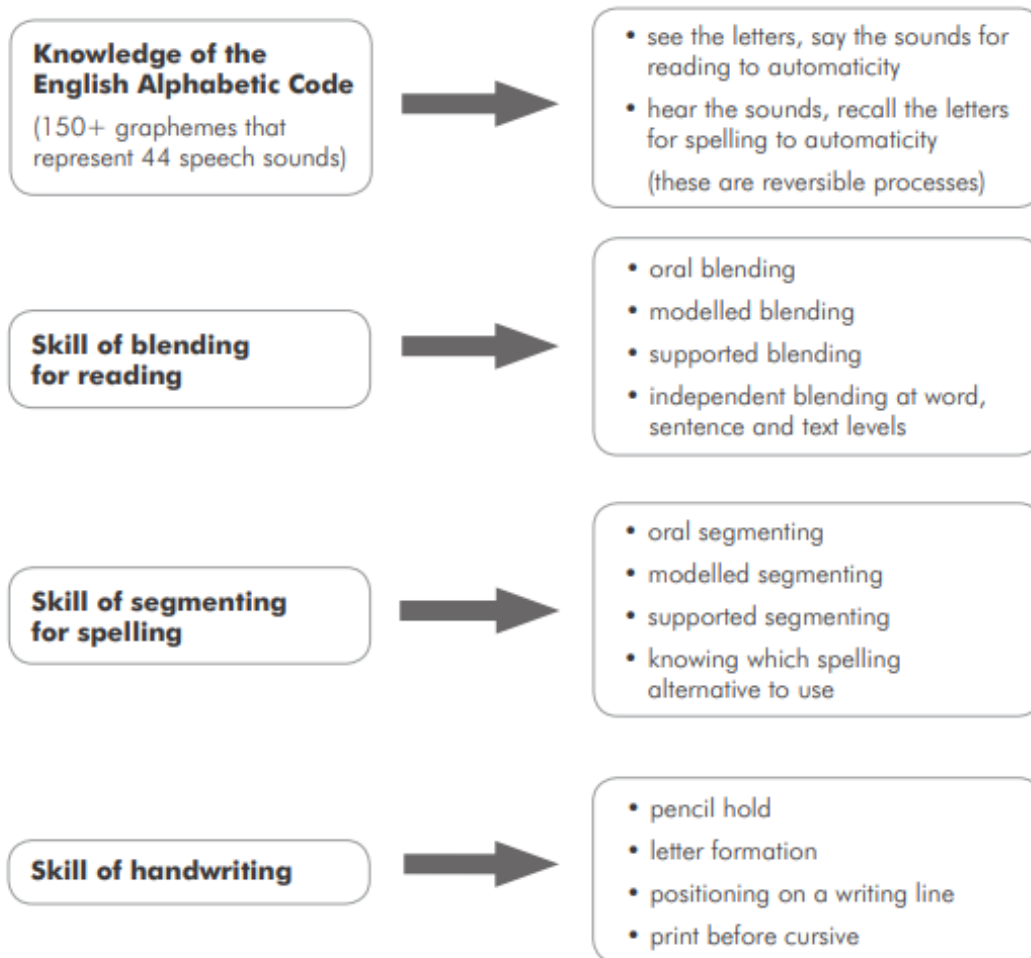
The Fundamental Principles of Rocket Phonics

There are some fundamental concepts that cannot be compromised on and we follow these to ensure that the children are successful with their phonic learning. They are central to the pedagogy behind the Rocket Phonics programme. At Felton C of E primary school we ensure that:

- Phonics is taught for at least 30 minutes per day
- All staff are supported with regular phonics professional development training
- A clear pathway is followed through the alphabetic code
- Children are not asked to read texts by themselves that they can't yet read
- The Systematic Synthetic Phonics Teaching Principles (see below) are taught explicitly
- The Teaching & Learning Cycle (revisit and review, teach, practise, apply) is followed
- Children are supported to keep up, so they do not need to catch up
- Phonics is taught at letter-sound, word, sentence and text levels
- Core phonics provision is distinguished from phonics enrichment activities
- Teachers have clarity about what, why and how they are teaching

Systematic Synthetic Phonics Teaching Principles

The Systematic Synthetic Phonics Teaching Principles are the specific knowledge and skills children need to be able to read and write in the English language. These principles can be broken down into smaller steps. At Felton C of E Primary School we ensure that these principles are at the core of our phonics teaching.



What is Blending and Segmenting?

Blending is the process of saying the individual sounds in a word and then running them together to make the word, e.g. sounding out c- a- t and making cat.

Segmenting is the process of saying the individual sounds in a word and then writing the letters that represent them, e.g. sounding out c- a- t and writing cat.

Blend to Read and Segment to Write!

Rocket Phonics Lesson Structure

Rocket Phonics teaches one letter-sound correspondence over two days. The first day focuses on blending skills and the second day focuses on segmenting skills. Reading and writing are interlinked so there will naturally be overlap, but by separating the skills and spreading them across two days we have greater clarity over which skill is being taught, practised or applied. The children have more time and more opportunity to learn, practise and apply the skills using the new letter-sound correspondences before moving on. The two-day pattern is repeated twice through the week, leaving the fifth day as an opportunity for further consolidation, assessment, enrichment activities or as a focus lesson on common exception words. A typical phonic weekly teaching structure would be as follows:

Day 1

Blending focus

Revisit and review – Use flashcards to revisit and review previously taught sounds.

Teach – Use the IWB Big Book to teach the new letter-sound correspondence.

Practise and apply – Children practise decoding using the Big Book decodable word lozenges, then using the first Pupil Practice Booklet lesson page.

Apply – Use Target Practice reading books for shared, guided and/or individual reading. Further application and consolidation – Children read independently using Rocket Phonics reading books.

Day 2

Segmenting focus

Revisit and review – Use air writing to revisit and review previously taught sounds.

Teach – Using flipchart or whiteboard to model and teach letter formation and segmenting. Practise and apply – Children practise segmenting and letter formation using mini whiteboards, then using the second Pupil Practice Booklet lesson page.

Apply – Children transfer skills to English and wider curriculum lessons.

Days 3 & 4 are a repeat of days 1 and 2 but with a new sound.

Day 5 - Flexible day

A flexible day that can be tailored to the children's needs.

Consolidation – Revisit learning using flashcards, Big Book spreads and games.

Focus on common exception words

Assessment – Check, observe and make notes on children's progress.

Enrichment – Play games such as letter-sound or word bingo or use activities.

Use Target Practice reading books for whole class shared, or group guided reading.

Resources

Big Books

At the heart of the programme are the digital-only 'Big Books', which consist of language-rich stories to teach all the target letter-sounds in context. These books are designed for use on the IWB in class. Here is an example page from one of the Interactive Big Books.

The screenshot shows a digital story page for the letter 'n'. It features a large illustration of two green alien-like characters, Nip and Nap, in a red and orange boat on a snowy mountain. Nip is holding a tablet. To the right, there's a smaller illustration of a character on a skidoo chasing a yellow lozenge labeled 'n N'. The text on the page includes: "Decodable words containing the focus letter-sound appear in blue lozenges that can be clicked to hear the pronunciation", "Story text for the teacher to read aloud, or play the audio version (with sound effects)", "Target letter-sounds appear in yellow lozenges that can be clicked to play the pronunciation", "The skidoo raced over a bump and the tin lunchbox flew off the back. Whoosh!", "Nan didn't realise her lunch was gone!", "Nan", "Nan and Nap didn't want Nan to go without her lunch. They used their amazing mind power to make Nan look around and see the tin box in the snow.", "tin", "Nan jumped onto her skidoo and sped through the snow. Nip and Nap followed behind her without being seen.", "Story text contains words with the target letter-sound to support phonemic awareness", "You can use the tools provided in the programme to zoom into illustrations, frame items, add sticky notes, etc.", and "Click on the Flashcard and Games buttons to launch the resources".

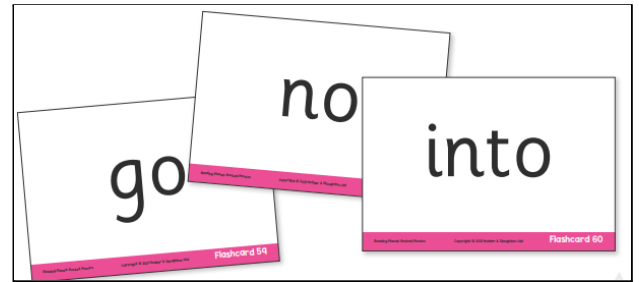
The diagram shows two flashcards. The first flashcard, labeled 'Flashcard 5', displays the lowercase letter 'p' and the uppercase letter 'P' next to a picture of a pot. A label 'Lowercase and capital letters' points to both letters. A label 'Picture mnemonic' points to the pot. The second flashcard, also labeled 'Flashcard 5', displays the word 'pat'. A label 'Decodable word on the reverse' points to the word. A label 'Colour band level' points to the bottom of the flashcard.

Flashcards

Flashcards are an important part of supporting children to develop their phonic knowledge. The Flashcards are designed for reviewing previously taught letter-sounds as well as introducing new letter-sounds. We used both printed and digital versions to support learning using a mnemonic system. A mnemonic system is a way of helping children to remember letter-sound correspondences. Rocket Phonics uses key pictures on Set 1 Flashcards, the Frieze and Sounds Mats, and in the Pupil Practice

Booklets. The words for the key pictures are not decodable at the point of introduction – the pictures are a visual and oral mnemonic to help children recall the focus letter-sound.

The children also have **Common Exception Words** that they need to learn to read by sight. These are sometimes referred to as the **Tricky Words**. These are introduced to the children gradually throughout the scheme and flashcards are used to support the learning of these words.



Pupil Practice Booklets

The Pupil Practice Booklets enable the children to practise and apply blending and segmenting skills at letter-sound, word, sentence and text levels. The children all have their own practice booklets and use these on a daily basis, see example below.

Left-hand pages focus on blending skills for reading

The image shows two sample pages from a Pupil Practice Booklet. The left page is for the letter 'p' and includes activities like blending words (pip, tip, tap), segmenting words (pip, tip, tap), and applying skills (It is a pit, It is a pip). The right page is for the letter 't' and includes activities like blending words (tip, tap, top), segmenting words (tip, tap, top), and applying skills (It is a pit, It is a pip). Each page has a rocket icon and a small label at the bottom: 'Flashcard 58', 'Flashcard 59', and 'Flashcard 60' respectively.

Right-hand pages focus on segmenting skills for spelling and writing

There are also review and common exception words pages, and two mini-assessments the end of each booklet.

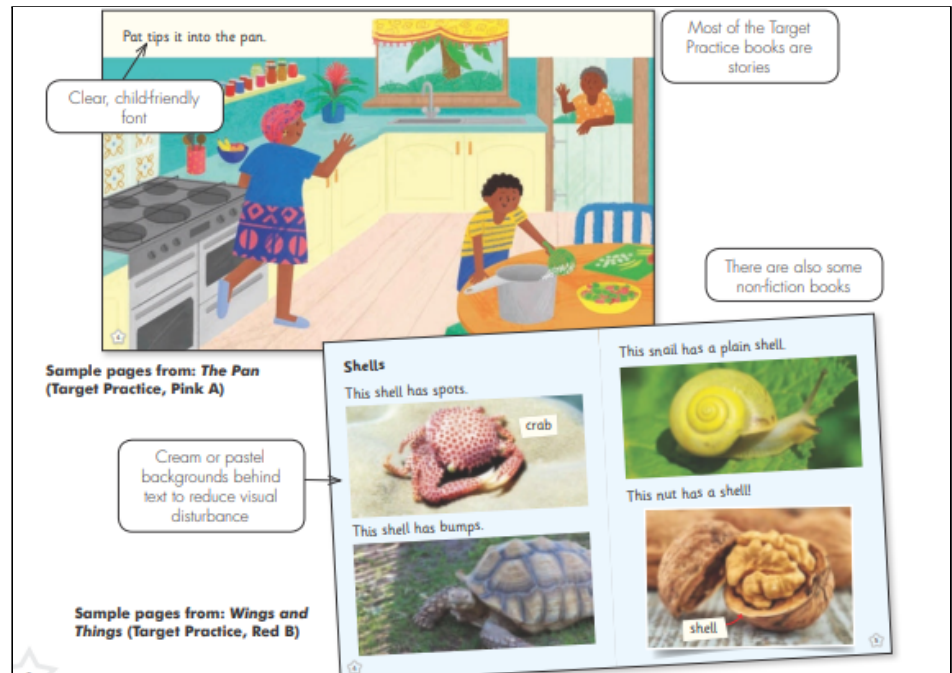
Review and common exception words pages

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Assessment A

Target Practice Reading Books

The Target Practice Books provide focused reading practice of small groups of letter-sounds. All the books are fully decodable, which means they only contain letter-sounds and 'tricky' words that the children have been taught in class. ('Tricky' words are also called 'common exception words' and include words like he, she, they and were that don't follow phonics rules.



Rocket Phonics Reading Books

The Rocket Phonics range of reading books are the ideal complement to the programme as additional decodable reading practice books. The Books provide focused reading practice of wider groups of letter-sounds. They are intended as additional reading practice once children have been taught all the letter-sounds in a particular colour level/band. The text in these books are fully decodable, which means they only contain letter-sounds and 'tricky' words that the children have been taught in class. They also include a page of questions at the back of each book that can be used to check your child's understanding. There are a variety of books both fiction and non-fiction.

Frieze and Sounds Mats

The Frieze and Sounds Mats are used as a visual reference to support letter-sound recognition, letter formation and spelling. The sound mats can be viewed here.

