Phase One Phonics

So why phonics?
- Research shows that when phonics is taught in a structured way – starting with the easiest sounds and progressing through to the most complex – it is the most effective way of teaching young children to read.
- Almost all children who receive good teaching of phonics will learn the skills they need to tackle new words. They can then go on to read any kind of text fluently and confidently, and to read for enjoyment.
- Children who have been taught phonics also tend to read more accurately than those taught using other methods, such as ‘look and say’. This includes children who find learning to read difficult, for example those who have dyslexia.

Research
The Rose Review (2006)
This was an independent review of the teaching of early reading – the main recommendations were:
- More attention needs to be given to speaking and listening from the outset.
- High quality, systematic phonics work should be taught discretely and daily and in line with the definition of high quality phonics work as set out in the Rose report.
- Phonics should be set within a broad and rich language curriculum that takes full account of developing speaking, listening, reading and writing.
- Phonic work for young children should be multi-sensory in order to capture their interest, sustain motivation, and reinforce learning in imaginative and exciting ways. Systematic phonics work – hear it, see it, feel it, do it, explain it.

Phase One phonics
- Phase 1 starts from birth and underpins all the other phases.
- Children who are struggling with higher phases need to be supported with lots of phase 1 activities.
- Research is showing us that older children who are struggling to read benefit from phase 1 type activities adjusted to make them age appropriate.

Letters and Sounds: Principles and Practice of High Quality Phonics
“Letters and Sounds is a six-phase teaching programme designed to help practitioners and teachers teach children how the alphabet works for reading and spelling.” Letters and Sounds p.2

Letters and Sounds Phase One Teaching Programme
“Phase One activities concentrate on developing children’s speaking and listening skills, phonological awareness and oral blending and segmenting. These activities are intended to be used as part of a broad and rich language curriculum that has speaking and listening at its centre, links language with physical and practical experiences, and provides an environment rich in print and abundant in opportunities to engage with books. Phase One activities pave the way for children to make a good start in reading and writing.” Letters and Sounds p.2

For most children phonics teaching should start with Phase one throughout pre-school years by:
- Planning a stimulating environment, both indoors and outdoors.
- Modelling speaking and listening.
- Enjoying and sharing books, rhymes and songs.

Letters and Sounds Phase One helps children to:
- Listen attentively.
- Enlarge their vocabulary.
- Speak confidently to adults and other children.
- Discriminate phonemes.
- Reproduce audibly the phonemes they hear, in order, all through the word;
- Use sound-talk to segment words into phonemes.
Letters and Sounds Phase 1 activities are arranged under seven aspects:
2. General Sound Discrimination: Instrumental Sounds.
4. Rhythm and Rhyme.
5. Alliteration.
7. Oral blending and segmenting.

Aspects 1 to 6 run concurrently. Aspect 7 usually comes just before children move into the Reception class.

Each aspect is divided into three strands:
- Tuning into sounds (auditory discrimination).
- Listening and remembering sounds (auditory memory and sequencing).
- Talking about sounds (developing vocabulary and language comprehension).

“While there is considerable overlap between the aspects, the overarching aim is to ensure that children experience regular, planned opportunities to listen carefully and to talk extensively about what they hear, see and can do. The boundaries between each strand are flexible and not fixed: practitioners should plan to integrate the activities according to the developing abilities and interests of the children in the setting.”

Letters and Sounds p.6

How to do it
There should be daily planned Letters and Sounds activities to embed skills through stories, songs, rhymes and speaking and listening activities. The activities in Letters and Sounds Phase One are mainly adult-led but there should opportunities to learn phonics throughout the setting by a mix of:
- Adult-led activities.
- Child-initiated activities.
- Exploring and applying within the learning environment.
- Developing speaking and listening skills through daily routines.

Links
- Letters and Sounds – gov.uk website:

  or via the foundationyears.org.uk website:

- “Independent review of the teaching of early reading” - Final Report, Jim Rose, March 2006:
  dera.ioe.ac.uk/5551/2/report.pdf

- Planning -
  Link to planning sheet for daily phonic sessions???