**Audit to support practice and provision for developing early phonological awareness**

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| **Setting name / address** |  | | | | |
| **Registration number** |  | **Current Ofsted outcome** |  | **Date of completion** |  |

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| **People involved in completing this audit** | |
| **Name** | **Role** |
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**Further reading, references and websites**

Westmorland and Furness,Support for Childminders, Early Years and Childcare Provision

[Support for Childminders, Early Years and Childcare Provision](https://legacy.westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk/childrensservices/childrenandfamilies/cfis/earlyyearsandchildcare/supportforearlyyearsandchildcareprovision.asp)

[The reading framework: teaching the foundations of literacy - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-reading-framework-teaching-the-foundations-of-literacy)

Developing phonological awareness in early years, prepares children for linking sounds and letters in the order in which they occur in words, and naming and sounding the letters of the alphabet as they move into reception. It also draws on and promotes other areas of learning for example, Expressive Arts and Design, where music plays a key part in developing children’s language skills. It contributes to the provision for Communication and Language and Literacy but is only a small part of overall language provision. Supporting children to develop effective language and communication skills is key and is a golden thread which should run through all provision and practice. Phonological awareness activities are mainly adult led with the intention of teaching young children important basic elements such as oral segmenting and blending of familiar words, being able to identify and talk about sounds and understanding rhythm and rhyme. However, it is equally important to sustain and draw upon worthwhile, freely chosen activities that are provided for children in good early years settings and school nursery classes. The aim is to embed adult-led activities in a language-rich provision that serves the best interests of the children by fully recognising their propensity for play and its importance in their development.

Phonics activities should be fun, multi-sensory, engaging and well-paced and should not involve young children being expected to sit for extended periods of time. Learning should take place indoors and outside using high-quality resources, with well-trained practitioners who are able to differentiate opportunities to meet the needs of all children. Group size and organisation should be considered and adapted, depending on the activity/ children’s needs. All aspects of early phonics should be considered but these should be seen as on-going, integral aspects of Communication and Language and not something to tick off after a short focus. The importance of children understanding and using spoken language is the most important skill for them to develop in early years as this underpins all other learning. Ofsted do not expect to see formal teaching of reading and writing in nursery. Once children move into a reception class a systematic synthetic phonics scheme will usually be used to ensure all children take part in high-quality phonics sessions.

This audit tool does not need to be completed in one go and ideally all staff should be able to input their thoughts and reflections. **Some points will only be appropriate for practitioners working with older children, not in baby rooms, so sections should be left blank if not relevant**. Managers may also choose to use it as an observational tool when identifying strengths and areas for development in rooms, which can then be discussed with practitioners.

| **Staff knowledge and attitudes** | | | | |
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| **Criteria** | **Emerging** | **Developing** | **Established** | **Comments / identified actions** |
| Practitioners, especially those working in pre-school have a good understanding of early phonics. |  |  |  |  |
| All practitioners have previously accessed training or CPD in relation to teaching phonics. |  |  |  |  |
| Practitioners are confident in using the correct terminology associated with early phonics. |  |  |  |  |
| Practitioners are confident in the phonetic alphabet and using/ modelling appropriate ‘clipped’ sounds. |  |  |  |  |
| Practitioners value the importance of teaching early phonological awareness and understand the need for children to have a secure knowledge of this before moving on. |  |  |  |  |
| Practitioners share a love of books with the children and introduce them to a range of authors/ genres. |  |  |  |  |
| All practitioners are happy to sing and share rhymes with children and have a repertoire to draw from. |  |  |  |  |
| Stories are carefully selected and used repeatedly so children really get to know a range of appropriate key texts. |  |  |  |  |
| Practitioners use the correct grammar and pronunciation even if this is not the local dialect. |  |  |  |  |
| Practitioners use correct vocabulary for children to hear and focus on increasing vocabulary. |  |  |  |  |

| **Partnership with parents** | | | | |
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| **Criteria** | **Emerging** | **Developing** | **Established** | **Comments / identified actions** |
| Practitioners share with parents their approach to teaching phonics. |  |  |  |  |
| Opportunities for home learning are regularly shared with parents. |  |  |  |  |
| Resources to consolidate learning are shared with parents, for example rhymes and songs. |  |  |  |  |
| Practitioners are willing to model activities/share knowledge for/with less confident parents. |  |  |  |  |

| **Phonics across the provision –indoors and out** | | | | |
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| **Criteria** | **Emerging** | **Developing** | **Established** | **Comments / identified actions** |
| Opportunities to consolidate learning across the day are regularly exploited by staff, as part of the everyday routine. |  |  |  |  |
| Practitioners are aware of the opportunities for promoting/facilitating language development through children’s play in all areas of learning. |  |  |  |  |
| Children can access books and print across all areas of provision including outside. |  |  |  |  |
| Practitioners understand the link between phonics and early mark-making, and this is promoted as well as resources being provided across provision both indoors as well as outside. |  |  |  |  |

| **Specific aspects of early phonological awareness** | | | | |
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| **Criteria** | **Emerging** | **Developing** | **Established** | **Comments / identified actions** |
| **General sound discrimination - environmental** | | | | |
| Children are frequently encouraged to listen to and identify sounds around them, both indoors and out. |  |  |  |  |
| Children are supported to find/use words to talk about sounds they hear. |  |  |  |  |
| Children are regularly encouraged to play games which include listening to/identifying sounds. |  |  |  |  |
| Children explore how sounds can be made using a range of found/natural materials, both indoors and out. |  |  |  |  |
| Practitioners join children in their play to extend their talk and enrich their vocabulary. |  |  |  |  |
| **General sound discrimination – instrumental sounds** | | | | |
| Children can access/explore musical instruments in provision as well as during planned activities. |  |  |  |  |
| A good range of quality instruments are available in the setting and the children are taught how to use these. |  |  |  |  |
| Opportunities are provided for children to play instruments to accompany songs, stories and a range of types of music. |  |  |  |  |
| Activities are planned where children match, or replicate sounds made by adults with instruments. |  |  |  |  |
| Opportunities are provided for children to make and use their own musical instruments. |  |  |  |  |
| Children are specifically taught to play a range of simple rhythms. |  |  |  |  |
| **General sound discrimination – body percussion** | | | | |
| Daily opportunities are provided for children to join in with singing and action rhymes. |  |  |  |  |
| Children are encouraged to explore the different sounds they can make with their bodies and voices. |  |  |  |  |
| **Rhythm and rhyme** | | | | |
| Daily opportunities are provided to explore rhythm and rhyme, through songs, stories and rhymes. |  |  |  |  |
| Children are supported to build rhyming strings, make up rhymes and add in missing rhyming words. |  |  |  |  |
| Regular opportunities are available for children to clap out and count syllables. |  |  |  |  |
| Practitioners are confident at making up/changing rhymes to share with the children. |  |  |  |  |
| Regular opportunities are included for children to move to a range of different beats. |  |  |  |  |
| **Alliteration** | | | | |
| Opportunities are provided for children to find/match objects with the same initial sound. |  |  |  |  |
| Children are taught to hear/recognise the initial sound in their name and in other words. |  |  |  |  |
| Fun opportunities to build alliterative strings and identify alliteration in spoken phrases are introduced and revisited often |  |  |  |  |
| Books are provided which include lots of alliterative rhymes and jingles. |  |  |  |  |
| Practitioners model the use of alliterative sentences when playing alongside children. |  |  |  |  |
| **Voice sounds** | | | | |
| A wide variety of opportunities are used to help children start to differentiate between different voice sounds. |  |  |  |  |
| When playing alongside children, practitioners encourage vocal sounds to be used in the play. |  |  |  |  |
| Regular opportunities are promoted for children to act out stories and to add sound effects. |  |  |  |  |
| During sensory/ messy play practitioners introduce new words and sounds to describe experiences. |  |  |  |  |
| **Oral blending and segmenting** | | | | |
| Practitioners can confidently segment words into their component sounds, and blend the component sounds all through a word. |  |  |  |  |
| Practitioners regularly write in front of the children and sound the phonemes as they record the grapheme. |  |  |  |  |
| Children are encouraged to sound talk the phonemes they can hear in simple regular words. |  |  |  |  |
| Practitioner’s sound talk words for children to blend regularly once children are at this stage. |  |  |  |  |
| Children are encouraged to talk about what they write and to ascribe meaning to marks. |  |  |  |  |

| **Observation, assessment and planning** | | | | |
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| **Criteria** | **Emerging** | **Developing** | **Established** | **Comments / identified actions** |
| Practitioners provide daily speaking and listening and phonological awareness activities that are well matched to children’s developing abilities and interests, drawing upon observations and assessments to plan for progression. |  |  |  |  |
| Children experience regular, planned opportunities to listen carefully and talk extensively about what they hear, see and do. |  |  |  |  |

| **Improvement priorities** | **Agreed support** | **Timescale (from – to)** | **Success criteria** | **Evaluation** |
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