

**A COMPLETE PHONICS RESOURCE  
TO SUPPORT CHILDREN**



# **TEACHING THE SEND PROGRAMME FOR THE GRADUATED APPROACH**

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# Teaching Little Wandle SEND

Little Wandle SEND is a complete programme that mirrors the main *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* phonics programme but with adaptations and support in place that make it possible for schools, special schools and providers to meet the needs of all their learners.

It has been created to help children learn to read using the right level of challenge for each child and using the graduated approach if needed.

We have provided a range of resources to support teachers with the planning and delivery of phonics lessons and Reading practice sessions. Use the resources flexibly in your teaching to match the needs of each child. Always teach to the point of challenge – we can have high expectations for every child if we put the correct adaptations, support and repeated practice in place.

## Timetabling phonics lessons and Reading practice sessions

Timetabling will depend on the specific needs of the children and on staff resourcing. Phonics lessons should be timetabled daily, if possible, and the teaching and practice of GPCs and words should continue until they are secure.

You will also need to timetable Reading practice sessions – ideally three a week. These sessions are essential so that children have quality teaching of reading and time to apply their secure phonic knowledge in age-appropriate decodable books. Children need to read each decodable book three times, and books should only be taken home for further reading practice after the final read.

Typically, you will be teaching individuals or small groups. The phonics lessons and Reading practice sessions can be used for small groups if the children have been assessed to have largely the same needs. You could also consider mixed year groups. All of the resources and activities in this guide can be used with individuals or groups of children.

## Phonics lessons

### Teaching GPCs

Teach GPCs **before** children encounter them in the words and activities in the SEND weekly grids. Use the Prompt cards and 'How to' videos on the website for guidance on how to teach GPCs. Once the children have secured enough GPCs to start learning to blend, use the Phase 2 and 3 blending practice templates and the weekly grids to teach and practise this skill. All of these resources are available in the SEND area of the Little Wandle website. Blending is key at Phase 4 so do not progress to Phase 4 until children understand how to blend, either orally or in their heads. At Phase 5, you should continue to teach GPCs before moving on to the words and activities in the weekly grids, but each GPC is introduced with an example word, such as 'ou' /ow/ 'cloud'. Use the SEND Phase 5 grapheme cards to teach Phase 5 GPCs.

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## Teaching blending

Concentrate on teaching Phase 2/3 GPCs for a number of weeks and then move on to applying them through teaching blending, using the words in the Phase 2 and 3 weekly grids. You can then return to teaching more GPCs and repeat the cycle.

The blending practice lessons, outlined in the templates, form the basis of teaching blending and are for children who can read some GPCs but cannot blend – yet! They should be run by a trained teacher or teaching assistant and focus solely on blending using GPCs that the children know – first orally, and then with graphemes.

There are seven weeks of daily blending practice lessons for Phase 2 and five for Phase 3, and they build cumulatively. Children who complete all the lessons should be able to read words with all the Phase 2 and 3 GPCs. However, you can use the lessons for as long as needed, and they can be repeated and broken down into smaller chunks to suit the needs of your children.

You will find detailed guidance on the different methods used in teaching blending in the Prompt cards and ‘How to’ videos for Blending and reading words. Children need to learn how to blend before starting Phase 4 but blending practice continues throughout the Little Wandle SEND programme and is covered on the weekly grids for all phases.

## Teaching tricky words

Tricky words are introduced in Phase 2 in Little Wandle SEND, as in the main programme, and are included in the weekly grids for convenience. However, you should teach tricky words in Phases 2 and 3 outside of the blending practice lessons detailed in the templates.

Use the Prompt card ‘All phases: Teaching tricky words’ for guidance. Tricky words are also included in the spelling activities in Phases 4 and 5. In Phases 4 and 5, tricky words can be taught in phonics lessons or separately to suit the child’s needs.

## Using the weekly grids

Use the weekly grids flexibly. Each lesson can be chunked up and taught over a number of sessions and it can be revisited as many times as needed. Optional phrases and sentences to read have been included for each phase, but they need not be taught within the lesson, and they can be used later to increase challenge. As described above, you may wish to concentrate on teaching several GPCs for a number of weeks and before teaching blending, reading and spelling using the weekly grids.

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## Reading practice sessions

### Match books to children's secure phonic knowledge

Use the assessments to work out which books match the children's secure phonic knowledge. The SEND assessment spreadsheet will give you the best match for each child, but you should use your professional judgement as well. If a book level seems too difficult or easy, try the level above or below to see if it is a better fit.

If children are making quicker progress in between assessments, you can also use your judgement to move them on to the next level of book. Check the child can read:

- the GPCs in the book effortlessly
- the practice words at the front of the book fluently (with little or no overt blending)
- the tricky words.

Now ask them to read the first double-page spread. Can they read it without hesitation? If so, then this is the correct level.

### Adapting the three reads

Children need to be given regular opportunities to apply the phonics they have learned to reading fully decodable books. The phonic progression in these books must match the progression of *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised*. Reading practice sessions should take place at least three times a week. Each Reading practice session needs to have a clear focus, so that the demands of the session do not overload the children's working memory.

The Reading practice sessions have been designed to focus on three key reading skills:

- decoding
- prosody – reading with meaning, stress and intonation
- comprehension – understanding the text.

For some SEND children, the three reads may take longer. Reading practice sessions can be adapted and taught to meet the needs of individuals or groups. A book can be taught over two weeks rather than one. Sensory elements, pictures and other adaptations can be added to ensure children make strong connections between the book and their knowledge of the world. This will enable them to read the book with the greatest level of success possible.

The **decoding** session might be repeated to aid fluency, or the book might be chunked up to two sessions, depending on the needs of the child.

Teaching **prosody** is an important skill for all children. Some children with an autistic spectrum condition (ASC), auditory processing disorder or hearing impairment may not be able to produce prosody when speaking. However, talking through how and why specific emphasis carries meaning beyond the words themselves is helpful in teaching how spoken prosody affects comprehension.

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Teach **comprehension** through talk and by making connections between the book and the children's lives. Dialogic talk is the best way to grow vocabulary and language. When children make connections between books and their interests, they are growing their foundational knowledge of reading and finding out how it will benefit them and give them pleasure.

### Using the blending practice books

The Little Wandle blending practice books all focus on specific Phase 2 and Phase 3 GPCs. They are much shorter in length, have sound buttons beneath the words and have been designed so that children can practise their blending skills in context. The books are richly illustrated and provide lots of opportunity to extend language and comprehension.

Children read the words or phrases on each double-page spread and then find the corresponding object, animal or person in the illustrations. When they turn over to the next double-page spread, they will find out if they were correct.

**Phase 2:** The Phase 2 blending practice books for the main programme cover the GPCs in small steps and are ideal for children who find the step up to reading the Phase 2 decodable books too much.

**Phase 3:** The Phase 3 blending practice books for the main programme cover specific Phase 3 GPCs in each book. These books may well meet the needs of many children who find the main programme books too long and complex.

**Blending practice books for age 7+:** The 7+ blending practice books cover Phases 2 and 3 in larger chunks and are more challenging than the blending books for the main programme. They are also designed to appeal to slightly older children in terms of content and interest level.

All of these books can be read using the three reads model, support for which can be found in the SEND area of the Little Wandle website. They can be used flexibly to meet the needs of each child and provide practice for blending in context.

### Which books?

All the Big Cat for Little Wandle books follow the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* progression. You can choose the decodable books, the blending practice books or the 7+ books that best suit your learners' needs and interests. Older SEND children may prefer the content and look of the 7+ books.

### Phase 5 core graphemes

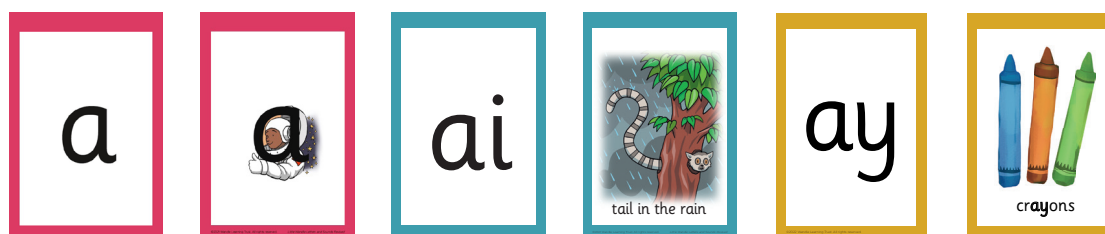
Not all Phase 5 graphemes from the main programme are taught in the Phase 5 SEND weekly grids – only the most common and useful GPCs are taught. Children following the Phase 5 SEND programme can still read the Phase 5 books, but some words in these books will need to be taught to the children as tricky words before they read the book. Support for this can be found in the matching grid for SEND, which can be found in the SEND assessment guidance on the Little Wandle website.

More planning and adaptation advice for teaching reading using the Big Cat for Little Wandle books can be found on the Little Wandle website.

# How to use the resources

The physical teaching resources for Little Wandle SEND have been carefully created to help you teach with fidelity to the programme and to ensure all children get the additional practice that they need to secure fluent reading of GPCs and words.

## Grapheme cards



Use the **Grapheme cards**:

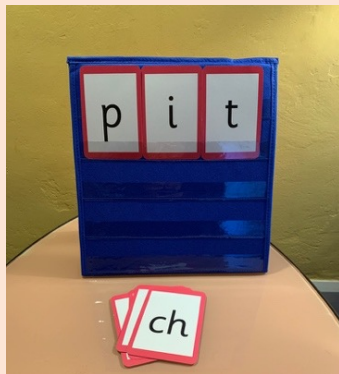
- To teach each new GPC in Phases 2, 3 and 5. The Phase 2, 3 and 5 grapheme cards are ideal to use when you are making the link between the grapheme, phoneme and the mnemonic/catchphrase/Phase 5 word. You may wish to use the large sensory grapheme cards for each phase. These are embossed so that children can feel the shape of the grapheme.
- To make the words used in oral and teacher-led blending. This is a crucial part of our pedagogy and ensures that children are taught to blend step by step. In this way, we model how to blend in every lesson, until the children are secure and do not need this support any more. You can see this in practice in the SEND 'How to' video 'Teacher-led blending'.

Revisit and review		Teach and practise		Practise and apply	
Oral blending games	GPCs	Oral blending	Teacher-led blending words Independent reading	Tricky words	Spelling
<b>Can you do the actions?</b> n-o-d your head c-l-a-p your hands t-a-p your foot r-u-b your tummy	l o g c k u b i r a t e d	l-o-g l-o-ck l-u-ck	<b>Teacher-led: log lock luck red</b> <b>Independent: big rat</b>	his	big rat
<b>Blend from the box</b> f-r-o-g f-i-sh h-a-t c-r-ow-n	b e l l t i s a o p d	b-e-ll t-e-ll b-i-ll	<b>Teacher-led: bell tell bill bed</b> <b>Independent: sat top</b>		sat top
<b>Can you touch your ... ?</b> l-e-g ch-ee-k b-a-ck h-ee-l	o f f h u p c a t	o-f-f h-u-ff	<b>Teacher-led: off huff puff cat</b> <b>Independent: cup hat</b>	her	cup hat
<b>Point to the ...</b> d-a-n-e f-l-a-s-h a-b-e-l	m e s s h i f u t n				ten man

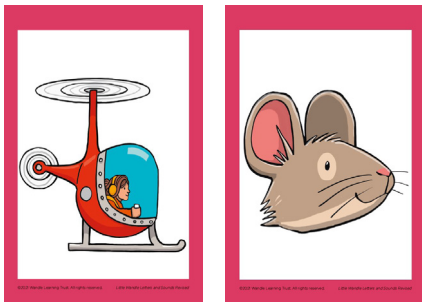
Use the grapheme cards for teacher-led blending

- When reviewing GPCs. Remember to use the grapheme side; only use the mnemonic/catchphrase/Phase 5 word if the children cannot automatically read the grapheme.
- For **Change it**. This game is part of the lessons in Phases 4 and 5. You can see it in practice in the 'How to' video 'Change it'.
- For **Mix it up**. Use the small grapheme cards to model spelling and for children to spell words in this one-to-one activity. You can see the activity in practice in the 'How to' video 'Mix it up'.

**Tip:** A pocket chart or stand is very useful. Make sure you have all your graphemes in order, so you can make the changes easily!



## Picture cards



Use the **Picture cards** when introducing a new GPC at Phase 2. The picture card is the same image as the mnemonic, to maximise on the link between the phoneme, mnemonic, and the grapheme.

## Word cards

There are three sets of word cards for Little Wandle SEND:

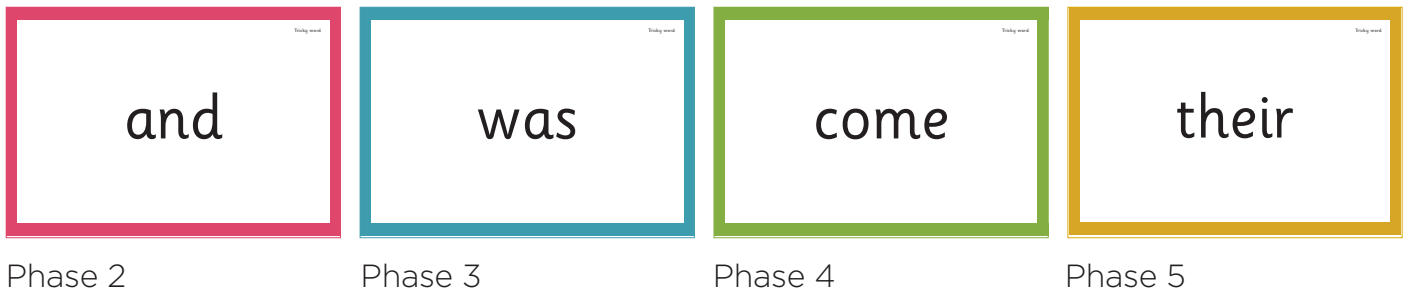
**Blending cards:** for use in blending practice sessions at Phases 2 and 3 (for independent reading only – use grapheme cards to make the words for teacher-led blending).



**Word cards for independent reading** at Phases 3, 4 and 5.



**Tricky word cards** for all phases.



The word cards have coloured borders to indicate their phase, and a label in the top right-hand corner to indicate their use. Blending cards and word cards are double sided, with sound buttons on one side and just the word on the other. Tricky word cards are single sided and do not have sound buttons.

### Organising your word cards

Multiple copies of words needed for review are provided so that you can organise your cards into sets according to the weekly grids. However, there is just one copy of each tricky word, and we recommend you organise these alphabetically so that you can find them quickly when needed for review.

**Tip:** The words from the previous week(s) can stay in your pocket chart so they are easy to find and review in your lesson or at any other time.

### How we chose the words

There are approximately 700 words and tricky words taught in the SEND programme. These are made up of the words we orally blend; words we make using grapheme cards in teacher-led blending; and the words on the word cards and tricky word cards.

### Decodable words

We chose the words for the SEND programme carefully, by using the original research from the 2007 *Letters and Sounds*<sup>(1)</sup>, which identified the 300 most common words, and the Collins Corpus, which extracted the most frequent words from 1.2 million words in 950 titles aimed at children aged three to 11. In this way, we could teach children to read words that would have the greatest impact on their reading as efficiently as possible. We have organised these words into a cumulative progression.

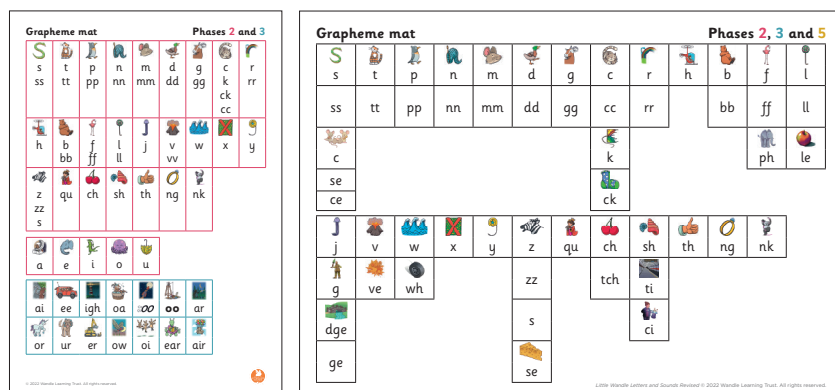
### Tricky words

The tricky words remain the same as those in the main Little Wandle programme. They are the original tricky words from *Letters and Sounds* (2007) combined with the Common Exception Words from the English National Curriculum Year 1 and 2 Spelling appendix.

<sup>(1)</sup> Masterson, J., Stuart, M., Dixon, M. and Lovejoy, S. (2003) *Children's Printed Word Database: Economic and Social Research Council funded project, R00023406*



## Grapheme mats



Download the grapheme mats to use with children in the lessons. There are two versions of the grapheme mat suitable for children following the SEND programme: one includes the Phase 2 and 3 graphemes only; the other also includes the Phase 5 core graphemes for SEND. Sets of laminated desktop grapheme mats are also available from Collins.

## Image bank

The Little Wandle SEND images can be used to support children who are non-verbal or who need additional language support. We have provided images for as many of the words featured in the weekly grids as possible, and these can be downloaded from the SEND area of the Little Wandle website. The words that have a matching image are in **bold** in the weekly grids. Each weekly grid has a corresponding PDF download containing all the images for the week. If you need images for teaching using the graduated approach, use the image search tool in the SEND area of the website.

## Fully decodable books

Alongside 204 fully decodable books for the main programme, Collins has created 50 fully decodable books for children age 7+. All the books provide practice at the correct level for each phase, as well as ensuring that children's vocabulary and language development is supported. The 7+ books may be more appropriate for your older learners.

The matching grid in the SEND assessment guidance, which can be found on the Little Wandle website, should be used to match each child's secure phonic knowledge in reading to the appropriate decodable reading books.

## Blending practice books

There are 20 blending practice books for Phases 2 and 3. These books have a very limited number of words and practise specific GPCs. They are used to focus on blending skills and extending vocabulary. There are supporting teacher's notes to guide you through how to use them. You can also see these books being used in the 'How to' video 'Blending practice books'.

# Using the graduated approach with Little Wandle

The graduated approach to teaching children to the point of challenge is outlined in the SEND Code of Practice (2014). This section outlines how you can use the graduated approach within the Little Wandle pedagogy.

The graduated approach	
Assess	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Work out which stage and GPC is appropriate for the child, using our assessments (the placement assessment or appropriate SEND assessments).</li></ul>
Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Use the weekly grids to identify which GPCs and skills you are going to teach.</li><li>• Plan the steps and adjustments needed to successfully teach these.</li><li>• Give a clear timescale for this/decide when to review progress towards these steps.</li></ul>
Do	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Teach and keep notes as needed for additional adjustments, successes and extra steps needed.</li><li>• From the activities described in the Prompt cards for teaching a new GPC, choose to start with either <b>What's in the box?</b> or <b>Teach a new phoneme</b>.</li></ul>
Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ensure regular review occurs. Consider reteaching, where more input and practice is needed.</li></ul>

## Using the graduated approach to teach blending

### Reducing cognitive load

It is important to factor in the impact of cognitive load on children. In phonics lessons, be mindful of the impact on cognitive load of the following:

#### The teaching environment

- Keep the visual environment clear and uncluttered – remove visual distractions.
- Keep teaching surfaces clear and easy to use.
- Put away any grapheme cards or word cards if they are not needed.

#### The way information is presented

- Think about how you can adapt lessons to cater to the children's working memory.
- Present new information using a combination of visual and auditory materials; the children will be less likely to experience cognitive overload as the content will be spread between the channels (audio/visual).

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- Only present the children with essential information, to ensure that non-essential information does not take up some of their working memory's capacity. Do not include unnecessary details, such as anecdotes or animations.
  - Consider how you can support the children when cognitive load is high for them; for example, when they need to hold more than one concept in their minds.

### **Teacher-modelling and language**

- Teach essential information one step at a time.
- Use teacher modelling and the **copy me method** to ensure children have worked examples to learn new content or skills.
- Consider the language level of instruction and materials. Language comprehension requires working memory, and many children with SEND will have both limited working memory capacity and delayed or disordered receptive language. This makes it all the more important to minimise unnecessary language, which increases the cognitive load. Keep language simple, clear and to the point, to offer children with SEND the maximum opportunity to process and understand it and, therefore, to learn.

### **Adaptations for sensory input**

- Place the grapheme cards in a protective plastic sleeve so the children can discover the graphemes in sensory materials.
- Use mirrors to help the children see how they make the sound.
- Use balloons and other objects that give feedback to help the children feel the sound.
- Use objects that give a sensory input. Provide visual aids where possible, for example, when blending c-a-t, have a toy cat. This aids learning and recall.

# A word about the schwa

The schwa is the name for the most common sound in English. It is the unstressed sound that we find in many words; it makes an 'uh' sound, which varies according to accent. For example, the 'o' in 'lesson' makes the schwa sound. The phonemic symbol for the schwa is ə. Schwa can be represented in writing by all five vowels, and by a number of digraphs and trigraphs such as 'er', 'ou', 'or' and 'our'.

## Introducing the schwa in Phase 3

Children first meet the schwa in Phase 3 when they read words ending in 'er'. In many accents the 'er' makes an unstressed vowel sound at the end of words such as 'bigger' and 'better', but in other accents these words are pronounced with pure sounds.

## The schwa in two-syllable words in Phases 3 and 4

Later in Phase 3 and in Phase 4, children will encounter some two-syllable words with the schwa sound that do not have the 'er' ending. Words such as 'dragon' and 'frighten' can be read using the GPCs the children know and with the chunking technique.

- 1) Say the word with pure sounds, a syllable at a time, for example: d-r-a-g/o-n.
- 2) Modify the pronunciation of the word. **Say:** *But we say dragən* (with the schwa).
- 3) Teach vocabulary. **Say:** *A dragon is a monster that breathes fire. It is not a real animal. It only appears in stories.*

## The schwa in Phase 5

Many combinations of vowels can make the schwa sound, especially in longer words. In Phase 5, the 'er' in 'spider', the first 'o' in 'potato', the 'e' in 'oven' and the 'a' in 'giant' make the schwa! Once again, it all depends on accent. We teach children to read these words with the chunking method and pure sounds, and then how the word is said (in their accent) with the schwa. This is important as so many words have the schwa!

The table below gives example words containing the schwa sound from the Little Wandle SEND programme.

Phase 3	Phase 4	Phase 5
better bigger ever finger	printer swimmer trainers children dragon frighten monster	avenue human sofa spider potato giant oven potion magician