

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n
 o p q r s t u v w x y z
 th sh ch ng er igh air

Introduction

Children learn a great deal from other people. As parents and carers you are your child's first teachers. You have a powerful influence on your child's early learning.

From a very early age your child will need to experience a wide range of activities and experiences with you in order to develop their early reading and writing skills. For example, singing and saying rhymes, making and listening to music, listening to them and joining in conversations, painting and pretend play. These activities will help your child take the first important steps towards reading and writing.



At North Heath school pupils take part in a high-quality communication, language and literacy development programme (CLLD) designed to promote every child's learning through a play-based approach.

A phonics teaching programme called *Song of Sounds* is used to support the teaching of CLLD in our school. With a song at its heart, this is a multi-sensory programme with kinaesthetic, auditory and visual activities that reinforce skills through a variety of learning styles.

The children learn through lots of play and activities and are encouraged to use their increasing phonics knowledge in freely chosen activities.

If you can be involved in helping your child we know it can make a big difference to your child's learning.

This booklet will give further information about the *Song of Sounds* programme and the best ways to support your child's learning at home.



What is Song of Sounds?

Song of Sounds is a phonics resource that has been created and developed in the classroom by teachers Liz Webster and Sue Reed. It aims to build children's knowledge of the phonemes necessary to read and write English successfully. Song is integral to the programme to help children remember every phoneme and involves a highly active approach with whole body actions and lots of games to aid learning.

Song of Sounds brings phonics to life with a fresh, lively, hands on approach to teaching phonics. It is divided into 3 stages. (Reception, Year 1 and Year 2)

Stage 1 – Reception

In this stage your child will be learning to:

- have fun with sounds
- listen carefully
- develop their vocabulary
- speak confidently to you, other adults and other children
- tune into sounds
- listen and remember sounds
- talk about sounds
- understand that spoken words are made up of different sounds
- blend and segment phonemes (sounds)
- read and write tricky words
- read and spell a range of CVC, CCVC/CVCC and CCVCC words
- use letter names to develop an understanding of the order of the alphabet

Throughout the Reception year sounds are taught in groups in the following order:

s / a / t / p → i / n / m / d → g / o / c / k → ck / e / u / r →
h / b / f / ff / l / ll → j / v / w / x → y / z / zz / qu → ch / sh / th / ng
ay / ee / igh / ow → oo / oo / ar / or → er / ou / oy / air

The following tricky words will also be taught during the course of the year:

I, the, he, she, we,
be, me

go, no, to, was,
saw

my, you, they, all,
are

Stage 2 – Year 1

In this stage your child will be learning to:

- discriminate between a new set of graphemes
- read and spell a new set of tricky words
- practise blending and segmenting
- understand vowels and consonants and their importance
- understand the difference between long and short vowel phonemes
- read and spell a range of CVC and CCVC/CVCC and CCVCC words
- discriminate syllables in multi-syllabic words

Throughout Year 1 sounds are taught in groups in the following order:

ay / ai / a-e → ee / ea / e-e → igh / ie / i-e → ow / oa / o-e →
oo / ew / u-e → er / ir / ur → or / aw / au → ou / ow →
oy / oi → air / are

The following tricky words will also be taught during the course of the year:

come, some, said,
have, any, many

oh, again, one,
once, there, their,
little, ask

when, what, why,
which, where,
were, who, how



Stage 3 – Year 2

In this stage your child will be learning to:

- discriminate between a new set of graphemes
- read and spell a new set of tricky words
- practise blending and segmenting
- read and spell words with two or more syllables
- revise adding 'es' to nouns and verbs ending in 'y'
- add 'ing', 'ed', 'er', 'est' and 'y' to root words
- add suffixes 'ment', 'ness', 'ful', 'less' and 'ly'

Throughout Year 2 sounds are taught in groups in the following order:

ey / y / ie → c / se / ce → ge / dge / g → kn / gn / nn

le / el / al → a / ar / ore → s / ti / ci → wr / ph / wh → o / a / or

The following tricky words will also be taught during the course of the year:

come, some,
said, have, any,
many, oh, again,
one, once, their,
there, little, ask,
when, what,
why, which,
where, were,
who, of, off,
house, because,
looked, called

Mr, Mrs, every,
everybody,
people, friend,
school, here,
live, love

are, our, your,
could, should,
would, only,
most, pretty,
beautiful

can't, don't, half,
last, after,
father, push,
pull, full, put



Learning to read and write in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Children's spoken language supports reading and writing

From a very early stage, children develop an awareness of the different sounds in our spoken language. They learn to use their voices to make contact with you and to let people know what they need and how they are feeling. As parents and carers, you best understand your child's communications; you are key people in helping them develop their speaking and listening skills.

Children need lots of opportunities to talk with others as they develop and practise their speaking and listening skills as this helps to build their confidence and improves their ability to communicate with other people. This is a really important aspect of learning to socialise and will help your child feel confident when the time comes to make friends.

In order to make a good start in reading and writing, children need an adult to talk to and listen to them.

Everyday activities such as preparing meals, tidying up, putting shopping away and getting ready to go out, offer you chances to talk to your child, explaining what you are doing. They hear the way language is put together into sentences for a purpose.

Books are a rich source of new words for your child – words you would not use in everyday conversations appear in books. Children need to have a wide stock of words (*vocabulary*) to understand the meaning of books, so read aloud and share books as often as you can. They will enjoy it and it will be useful to them when they come across these words in their own reading.



Ways you can support your children at home: talking and listening

- **Make time to listen to your child talking** – as you meet them from their setting or school, as you walk, or travel home by car, in the supermarket as you shop, at meal times, bath times, bedtimes – any time!
- **Switch off the TV, radio, mobile phones and all other devices** – and really listen!
- **Open ended questions** – Use open ended questions to avoid 'yes/no' answers, allow your child to explain their thoughts and ideas.
- **Show that you are interested in what they are talking about** – look at your child, smile, nod your head, ask a question or make a response to show that you really have been listening.

- **Make a collection of different toy creatures** – for example, a duck, a snake, an alien, say the sound it might make as you play together, for example, 'quack-quack', 'sssssss', 'yuk-yuk', and encourage your child to copy you
- **Listen at home** – switch off the TV (and all other devices) and listen to the sounds both inside and outside the home. Can your child tell you what sounds they heard, in the order in which they heard them?
- **Play-a-tune** – and follow me! Make or buy some simple shakers, drums and beaters, then play a simple tune and ask your child to copy. Have fun!
- **Use puppets** and toys to make up stories or retell known ones. Record your child telling the story and play it back to them.
- **Environmental print** – Look and talk about print in the environment. Children will start to recognise familiar symbols and print.
- **Interact with others** – Encourage dialogue with other children they meet, with friends, in the park, in shops.
- **Photographs** – Take photographs to record special events, games and visits, talk about the photos with your child and sequence them.



The importance of speech sounds

As children grow older they begin to understand more about the sounds of our language and they are able to join in with rhymes, songs and stories by clapping, stamping and skipping. This is an important stage as the children's ears are learning to tune into all the different sounds around them. Playing with sounds and tuning your child's ears into sounds will develop phonological awareness that is the ability to discriminate different sounds. Over time, this will help your child develop an understanding that words are made up of different sounds (*phonemes*) and they will be able to hear the different sounds in a word. Gradually they will learn to match sounds to letters (*graphemes*). This is phonic knowledge. They use this knowledge when they are reading and writing.



Ways you can support your children at home: sound talk

This is a very supportive activity to play with your child.

Try breaking down simple words when you are giving instructions or asking questions, such as 'Can you find your h-a-t hat?' 'Where is the c-a-t cat?' 'Sit on the s-ea-t seat' 'Eat your f-oo-d food'. It is really important to say the sounds (*phonemes*) aloud, in order, all through the word.

Prior to this, your child should have experienced lots of the environmental, instrumental and body percussion, rhythm and rhyming, alliteration, and voice sounds activities to tune in their ears.

Speaking and listening are the foundations for reading and writing

You can help your child develop in each of these by trying some of the following ideas. Remember that all these activities should be fun and interactive. Give your child lots of encouragement and cuddles as you play together. Smiles and praise will help develop a sense of achievement and build confidence.

This is all oral (*spoken*). Your child will not yet be expected to match the letter to the sound. The emphasis is on developing the ability to distinguish sounds and create sounds.



Ways you can support your children at home: environmental sounds

- Go on a listening walk – when walking down the road, make a point of listening to different sounds: cars revving, people talking, birds singing, dogs barking. When you get home, try to remember all the sounds you heard. You could try recording the sounds, to listen to them again, or try reproducing them yourselves, using your voices or instruments.
- Make sounds, using a range of props, such as running a stick along a fence or tapping on the bin lid.
- Invent a secret family 'knock' for entering rooms.
- Play 'Sound lotto'. A commercial version of this can be purchased from many children's toy stores but making your own, from your sound walk, would be far more rewarding.
- Describe the sounds you can hear, ask your child if they can hear them too. What is making that sound? Can they copy the sound?





Ways you can support your children at home: instrumental sounds

- Make your own musical instruments, using cardboard rolls, tins, dried peas, beans, stones. Shake these loudly, softly, as you are marching, skipping or stomping. Play 'Guess what's inside the instrument'.
- Sing known songs loudly and then softly, stretch words in known songs and add new words or sounds.
- Listen to a range of music with your child, from rap to classical. Encourage your child to move in response to the variety of musical styles and moods. Move to and make sounds with household objects.



Ways you can support your children at home: body percussion

- Learn some action rhymes, such as 'Wind the bobbin up'.
- Play some commercially produced tapes and CD-ROMs. Clap along with familiar rhymes and learn new ones.
- Listen to the sounds your feet make when walking, running or skipping: slowly, softly, fast, stomping hard, in flipflops, boots, high heels.
- Try different types of clapping: clap your hands softly, fast and make a pattern for your child to follow. Do the same, clapping your thighs or stamping your feet. Tap your fingers. Click your tongue.
- Invent a special family clap routine for when someone does something really well.



Ways you can support your children at home: rhythm and rhyme

- Get into the rhythm of language: bounce your child on your knee to the rhythm of a song or nursery rhyme, march or clap to a chant or poem.
- Help your child move to the rhythm of a song or rhyme.
- Read or say poems, songs, nursery songs and rhyming stories as often as you can, try to use gestures, tap regular beats and pause to emphasise the rhythm of the piece.
- Add percussion to mark the beats, using your hands, feet or instruments.
- Try out some rhythmic chanting such as 'two, four, six, eight, hurry up or we'll be late' or 'bip bop boo, who are you?'



Ways you can support your children at home: alliteration (words that begin with the same sound)

- Alliteration is a lot of fun to play around with. Your child's name can be a good place to start, for example, say: 'Gary gets the giggles', 'Milo makes music', 'Nicola's nose', 'Carl caught a cat', 'Jolly Jessie jumped', 'Tina is talking'. Encourage other family members to have a go, for example: 'Mummy munches muffins', 'Daddy is doing the dishes'.
- Emphasise alliteration in songs and stories, for example: 'Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers'.
- Play around with familiar songs, such as 'Old MacDonald had some sheep, shoes, shorts, with a sh sh here and a sh sh there', to emphasise alliteration.
- Identify the odd one out, for example, *cat*, *cup*, *boy*, *car*.
- Make up little nonsense stories together, using lots of alliteration.
- Collect items that start with the same sound from the park, the garden and around the house.
- When shopping, think about items you are buying and say: 'a tall tin of tomatoes', 'a lovely little lemon'. Encourage your child to do the same.



Ways you can support your children at home: voice sounds

- Repeat your infant's vocalisations.
- Make fun noises or nonsense words.
- Say words in different ways (fast, slowly, high, low, using a funny voice).
- 'Sing' known songs using only sounds, for example, 'la, la, la', and ask your child to guess the song.
- Vary your tempo and pitch when reading stories.
- Make different voices for characters when reading stories.
- Read or tell sound stories. Your local library or bookshop will be able to point out some very good books that encourage sound-making as you read the story. This is huge fun and can involve all the family.





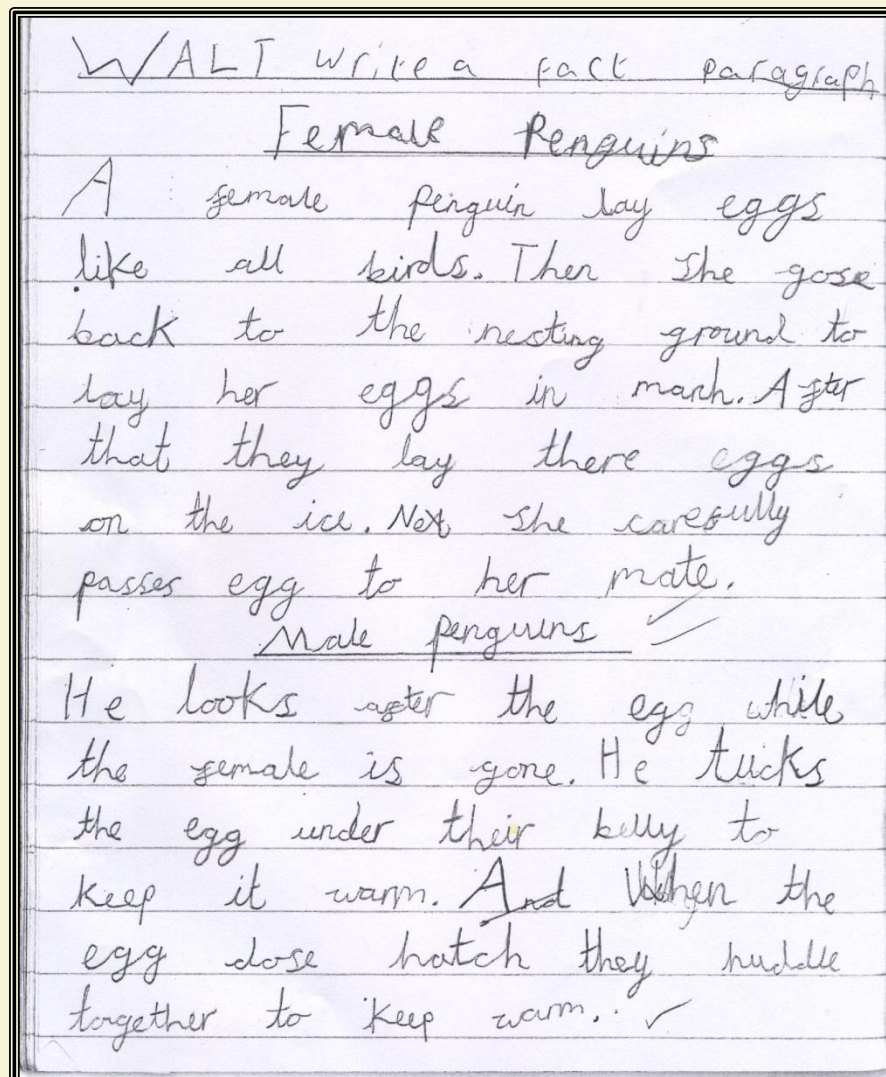
Ways you can support your children at home: oral blending and segmenting

This is all oral (spoken). Your child will not be expected to match the letter to the sound at this stage. The emphasis is on helping children to hear the separate sounds in words and to create spoken sounds.

Oral blending and segmenting is a later skill that will be important when the time comes for your child to read and write. Being able to hear the separate sounds within a word and then blend them together to understand that word is really important.

Blending is a vital skill for reading. The separate sounds (*phonemes*) of the word are spoken aloud, in order, all through the word, and are then merged together into the whole word. This merging together is called *blending*. For example, the adult would say **c-a-t = cat**.

Segmenting is a vital skill for spelling. The whole word is spoken aloud, then broken up into its separate sounds (*phonemes*) in order, all through the word. For example, the adult would say **cat = c-a-t**.



The importance of mark making

Your child will notice adults around them reading and writing and they will want to copy them. Mark-making is the first step towards writing. Mark-making in the early stages is closely linked to physical development. The more opportunities your child has to develop large and small movement in their arms, hands and fingers, the easier it will be to make marks with a variety of tools.

Activities such as digging, 'painting' outdoor surfaces with water and a large brush, sweeping, and swishing a scarf through the air in different shapes will help develop large motor movement. Small or fine motor movement will be needed to hold pencils and pens correctly. Hanging out the washing and playing with pegs, using a pegboard and picking up grains of rice with fingers and tweezers will help develop the pincer grip needed for writing.

In the early stages of learning to write, your child will like to experiment, making marks on paper with a variety of writing tools such as brushes, pens, pencils and felt-tip markers. They will often include drawings with their writing. Sometimes you will write for them. It is a good idea at this stage to use lower-case letters when you write for your child, introducing capitals only for names. (Please refer to the letter formation pages at the back of this booklet)



Ways you can support your children at home: other things to do at home

- Turn off the TV and any other devices so you can listen to and talk to your child.
- Read every day to your child.
- Set up a place where your child can experiment with mark-making, both outside and inside, using gloop, paint, pens, stamps and stencils onto a variety of surfaces such as paper, cardboard and material.
- Collect a variety of pencils and pens, and keep them handy for your child.
- Create a special writing bag to keep little writing tools in, for travelling in the car or visiting the doctor's. Change the contents regularly.



Ways you can support your children at home: what to do if your child is reluctant to read or write at home

Relax! It is important not to worry if your child shows no inclination to write at home; the important thing is to keep on sharing books and talking together. There is no need to insist that your child does some writing – more often than not they will choose to do so when they have a real reason to.

Reading

- Make sure your child sees you reading.
- Read **to** your child. Show you like the book. Bring stories to life by using loud, soft, scary voices – let yourself go!
- Leave books around your house for your child to dip into.
- Let your child choose what **they** would like to read – books, comics, catalogues.
- Read favourite books over and over again. Enjoy!
- Make up your own stories
- Make an inviting place to share books. Eg tent, den using sheets, cushions
- Tell stories to toys, dolls and teddies
- Join the local library and get involved in their special events
- Leave around the house a range of reading material. Eg toy catalogues, comics, children's recipe books, annuals, post it notes written to your child

Writing

- Make sure your child sees you writing. Eg shopping lists, invitations, letters, messages to family members
- Compose an email together inviting a friend over to tea. Or write an invitation.
- Make words together using magnetic letters.
- Make up a story together about one of their toys. You write for them, repeating the sentences as you write. When it is complete, they can draw pictures to go with it.
- Buy stickers of a favourite film or TV programme and make a book about it.
- Label pictures that your child has drawn
- Have fun with letters and words, make real and nonsense words
- Recreate favourite books and keep on the book shelf to revisit and enjoy
- Encourage writing for a purpose. eg Birthday cards, invitations, shopping lists, letter to father Christmas, reminder notes, role play writing (menus, lists, forms)



Further ideas to support Reading and Writing at home



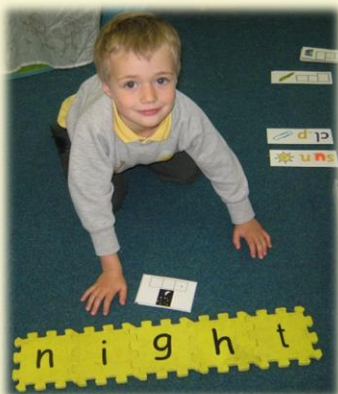
Ways you can support your children at home: Reading and Writing

Reading

- Point to words as you read, encourage your child to do the same. Pretend to get stuck on words and encourage your child to use picture clues and phonics to attempt to read words.
- Encourage your child to teach their toys, dolls, teddies letter sound sand word building
- Encourage reading words and signs when out and about using phonics and picture clues
- Read books over and over
- Read repetitive texts. Children will learn to read these from memory and it will boost their confidence
- Encourage your child to take their favourite books to school to share with their class and teacher
- Letter and word bingo

Writing

- Encourage writing in your child's imaginative play eg make menus when playing cafes,
- Letter and word bingo
- Make scrap/memory books
- Create books using your child's interests and favourite characters
- Use a range of mark making materials, encourage your child to work outside on a large scale. eg with paintbrushes and water or on the back of large rolls of wallpaper
- Use resources from the '6 week in' pack received in Reception



Year 1 Phonics screening

The Phonics screening check is a statutory requirement for Year 1 pupils, which takes place in June. It is a reading check carried out on a one to one basis consisting of a mixture of 40 real and nonsense words.

The screening check consists of the following:

Section 1:

A selection of 20 words (CVC, VCC, CCVC, CVCC) (C=consonant, V=vowel) using letters *a-z* and consonant digraphs *ch, sh, ff, ll, ng, ck, ss, th, zz* and frequent and consistent vowel digraphs *ar, ee, oi, oo, or*

For example – *vap osk ect in at beg quemp thazz geck best week start*

Section 2:

A selection of 20 more complex words (CCVCC, CCCVC, CCCVCC and 2 syllable words) with some additional consonant digraphs (ph, wh) and some less frequent and consistent vowel digraphs including split digraphs (a-e, ai, au, aw, ay, ea, e-e, er, ew, i-e, ie, ir, oa, o-e, ou, ow, oy, ue, u-e, ur) and trigraphs (air, igh)

For example – *jound, snemp, stroft, phone, dentist, rusty*



Useful websites and leaflets for more information

www.education.gov.uk

Learning to read through phonics – information for parents

www.parentscentre.gov.uk/foragegroup/3to5years/readandwritetogether

This link to the Parents Centre website gives some really good ideas about how you can enjoy sharing books with your child and tells you a bit more about phonics.

www.parentscentre.gov.uk/foragegroup/5to7years/alittlereadinggoesalongway

This link gives ideas about how to help your child as they are learning to read.

www.read-count.org/index.asp

This is a website for you and your child to explore together. It will give you some ideas about reading with your child and has online games for young children to play, both with you and on their own. It also has ideas for games to play away from the computer.

www.bookstart.co.uk

This website provides information about the national Bookstart scheme and the Bookstart packs that your child will receive as a baby, a toddler and at age three to four. It also gives information about sharing books with your child. You can find out about Bookstart events in your area, which you can attend with your child.

You can get 'Learning Together' leaflets – 'The road to reading' and 'Making their mark – children's early writing' (and other leaflets covering a range of topics) from Early Education, 136 Cavell Street, London, E1 2JA. Telephone 020 7539 5400. You can also download them from the website www.early-education.org.uk.

www.talktoyourbaby.org.uk

This website provides lots of information for parents and carers of babies and young children, and suggestions for activities, features, DVD-ROMs, books and events that are both useful and fun. You can have their free newsletter emailed to you directly.

www.ican.org.uk

This website provides lots of information for parents and teachers on the importance of speaking and listening skills for young children's development. Although it is aimed at early communication development, there is a lot of very useful information and material, such as *Chatter Matters*, that can be downloaded from the website; some free materials can be ordered.

www.nationalliteracytrust.org.uk/familyreading/parents

This website offers a wealth of information about how to make reading and writing fun for you and all your family. It promotes their campaign to make 'every home a reading home'. It also offers many links to further websites.

Sources included within this booklet:

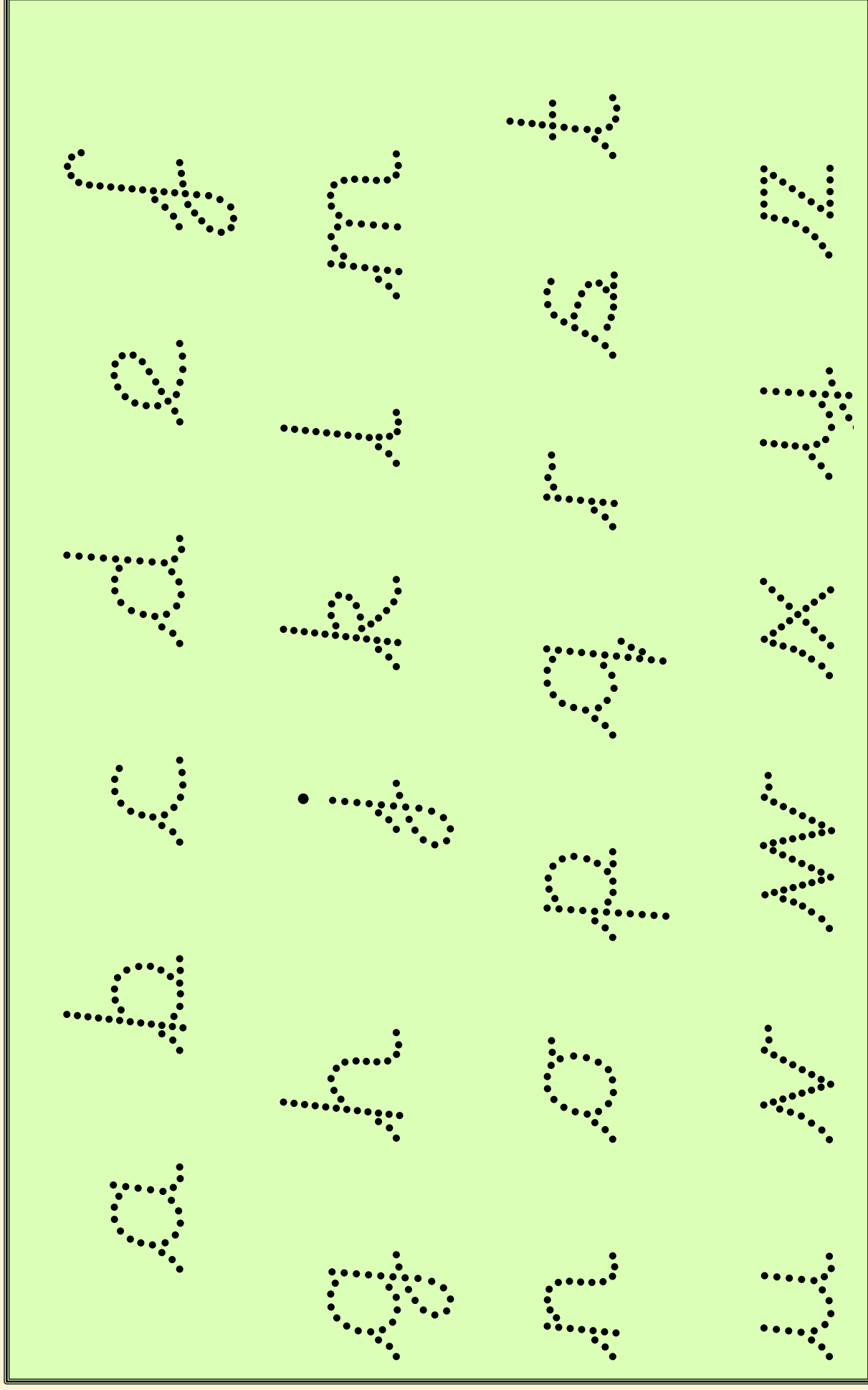
www.education.gov.uk

www.collins.co.uk

Songs of Sounds Teacher's handbook

The National Strategies/Early Years

Letter formation – lower case



Letter formation – upper case

G

Z

C

L

S

T

W

J

U

N

D

V

A

X

U

Y

O

X

B

H

A

S

A

I

O

V

a b c d e f

g h i j k l m

n o p q r s t

u v w x y z

wen its a sunny day it puts
 a smile on my face we sing the
 song to keep me happy wen its
 a sunny day wen its a windy
 day it blows my trousers away
 we sing the song to keep me
 happy wen its a windy day
 to day we can't ever get the wet
 we can't make it with the most of
 us time to day with it
 together it but it doesn't matter
 is the sun we want to shine we
 its a soggy day it washes
 we sing the song to keep me
 happy wen its a rainy day
 wen its a rainy day we can't
 a splash to keep me happy
 its a rainy day to day we can't
 ever get the wet we can't make
 the most of our time to day
 we're happy together so it doesn't
 matter is the sun we
 shine wen its a sunny day it puts
 a smile on my face we sing the
 song to keep me happy wen its a
 sunny