

Catch-up for literacy with the systematic synthetic phonics programme *Sound Discovery*[®]

Sound Discovery[®] can provide e-learning catch-up training as well as a wide range of resources for all children where additional targeted support for literacy skills would be particularly beneficial. It works extremely well as a small group intervention and it can provide a generic intervention for children whose first-time teaching was with another programme. The aim is to support literacy skills of pupils in both YR and Y1, and also for older children who still need these foundations.

What is *Sound Discovery*[®]?

Sound Discovery[®] is a government validated high quality systematic, synthetic phonics programme (SSP) which provides prepared lesson plans for targeted teaching from the very beginning of literacy, following through to more complex words, sentences and text. It is the most extensively researched SSP programme and probably the most effective with disadvantaged, slowest progress readers.

It has been shown to accelerate pupil progress in early literacy and to be effective with a wide range of children with additional needs, including severe dyslexia. Many of the children who have fallen behind with reading and spelling during school closures will need a targeted SSP intervention to catch up. The *Sound Discovery*[®] programme can deliver this. It teaches reading and writing as reversible processes and can support reluctant writers as well as those who struggle with reading.

What is the evidence base?

Sound Discovery[®] is based on 11 years of longitudinal research in two primary schools, involving about 700 children. Whole classes of children were involved and no child was omitted or dis-applied from the data. Results were significantly high for chronological age and also when compared with national results from the rest of England.

Perhaps most importantly for the present context were the results for the *Sound Discovery*[®] intervention with groups of children who had the most severe difficulties. For example in Reception, with children who had no measurable reading or spelling skills in the January of Reception and who were the lowest 5-9% of their cohorts: After two terms of small group intervention with *Sound Discovery*[®] these lowest achieving children were **+6:06 months** ahead of chronological age for reading and **+10:06 months** ahead for spelling, on average, in the summer.

<https://www.syntheticphonics.net/pdf/2014-Report.pdf>.

How can this be achieved?

Assessment is the key to identify which children are the lowest achieving in your school and which would benefit most from a literacy intervention. A major advantage of *Sound Discovery*[®] is its quick and easy to use assessment tools.

Assessment Plan:

- Give every child in the school a single word reading test (individual) and a spelling test (as a class). Try the (freely available) Burt Reading Test and the Schonell Spelling Test.

<http://www.rrf.org.uk/pdf/Burtreadingtestonweb.pdf>

<http://www.rrf.org.uk/pdf/Schonell%20Spelling%20Test%20with%20instructions.pdf>

- For those children whose reading and/or spelling lies below chronological age, *Sound Discovery*[®] has a test of Code Knowledge and Placement Tests for reading and spelling to show where children should start on the programme. These tests are included in the Tutor Pack (see below).

What you need to deliver the intervention

- **Training:** *Sound Discovery*[®] provides e-learning training which can be used to train teachers, teaching assistants or tutors. It is highly cost effective as, once purchased by a school, it can be used to train as many staff as necessary and remains indefinitely to refresh teaching skills. It is organised in modules of about half an hour making it convenient for twilight sessions or home learning.

<https://www.syntheticphonics.net/uploads/e-learning%20training%20programme.pdf>

Cost of Training: Various packages are available, but we would recommend the **Catch-Up Training Package** at £250 (a special price with 50% discount for the DfE Catch-up Premium initiative only). Additional webinars for discussion with the authors can be purchased.

- **Intervention Groups:** *Sound Discovery*[®] works extremely well as a small group intervention, and can be delivered by suitably trained teaching assistants as well as by teachers or tutors. This has the potential to make catch-up funding go further. For effective, rapid catch-up, at least 4 half hour Snappy Lesson[®] sessions a week are recommended, with additional opportunities for reading decodable text, for structured writing activities and for applying a modelled approach to writing (as described in the training and in the Tutor Pack).

Cost of delivering interventions:

- **Tutoring Costs:** this can be reduced by group teaching of children who need to work at the same level or step of the programme
- **Resources:** The **Tutor Pack** provides the Manual and the Placement Tests, priced **£54.40**. **Teaching Packs** are at three different levels, one for the **initial alphabetic code**, one for the **advanced code** and one for more **complex** written language. The teaching packs provide prepared, structured lesson plans, resources to teach the lessons, handwriting sheets for letter formation and decodable stories and texts matched to the phonic progression. Prices are **£192.50**, **£147.50** and **£72.50** respectively. An advantage of the *Sound Discovery*[®] programme is that these resources are photocopiable which brings down the price per pupil considerably.

For **Catch-up e-learning training:** enquiries and purchase from Marlynne Grant and Jackie Day at training@syntheticphonics.net. Telephone; 0117 962 2670.

For **Tutor Pack** and **Teaching Packs:** enquiries and purchases from Synthetic Phonics Ltd. www.syntheticphonics.net, sales@syntheticphonics.net, Telephone 0117 962 2670.

Investing in the *Sound Discovery*[®] training and resource materials will not only enable your current pupils to catch up, but will provide your school with an effective systematic synthetic phonics programme for first time teaching and interventions in the future.