



**Wiltshire**  
COUNTY COUNCIL

CHILDREN & EDUCATION

SCHOOLS BRANCH

**Wiltshire Learning Support Service**

# **Sound Discovery®**

**A Wave 3 Synthetic Phonics  
Programme for the Teaching of  
Reading, Writing and Spelling**

**A report of the  
Sound Discovery Trial  
February - July 2008**



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

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# Sound Discovery® Trial 2007/2008

## Background

Following the successful piloting of the Sound Discovery Programme in two primary schools in Wiltshire, it was agreed by the Learning Support Service and Literacy Advisory Team that the effectiveness of Sound Discovery as a Wave 3 intervention resource should be further explored through a trial involving a larger number of schools.

## The Trial

The purpose of the trial was:

- To measure the effectiveness of the programme with pupils from early Key Stage 2 struggling with basic literacy skills, including pupils identified as having SEN.
- To gather further evidence of the impact of the Sound Discovery may have on:
  - Reading
  - Spelling
  - Phonic knowledge
  - Motivation.
- To explore the factors that may contribute to the successful delivery of the Sound Discovery Programme.

## Timescale

Two pilot studies were undertaken by St Paul's Primary School, Chippenham and Neston Primary with groups of early Key Stage 2 children who were struggling with basic literacy skills during Terms 1 and 2 of 2007.

Initial training was devised and undertaken for a group of 15 Wiltshire primary schools. A TA and SENCo from each school attended two mornings of training in February and March 2008. Staff from these schools reported back their findings during a follow up afternoon in early July 2008.

## The Sound Discovery Programme

Sound Discovery is a synthetic phonics programme for the teaching of reading and spelling and was first published in 2000. It is suitable for pupils of all ages and was devised by Dr Marlynn Grant, an Educational Psychologist in South Gloucestershire (for details see [www.syntheticphonics.net](http://www.syntheticphonics.net)) The development of the programme has been influenced by the work of Sue Lloyd (Jolly Phonics), Mona McNee (Step by Step), Diane McGuinness and Ruth Miskin.

The children are taught grapheme-phoneme correspondences and the phonic skills of blending and segmenting and how to use this knowledge in reading and writing. It is delivered through three sessions a week of Snappy Lessons®<sup>1</sup> to small groups of children. These lessons are fast paced and consist of multi-sensory activities designed to promote the basic phonological skills of blending and segmenting sounds. There are seven steps within the programme.

A later, Wave 3 element to the Programme was devised by Mary Adams, Senior Learning Support Teacher for Bath and North East Somerset in 2004. Mary Adams' resources<sup>2</sup> were designed to meet the needs of children who required additional literacy intervention and for whom the fast paced introduction of phoneme-grapheme correspondences needed to be slowed down. This intervention included 76 Snappy Lessons based around earliest Steps 1 and 2 of the programme. It was this material that formed the basis of the pilot work, trial schools training and resources.

<sup>1</sup> The Snappy Lesson® is a registered trademark of Synthetic Phonics Ltd. (previously Ridgehill Publishing)

<sup>2</sup> Wave 3 Literacy Intervention Resource Materials, Synthetic Phonics Ltd. (previously Ridgehill Publishing)

## **Snappy Lessons – The Key Elements of the Sound Discovery Programme**

Essential principles of good phonics teaching were felt to be encapsulated in the Snappy Lesson format (see Appendix I for an example of a Snappy Lesson). The importance of this lesson structure was also recognised by the publishers in the 'Self Assessment Form – Assuring High Quality Phonic Work' found at:

[www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/phonics/programmes/publishers/syntheticphonicsltd](http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/phonics/programmes/publishers/syntheticphonicsltd) (see Appendix II).

A clear structure for teaching was thought to be especially helpful if, as was likely, the delivery of these lessons was to be undertaken mainly by teaching assistants to small groups of children struggling with basic skills.

Important features of the Snappy Lesson included regular reinforcement and repetition, opportunities for oral work to develop phonological skills and the use of direct instruction (modelling) ie the 'I do, we do, you do' approach.

In order to make it clear to the schools taking part in the trial how best to deliver these Snappy Lessons, the 76 Steps 1 and 2 Snappy Lessons were written out in full and issued as an additional resource during training (details of the teaching objectives for each of the sub steps within Steps 1 and 2 of the programme are outlined in Appendix III).

It is recognised that the long term aim for any professional development training is to build capacity and expertise within schools. To this end, blank extension lessons were also included within the Snappy Lesson resource at the end of each sub step within the programme. This allowed scope for deliverers to plan additional/extension lessons where teaching objectives were not felt to be met.

### **Sound Discovery - Already a Successful Intervention**

Evidence about the success of Sound Discovery as a catch-up programme has been highlighted in 'What works for children with literacy difficulties', Greg Brooks and NFER, 2007<sup>3</sup>. A study in Norfolk (Worsley, 2005<sup>4</sup>) found substantial gain in reading and modest progress in spelling. A later Bedfordshire study based on Year 5 and 6 pupils found standard progress in reading but more useful progress in spelling (unpublished data).

As ratio gains had previously been used as a measure of the success of this intervention, these measures were reported on by schools in this Wiltshire study.

### **Trial Schools and Sample**

Advertised in Term 2 of 2007, the trial received applications from over 30 schools. However, only 15 schools could be accommodated on a 'first come, first serve' basis. Within this group of Wiltshire schools were 14 primary and 1 junior. In total, results from 46 children were reported ranging from year groups 3 to 5. As with other literacy intervention programmes the majority of children selected for additional support were boys.

Nine out of the 15 schools who attended initial training reported results in full. Other schools reported legitimate reasons for their lack of feedback. These mainly related to staff changes within schools or difficulties with beginning work on the programme within the given timescale rather than concerns over the Sound Discovery resources themselves.

Of the nine schools who managed to complete the trial and report their findings, all carried out the intervention with small groups of target children over a 3 to 4 month period between March and June 2008.

<sup>3</sup> What works for pupils with literacy difficulties? The effectiveness of intervention schemes. DCSF, 2007

<sup>4</sup> A Report of the Sound Discovery Trial, Cognition and Learning Group, Norwich EP and Specialist Support Services, 2005.  
S:Chipp/Gen/LSS/2008/SC/Wave 3 Projects/Sound Discovery-Report of Trial 2008/di

The trial sample included children with a range of difficulties at School Action Plus on the Code of Practice for Special Educational Needs; children with dyslexia and children with complex needs who either held a Statement of SEN or were going through the statementing process. The sample also included children with attention and concentration difficulties, children with speech and language difficulties, children with emotional and behavioural difficulties and low self-esteem.

### **Assessments, Placement and Evaluation**

One of the strengths of the Sound Discovery Programme is the assessment and placement tests which are quick and easy to administer but yield essential information concerning a child's stage of phonic development and enable the child to be correctly placed on the appropriate step of the teaching programme.

Assessment requirements from schools both pre and post intervention included the following (see Appendix IV):

- Code knowledge for 42 phonemes – both saying and recording phoneme-grapheme correspondences
- Simple blending and segmentation tests
- Sound Discovery Placement Tests, Steps 1 and 2 – word reading and spelling

For the purposes of this trial schools were also asked to gather normative test scores for reading and spelling based on standardised tools that were already in use within the school. Ratio gains for reading and spelling were calculated from changes in these results.

Summary sheets for all quantitative data were issued for both reading and spelling (see Appendix V).

In order to obtain data of a more qualitative nature, questionnaires were also devised and issued to trial schools. These included

- A School Evaluation Questionnaire – designed to elicit judgements from the trial schools about their overall response to the training, programme implementation and management issues
- A Pupil Evaluation Questionnaire – designed to elicit from children views about their own reading and spelling progress as well general views about the programme itself (see Appendix VI)

### **Outcomes of the Trial**

#### ***Data Analysis***

As no control sample was included within this research trial and sample sizes were relatively small, it would be rash to make claims of causal links between ratio gains and the Sound Discovery resources. However, as many schools had elected to work from the Snappy Lessons for the trial period without other Wave 3 interventions running concurrently, some tentative conclusions about its success may be drawn.

#### ***Reading***

Ratio gains for reading were positive with eight out of the nine reporting schools achieving average ratio gains of between 2.3 and 6.2 for reading. See graph overleaf.

More detailed analyses of the data gave an overall average ratio gain of 3.7 for reading within the sample of 46 children. Furthermore, 65% of this sample made ratio gains between 2 and 10 for their reading. These results would indicate at least 'double the rate of catch up' over the period of intervention for a large percentage of sample children (ie 'a good impact').

## Spelling

Ratio gains for spelling were also positive. Eight of the trial schools reported normative spelling results and six of these achieved average ratio gains of 1.4 and above – the gain deemed appropriate for a Wave 3 intervention to be considered 'educationally significant' (see pg 30, *What works for pupils with literacy difficulties*, DCSF, 2007). Average ratio gains between 1.4 and 5.2 were achieved by these six schools (see graph overleaf). Of the two schools that did not achieve these results, limited or negative change in spelling ages over time were recorded for just four children.

An overall average ratio gain of 1.9 for spelling within a sample of 40 children was achieved. 50% of this sample made ratio gains of between 1.4 and 7.3 for their spelling and of this number 60% achieved ratio gains of 2 or above.

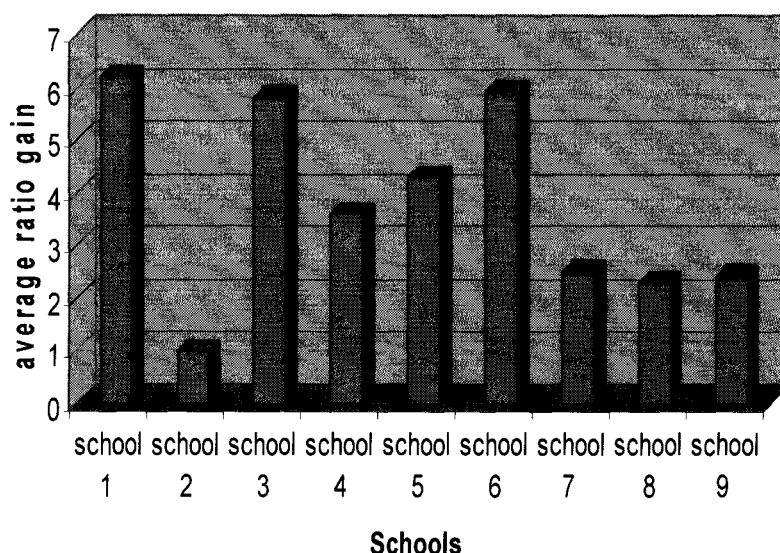
## Code Knowledge and Placement Tests

Results from data collected for code knowledge indicated that 70% of children increased their working knowledge of grapheme-phoneme correspondences and 78% could read more words from the word-reading placement test. The number of additional words that could be read after intervention ranged from 1 to 26 and the number of graphemes that could be accurately recognised ranged from 1 to 18.

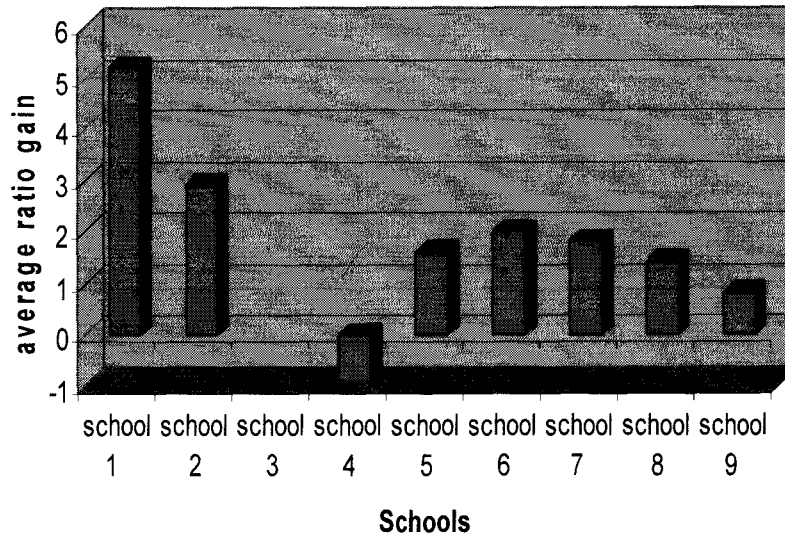
Further findings from code knowledge data indicated that 95% of children could record more graphemes accurately from given phonemes and 86% could spell more words from the spelling placement test. The number of additional words spelled after intervention ranged from 1 to 25 words and the number of additional graphemes recorded ranged from 1 to 10.

Data from simple phonological skills tests of blending and segmenting revealed limited information. The majority of children scored well (either with full marks or 4/5 points) before the intervention. There was therefore little scope for gauging advances with these skills from these tests at the post intervention point. More detailed assessments of phonological skills may be needed in future.

**Average ratio gains for reading**



## Average ratio gains for spelling



### What did Schools Think?

- **The School Evaluation Questionnaire**

Six of the nine schools reporting findings also completed evaluation forms. This evaluative questionnaire invited feedback on:

- The strengths and weaknesses of the Programme
- Modifications to the Programme
- Wider school responses

- **Strengths and Weaknesses**

For the majority of schools the strength of the Sound Discovery Programme lay in the easy to use, short, fast paced Snappy Lessons that followed a simple format and gave opportunity for regular revision. As one school wrote:

*The Snappy Lesson aspect is the 'key'!*

Schools reported that their target children seemed to enjoy the chance for additional support that the programme afforded them with several suggesting that the small group approach to teaching was a considerable advantage in supporting larger numbers of struggling children. Reports about observable improvements in children's confidence were also prevalent.

*It was easy to use and it was fantastic to see the children achieving and enjoying reading and spelling confidently.*

Programme weaknesses related to the time taken to become proficient at mastering the Snappy Lesson and working through all the items required in the given time. It was also felt that, whilst the Snappy Lessons were multi-sensory in their approach, they lacked 'interest' in terms of pictures and actions for sounds and could become quite repetitive. Several schools used the Jolly Phonics resources<sup>5</sup> to supplement the Sound Discovery resources supplied.

Some schools also commented on the lack of provision within the programme for teaching 'tricky' high frequency words.

<sup>5</sup> Sue Lloyd, Jolly Learning Ltd, 1992  
S:Chipp/Gen/LSS/2008/SC/Wave 3 Projects/Sound Discovery-Report of Trial 2008/di

Despite these weaker areas, all six schools felt that the Programme was effective in improving children's reading and spelling. Five of the six schools believed that the programme had also had a positive impact on phonic skills. Schools also thought that the programme was motivating; that they would recommend the resource to colleagues and, with some caveats/modifications, would continue using it within their own settings.

- **Modifications**

Modifications to the Snappy Lesson structure were debated at length by colleagues at the follow up session. Not all groups of children were homogenous and would therefore respond differently to aspects of the lesson. Most agreed that teaching assistants, with advice from SENCOs, had used professional judgements in their delivery of the Snappy Lesson to meet the needs of the group they were working with. *flexible, adaptable*

For teaching assistants the 'Grab Game' appeared to cause the most controversy. For some, this fast moving game was thought to disadvantage slower children; often leaving them repeatedly unsuccessful. A variety of modifications were therefore devised including 'fairer' versions or the use of a different 'flash card' type game.

Several schools had made use of the 'extension lessons' at the end of a sub set when it was felt that more practise had been needed. Many schools also found it helpful to use handwriting books rather than record letters, words and sentences on whiteboards. This provided a clear record of the child's progress through the Programme. For those working with older children in KS2 (ieY5) adaptations to the delivery of the Snappy Lesson were also felt necessary with more 'older boy-orientated' activities to improve motivation.

- **Wider School Responses**

Wider school responses varied in their focus but several schools were keen to disseminate their training to other teaching assistant colleagues to support other year groups as a result of their initial trial with the programme.

*'From our reactions and enthusiasm, other TAs are keen to use the Programme with children in their classes.'*

Other positive responses indicated that new skills learned through Sound Discovery were being applied in the wider classroom setting. In some comments it was clear that class teachers were noticing positive outcomes in terms of confidence and self esteem and teaching assistant staff were aware that children were trying to transfer skills such as 'phoneme fingers' when spelling unfamiliar words in class writing.

Further comments also suggested that the increased awareness of basic punctuation, correct letter formation and general self checking elements of the programme was helpful in the classroom.

One school had shared some of the Sound Discovery resources with parents of children working on the Programme so that elements of the Snappy Lesson delivered in school could be reinforced at home.

Few schools commented on the broader management issues raised up by the introduction of this intervention but it was agreed at the follow up meeting that both a model of ongoing support and monitoring led by the SENCO and the involvement of the Senior Management Team was essential to the success of this work in school.



## What did the Children Think?

- **Pupil Evaluation Questionnaire**

35 pupil responses were obtained from schools undertaking the trial. Their questionnaire invited feedback on:

- Perceptions of progress in reading and spelling
- Aspects of the Programme they considered enjoyable / not enjoyable
- Suggestions to improve the Programme.

- **Progress in Reading and Spelling?**

The majority of children's responses indicated that they felt that they had made progress with their reading and spelling. 30 registered a positive response for reading and 31 for spelling. In most cases the reasons given for reading improvements were linked to better code knowledge and ability to 'sound out' words.

*I know how to say the different sounds*

*I break up the words and put them back together*

*I sound out better in my head which helps*

*The 'robot arms' help me sound out the word.*

In other cases, 'visible' progress in the form of movement on reading schemes within school or more confidence with reading more generally were noted. Any negative responses were the result of the programme appearing too easy.

Similarly, with improvements in spelling, children reported that they felt better equipped to break words down into their constituent sounds through the use of Snappy Lesson strategies such as 'phoneme fingers' or 'tap and write'. In some cases this had led them to improvements with spelling tests and confidence in writing.

Several children felt that they had made more limited improvements in their spelling compared with their reading. To some extent this finding is reflected in the ratio gain data outlined above.

- **Enjoyable/Not Enjoyable**

33 of the 35 respondents felt that the programme had been enjoyable. In contrast to teaching assistant comments, nine of these responses referred to the Grab Game as the most enjoyable part of the Snappy Lesson. A further nine children enjoyed the confidence they felt when writing whole sentences. Others found using 'robot arms' both fun and helpful. One school had changed this element of the lesson to the 'boxing beast'! For others the timing of the intervention was important...

*The best bit is we get out of 'asambely'!*

11 children reported on aspects of the programme that they had not enjoyed. These were variable and were linked to either Snappy Lessons moving too fast/ too slow or being too easy/hard. For some children the recall of sentences in order to write them had been problematic.

- **Programme Improvements**

The children also expressed a wide range of ideas for making the programme more successful. These ranged from the use of laptops within the session to the introduction of more games / team games. Some felt that the lessons needed to be extended and made more difficult with the use of harder words and sentences - others felt exactly the opposite. One group of children commented on how helpful they had found the use of Jolly Phonics actions and pictures to support their learning.

## Summary

Whilst any firm conclusions about the effectiveness of the programme need to be treated with caution, both quantitative and qualitative data from this Wiltshire trial indicate the following:

- Overall a good impact was achieved for reading (ie sufficient to at least double the standard rate of progress).
- Useful progress was achieved in spelling with half the sample children making 'educationally significant' improvements. Overall spelling progress did not achieve 'double the rate of catch-up' status.
- Diagnostic measures indicated improvements in the accurate recording of phonemes and simple phonetically regular words for a large percentage of children.
- All schools felt that the Sound Discovery resources were easy to follow and that the Snappy Lesson structure was helpful for those responsible for delivering the Programme
- Most children were able to recognise the progress they were making with their basic literacy skills and found the programme enjoyable.

These findings lead to the following implications for schools in Wiltshire considering the introduction of this intervention:

- The Sound Discovery Programme and the Snappy Lessons at Steps 1 and 2 provide an effective Wave 3 intervention for building the reading skills of children in early KS2. It appears to be especially helpful for children who have limited alphabetic code knowledge and weak decoding skills when reading.
- The Programme supports some progress with spelling but is helpful in developing segmenting skills and the recording of simple phonetically regular words. Additional work may be required to develop the reading and spelling of common non-decodable or 'tricky' words.
- Careful placement of children onto the appropriate sub-step of the programme is required through the bank of initial assessment tests provided and as much homogeneity within the group as possible is needed if success and enjoyment is to be achieved.
- Staff assigned to the deliver the programme will require initial training and time to master the Snappy Lesson structure as well as ongoing support from teaching professionals to ensure that Snappy Lessons are tailored to the individual needs of the group. Additional resources may be needed to improve some multi-sensory aspects of the programme.
- Skills learned through this intervention are highly transferable to the classroom setting and may be applied in any reading and writing activity. Class teachers need to be aware of the Programme contents and raise their expectations in line with the individual progress being made.

*'Effective schemes give lasting benefit if normal teaching capitalises on them'. Greg Brooks, 2007.*

- As with any Wave 3 intervention the children's progress with the programme will need careful monitoring by the school SENCO and oversight by the SMT.

### **Next Steps**

These positive findings have generated substantial interest in a number of Wiltshire schools and indicate that there is potential for running a further trial of the Sound Discovery Programme to both increase the available data and disseminate good practice with this programme.

It may also be helpful to devise further training for those schools already trained to move on through the Sound Discovery Programme with children who have already worked through Steps 1 and 2 and are ready for the main spelling alternatives for vowels and consonants in Step 3. The possibility of developing this training will be discussed by Learning Support and Literacy Teams.

## Snappy Lesson Plan

## Sound Discovery Step 1.3

## Lesson: 1

**Learning Objective:** to blend and segment four phoneme words using single letter sounds (c-v-c-c).

**Success Criteria:** to read and write four-phoneme words and sentences with 100% accuracy.

Reading	Writing
<p><b>1 Review Sounds</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Show grapheme cards. Children to say sounds</li> <li>• Play 'grab game' with a selection of cards - first child to touch card wins it.</li> </ul>	<p><b>6 Sound Dictation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Say sounds f, o, n, d, l, a, s, t, e, u, j, m, p, w, n, i. separately</li> <li>• Children to write each sound on white boards</li> </ul>
<p><b>2 Blending (oral) Robot Speech</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Robot arms - say sounds</li> <li>• Child to say word made f-o-n-d, l-a-s-t, t-e-s-t, j-u-s-t, j-u-m-p, w-e-n-t, m-i-n-t.</li> </ul>	<p><b>7 Segmenting words - Phoneme fingers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Say a word from list</li> <li>• Child to flick phoneme fingers for each sound and say the word</li> </ul>
<p><b>3 Manipulating Sounds</b></p> <p>Vowels at top of board, consonants at bottom: a,e,i,o,u f,n,d,w,t,p,s,t,m,l fun &gt; fund &gt; fond pet &gt; pest &gt; test wet &gt; went mint &gt; mit &gt; met &gt; melt</p>	<p><b>8 Word dictation (tap and write)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Say a word from list</li> <li>• Children to tap phonemes</li> <li>• Draw a phoneme line for each Write in letters</li> </ul>
<p><b>4 Word Cards for blending</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Show word card, child to sound and blend to make word.</li> <li>• Word cards: last, test, just, jump, mint, went, fond, just.</li> </ul>	<p><b>9 Sentence dictation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Say a sentence</li> <li>• Children to recall sentence orally and write sentence on white board. Check for word spacing and punctuation.</li> </ul>
<p><b>5 Reading sentences</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One child to read each sentence: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Max is fond of mint.</li> <li>- I did jump on the bed.</li> <li>- It is just a test.</li> <li>- Dan got on the last bus.</li> <li>- We went on a picnic.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Comments:</b></p>

## Appendix II

### Assuring High Quality Phonic Work - Self-Assessment Form

The self-assessment below provides a snapshot of how this programme meets the core criteria for a high quality phonics programme. For more detailed information on how this programme meets each of the core criteria please click [here](#)

Name of Programme:

**Sound Discovery®**

*Please tick as appropriate*

This programme should:	Fully meet	Not meet
Present high quality systematic phonic work, as defined by the Independent review of teaching of early reading and now encapsulated in the Primary Framework, as the prime approach to decoding print	✓	
Enable children to start learning phonic knowledge and skills systematically by the age of five with the expectation that they will be fluent readers having secured word recognition skills by the end of key stage one	✓	
Be designed for the teaching of discrete, daily sessions progressing from simple to more complex phonic knowledge and skills and covering the major grapheme phoneme correspondences	✓	
Enable children's progress to be assessed	✓	
Use a multi-sensory approach so that children learn variously from simultaneous visual, auditory and kinaesthetic activities which are designed to secure essential phonic knowledge and skills	✓	
Demonstrate that phonemes should be blended, in order, from left to right, 'all through the word' for reading	✓	
Demonstrate how words can be segmented into their constituent phonemes for spelling and that this is the reverse of blending phonemes to read words	✓	
Ensure children apply phonic knowledge and skills as their first approach to reading and spelling even if a word is not completely phonically regular	✓	
Ensure that children are taught high frequency words that do not conform completely to grapheme/phoneme correspondence rules	✓	
Ensure that, as early as possible, children have opportunities to read texts (and spell words) that are within the reach of their phonic knowledge and skills even though every single word in the text may not be entirely decodable by the children unaided	✓	

**Please explain how your programme meets the core criteria above:**

**Sound Discovery**® is a high quality, research based, synthetic phonics programme for the teaching of reading, spelling and writing.

*"Quite simply, 'It works!' "*

Children start learning phonic knowledge and skills systematically from Reception.

Research results at the end of Key Stage one are significantly above national averages, eg 95% Level 2+, with 40% Level 3 reading for both boys and girls.

The *Snappy Lesson*® provides a clear structure for teaching in discrete, daily sessions progressing from simple to more complex and covering the major grapheme/phoneme correspondences.

Assessments, which are quick and easy to administer, yield essential information concerning a pupil's progress.

Teaching is multi-sensory, integrating seeing, hearing and doing.

From the beginning, children begin to blend sounds into words for reading and segment words into their constituent phonemes for spelling.

The *Snappy Lesson*® structure of two halves makes it clear that blending and segmenting are reversible processes.

Children use a phonics first approach for reading and spelling.

High frequency irregular words are taught systematically in sentence and text level work.

Carefully written sentences and stories are available so that children can read and spell unaided with success using the phonic knowledge and skills they have already learned.

**Please provide a brief explanation of what your programme provides, eg resources**

A **Manual** and two **Handbooks** detail how children learn phonic knowledge and skills systematically.

A **High Frequency Word book** ensures logical teaching.

Books of prepared **Snappy Lesson Plans** assist teaching of discrete, daily sessions.

**Tests** enable easy assessment of progress.

Carefully written **stories** provide reading, comprehension and writing practice.

**DVDs** show **Sound Discovery**® at its best in the classroom.

## Contact details

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## Assuring High Quality Phonic Work – Detailed Self-Assessment Form

This self assessment form gives schools and settings detailed information about this programme set against each core criterion.

**Name of Programme:**

### Sound Discovery®

*Please explain how your programme meets the following core criteria:*

The programme should:

- Present high quality systematic phonic work, as defined by the Independent review of teaching of early reading and now encapsulated in the Primary Framework, as the prime approach to decoding print

**Sound Discovery®** is a high quality, systematic, phonics-first programme which has a strong research base with good results over several years. It shares the key features outlined in the Primary Framework ensuring that children learn:

- Letter/sound correspondences in a clearly defined, incremental sequence. Its clear phonic progression builds on the 40+ sounds of Jolly Phonics but in smaller substeps, in a more logical sequence and extends further.
- To apply the important skill of blending (synthesising) sounds all through a word for reading. *The Snappy Lesson®* involves blending and decoding print at sound, word and sentence levels.
- To apply the skill of segmenting words into their constituent phonemes for spelling. *The Snappy Lesson®* involves segmenting and writing from dictation at sound, word and sentence levels.
- Blending and segmenting are reversible processes. The two halves of the *Snappy Lesson®* demonstrate that the alphabetic code works both ways.

- Enable children to start learning phonic knowledge and skills systematically by the age of five with the expectation that they will be fluent readers having secured word recognition skills by the end of key stage one

All children are taught 40+ letter/sound relationships early in Reception.

They learn about 6 sounds per week, alphabet sounds first and then digraph sounds, in about 8 weeks.

Immediately they start blending sounds to say and read words and segmenting spoken words into constituent phonemes.

Using sound cards they practise making words. They have fun swapping sounds around and playing the Grab Game to ensure a secure grasp of letter/sound match and the skills of blending and segmenting.

They learn how to form letters and write from dictation.

They practise reading regular sentences and then simple decodable books.

They begin to learn the main alternative spelling choices.

Slow-to-start children are identified early in Reception and start light-touch *Snappy Lesson®* sessions. Most catch up and by the end of Key Stage one are fluent readers and writers eg reading and writing: 95% Level 2+; 40% and 31% Level 3 respectively.



- Be designed for the teaching of discrete, daily sessions progressing from simple to more complex phonic knowledge and skills and covering the major grapheme phoneme correspondences

**Sound Discovery®** is designed for the teaching of **discrete, daily sessions called a Snappy Lesson®** - a clear teaching structure which Ofsted has described as:

- *“Whole-group work with built-in repetition and reinforcement*
- *Encouraging active recall*
- *Active, oral, lively teaching with a good pace*
- *Multi-sensory approaches so that pupils can integrate what they hear, see and do.*
- *Direct instruction and repetition are critical to pupils’ mastery of their learning and the success of the teaching: “I do, we do together, you do.”*
- *The lesson has two halves.*
- *For reading, there is work on sounds, blending, sound manipulation and reading words and sentences.*
- *For spelling, again work on sounds, segmentation, spelling words, writing sentences from dictation and reading them back to the teacher.”*
- The phonic knowledge and skills taught through the *Snappy Lesson®* follow a **clear progression** from simple to more complex covering major letter/sound correspondences and main spelling choices.

- Enable children’s progress to be assessed

Diagnostic assessments and placement tests are one of the many strengths of the **Sound Discovery®** programme.

They allow careful assessment of all children.

They are quick and easy to administer, but yield essential information concerning a child’s stage of phonic development eg code knowledge, blending skills and phoneme segmentation skills.

The assessments link directly to the clear structure and progression of the programme and should enable the child to be correctly placed on the appropriate stage of the teaching programme.

*Phonic Progression Charts* also enable easy tracking of progress.

- Use a multi-sensory approach so that children learn variously from simultaneous visual, auditory and kinaesthetic activities which are designed to secure essential phonic knowledge and skills

**Sound Discovery®** is multi-sensory, integrating hearing (auditory), seeing (visual) and doing (kinaesthetic).

Learning styles become irrelevant as three senses are simultaneously involved, intensifying each piece of learning, making it more secure.

Half the *Snappy Lesson®* involves decoding – from visual to auditory; half involves encoding - from auditory to visual.

Children **hear**: sounds, spoken words and sentences.

They **see**: letters representing sounds and contained in written words and sentences.

Simultaneously hearing sounds and seeing letters makes phonic knowledge more secure.

**Kinaesthetically** children move their mouths to articulate sounds, words, sentences and Robot Speech. They move their bodies to make actions and Robot Arms; they push sound cards together, swap cards around, Flick Fingers, play Phoneme Fingers, get red faces and hands playing the Grab Game, draw Phoneme Lines, write letters, words and sentences.

HMI wrote that all these comprise a “*good variety of judiciously chosen activities linked exactly to lesson’s objectives*”.

- Demonstrate that phonemes should be blended, in order, from left to right, ‘all through the word’ for reading

Half the *Snappy Lesson®* is dedicated to blending of sounds in left to right order, all through words, for reading. To develop this skill a particular sound is blended orally, then manipulated, read in words, in sentences and texts.

**Oral Blending** - adult says each sound in a word in Robot Speech with Robot Arms. Children say word. If they cannot, adult models.

**Manipulating Sounds** - move sound cards/magnetic letters on surface or IWB. Adult makes word eg “c-a-t”, asks child(ren) to sound and say. If they cannot blend, shorten time between sounds, or push “c” and “a” together, say “ca” then point to “t”. Adult says, “Change one sound and make it say ‘can’” (child makes and reads), then ‘tan’, ‘tin’ etc. Support as necessary.

**Reading Words** on cards – child(ren) sound and blend; later sound silently and say

**Reading Word Lists** (optional)

**Reading Sentences**

**Reading Decodable Texts.**

- Demonstrate how words can be segmented into their constituent phonemes for spelling and that this is the reverse of blending phonemes to read words

Half the *Snappy Lesson*® involves segmenting words into constituent sounds for spelling and demonstrating reversibility of segmenting and blending. Do work on sounds, oral segmenting, spelling words, writing sentences from dictation and reading back.

**Oral Segmenting** – adult says word, children flick up one finger per sound whilst saying each sound.

**Word Dictation** – adult dictates word, children tap out sounds with fingers, write and read. Phoneme Lines provide support. Children with writing difficulty can make word with sound cards.

**Sentence Dictation** – adult dictates sentence, one word and “space” at a time; children write sentence, punctuate and read it back. Adult models correct response. Start independent writing through modelling involving vocalisation.

**Segmenting is reverse of blending** - Sounds, words and sentences which are written down are read back. Reading is check on accuracy and completes cycle: spoken word encoded and written down, then sounded out, blended and read back as spoken word.

- Ensure children apply phonic knowledge and skills as their first approach to reading and spelling even if a word is not completely phonically regular

Children will choose a phonics-first strategy to read and spell if this works for them.

**Sound Discovery**®’s carefully written materials ensure this happens.

Children assessed at Step 1.3 are taught at this stage in classrooms or intervention groups.

The activities of *Snappy Lesson*® support present learning and go further.

Children work with sounds, words and sentences including words not completely phonically regular. Children choose to sound, say and ‘tweak’ these words for reading. When spelling, children say words as they look eg “wass” for ‘was’.

Dreaded spelling tests are a thing of the past. Success is the key. Spelling lists are at Step 1.3 with a few irregular words, again supporting learning.

In guided reading and at home children read and write in **Sound Discovery**® story books.

The **Sound Discovery**® structure supports children at each stage of phonic progression and strengthens blending and segmenting skills through confident and secure learning.

- Ensure that children are taught high frequency words that do not conform completely to grapheme/phoneme correspondence rules

A strength of **Sound Discovery**® is that it facilitates active learning through a balance and variety of activities.

From an early stage these activities include work with sentences and texts containing high frequency words (HFW) that do not conform completely to grapheme/phoneme correspondence rules.

Irregular HFW are taught systematically in sentence and text level work.

There are hundreds of sentences in the *Words and Sentences Handbooks* and there are decodable texts.

Also the *Manual* has a list of irregular words to aid systematic teaching.

The *High Frequency Words* book tackles the challenge of HFW directly by analysing the National Literacy Strategy HFW lists to explain how best to learn these words in a way which is consistent with the **Sound Discovery**® programme and the logic of the alphabetic principle.

The structure of **Sound Discovery**® makes the learning of irregular HFW much more manageable for children without overloading their visual memories.

- Ensure that, as early as possible, children have opportunities to read texts (and spell words) that are within the reach of their phonic knowledge and skills even though every single word in the text may not be entirely decodable by the children unaided

A unique feature of **Sound Discovery**® is the clear structure and fine grained progression. This ensures secure early learning but also extension.

At Step 1 it allows sequential teaching of beginning and end consonant clusters;  
at Step 2 consonant and vowel digraphs;  
at Step 3 main alternative spelling choices.

The progression provides a framework for **Sound Discovery**® activities and materials at word, sentence and texts levels.

As early as possible, children have lots of opportunities to read texts and spell words that are within the reach of their phonic knowledge and skills even though every single word may not be entirely decodable by them unaided; eg earliest texts are available with regular words using only six sounds and a very few undecodable words.

Spelling can also be finely graded.

Built in repetition and reinforcement ensures fluency and mastery in learning and later success with reading comprehension and writing.

## Contact details

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## SOUND DISCOVERY PROGRESSION OF PHONEME INTRODUCTION FOR STEPS 1 AND 2

<b>Step 1.1</b>	
<b>Group 1</b>	s a t p i n
<b>Group 2</b>	c e h r m d
<b>Group 3</b>	g o u l f b
<b>Group 4</b>	j
<b>Group 5</b>	v w z
<b>Group 6</b>	y
<b>Group 7</b>	k q x

<b>Step 1.2</b>	2 syllable cvc words eg sunset
<b>Step 1.3</b>	4 phoneme cvcc words with end clusters eg must
<b>Step 1.4</b>	4 phoneme cvcc words with initial clusters eg drop
<b>Step 1.5</b>	5 phoneme ccvcc words eg stamp

<b>Step 2.1</b>	sh	ch	th	ng
<b>Step 2.2</b>	ai (rain)	ee (green)	ie (tie)	oa (boat)      ue (due)
<b>Step 2.3</b>	ar		er	or
<b>Step 2.4</b>	oi (boil)	ou (sound)	oo (book)	oo (moon)

## SOUND DISCOVERY CODE KNOWLEDGE TEST

Name: ..... School: ..... Date: .....

Ask the pupil to write down each phoneme as you dictate it.

Work across the page →

<b>Step 1</b>						
<b>Step 2.1</b>						
<b>Step 2.2</b>						
<b>Step 2.3</b>						
<b>Step 2.4</b>						

**Score**                      **/42**

## SOUND DISCOVERY CODE KNOWLEDGE TEST

Name: .....

Date: .....

**Use a pack of the 42 phonemes. Mark down the pupil's verbal responses.**

Work across the page →

<b>Step 1</b>	s	a	t	p	i	n
	c	e	h	r	m	d
	g	o	u	l	f	b
	j	v	w	z	y	
<b>Step 2.1</b>	k	x	qu			
<b>Step 2.1</b>	sh	ch	th	ng		
<b>Step 2.2</b>	ai (rain)	ee (green)	ie (tie)	oa (boat)	ue (due)	
<b>Step 2.3</b>	ar (farm)	er (letter)	or (fork)			
<b>Step 2.4</b>	oi (boil)	ou (sound)	oo (book)	oo (moon)		

**Score** **/42**



## RECORD OF CODE KNOWLEDGE

Name:.....

Date:.....

Phonemes	Pupil Reads	Pupil Writes from Dictation	Notes	Phonemes	Pupil Reads	Pupil Writes from Dictation	Notes
<b>Step 1</b>				k			
s				x			
a				qu			
t							
p				<b>Step 2.1</b>			
i				sh			
n				ch			
				th			
c				ng			
e							
h				<b>Step 2.2</b>			
r				ai			
m				ee			
d				ie			
				oa			
g				ue			
o							
u				<b>Step 2.3</b>			
l				ar			
f				er			
b				or			
j				<b>Step 2.4</b>			
v				oi			
w				ou			
z				oo			
y				oo			

## QUICK SOUND DISCOVERY BLENDING TEST 1

Name:..... School:..... Date:.....

Say "I am going to say some sounds. You tell me what words you can hear?" Try the examples. Be sure to use pure sounds. Help pupils if they cannot do it. Present the test words in the same way but accept the first answer.

**Examples: dog = d-o-g; tap = t-a-p**

ou-t	p-ai-n	m-u-s-t	f-r-o-m	p-r-i-n-t

**Total**                      /5

## QUICK SOUND DISCOVERY SEGMENTATION TEST 2

Say: "This time I will say the word and you tell me all the sounds in the word." Say the example words and help the pupils if they try to spell the words or if they cannot do it.

Present the test words and accept the first answer.

**Examples: sat = s-a-t; chin = ch-i-n**

posh (3)	boat (3)	camp (4)	stop (4)	ground (5)

*A score of less than 5/5 for either indicates a weakness in either blending or segmenting skills. If more specific assessment is required there are additional tests in the Sound Discovery Manual (page 18).*

## Sound Discovery Placement Test Steps 1 and 2: Spelling

Name: ..... School: ..... Date: .....

					<b>Step 1.1</b>
					<b>Step 1.3</b>
					<b>Step 1.4</b>
					<b>Step 1.5</b>
					<b>Step 2.1</b>
					<b>Step 2.2</b>
					<b>Step 2.3</b>
					<b>Step 2.4</b>

Dictate the words from the Placement Test to the pupil. Ask them to write them in the boxes going across the page. Score the number of correctly spelt words and read off from the end of the line where the first error is made for the starting point for the Sound Discovery step.

Number of words correct:

Starting point: Step.....

**Sound Discovery Placement Test  
Steps 1 and 2: Reading**

<b>sat</b>	<b>bed</b>	<b>lip</b>	<b>dog</b>	<b>gun</b>	<i>Step 1.1</i>
<b>tent</b>	<b>limp</b>	<b>must</b>	<b>hand</b>	<b>soft</b>	<i>Step 1.3</i>
<b>step</b>	<b>flag</b>	<b>plum</b>	<b>grin</b>	<b>spot</b>	<i>Step 1.4</i>
<b>stump</b>	<b>grand</b>	<b>spent</b>	<b>twist</b>	<b>crisp</b>	<i>Step 1.5</i>
<b>wish</b>	<b>much</b>	<b>ship</b>	<b>moth</b>	<b>ring</b>	<i>Step 2.1</i>
<b>sweep</b>	<b>train</b>	<b>rescue</b>	<b>untie</b>	<b>float</b>	<i>Step 2.2</i>
<b>park</b>	<b>term</b>	<b>sport</b>	<b>chart</b>	<b>number</b>	<i>Step 2.3</i>
<b>loud</b>	<b>took</b>	<b>join</b>	<b>moon</b>	<b>count</b>	<i>Step 2.4</i>

## Sound Discovery Placement Test Steps 1 and 2: Reading

Name: ..... School: ..... Date: .....

sat	bed	lip	dog	gun	Step 1.1
tent	limp	must	hand	soft	Step 1.3
step	flag	plum	grin	spot	Step 1.4
stump	grand	spent	twist	crisp	Step 1.5
wish	much	ship	moth	ring	Step 2.1
sweep	train	rescue	untie	float	Step 2.2
park	term	sport	chart	number	Step 2.3
loud	took	join	moon	count	Step 2.4

Ask the pupil to read the words from the Placement Test and mark their responses. When he/she makes the first error on a line read off from the end of the line the starting point for the Sound Discovery step. Score the number of correct responses from all the words read.

Number of words correct:

Starting point: Step.....

*The starting point to begin teaching the Snappy Lesson comes from the earlier line of errors, whether for reading or spelling.*

## Wiltshire Sound Discovery© Trial 2008

### Summary of Results for READING

School: .....

Date: .....

Number of Weeks of Intervention:

Pupil Name/Initials	Code Knowledge		Blending Skills		Sound Discovery© Placement Test (no of words correctly read)		Reading Age Standardised Test used		Reading Age Change
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	
	42	42	5	5	40	40			
	42	42	5	5	40	40			
	42	42	5	5	40	40			
	42	42	5	5	40	40			

# Wiltshire Sound Discovery© Trial 2008

## Summary of Results for WRITING

School:.....

Date:.....

Number of Weeks of Intervention:

Pupil Name/Initials	Code Knowledge		Segmenting Skills		Sound Discovery© Placement Test (no of words correctly spelt)		Spelling Age Standardised Test used		Spelling Age Change
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	
	42	42	5	5	40	40			
	42	42	5	5	40	40			
	42	42	5	5	40	40			
	42	42	5	5	40	40			

## Wiltshire Sound Discovery© Trial 2008

### School Evaluation Questionnaire

School:.....

Date:.....

**1** What do you consider to be strengths of Sound Discovery?

**2** Please comment on any weaknesses/drawbacks of the actual programme itself.

**3** Was the Sound Discovery teaching **effective** in developing your pupils' skills in the following areas? *(Please tick Yes or No)*

	Yes	No
Reading Skills		
Spelling Skills		
Phonic Skills		

**4** Is the programme motivating to pupils?

Yes	
No	
No Sure	

**5** What modifications did you make, if any, to the delivery or the content of the programme?



**6** Was the initial training and resources given at the PDC adequate to enable you to deliver this programme effectively in school? If not, what further help would you have liked?

**7** Would you recommend this programme as a Wave 3 intervention to other schools? If not, please say why?

**8** Will you continue to use the Sound Discovery programme in your teaching? If not, please say how else you will teach phonics for pupils at KS2?

**9** Did you enjoy using the Sound Discovery Programme? Please say why?

**10** How has your school responded to the Wiltshire Trial?

**11** Is your school interested in working on the next steps within the programme (Step 3 onwards)?

**12** Please add further comments about any aspects of the programme and thoughts about future developments.

# Wiltshire Sound Discovery© Trial 2008

## Pupil Evaluation Questionnaire

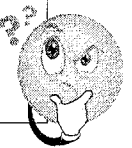
School:.....

Date:.....

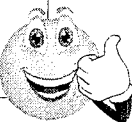
1 Do you think that your reading has improved after doing the Snappy Lessons? If so how?



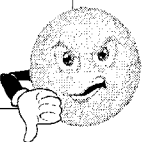
2 Do you think your spelling has improved after doing the Snappy Lessons? If so how?



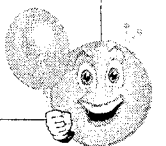
3 Have you enjoyed the Sound Discovery Snappy Lessons? Which bits did you enjoy the most?



4 Was there anything you did not enjoy?



5 If we were doing it again with other children what could we do to make it more successful?



Pupil's Name (Optional) .....

Sarah Couzens ©  
Advisory Teacher for Special Educational Needs  
Learning Support Service - Julv 2008

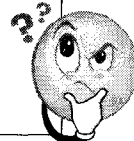
# Wiltshire Sound Discovery© Trial 2008

## Pupil Evaluation Questionnaire

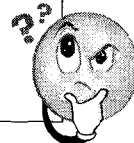
School:.....

Date:.....

1 Do you think that your reading has improved after doing the Snappy Lessons? If so how?



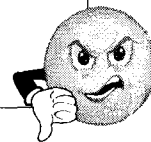
2 Do you think your spelling has improved after doing the Snappy Lessons? If so how?



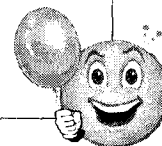
3 Have you enjoyed the Sound Discovery Snappy Lessons? Which bits did you enjoy the most?



4 Was there anything you did not enjoy?



5 If we were doing it again with other children what could we do to make it more successful?



Pupil's Name (Optional) .....

Sarah Couzens ©  
Advisory Teacher for Special Educational Needs  
Learning Support Service - July 2008