

## THRASS AND THE NEW PRIMARY CURRICULUM FOR ENGLISH

THRASS has always promoted the importance of developing essential speaking and listening skills as part of a broad and balanced English curriculum. This is entirely in line with the new curriculum:

- Spoken language underpins the development of reading and writing.
- Attention should be paid to increasing pupils' vocabulary, ranging from describing their immediate world (THRASS has always highlighted the importance of environmental print) and feelings to developing a broader, deeper and richer vocabulary to enable them to discuss abstract concepts and a wider range of topics, and to enhancing their knowledge about language as a whole.

In terms of reading, the new curriculum is very clear that teaching should focus on both word reading and comprehension (both listening and reading); competence development in both dimensions is essential and different kinds of teaching are needed for each. In terms of word reading, there is a clear statutory responsibility for teachers to ensure that, at early reading stages, pupils can sound and blend unfamiliar words quickly and accurately (THRASS Skills Drill Phases 4-6). Linked to this, children in Year 1 should experience reading books that are consistent with their developing phonic knowledge to develop fluency of word reading, which will ultimately assist comprehension as they read increasingly complex texts. The Year 1 curriculum is also explicit about the statutory responsibility to teach children to develop pleasure in reading, motivation to read, vocabulary and understanding, and to understand both the books they can already read accurately and fluently, and those they listen to. Guidance is very clear that a combined approach of reading at a level that can be accessed independently, alongside introducing children to the meaning of words they cannot yet read on their own so that comprehension is not held up, is vital. This is entirely in line with the THRASS approach (e.g. reading and exploring the 120 keyword questions in S-80 The English Keywords Book).

The development of spelling skills is clearly linked to the developing ability to break down spoken words into individual sounds and then to represent those sounds with an appropriate spelling choice. It is recognised that early on children will make phonetically plausible choices that may not be correct; THRASS Skills Drill Phase 7 introduces children to a wide range of spelling choices explicitly linked to a particular sound. This encourages the early aspirational use of vocabulary in writing, rather than children being restricted to the use of spelling choices limited by incremental introduction of sound-spelling relationships (e.g. if children are only introduced to the letter 'j' as a way of representing the 'jay' sound, they are restricted to using that letter every time they hear the sound. THRASS opens up the possibilities of 'j', 'g', 'ge' and 'dge').

As children develop as writers, the curriculum is clear that strategies beyond simply phonics should be introduced. Writing depends on spelling quickly and accurately through knowing the relationship between sounds and letters (phonics), and understanding the morphology (word structure) and orthography (spelling structure) of words.

The THRASS English Phonics Chart Programme Checklist (EPCP Checklist) can be downloaded from [www.englishphonicschart.com](http://www.englishphonicschart.com). The website also has links to a large number of associated videos (on YouTube) featuring pupils, student teachers and teachers from several different countries.