

Final Report of Project

Project No. : 2011 / 0281

Part A

Project Title: Utilising Synthetic Phonics in Schools Catering for Children from Low-income Families
with Significant Literacy Difficulties in Hong Kong

Name of Organization/School: Ta Ku Ling Ling Ying Public School

Project Period: From 01/09/2012 (month/year) to 31/08/2013 (month/year)

Part B

*Please read the **Guidelines to Completion of Final Report of Quality Education Fund Projects** before completing this part of the report.*

Please use separate A4-size sheets to provide an overall report with regard to the following aspects:

1. Attainment of objectives
2. Project impact on learning effectiveness, professional development and school development
3. Cost-effectiveness – a self-evaluation against clear indicators and measures
4. Deliverables and modes of dissemination; responses to dissemination
5. Activity list
6. Difficulties encountered and solutions adopted



Name of Project Leader: Ms Pua Chui Wai, Carol Name of Grantee*: Mr Chu Kwok Keung

Signature: [Handwritten Signature]

Signature: [Handwritten Signature]

Date: 28/11/2013

Date: 30/11/2013

** Final Report of Project prior to the 8th call should be signed by the supervisor of the school/the head of the organization or the one who signed the Quality Education Fund Agreement for allocation of grant on behalf of the organization.*

** Final Report of Project under the 8th and subsequent calls should be submitted via "Electronic Project Management System" (EPMS). Once submitted, these reports are regarded as already endorsed by the supervisor of the school/the head of the organization or the one who signed the Quality Education Fund Agreement for allocation of grant on behalf of the organization.*



1. Attainment of Objectives

– objective statement

1. To create an effective and enjoyable English learning environment through phonics teaching, with special emphasis on reading and spelling.
2. To enhance English teacher’s professional knowledge and skills in phonics teaching.
3. To develop phonics teaching kits which are tailored to the curriculum needs.

– activities related to the objective

By implementing the program, we have integrated the synthetic phonics skills into the P.1 and P.2 classes. Besides, extra curriculum activities focused on synthetic phonics skills were provided for the P.1 and P.2 students in the academic year of 2012. Training workshops of synthetic phonics skills have been organized for our English teachers. School-based materials have been developed as well.

Table 1: Attainment of Objectives

Objective statement	Activities related to the objective	Extent of attainment of the objective	Evidence or indicators of having achieved the objective	Reasons for not being able to achieve the objective, if applicable
To create an effective and enjoyable English learning environment through phonics teaching	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 26 lessons per week, co – teaching with our English teacher. 2. 10 hours per every 2 weeks to hold extra curriculum activities. 	Fully achieved	Phonics activities have been regularly conducted in daily teaching. Students showed increased motivation and confidence in reading aloud.	
To enhance English teacher’s professional knowledge and skills in phonics teaching	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 20 hours phonics teacher training workshop will enhance teachers’ readiness in phonics teaching. 	Fully achieved	Co-teaching with NET teacher allowed teachers to gain more insights related to phonics teaching. Workshops and sharing sessions conducted with positive feedback from teachers.	
To develop phonics teaching kits	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prepare additional resources and lesson plans for phonics teaching. 	Fully achieved	Class materials and teachers’ guidance book have been produced.	



2. Project Impact on

The project's effects on the learning effectiveness / professional development / school development should be evaluated, in evidence-based approach, with regard to:

By integrating the synthetic phonics skills, the students' overall performance in English is improved, especially for key stage 1. The P.1 and P.2 students enjoyed learning in the reading classes, which were conducted in a fun way with lots of games and songs. They had developed competency to sound out individual letter sounds, and to understand the consonant blends, diagraphs, and rhymes. They enjoyed participating in the reading classes and learning the phonics skills. Also, they became more confident in spelling and reading.

The experienced English teachers in our school provided a strong basis to implement this school-based synthetic phonics programme. Professional exchanges on ideas on teaching phonics have been shared. Through close collaboration among teachers, their knowledge and skills in phonics teaching have been enhanced. Lesson observations provided strong evidence that teachers have progressively gained knowledge and experience in helping young children to master the relation between letters and sounds. Teachers were working hard to integrate the synthetic phonics skills into their regular lessons and reading lessons. They were often using the phonics techniques to teach speaking and reading skills in the class. In key stage 1, the teachers had spent more than 20% or 50% of time to deliver the phonics skills.

In addition to the teachers' experience and ideas, in-service training and reading materials were useful for the teachers to enrich their phonics skills. To provide support for the English teachers to deliver the synthetic phonics skills, the English Department had provided respective training, co-planning sessions, school-based synthetic phonics materials and textbooks for the English teachers. Overall, the programme had been implemented smoothly and successfully in our school, particularly in key stage 1. The results and feedback of learning synthetic phonics from the students and teachers were also very positive (refer to appendix 1 for the results and analysis of the programme).

3. Cost-effectiveness

The school has been able to make effective use of the funds provided by QEF. With the addition of an extra teaching staff, the school has been able to launch the activities outlined in the project proposal. These include co-taught lessons with the NET and among local teachers, training workshops and sharing sessions, and most importantly, the production of teacher training materials and teaching resources.

The project team has researched into different phonics teaching resources currently available. Based on the needs of our students, the team purchased a pool of teaching resources such as phonics readers and word cards appropriate to the levels of our students. Teachers have adopted these resources regularly in their classroom and have made effective use of them. The versatility of the resources allowed our students to acquire phonics skills in an enjoyable manner.

The teacher training manuals purchased allowed our teachers to gain more insights into the effective teaching of phonics at a relatively low cost, both in terms of time and monetary expenses. With the increased mastery of phonics teaching skills and knowledge, our teachers have been able to make appropriate selections of other free resources such as e-learning platforms and phonics readers which can be readily made available to students from low-income families.

Table 2: Budget Checklist

Budget Items <i>(Based on Schedule II of Agreement)</i>	Approved Budget (a)	Actual Expense (b)	Change [(b)-(a)]/(a) +/- %
Staff Cost	\$282,303	\$282,303	0%
General Expenses	\$11,997	\$11,888.6	-0.9%
Others (audit fee)	\$5,000	\$5,000	0%

4. Deliverables and Modes of Dissemination

A brief description of the elements/experiences contributing to the success of the project and feasibility of continuing the project should also be given.

Our project team has put together a pool of synthetic teaching resources which can be reproduced a relative low-cost. Sets of phonics worksheets have been uploaded onto our school's website. A comprehensive teacher-training have also been complied for reference. An inventory of phonics readers of the books purchased has been complied. Schools interested in gaining access to these resources are welcomed to contact us.

We have built up a pool of teaching resources which can be easily adopted for home teaching. We hope that in the future, we can provide training workshops to parents (especially those who live in the Mainland) or set up phonics classes to further assist children

On 21st June, 2012, the Under Secretary for Education, Mr. Yeung Yun Hung, JP, and officials from the Education Bureau visited our school and observed our P.2 phonics lesson. The performance of our students and teacher was given high recognition. Video clips of the lesson have been uploaded for sharing and is available at:

(<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=epN6HcWAQgo>)



5. Activity List

Activities

An array of activities related to the project has been introduced. These include the following four main categories:

1. Phonics teaching for students the synthetic phonics way
2. Phonics teacher training for the teachers
3. School- wide phonics awareness activities
4. IT in Phonics

Details of the above activities can be found in the tables in appendix 2.

6. Difficulties Encountered and Solutions Adopted

It had been difficult for the school to employ a full-time experienced English teacher to be responsible for all the proposed activities. Fortunately, with the consent of QEF, the school had been able to make flexible deployment of the newly employed teacher. As a result, teachers within the English Panel were able to share the work related to the project.

The school had not been able to arrange for the NET to co-teach 26 lessons with the school teachers as proposed due to the constraints in setting the time-table when other issues, such as the use of special rooms, playground, and teacher deployment, etc. were taken into consideration. As a result, 9 of the weekly lessons were taken up by the school English teachers.

The proposed special phonics awareness workshop for parents were not introduced as it was difficult to find a venue that can easily accommodate parents from Hong Kong and the Mainland at the same time. We hope that such workshops can be introduced in the next academic year. Proposed alternatives include setting up e-learning platforms for parents and home loan of phonics packages to parents.



Appendix 1: Results and analysis for the programme

1. Process of teaching synthetic phonics in English Lessons



1.1 Teach

We teach the phonemes by adopting various means such as songs and games.

1.2 Review

After teaching the letter sounds, we monitor the children's learning progress. We ask the children to demonstrate the learnt skills by blending letter sounds or pronouncing new words. We have to check whether the children are able to respond confidently when practising the skills.

1.3 Co-planning

We share and discuss the classroom experience with the English teachers. We create strategies to assist the children to master the phonics skills.



1.4 Practise

To ensure the children are growing confidence in the use of phonics skills. We help the children to keep practising the learned phonemes and blending new words consistently.

1.5 Apply

The children have to apply what they have learnt independently in their reading, spelling and writing exercises.

1.6 Assess

Based on the children's performance in classroom and individual exercises (e.g. homework), their understandings and abilities are assessed. The data is used for the planning of their reading lesson.

2. Assessment

The learning progress of the P.1 and P.2 students has been evaluated three times, i.e. at the beginning, middle, and the end of the academic year. The children have to participate in three quizzes about the phonics skills. To further investigate the students' learning experiences in the programme, we also collected feedback from English teachers, P.1 and P.2 students at the end of the academic year by using questionnaires.

To conclude, we have used the following means to evaluate the effectiveness of the programme.

- 1) Scores in the quizzes for phonemes.
- 2) Questionnaire for the students to evaluate students' enjoyment level.
- 3) Survey for the English teachers to evaluate the effectiveness of using synthetic phonics.



2.1 Scores in the quizzes for phonemes

Three oral quizzes were given to P.1 and P.2 students in order to evaluate their abilities in using the phonics skills. The quizzes were conducted in September (1st Quiz), February (2nd Quiz) and July 2013 (3rd Quiz). Contents of the quizzes were base on **letter sounds, consonant digraphs, and short vowel sound** (pronouncing new words) for P.2 students, while the quizzes were based on letter sounds for P.1 students. Their scores in the quizzes are shown as below.

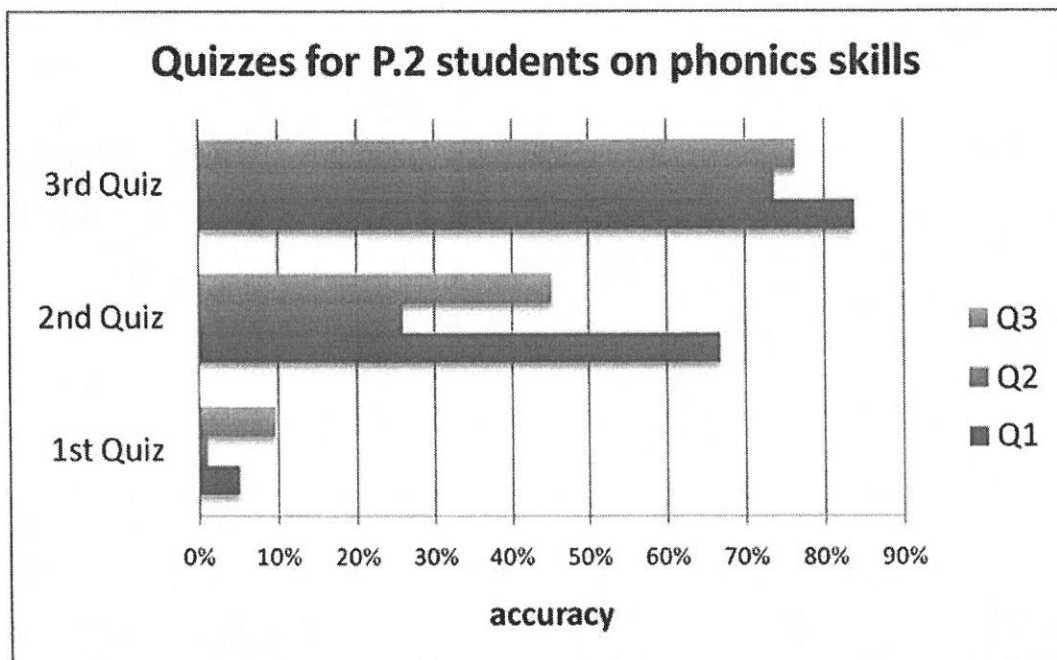


Figure 2.1a Performance of P.2 students in the three Phonics quizzes

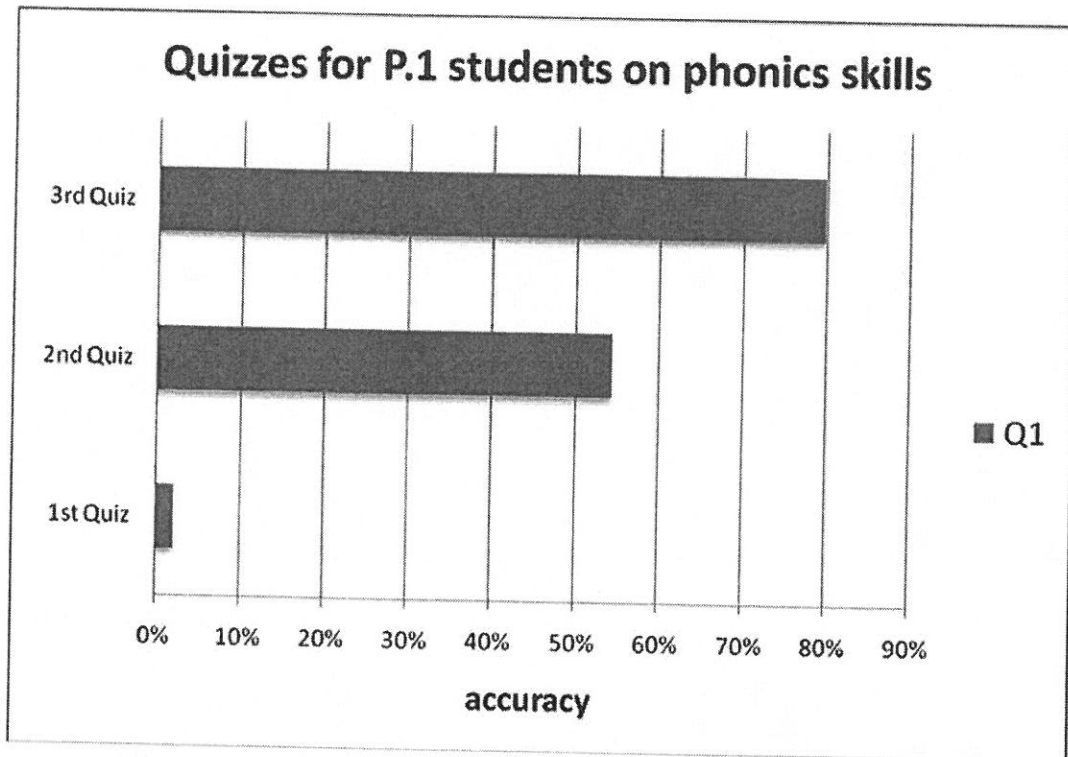


Figure 2.1b Performance of P.1 students in the three Phonics quizzes

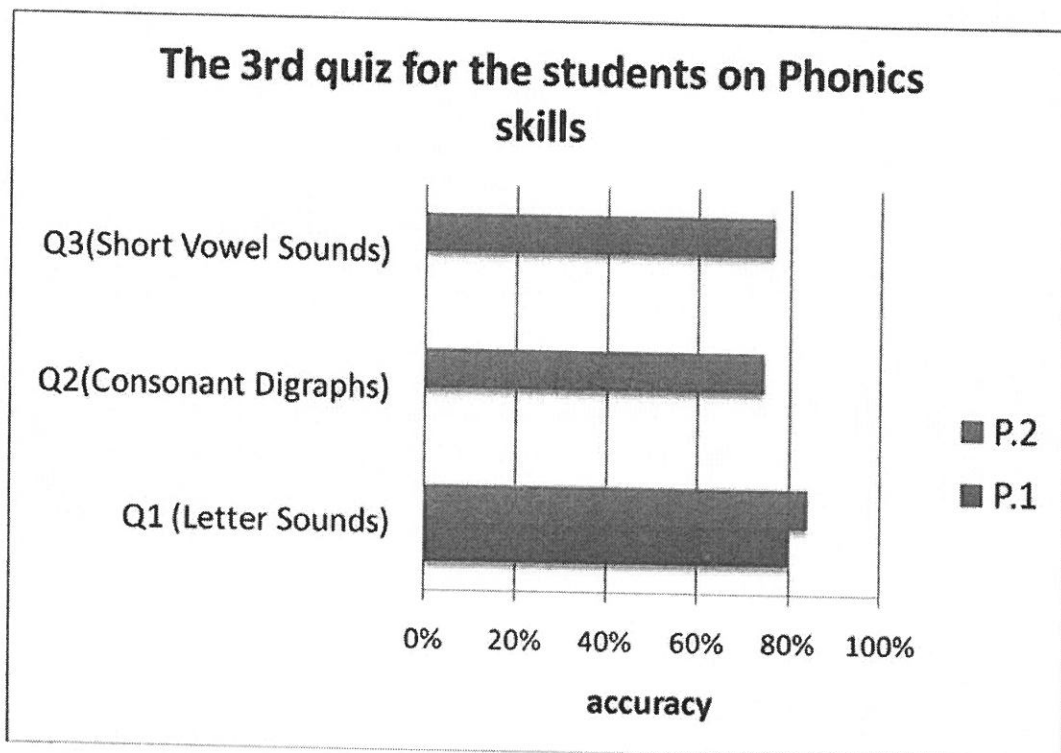


Figure 2.1c Comparison of performance by P.1 and P.2 students in the 3rd quiz

Based on the results of the quizzes, students showed obvious improvements in their abilities to master the phonics skills throughout the year. By the end of the academic year, both classes have reached higher than 75% accuracy on sounding out the letter sounds in the 3rd quiz. Also, the P.2 students are able to address the different vowel sounds, as well as consonant blends, digraphs, and rhymes.

2.2 Students' enjoyment level in the Reading lessons

A survey was conducted in July to study students' enjoyment level in learning Synthetic Phonics. In our synthetic phonics programme that targets the students in Key Stage 1, Phonics skills were embedded in regular English lessons as well as weekly Reading lessons. The weekly reading lessons (co-taught with a NET teacher) were particularly designed for delivering Synthetic Phonics skills. Thus, the survey investigated students' learning experiences in the reading lessons, their competency in learning Synthetic Phonics skills, and confidence in learning English after mastering the phonics skills.

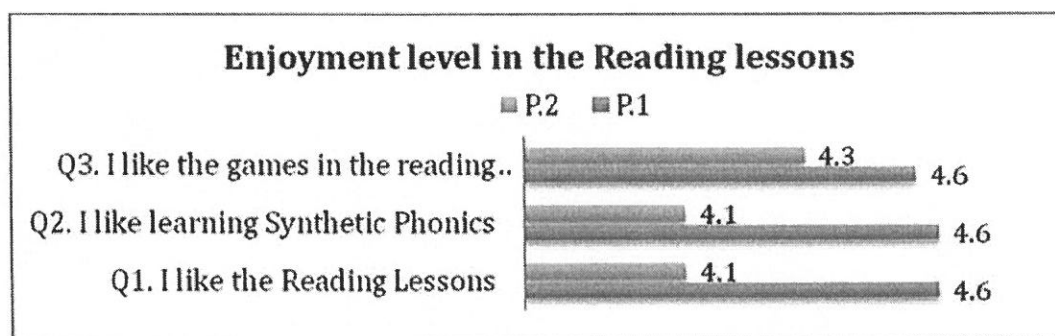


Figure 2.2a Students' enjoyment level in the Reading lessons

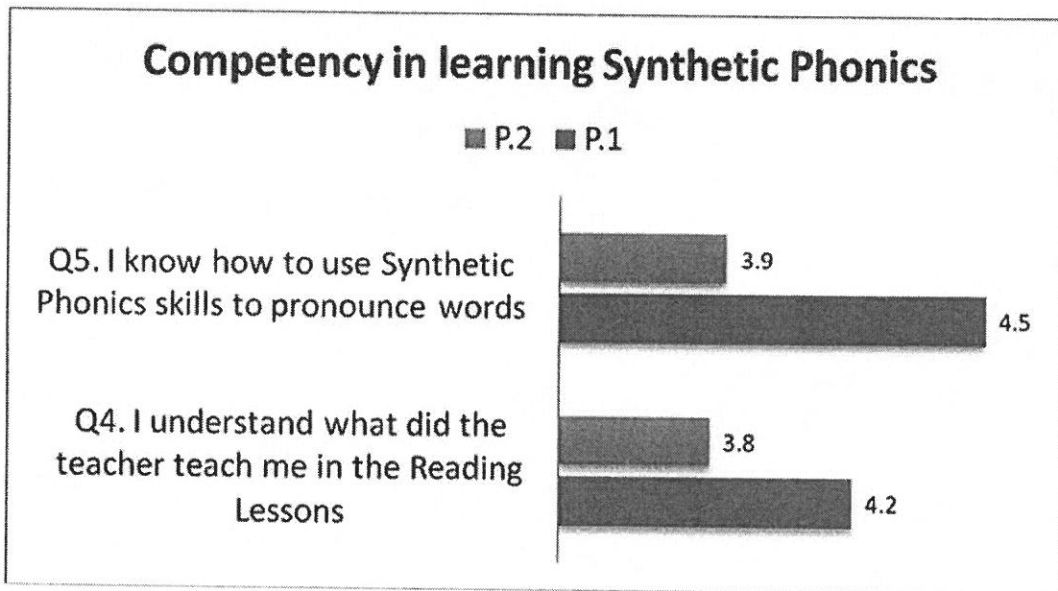


Figure 2.2b Students' competency in learning synthetic phonics

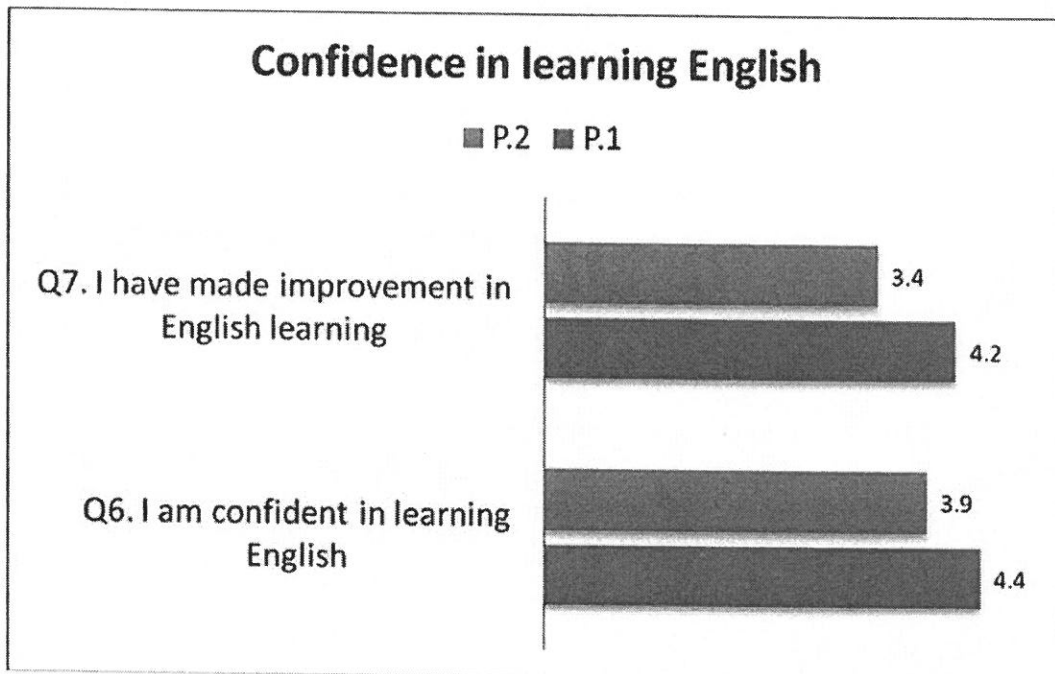


Figure 2.2c Students' confidence in learning English



According to the survey results, students' satisfaction rate for the reading classes on average is higher than 4 (out of 5). They enjoyed learning in the reading lessons, which were delivered in a fun way with songs and games. Based on the results of 2.2b and 2.2c, both P.1 and P.2 students are confident in learning English and mastering the synthetic phonics skills. Compared with P.2 students, P.1 students have developed higher self-confidence in English after learning the phonics skills. It is believed that the students have gained positive learning experiences in the English lessons.

2.3 Teachers' survey on the programme effectiveness

To evaluate the effectiveness of the programme, we have set a survey to investigate **the level of use, the school-based teaching supports and the students' achievement** by adopting the synthetic phonics skills in the reading and regular English lessons. All of our English teachers have responded to the survey in July 2013. The analysed results are shown as below.

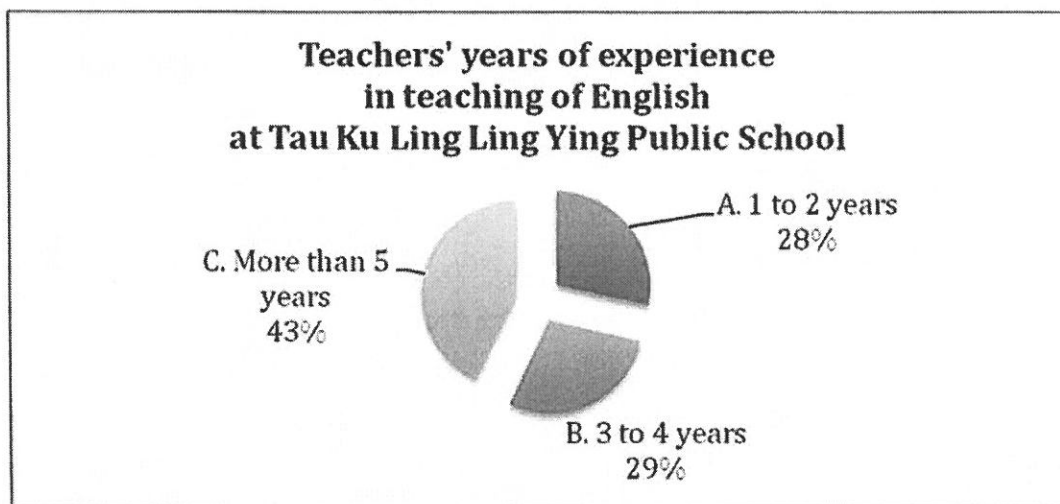


Figure 2.3a Teachers' years of experience in teaching English at our school



Figure 2.3b Allocation of time in teaching the four language skills in English lessons

In figure 2.3a, it showed that most of the English teachers including the NET teacher, are experienced in teaching English at our school. They are familiar with the students and the school settings; it provides a strong basis for our school to deliver this school-based phonics programme. From figure 2.3b, teachers are spending more effort in the lessons to teach speaking and reading skills this year.

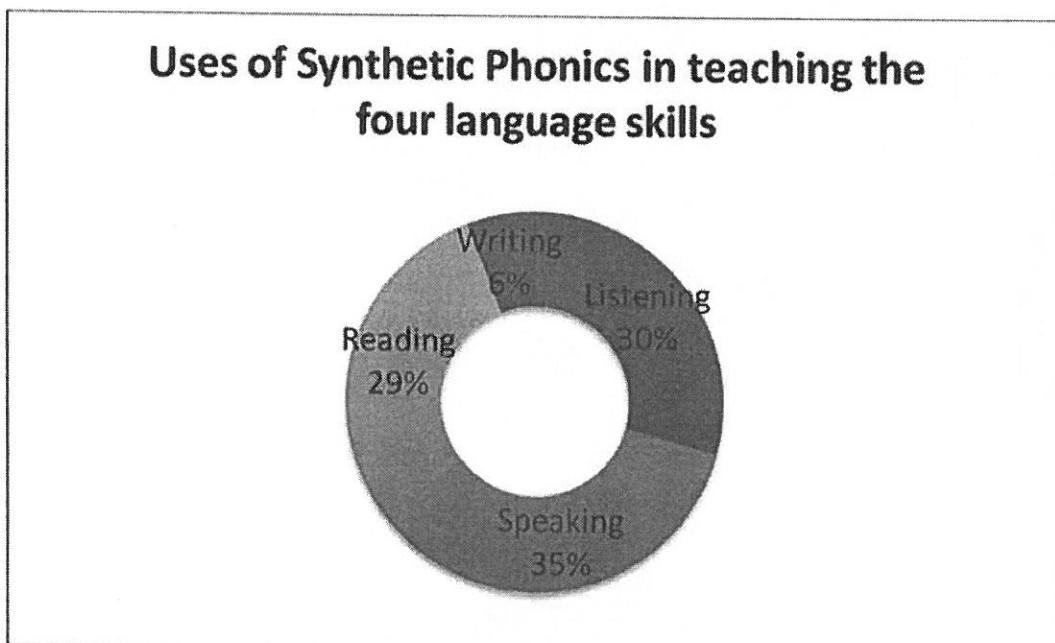


Figure 2.3c Uses of synthetic phonics in teaching the four language skills in the English lessons

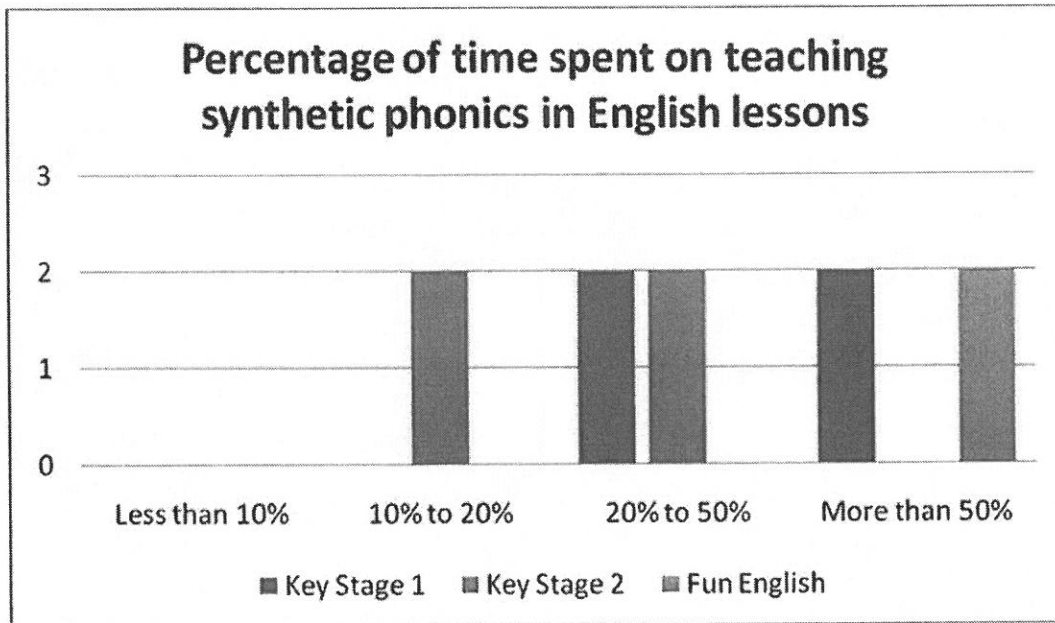


Figure 2.3d Percentage of time spent on teaching synthetic phonics in English lessons

In figure 2.3c, it revealed that the teachers are putting more effort into integrating synthetic phonics techniques in speaking, reading, and listening skills. The results are consistent with the language skills that they emphasized in the lesson (refer to figure 2.3b). It is believed that the teachers admit the importance of adopting the phonics skills in their regular class. In key stage 1, teachers are spending significant effort in teaching synthetic phonics. They are using more than 20% or even 50% of time in teaching synthetic phonics skills in their English lessons (refer to figure 2.3d). Although less effort has been spent on synthetic phonics skills in key stage 2, the teachers have also tried to spend at least 10% of time in teaching phonics skills. While the Fun English class is not scheduled in the regular school timetable (extra curriculum activities), the teachers are mainly focusing on teaching synthetic phonics skills.

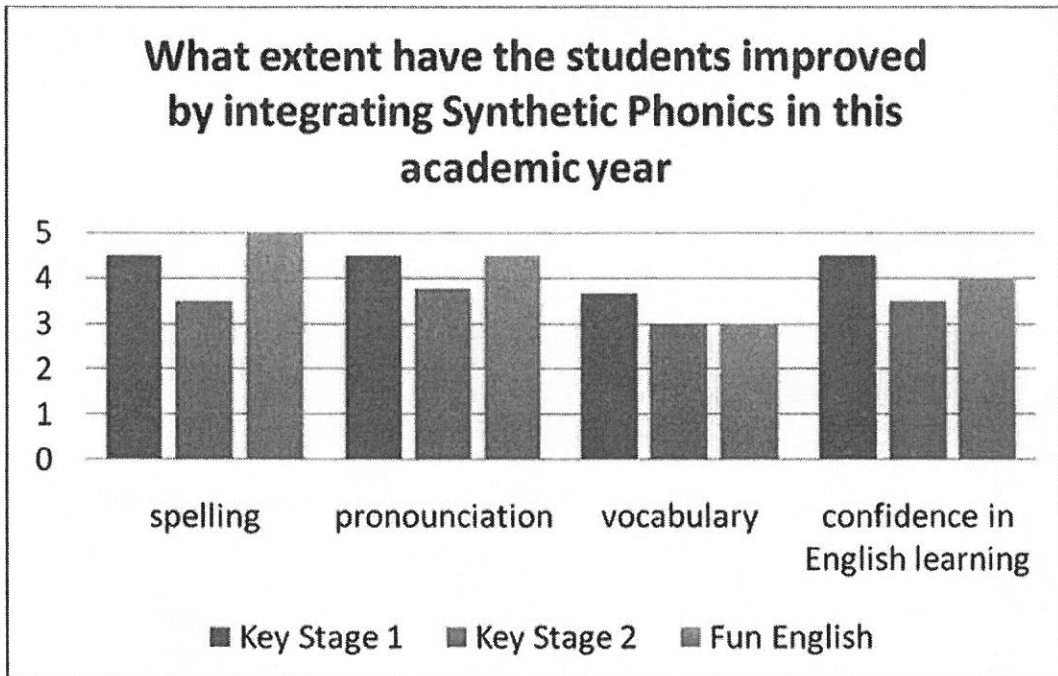


Figure 2.3e Improvements of students by integrating synthetic phonics skills

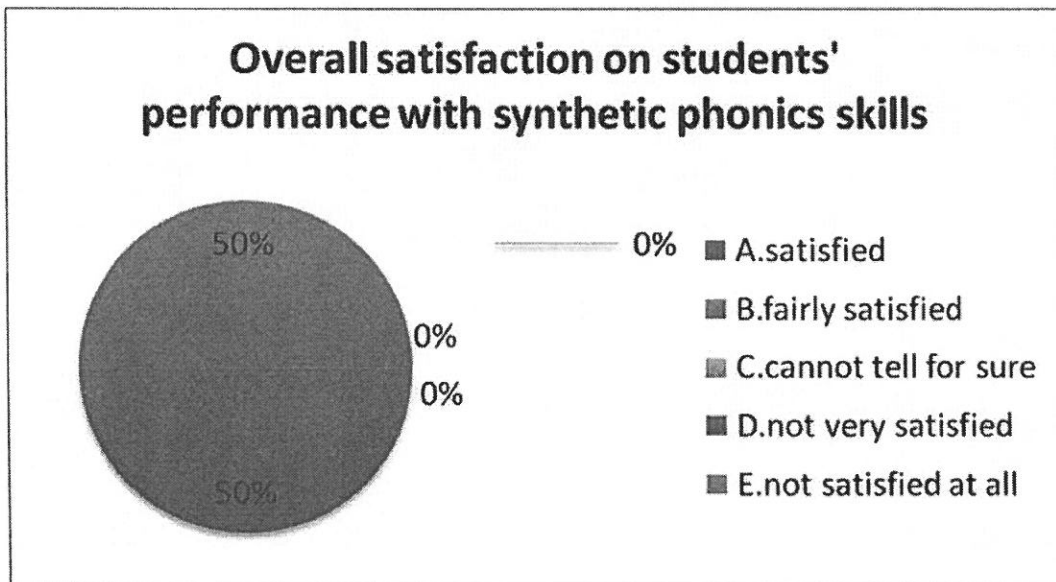


Figure 2.3f Overall satisfaction on students' performance with synthetic phonics skills

By reviewing the data analysed in figure 2.3e, the more effort the teachers spent in teaching phonics skills in key stage 1 and Fun English class correlates to greater improvements of students' abilities in spelling, pronunciation, vocabulary as well as higher confidence in English learning (refer to figure 2.3f). Overall, the teachers rated satisfied or fairly satisfied for the students' performance with synthetic phonics skills. The teachers' feedback also aligned with the students' survey, which showed that the P.1 & P.2 students are gaining confidence in learning English.

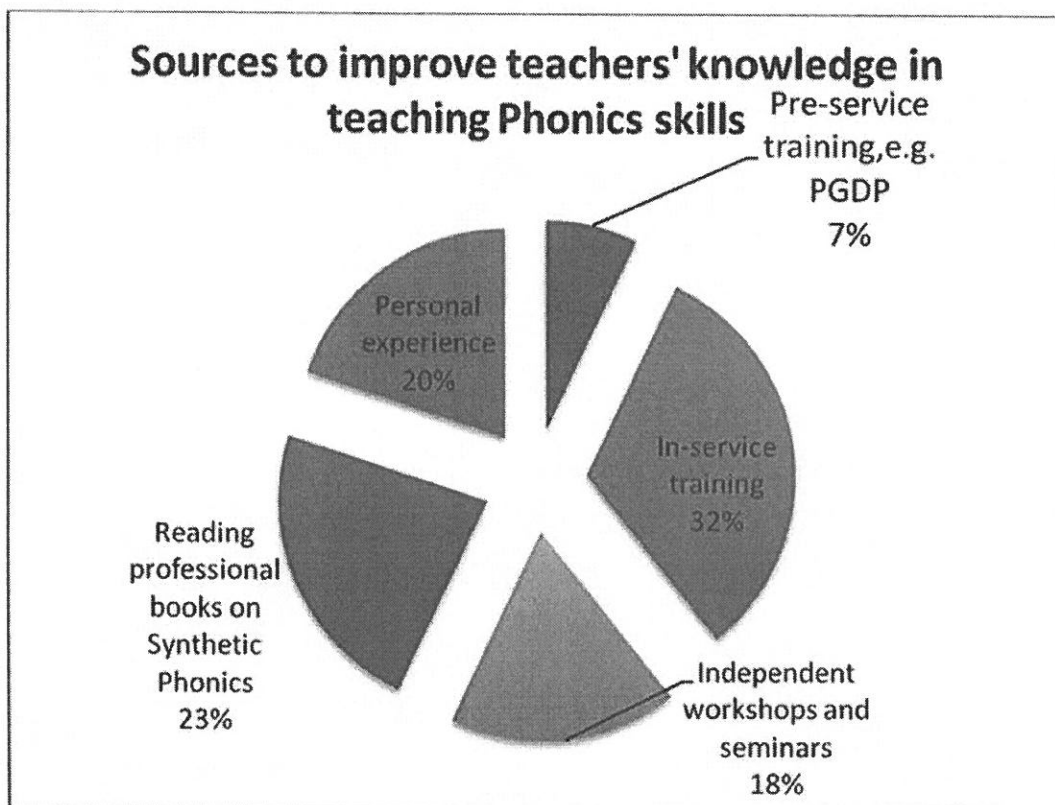


Figure 2.3g Sources to improve teachers' knowledge in teaching phonics skills

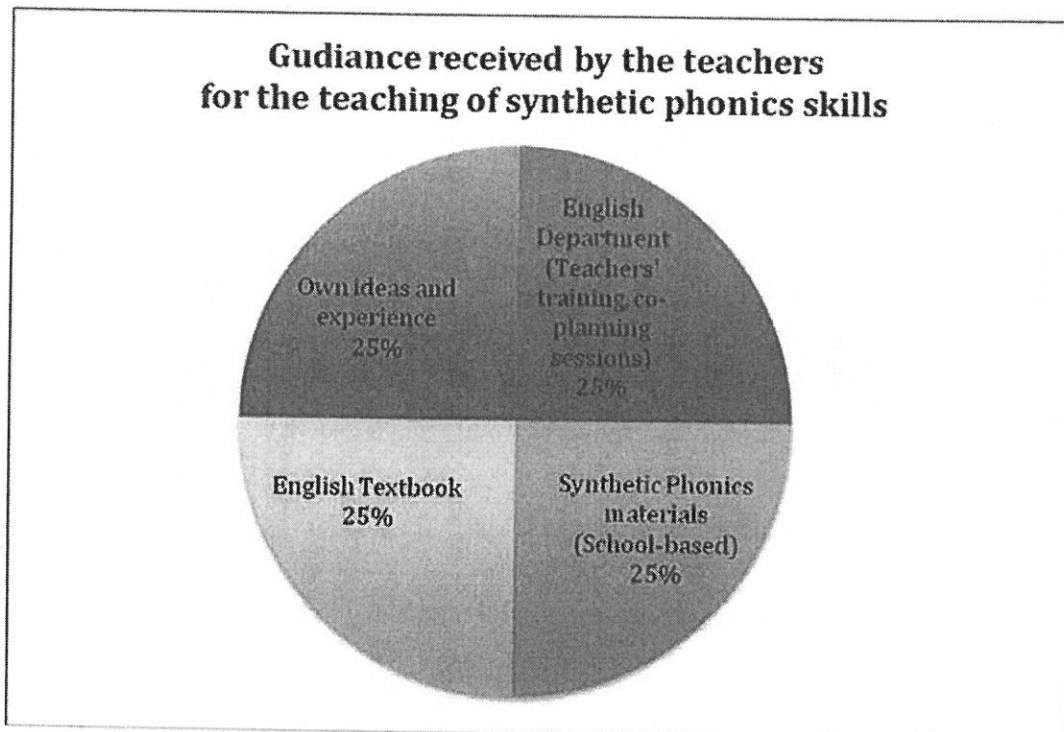


Figure 2.3h Guidance received by the teachers for the teaching of synthetic phonics skills

In figure 2.3h, it shows that in-service training and reading materials are critical to improving teachers' knowledge in teaching phonics skills. To ensure a high quality of teaching in school, the English department has provided various support for the English teachers to enrich their synthetic phonics skills. The department has held several teachers' training and co-planning sessions throughout the year. Also, the school-based materials and textbooks on synthetic phonics were provided for the teachers for their uses. According to the figure 2.3h, the teachers are relying on all of these materials and training sessions provided by the English department, with addition to their knowledge and self-experience for the teaching of synthetic phonics skills.



Conclusion

The quiz and survey results have revealed that by integrating the synthetic phonics skills, the students' overall performance in English is improved, especially for key stage 1. The P.1 and P.2 students enjoyed learning in the reading classes, which were conducted in a fun way with lots of games and songs. They have developed competency to sound out individual letter sounds, and to understand the consonant blends, diagraphs, and rhymes. They enjoy participating in the reading classes and learning the phonics skills. Also, they become more confident in spelling and reading.

The experienced English teachers in our school provide a strong basis to implement this school-based synthetic phonics programme. The English teachers are working hard to integrate the synthetic phonics skills into their regular lessons and reading lessons. They are often using the phonics techniques to teach speaking and reading skills in the class. In key stage 1, the teachers have spent more than 20% or 50% of time to deliver the phonics skills.

In addition to the teachers' experience and ideas, in-service training and reading materials are useful for the teachers to enrich their phonics skills. To provide support for the English teachers to deliver the synthetic phonics skills, the English Department has provided respective training, co-planning sessions, school-based synthetic phonics materials and textbooks for the English teachers. Overall, the programme has been implemented smoothly and successfully in our school, particularly in key stage 1. The results and feedback of learning synthetic phonics from the students and teachers are also very positive.



Appendix 2:

A. Phonics Class Timetable on Friday and Saturday (September 2012 - July 2013)

Type of activities	Date	Time	Contents	Class	Teacher	No. of Students
Class	2012/10/13	10:30 - 11:50	Alphabet matching game	1A		20
Class	2012/10/20	10:30 - 11:50	Phonics Dance (A-F), Numbers	1A		20
Class	2012/11/17	10:30 - 11:50	Phonics Dance: (G-L), Colours	1A		20
Class	2012/11/24	10:30 - 11:50	Phonics Dance: (M-S), Clothes	1A		20
Class	2012/12/1	10:30 - 11:50	Phonics Dance (T-Z), Clothes matching game	1A		20
Class	2013/1/5	10:30 - 11:50	Phonics Dance: Revision + Blending Exercise	1A		20
Class	2013/1/12	10:30 - 11:50	Phonics Dance: Revision + Blending Exercise, Fruit	1A		20
Class	2013/3/9	10:30 - 11:50	(1) Revise Phonics Dance (2) Animals (hidden pictures, online spelling)	1A		20
Class	2013/3/16	10:30 - 11:50	(1) Phonics dictation with magnetic letters (a, i and consonant letters) (2) Farm animals (running dictation, shared reading: kizclub.com/farm animals)	1A		20
Class	2013/5/4	10:30 - 11:50	(1) Phonics flip book reading (short vowels and consonant letters) (2) Weather words (matching game, cross word)	1A		20
Class	2013/5/11	10:30 - 11:50	(1) Phonics puzzle (short vowels, initial consonants) (2) How old are you? (board game)	1A		20
Class	2013/5/25	10:30 - 11:50	(1) Phonics bingo (CVC words) (2) Body parts (running dictation, crossword)	1A		20
Class	2013/6/8	10:30 - 11:50	(1) Phonic spinning wheel (Blending: CVC words) (2) School supplies (interactive board game)	1A		20
Class	2013/6/15	10:30 - 11:50	(1) Phonics drawing game (short vowels and s,t,p,n,m,o,g,b) (2) Toys memory game	1A		20
Class	2012/10/13	10:30 - 11:50	Sing a song: Letter Sounds (A – I)	2A		20



Class	2012/10/20	10:30 - 11:50	Sing a song: Letter Sounds (J – Z)	2A		20
Class	2012/11/17	10:30 - 11:50	Learn to read words with vowels and consonant (Topic: Clothes)	2A		20
Class	2012/11/24	10:30 - 11:50	Learn to read words with vowels and consonant (Topic: Weather)	2A		20
Class	2012/12/1	10:30 - 11:50	Learn to read words with vowels and consonant (Topic: Emotions)	2A		20
Class	2013/1/5	10:30 - 11:50	Learn to read words with vowels and consonant (Topic: Career)	2A		20
Class	2013/1/12	10:30 - 11:50	Learn to read words with vowels and consonant (Topic: Adjectives)	2A		20
Class	2013/3/9	10:30 - 11:50	Learn to read words with vowels and consonant (Topic: Months)	2A		20
Class	2013/3/16	10:30 - 11:50	Learn to read words with vowels and consonant (Topic: Summer Time)	2A		20
Class	2013/5/4	10:30 - 11:50	Phonics: Letter sounds (ck, e, u, r)	2A		20
Class	2013/5/11	10:30 - 11:50	Sing songs (Hobo's Lullaby) with guest teacher	2A		20
Class	2013/5/25	10:30 - 11:50	Phonics: Letter sounds (qu, y, z)	2A		20
Class	2013/6/15	10:30 - 11:50	Phonics: Letter sounds (ch, sh)	2A		20
Class	8/6/2013	10:30 - 11:50	Phonics: Letter sounds (a, e, i, o, u)	2A		20
Class	2012/9/14	1:50 - 3:10	Picture card dictation – ai/air: reinforces segmenting + encourages children to write sentences.	Soak Up English Friday		20
Class	2012/9/28	1:50 - 3:10	Picture card dictation – ai/air/ar: reinforces segmenting + encourages children to write sentences.	Soak Up English Friday		20
Class	2012/10/12	1:50 - 3:10	Fill in the blank – ee/er: encourages reading for meaning.	Soak Up English Friday		20
Class	2012/10/26	1:50 - 3:10	Fast read/write – ee/er/ear: encourages automaticity + reading fluency.	Soak Up English Friday		20



Class	2012/11/16	1:50 - 3:10	Go fish – igh/ai/air/ar/ee/er/ear: encourages automaticity + gives children experience of asking questions.	Soak Up English Friday	20
Class	2012/11/30	1:50 - 3:10	Phoneme run to it - igh/ai/air/ar/ee/er/ear: reinforces blending phonemes to read words.	Soak Up English Friday	20
Class	2012/12/14	1:50 - 3:10	My word, your word - igh/ai/air/ar/ee/er/ear: reinforces how to segment words into phonemes in order to spell new words.	Soak Up English Friday	20
Class	2013/1/11	1:50 - 3:10	Caption dictation - igh/ai/air/ar/ee/er/ear: reinforces segmenting words into phonemes + encourages children to write more than one word.	Soak Up English Friday	20
Class	2013/3/8	1:50 - 3:10	Fly Swatter – oa/oi + 1st term Phonemes – reinforces phoneme recognition	Soak Up English Friday	20
Class	2013/3/15	1:50 - 3:10	Fly Swatter – oa/oi/oo/or/ow + 1st term Phonemes – reinforces phoneme recognition	Soak Up English Friday	20
Class	2013/4/12	1:50 - 3:10	Fast read/write - oa/oi/oo/or/ow - encourages automaticity + reading fluency.	Soak Up English Friday	20
Class	2013/4/26	1:50 - 3:10	Fill in the blank – ur/ure - encourages reading for meaning.	Soak Up English Friday	20
Class	2013/5/10	1:50 - 3:10	Picture card dictation – oa/oi/oo/or/ow/ur/ure: reinforces segmenting + encourages children to write sentences.	Soak Up English Friday	20

Class	2013/5/31	1:50 - 3:10	Picture card dictation – oa/oi/oo/or/ow/ur/ure: reinforces segmenting + encourages children to write sentences.	Soak Up English Friday		20
Class	2013/6/14	1:50 - 3:10	Snap – all learnt phonemes: reinforces phoneme/grapheme correspondences + blending phonemes in order to read.	Soak Up English Friday		20

B. Teachers' Training / Co-planning Meeting

Date	Event	Shared by	Feedback
2012/12/11	Synthetic Phonics Workshop (1)		See Appendix 1
2012/12/5	Co-planning meeting		See Appendix 1
2012/10/1 - 2013/6/1	Co-planning meeting :Synthetic Phonics Programme (20 mins X 15)		See Appendix 1
2013/1/10	Synthetic Phonics lesson observation		See Appendix 1
2013/2/26	Co-planning meeting :Synthetic Phonics Programme		See Appendix 1
2013/4/5	Synthetic Phonics Workshop (2)		See Appendix 1
2013/4/9	Synthetic Phonics Workshop (3)		See Appendix 1
2013/4/23	Co-planning meeting :Synthetic Phonics Programme		See Appendix 1
2013/4/11	Synthetic Phonics lesson observation		See Appendix 1
2013/1/1 - 2013/3/1	Online Training Workshops (3 hours X 2)		See Appendix 1