

A reflection on CAPS Grade R: English Home Language

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Background

In 2020, Wordworks was commissioned to design teacher’s guides, classroom resources and training materials for the Gauteng Grade R Improvement Project, building on its Stellar Grade R Home Language programme. The development team needed to ensure that the teaching and assessment activities for the project were curriculum aligned and covered the content in the *Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement. Foundation Phase Grade R–3. English Home Language* (DBE, 2011).



Review of CAPS Home Language: Grade R

To ensure coverage of and alignment with policy, we looked at the content, concepts and skills covered in the CAPS document for each of the four terms in the Grade R year. We found the CAPS document challenging to navigate and therefore began by grouping related content, concepts and skills. We then highlighted skills and concepts in Term 1 and tracked them for developmental progression across all four terms of the Grade R year.

The tables in the appendices are the result of this analysis. They include all the content of CAPS Grade R, grouped for conceptual coherence and with alignment of content from one term to the next, as far as possible. This process made it easier for us to check that the materials for the Grade R Improvement Project covered the necessary content for learners to achieve the CAPS Grade R learning goals, and to ensure that our assessment checklists and rubrics were CAPS aligned.

The process also revealed several issues in the CAPS document such as inconsistencies, repetition, a lack of conceptual coherence, incorrect use of terminology, and challenges with developmental progression across the Grade R year. These issues are discussed further in this report.

We resolved some of these issues by referencing other documents produced by the DBE in the past 10 years, and by consulting research on early language and literacy development. We realised we are unlikely to be the only users of CAPS who have experienced challenges using the document to guide decision making on activities and assessment tasks, and we have therefore included the tables we created from the CAPS document as appendices.

This is not intended as a full review or critique of the curriculum content for Grade R, but rather as a contribution to wider review processes, and to help those who need to interpret the document for their work.

Inconsistencies between overview pages (pages 23–30) and guidelines for each term (pages 31–53)

We started by reviewing the “Overview of the language skills to be taught in the Home Language Grades R–3” (CAPS, pages 23–30). The overview seemed to provide a very useful high-level list of content (knowledge, concepts and skills) for Grades R–3. However, a careful analysis indicated that some skills listed across the four terms did not appear in the overview pages. For example, there is no mention of “telling stories” or “sequencing pictures to tell a story” under the Listening and Speaking heading on the overview pages, and yet the telling of stories and the use of sequence pictures to guide storytelling appears in each term. These and other omissions are evident in the tables in the appendices, where we list the skills in the overview pages as well as by term. These omissions of skills in the overview pages mean that it does not serve its purpose as a high-level summary of the content to be covered in Grade R.

Unnecessary repetition

After reviewing the overview pages, we then considered each of the Home Language components by term (pages 31–53). The amount of content and number of concepts and skills to be covered was overwhelming. It also seemed as if some skills were referenced in more than one place. We therefore began by grouping similar skills. This revealed unnecessary repetition. For example, the following content, concepts and skills are listed under Phonological/Phonemic Awareness:

Overview	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4
Begins to recognise that words are made up of sounds, for example, the beginning letter/s of their names	Begins to recognise that words are made up of sounds: gives the beginning sound of own name	Recognises initial spoken sounds especially at the beginning of own name		Begins to recognise that words are made up of sounds such as the beginning letter/s of their names
	Distinguishes aurally between different sounds especially at the beginning of own name	Distinguishes aurally between different sounds especially at the beginning of words		
		Can recognise sounds at the beginning of some words such as friends' names	Recognises sounds at the beginning of some words: friends' names or names of animals	Recognises sounds at the beginning of some words

Apart from the obvious error in the reference to the “beginning letter/s of names” (where “letter/s” should read “sound/s”), the skills listed in the table above are all the same, despite the use of different phrasing and terminology. This runs the risk of confusing the user who has to try and distinguish between different references to the skill of recognising the beginning sounds in words. The beginning sound of learners’ names is an example of the application of the skill for Term 1, but this is not a different skill to recognising the beginning sound of friends’ names or the names of animals or some words. A single phrase used across terms with different examples that show increasing difficulty would make it easier for users of CAPS.

There is in fact another reference to recognising sounds in Term 3 and Term 4: *Recognises aurally and visually some initial consonants and vowels especially at the beginning of common words.* This reference to “recognising aurally initial consonants and vowels” is a repeat of the skills listed in the table on the left-hand side.

Here are further examples showing the repetition of skills within and across components of the Home Language curriculum.

Listening and Speaking

Overview	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4
No reference in Overview		Sequences pictures of a story	Sequences pictures of a story	Sequences pictures of a story
	Arranges a set of three pictures in such a way that they form a story and a logical sequence of events when verbalised and relates the story created	Orders a sequence of pictures and relates the story created	Sequences pictures and relates the story created	

Emergent Reading

Overview	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4
Arranges a set of pictures in such a way that they form a story	Uses sequencing skills to order three pictures and relate the story created	Arranges a set of pictures in such a way that they form a story and then “reads” the story		
	Sequences pictures in a story			

The above examples appear to all describe the skill of arranging/ordering a set of pictures to tell a story and then relating this story. It is unclear why there are so many different references to this skill, why it appears in some terms and not others, and why there is one reference to the number of recommended pictures in a sequence for learners in Term 1, but this is not specified in other terms.



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Lack of conceptual coherence

The rationale for the inclusion of certain skills under some headings is not clear. For example: Listening and Speaking includes references to completing jigsaw puzzles as well as the following:

- Remembers what the eyes have seen in a memory game. For example: put different objects on the table, learners look at these, teacher covers objects and learners have to recall what they saw on the table.
- Isolates images from the foreground and background in pictures and simple designs.
- Distinguishes between the shape of different letters and words (for example, “c” and “a”).

It is unclear how the above skills relate to Listening and Speaking (they are listed under the subheading: *Uses visual and pictorial cues to make meaning*, which in itself does not seem to be conceptually linked to listening or speaking). This is confusing to the user who may attempt to use the document structure to create conceptual connections.

The Emergent Writing heading has a subheading: *Works with words*. Some of the skills listed are phonological awareness skills and there seems to be no apparent reason why they are included under Emergent Writing. Here are some examples.

Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4
Groups words: those that start with same initial sound such as “Charmaine” and “Shireen”; or same letter such as “Mpho” and “Michael”	Groups words that share the same initial sound or letter		
		Groups pictures of rhyming words, for example, “bat”, “cat”, “hat”	Groups pictures of rhyming words such as “can”, “fan”, “pan”

Lack of clarity on key terms and concepts

One of the components of CAPS Home Language in the Foundation Phase is Phonics. In CAPS Grade R, there is no reference to phonics on pages 31–53, which cover all the content for Terms 1 to 4 of Grade R. This is a serious omission given that letter-sound knowledge is one of the strongest predictors that children will learn to read and write successfully.

Skills related to awareness of sounds in words (phonological awareness) and knowledge relating sounds to letters (phonics) are listed under Emergent Reading, under the subheading: *Phonological/Phonemic Awareness*. Phonological awareness is the ability to hear sounds in words – it is a listening skill and does not include knowledge of letters. Phonics refers to the knowledge of how specific written letters relate to specific spoken sounds. This is an important distinction that is often a cause of confusion for teachers. The CAPS document does not aid in clarifying the fact that learners need to develop both an awareness of sounds in words (phonological awareness) and learn to connect these sounds to letters (phonics/letter-sound knowledge/alphabetic knowledge). This distinction is clear in other documents that teachers may reference such as the *Grade R Teacher’s Guide* (DBE, 2015) which distinguishes activities to *Build phonological awareness* and activities to *Teach the alphabet and phonics* (pages 34–37).

Lack of clarity on the teaching of letter-sound knowledge and poor articulation with Grade 1 curriculum expectations

As CAPS is used to guide the teaching of activities and planning of assessment tasks, clear guidelines and goals for teaching and learning are critical. Unfortunately, CAPS does not provide this guidance for the teaching of letter-sound relationships. In particular, the use of “some” as a quantifier to describe targets for certain skills and knowledge, leaves curriculum delivery open to interpretation. For example: *Recognises aurally and visually some initial consonants and vowels especially at the beginning of common words; Recognises and names some letters of the alphabet such as letters in own name* (Term 3 and 4 Phonological/Phonemic Awareness). As has been mentioned earlier, this is a serious omission as research findings are very clear that letter-sound knowledge is a strong predictor of the ease with which children will learn to read and write.

The lack of guidance provided for teaching letter knowledge in CAPS Grade R may seem acceptable given that CAPS Grade 1 specifies the teaching of 1–2 letters per week with all letters to be taught in Term 1 and Term 2. However, in Term 1 and 2, according to CAPS Grade 1, learners must simultaneously be reading and writing words (all of which demand knowledge of the letters that they are still busy learning and will be learning). This clearly sets the teachers and learners up for failure.

Well-established research findings show that letter-sound correspondence plays a role from the earliest stages of learning to read and write words. Learners who know letter sounds have an advantage over learners who do not know many letters and are learning words using visual cues and arbitrary connections.



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In the South African context, although all government schools follow CAPS, learners in well-resourced schools are taught and assessed on all the letters of the alphabet in Grade R in anticipation of the demands of the Grade 1 curriculum. In contrast, data collected in low resource contexts has shown that far too many learners begin Grade 1 with virtually no letter-sound knowledge (Wills, Ardington & Sebaeng, 2022). While there is no guarantee that what is specified in the curriculum translates into learners achieving these goals, appropriate guidance on the teaching and learning of letters in Grade R is crucial given the curriculum expectations in Grade 1.

Developmental progression is not clear

The CAPS document has been set out term by term. This makes it difficult to look at developmental progression across the four terms. When we searched for the same skill in each term and listed these in a table, it showed a clear progression for certain skills from Term 1 to Term 4, for example:

Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4
Solves and completes at least five or more piece jigsaw puzzles	Solves and completes ten or more piece jigsaw puzzles	Completes between ten and twenty piece jigsaw puzzles	Completes 20 piece or more jigsaw puzzles

Also, some skills which only appear in one term, make sense developmentally because learners would not be expected to have acquired those skills earlier in the year, for example, in Term 4: Handwriting: *Forms **some** lower case letters correctly, that is, starts and ends in the correct place.*

However, other content, concepts and skills appear to be randomly allocated to one term but not to others. There does not seem to be a rationale for the inclusions/ omissions. It is also unclear whether teachers are expected to only focus on the skill in the term where it is listed, or whether they should continue teaching and assessing skills even if they are not included in the list for a particular term. In the following examples, there is no conceptual reason for the subskill not to be listed in each term.

	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4
Emergent Writing	Copies known letters in own name to represent writing: copies own name			

	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4
Emergent Reading			Answers a range of questions based on the story read	Answers a range of questions based on the story read
Emergent Reading		Predicts what will happen next in the story using familiar texts and picture cues		

Summary

It is recognised that designing a curriculum for Grade R Home Language is a complex balancing task, and the emergent nature of the skills to be built, poses different challenges to curriculum design for Grades 1–3. In Grade R, subject areas are less clearly defined and there is a more integrated approach to teaching; perceptual skills are still developing and need to be included alongside content; there needs to be alignment with teaching methodologies in Grades 1–3 although these necessarily need to be adapted for Grade R. CAPS Home Language for Grade R was designed within these constraints and competing priorities, and includes many of the most important content, concepts and skills for language and literacy development.

However, in working closely with the CAPS document to ensure alignment of teaching materials, it was evident that CAPS Home Language for Grade R is unwieldy and unnecessarily repetitive. Teachers are likely to be easily overwhelmed with the sheer number of listed concepts and skills, and the lack of conceptual coherence makes it very difficult to get a high-level overview of what must be covered and what to prioritise in planning teaching activities and assessment tasks.

The structure of the document does not make apparent the importance of viewing skill development over time. In addition, the random placement of skills in some terms and not others means that teachers are likely to find it difficult to understand what to expect as learners progress from one term to the next. If a skill or concept is not listed for the term, should teachers keep teaching it? Should they still assess it if it is not listed in a specific term?



There are also issues with key terminology related to phonics and phonological awareness and the omission of references to teaching of letter-sound relationships in Terms 1 and 2 of Grade R. The lack of guidance on the teaching of alphabet knowledge in Grade R is contributing to learners not being adequately prepared for the demands of the Grade 1 curriculum.

It is hoped that these reflections, together with the summary tables that we produced for our own process, will help teachers, subject advisors and HODs to navigate the CAPS Grade R Home Language curriculum, encourage debate and contribute to strengthening the document that guides one of the most important years of teaching and learning in our education system.



References

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Overview of the language skills to be taught in Home Language Grade R (CAPS, pages 23–30).

Appendix 2: Language content, concepts and skills for each term in English Home Language Grade R (CAPS, pages 31–53).

Acknowledgements



The Grade R Language and Mathematics Improvement Project is an initiative of the Gauteng Department of Education and its key partner, the Gauteng Education Development Trust. The project is managed by the JET Education Services with Wordworks and UCT's Schools Development Unit as technical partners.

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Wordworks is a South African non-profit organisation that focuses on early language and literacy development in the first eight years of children's lives. Since 2005, Wordworks has developed and shared its programmes and materials with those adults best positioned to impact on young children's language and literacy development (www.wordworks.org.za).

The Gauteng Department of Education's Early Childhood Development and Foundation Phase Curriculum Sub-Directorates made valuable contributions to the content of the materials and engaged constructively to ensure alignment with provincial policies, practices and values.

Further information about the project as well as creative commons licensed resources can be accessed here: <https://www.jet.org.za/clearinghouse/projects/grade-r-maths-and-language-improvement-project/resources> or contact the developers at info@wordworks.org.za.



Appendix 1: Overview of the language skills to be taught in Home Language Grade R (CAPS, pages 23–30).

Listening and Speaking	Phonics	Reading and Viewing	Handwriting	Writing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listens to stories and acts these out • Listens and responds to simple questions • Listens to and repeats rhythmic patterns, and copies correctly • Listens to and recalls simple word sequences in order (for example, big, beg, bag) • Names and points to parts of the body • Sings simple songs and does action rhymes • Talks about pictures in posters, theme charts, books, etc. • Matches and sorts things according to shape, colour, etc. • Participates in discussions and asks questions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifies rhyming words in well-known rhymes and songs such as Humpty Dumpty • Begins to recognize that words are made up of sounds, for example, the beginning letter/s of their names • Segments oral sentences into individual words • Divides multisyllabic words into syllables • Recognises aurally and visually some initial consonants and vowels especially at the beginning of a word 	<p>Emergent Reading Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognises and points out common objects in pictures • Arranges a set of pictures in such a way that they form a story • Interprets pictures, for example, makes up own story and “reads” the pictures • Acts out parts of a story, song or rhyme • Holds the book the right way up and turns pages correctly • Pretends to read and adopts a “reading voice” • Recognises own name and names of some other children in the class • Begins to “read” high frequency words seen in the classroom and at school, for example, door, cupboard <p>Shared Reading as a class with teacher</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Reads” enlarged texts such as poems, big books, posters • Makes links to own experience when reading with the teacher • Describes characters in stories and gives opinions • Predicts what will happen in a story through the pictures • Answers questions based on the story read • Draws pictures capturing main idea of the stories <p>Independent Reading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reads picture books 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develops small muscle skills through finger play, for example, playdough, screwing nuts onto bolts • Develops fine motor control using scissors to cut out bold outlined pictures, shapes, etc. • Develops hand-eye coordination by playing, for example, catching and throwing, drawing and painting • Traces simple outlines of pictures, patterns and letters in own name where the correct starting point and direction arrows are included on all letters • Forms letters using finger painting, paintbrushes, wax crayons, etc. starting at the right point and following the correct direction • Copies patterns, words and letters (using the correct starting point and direction when forming letters) • Uses a range of writing tools, for example, paintbrushes, wax crayons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draws or paints pictures to convey a message • Copies known letters in own name to represent writing • “Writes” from left to right and top to bottom • Contributes ideas for a class news book by means of drawings • Makes an attempt to write letters using squiggles, scribbles, etc. • Talks to own writing, for example, “reads” what squiggles “say” • Makes own books and contributes to class book collection

Appendix 2: Language content, concepts and skills for each term in English Home Language Grade R (CAPS, pages 31–53).

Listening and Speaking				
Overview	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4
<i>Listens and responds to simple questions</i>	Listens to simple instructions and acts on them	Listens to two or three part instructions, announcements and responds appropriately (for example, "Collect the crayons and put them on the shelf.")	Listens to a complex string of instructions and acts on them	Listens to complex string of instructions and acts on them
	Listens attentively to simple questions and announcements and responds appropriately		Listens to announcements and responds appropriately	Listens to announcements and responds appropriately
	Listens without interrupting	Listens without interrupting, taking turns to speak	Listens without interrupting, showing respect for the speaker and takes turns to speak	Listens without interrupting, showing respect for the speaker and takes turns to speak
			Listens attentively to questions and gives answers	Listens attentively to questions and gives answers
<i>Participates in discussions and asks questions</i>		Participates in discussions and asks questions		Participates in discussions and asks questions
	Asks questions	Asks questions and asks for explanations	Asks questions and looks to books for explanations	Asks questions and looks to books, television, computers for explanations
	Gives explanations	Gives explanations and asks for clarification	Gives explanations and offers solutions	Listens to problems and offers solutions
<i>Sings simple songs and does action rhymes</i>	Sings simple songs and does actions (with help), for example, "This is the way I wash my hands, wash my hands, wash my hands ..." (Do the same with "comb my hair ...", "brush my teeth ...")	Sings songs, recites rhymes and performs actions with the whole class	Sings songs and rhymes and performs actions on own	Sings songs and rhymes and performs actions on own with confidence
	Recites simple rhymes and does actions (with help)	Recites poems and rhymes and adds actions to them in a group	Recites poems and rhymes and adds actions to them with growing confidence	Recites poems and rhymes and adds actions to them with confidence
<i>Listens to stories and acts these out</i>	Listens to short stories with enjoyment and joins in choruses at the appropriate time	Listens to stories and acts these out		
			Listens to longer stories and shows understanding by answering questions related to the story	Listens to longer stories and shows understanding by answering questions related to the story
	Tells stories and retells stories of others in own words	Tells stories and retells the stories of other children in own words	Tells stories and retells other children's stories in own words	Tells stories and retells other children's stories in own words

Listening and Speaking

Overview	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4
		Sequences pictures of a story	Sequences pictures of a story	Sequences pictures of a story
	Arranges a set of three pictures in such a way that they form a story and a logical sequence of events when verbalised and relates the story created	Orders a sequence of pictures and relates the story created	Sequences pictures and relates the story created	
<i>Listens to and repeats rhythmic patterns, and copies correctly</i>	Listens to and repeats rhythmic patterns, for example, clap, clap-clap, clap, and copies correctly			
<i>Listens to and recalls simple word sequences in order (for example, big, beg, bag)</i>	Listens to and recalls simple word sequences, in order, such as big, beg, bag. Start with three words and build up to four or more so that memory of what the ears have heard is developed	Listens to and recalls in order simple word sequences such as big, beg, bag. Start with three words, build up to four or more	Listens to and recalls in order simple word sequences. For example, rat, mat, cat, sat. Start with three words and build up to four or more	Listens to and recalls simple word sequences such as "spark", "bark", "cart", "start". Start with three words and build up to four or more
<i>Talks about pictures in posters, theme charts, books, etc.</i>	Talks about pictures in posters, theme charts, books, etc. related to a minimum of five themes per term	Talks about pictures in posters, theme charts, books, etc. related to a minimum of five themes per term	Talks about pictures in posters, theme charts, books, etc. related to a minimum of five themes per term	Talks about pictures in posters, theme charts, books related to a minimum of five themes per term
	Develops skills to select and identify a specific sound when a background noise is present or music is playing, for example, select the teacher's voice from noises or sounds in the background			
				Passes on messages
	Develops language to develop concepts: shape, colour, age, time and sequence	Uses language to develop concepts in all subject areas such as quantity, direction, time, sequence, colour, age	Uses language to develop concepts in all subjects. For example, Mathematics: quantity, size, time, shape, age, direction and colour during ring time or informally during free play	Uses language to develop concepts in all subjects such as quantity, size, shape, direction, colour, speed, time, age and sequence
	Identifies and describes similarities and differences	Identifies and describes similarities and differences	Identifies and describes similarities and differences	Identifies and describes similarities and differences
<i>Matches and sorts things according to shape, colour, etc.</i>	Matches things that go together, and compares things that are different	Matches things that go together, and compares things that are different	Matches things that go together and compares things that are different	Matches things that go together, and compares things that are different
	Classifies familiar items such as puts all toys in box, books on shelves, crayons in tins, sorts according to colour, etc.	Classifies things according to colour, shape or size	Classifies things according to own criteria	Classifies things according to own criteria and more complex criteria such as textures

Listening and Speaking

Overview	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4
<i>Names and points to parts of the body</i>	Identifies parts from the whole such as names and points to parts of the body	Identifies parts from the whole. For example, names parts of the body such as elbow, wrist, knee, etc.	Identifies parts from the whole (for example, parts that make up a picture)	Identifies parts from the whole in a 2-Dimensional format and constructs in 3-Dimensional format. Copies a picture or a pattern from a card [2-D] using blocks or plastic shapes [3-D]
	Solves and completes at least five or more piece jigsaw puzzles	Solves and completes ten or more piece jigsaw puzzles	Completes between ten and twenty piece jigsaw puzzles	Completes 20 piece or more jigsaw puzzles
	Picks out selected information from a description	Picks out selected information from a description	Picks out selected information from a description	Picks out selected information from an oral description. For example, listens for the starting time of an event from an announcement
	Recognises and points out common objects in pictures	Looks carefully at pictures and talks about common experiences	Looks carefully at pictures and talks about common experiences	Uses pictures to predict content of stories
			Understands that pictures and photographs convey meaning about events, people, places and things and talks about these	Understands that pictures and photographs convey meaning about events, people, places and things and talks about these
	Participates in activities to perceive objects in the foreground and the background and to separate them meaningfully such as finds an image in a busy or detailed picture	Finds specified images in a busy or detailed picture	Isolates images from the foreground and background in pictures and simple designs	Identifies the foreground and background in pictures as separate elements
	Plays games such as "Where is it?" finding an object hidden in a classroom among other items	Plays games such as "Search!" finding an object hidden in a classroom among other items	Finds object hidden in a classroom among other items and guides peers to items using simple directions	
	Distinguishes between the shape of different letters and words through activities such as sorting identical objects, viewing sequence of nearly identical pictures, picking out the one that is different and explaining why it is different	Distinguishes between the shape of different letters and words. For example, sorts identical objects, views a sequence of nearly identical pictures and picks out the one that is different and explains why it is different	Distinguishes between the shape of different letters and words (for example, "c" and "a")	Distinguishes between the shapes of different letters and words: sorts plastic letters into groups of the same letter
	Remembers what the eyes have seen in a memory game. For example, put different objects on the table, children look at these, teacher covers objects and children have to recall what they saw on the table			
	Completes a puzzle or picture			Matches pictures and words using puzzles
				Plays direction games with teacher and friends. Example: "snakes and ladders" board game

Reading and Viewing	Emergent Reading			
Overview	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4
<i>Holds the book the right way up and turns pages correctly</i>	Holds the book the right way up and turns pages correctly	Holds the book the right way up and turns pages correctly when “reading”	Holds the book the right way up and turns pages correctly	
			Discusses book handling and care	Discusses book handling and care
<i>Acts out parts of a story, song or rhyme</i>		Acts out parts of a story, song or rhyme	Acts out a story, song or rhyme	Acts out a story, song or rhyme
<i>Recognises own name and names of some other children in the class</i>	Recognises own name and names of at least five other children in the class	Recognises own name and names of five other children in the class		
	Understands that print communicates meaning: a word can represent one’s own name	Understands that print communicates meaning. Knows words can represent own name, names of people, places and things		
	Understands that written words refer to spoken words	Understands that written words refer to spoken words such as daily news written down by the teacher as the child speaks		
<i>Begins to “read” high frequency words seen in the classroom and at school, for example, door, cupboard</i>	“Reads” high frequency words: own name, common brand names such as SPAR, Coke, and television programme titles, etc.	“Reads” high frequency words: peer names, calendar and weather words	Begins to recognise high frequency words used in the classroom: weather words, days of the week, peers’ names, months of the year	Begins to “read” high frequency words seen in the classroom and at school: door, cupboard, etc.
			“Reads” high frequency words in the community: road signs, shop names	
	Matches words to words on objects and named items such as name cards on tables, door, window	“Reads” theme related flashcards and captions in a group with the teacher	Can match words to objects: matches labels to labelled items on an interest table	Matches words to pictures in print such as word-picture puzzles
			Distinguishes pictures from print: points to a word and asks what the word is	Distinguishes pictures from print. For example, points to a word and asks for it to be read
				Points at words rather than pictures when “reading”
<i>Reads picture books</i>	“Reads” independently books for pleasure in the library or classroom reading corner	“Reads” independently books for pleasure in the library or classroom reading corner	“Reads” books independently for pleasure in the library or classroom reading corner, turning the pages correctly, showing respect for books	“Reads” books independently for pleasure in the library or classroom reading corner, turning the pages correctly, showing respect for books
		Uses pictures to “read” simple phrase or caption books. The dog – a page with a picture of a dog	Uses pictures to understand simple phrases and sentences in a book. For example, a picture of a dog and a sentence that reads, “Look at the dog.”	

Reading and Viewing	Emergent Reading			
Overview	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4
			"Reads" picture books with three or four predictable sentences. For example, It is a dog. Look at the dog. It is a big dog.	"Reads" picture books of increasing complexity
<i>Interprets pictures, for example, makes up own story and "reads" the pictures</i>	Makes up own story by "reading" the pictures	Interprets pictures to make up own story: "reads" the pictures	Interprets pictures to make up own story, that is, "reads" the pictures	Interprets pictures to construct ideas. For example, makes up own story and "reads" the pictures
	Uses pictures to predict what the story is about: "reads" pictures and captions showing an understanding that pictures and words are related but different	Uses pictures to predict what the story is about. For example, "reads" picture and caption books showing an understanding that pictures and words are related, but different. Points to words when "reading"	Uses cover of book and illustrations throughout the text to predict storyline	Uses cover of book and illustrations throughout the text to predict storyline
<i>"Reads" enlarged texts such as poems, big books, posters</i>	"Reads" enlarged texts such as poems, big books and posters as a whole class with the teacher (Shared Reading)	"Reads" enlarged texts such as poems, big books, posters and electronic texts (computer texts) as a whole class with the teacher (Shared Reading)	"Reads" big books or other enlarged texts as a whole class with the teacher	"Reads" big books or other enlarged texts as a whole class with the teacher
			"Reads" class or group generated texts. For example, sentences written by the teacher while the children are watching, talking and dictating	"Reads" class generated texts such as sentences scribed by the teacher, in a group with the teacher
			Joins in the shared reading of texts with increasing confidence and enjoyment	Joins in the shared reading of texts with increasing confidence and enjoyment
<i>Makes links to own experience when reading with the teacher</i>			Makes links to own experience when reading with the teacher, viewing television or pictures	Makes links to own experience when reading with the teacher, viewing television or pictures
<i>Describes characters in stories and gives opinions</i>	Discusses and describes characters in stories	Discusses and describes characters in stories	Describes the characteristics of characters in stories or television and gives opinions	Describes the characteristics of characters in stories or television and gives opinions
<i>Predicts what will happen in a story through the pictures</i>		Predicts what will happen next in the story using familiar texts and picture cues		
<i>Answers questions based on the story read</i>			Answers a range of questions based on the story read	Answers a range of questions based on the story read
		Listens to and discusses stories and other texts read or told aloud. Recalls details and states main idea	Listens to, and discusses, stories and other texts read aloud Recalls details and states main idea from a story read by the teacher	Recalls details and states main idea
<i>Pretends to read and adopts a "reading voice"</i>	Pretends to read and adopts a "reading voice"	Pretends to read and adopts a "reading voice"	Pretends to "read" and adopts a "reading voice"	

Reading and Viewing	Emergent Reading			
Overview	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4
				"Reads" personal texts such as sentences written by the teacher
<i>Draws pictures capturing main idea of the stories</i>	Draws pictures capturing main idea of the stories, songs or rhymes	Draws pictures capturing the main idea of stories, songs or rhymes	Draws pictures of stories, songs or rhymes	Draws pictures of stories, songs or rhymes
		Responds to stories through creative art: paints a picture of the story		
	Responds to stories through movement and drama activities or rings	Responds to stories through movement and drama activities or rings (for example, "The Three Little Pigs")		
<i>Arranges a set of pictures in such a way that they form a story</i>	Sequences pictures in a story Uses sequencing skills to order three pictures and relate the story created	Arranges a set of pictures in such a way that they form a story and then "reads" the story		
			Identifies the sequence of events in simple stories	Identifies the sequence of events in simple stories
<i>Recognises and points out common objects in pictures</i>				
	Develops correct eye movements such as following a swinging ball moved from left to right	Develops correct eye movement such as following a ball moved from left to right	Develops eye movements. For example, follows a pencil moved from left to right	
	Participates in directionality activities such as moving the body left to right and top to bottom	Develops directionality such as moving blocks from left to right and top to bottom	Develops directionality: "reads" a series of pictures or arrows from left to right and top to bottom	
	Distinguishes between the shapes of different letters and words such as sorting objects that are the same, sequencing of pictures, picking out the picture that is different			
	Uses memory skills to recall items seen such as letters, shapes or concrete objects			
	Completes a visual picture such as building puzzles, completing pictures			
		Talks about texts such as stories using terms such as "beginning", "middle", "end", "sound", "word", "letter", "rhyme"	Uses words like "sound", "word", "letter", "rhyme", "beginning", "middle", "end" when talking about text	

Phonics	Phonological/Phonemic Awareness			
Overview	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4
	Identifies a sound that does not belong in a sequence: "Which sound does not belong – b, b, k, b; d, d, d, t?"			
	Identifies whether two given sounds are the same or different: /p/, /p/ [same]; /p/, /d/ [different]			
Identifies rhyming words in well-known rhymes and songs such as Humpty Dumpty		Identifies rhyming words in well-known rhymes and songs. For example, Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall – Humpty Dumpty had a great fall	Identifies rhyming words in well-known rhymes and songs and in sequences of rhyming words such as Incey Wincey Spider ...	Identifies rhyming words in well-known rhymes and songs and in sequences of rhyming words
		Anticipates rhyming words in new songs and rhymes and completes the line or sentence	Substitutes rhyming words in common songs and rhymes. For example, Humpty Dumpty sat on a ball. Humpty Dumpty said, "Oh! I'll fall."	
Segments oral sentences into individual words	Can identify that oral sentences are made up of individual words: clap on each word in a sentence where all words have only one syllable [Ben is good]		Segments oral sentences into individual words using words of one syllable first (for example, Sam - is - a - boy)	Segments oral sentences into individual words. For example, claps on each word in a sentence using words of one syllable first – "It is time for lunch"
Divides multisyllabic words into syllables		Divides multisyllabic words into syllables: uses clapping or drumbeats on each syllable in the word "ba-na-na" or identifies the number of syllables (claps) in the names of the children in the class: "Lu-ne-tta" has three claps, "Rose" one clap	Divides multisyllabic words into syllables: uses claps or drumbeats on each syllable in words and names such as "cupboard", "Jacqueline". Children then count the syllables	Divides multisyllabic words into syllables: crocodile – croc-o-dile
Begins to recognize that words are made up of sounds, for example, the beginning letter/s of their names	Begins to recognise that words are made up of sounds: gives the beginning sound of own name	Recognises initial spoken sounds especially at the beginning of own name		Begins to recognise that words are made up of sounds such as the beginning letter/s of their names
	Distinguishes aurally between different sounds especially at the beginning of own name	Distinguishes aurally between different sounds especially at the beginning of words		
		Can recognise sounds at the beginning of some words such as friends' names	Recognises sounds at the beginning of some words: friends' names or names of animals	Recognises sounds at the beginning of some words
		Listens for the odd word in a sequence where all words begin with the same sound. For example, <u>ring</u> , <u>rose</u> , <u>round</u> , <u>pose</u> ; or identifies whether two given sounds are the same or different: /c/, /c/ [same] or /c/, /g/ [different]		

Phonics	Phonological/Phonemic Awareness			
Overview	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4
<p><i>Recognises aurally and visually some initial consonants and vowels especially at the beginning of a word</i></p>			<p>Recognises aurally and visually some initial consonants and vowels especially at the beginning of common words. For example, in Helen's name she tells the teacher as she points to the "h" that it says /h/</p>	<p>Recognises aurally and visually some initial consonants and vowels especially at the beginning of common words</p>
			<p>Recognises and names some letters of the alphabet especially own name. For example, My name, Diane, begins with a letter d</p>	<p>Recognises and names some letters of the alphabet such as letters in own name</p>
		<p>Understands that words consist of more than one sound. For example, sat – s-a-t done aurally</p>	<p>Understands that words consist of more than one sound. For example, "hand" has four sounds h-a-n-d</p>	<p>Relates sounds to letters and words and understands that words consist of more than one sound: duck is d-u-ck – done aurally</p>

Handwriting	Emergent Handwriting			
Overview	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4
<i>Develops fine motor control using scissors to cut out bold outlined pictures, shapes, etc.</i>	Develops fine motor control: uses scissors to cut fringes on paper mats, etc.	Develops fine motor control using scissors to cut out bold outlined pictures, shapes, etc.	Develops fine motor control using scissors to cut out bold outlined pictures, shapes, etc.	Uses scissors to cut out bold outlined pictures, shapes, etc.
<i>Uses a range of writing tools, for example, paintbrushes, wax crayons</i>	Uses a range of writing tools: paintbrushes, wax crayons, etc. during free indoor play or creative art activities	Uses a range of writing tools: paintbrushes, wax crayons, etc.		Uses a range of writing tools such as paintbrushes, wax crayons
<i>Forms letters using finger painting, paintbrushes, wax crayons, etc. starting at the right point and following the correct direction</i>	"Writes" in sand trays	Begins to form letters using finger painting, paintbrushes, wax crayons	Begins to form letters: uses finger painting, paintbrushes, wax crayons, pegboards or elastic boards	Forms letters using finger paint, paintbrushes, wax crayons Forms letters with a variety of writing tools such as crayons, pencils, chalk
	Forms letters in various ways using the whole body: by using own body to make the letter "l"	Develops large muscle control: works in pairs or on own to form letters with their bodies	Develops large muscle control: works in pairs or on own to form letters with their bodies	Form letters with their bodies in pairs or on their own
				Forms some lower case letters correctly, that is, starts and ends in the correct place
<i>Traces simple outlines of pictures, patterns and letters in own name where the correct starting point and direction arrows are included on all letters</i>	Traces simple outlines of pictures and patterns	Traces simple outlines of pictures, patterns and own names where the correct starting point and writing direction are indicated on letters	Traces simple outlines of pictures, patterns and own names where the correct starting point and writing direction are indicated on letters	Traces simple outlines of pictures, patterns and own names where the correct starting point and writing direction are indicated on letters
<i>Copies patterns, words and letters (using the correct starting point and direction when forming letters)</i>	Copies patterns onto pegboards	Copies patterns onto pegboards and copies patterns, words and letters onto paper	Copies patterns onto pegboards and words and letters onto paper	Copies patterns, words and letters
		Holds crayons correctly using an acceptable pencil grip	Holds crayons using an acceptable pencil grip and writes using a good writing position	Holds crayons correctly showing preference for a particular hand to be used: left/right hand dominance
<i>Develops small muscle skills through finger play, for example, playdough, screwing nuts onto bolts</i>	Develops fine motor skills for strengthening hands: rolls Plasticine, models with playdough, screws nuts onto bolts, plays the piano in the air, etc.	Develops fine motor skills for strengthening hand muscles: rolls Plasticine, models with playdough, plays a trumpet in the air, threads lacing cards, beads, etc.	Develops fine motor skills for strengthening hand muscles: forms letters with playdough, threads lacing cards, beads	Develops fine motor skills for strengthening hand muscles
	Develops fine motor control to strengthen fingers: plays finger rhymes with finger actions or rolls small paper balls between fingers, etc.	Develops fine motor control by playing more finger rhymes with finger actions	Develops fine motor control by playing more finger rhymes with finger actions	Plays finger rhymes with finger actions

Handwriting	Emergent Handwriting			
Overview	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4
<i>Develops hand-eye coordination by playing, for example, catching and throwing, drawing and painting</i>	Develops hand-eye coordination: plays catch with beanbags, balls, paper balls, draws with crayons or paints informally during outdoor play, etc.	Develops hand-eye coordination: plays catch with beanbags, large or tennis balls, paper balls; creates drawings and makes more complex patterns with crayons	Develops hand-eye coordination: plays catch with beanbags, large or tennis balls, paper balls, etc., creates drawings, makes more complex patterns with crayons	Plays catch with beanbags, large or tennis balls, paper balls, etc. as well as through creating drawings, making more complex patterns with crayons
	Develops directionality: moves parts of the body to the left or right, up or down, etc.			
	Crosses the midline: takes the right hand across the midline to touch the left shoulder, etc.			
		"Writes" using a correct sitting position		

Writing	Emergent Writing			
Overview	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4
<i>Draws or paints pictures to convey a message</i>	Draws or paints pictures to convey messages during creative art activities such as about a personal experience	Draws pictures to convey a message such as own "news"	Draws pictures to convey a message about a personal experience and uses this as a starting point for writing. With help adds a word or phrase to a drawing	Draws pictures to convey a message about a personal experience and uses this as a starting point for writing: with help adds a word, phrase or sentence
	Role plays writing in play situations: takes a telephone message, writes a traffic fine, etc.	Role plays writing in play situations: makes greeting cards, writes letters, etc.	Role plays writing in play situations. For example, "writes" lists	Role plays "writing" in play situations. For example, "writes" lists
		Spontaneously copies print from the environment such as labels on common household products when playing	Copies print from the environment when playing. For example, labels from advertisements	Copies print from the environment when playing such as labels from advertisements
<i>Makes an attempt to write letters using squiggles, scribbles, etc.</i>	Understands that writing and drawing are different: pretend writing represented using squiggles	Understands that writing and drawing are different and begins to copy letters and numerals from the classroom environment in own writing attempts: pretend writing using a mixture of copied letters and squiggles	Understands that writing and drawing are different and begins to copy letters and numerals from the classroom environment in own writing attempts: pretend writing using a mixture of copied letters and squiggles	Copies letters and numerals from the classroom environment when "writing"
				Copies short sentences and words written by the teacher
<i>Copies known letters in own name to represent writing</i>	Copies known letters in own name to represent writing: copies own name			
<i>Contributes ideas for a class news book by means of drawings</i>	Contributes ideas for a class news book by means of drawings		Contributes ideas for a class news book	Contributes ideas for a class news book
<i>Makes own books and contributes to class book collection</i>		Contributes sentences to a class piece of writing: child dictates as the teacher writes	Contributes sentences to a class piece of writing: child dictates as the teacher writes	Contributes sentences to a class piece of writing: child dictates as the teacher writes
<i>Talks to own writing, for example, "reads" what squiggles "say"</i>	"Reads" own writing: "reads" what squiggles "say"	"Reads" what letters and squiggles "say"		"Reads" own and others' "writing"
				"Writes" and asks others to give meaning to what has been written
				Makes attempts at familiar forms of writing, using known letters. For example, "writes" a letter home

Writing	Emergent Writing			
Overview	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4
"Writes" from left to right and top to bottom	"Writes" from left to right and top to bottom	Begins to "write" observing conventions of directionality: "writes" from left to right, top to bottom of page	Begins to "write" observing conventions of directionality: "writes" from left to right, top to bottom of page	"Writes" observing conventions of directionality: "writes" from left to right, top to bottom of page
			Uses writing tools with greater confidence and ease: crayons and pencils	Uses writing tools with increased confidence and ease
	Groups words: those that start with same initial sound such as "Charmaine" and "Shireen"; or same letter such as "Mpho" and "Michael"	Groups words that share the same initial sound or letter	Groups pictures of rhyming words, for example, "bat", "cat", "hat"	Groups pictures of rhyming words such as "can", "fan", "pan"
	Identifies name in print	Identifies a letter or a space between words in print: own names or familiar words or in a book	Identifies a letter or a space between words in print, for example, their names or familiar words or in a book	Identifies a letter or a space between words in print such as their names or familiar words or in a book
			Uses terms like "beginning", "middle", "end", "sound", "word", "letter" when talking about texts	Uses terms like "beginning", "middle", "end", "sound", "word", "letter", "rhyme"