The Initial Code

	Autumn	**Spring**	**Summer**
Review	Content from previously taught units based on formative assessment		
Current unit	Initial Code Units 1-7	Initial Code Units 8-11	Bridging Unit
Reading and writing in connected text	Reading: decodable texts from at least one unit behind the current unit Dictation: content from at least two units behind the current unit		

The Sounds-Write programme starts by building on what children can already do: they can speak! They are taught to read and spell using a reversible code that is anchored in the spoken sounds of the English language.

The Initial Code begins as a transparent introduction to the English alphabetic code (Units 1 to 6), where sounds are represented by one-letter spellings. It is designed to build students' trust in the decoding and encoding system within CVC and VC words before moving on to words with more complex structures that include adjacent consonant sounds (CVCC, CCVC, CCVCC, etc) in later units (Units 8-10).

The Initial Code then moves on to the more complex concepts that sounds may be spelled by more than one letter (1, 2 or 3 letter spellings introduced in the Initial Code Units 7 and 11) and that the same sound can be spelled in more than one way (Initial Code Unit 11).

The Bridging Unit serves as a gentle introduction to what students will encounter in the Extended Code. It introduces formally the concept that the same sound can be spelled in more than one way, using simple examples like the spellings of the sound /k/ with the spellings < c >, < k > or < ck >, or the sound /ch/ with the letters < ch > and < tch >, which they have already encountered informally in Unit 11.

Whilst working on the Initial Code, students will develop these key skills:

- Segmenting -– the ability to pull apart the individual sounds in words.

- Blending – the ability to push sounds together to build words.

- Phoneme manipulation – the ability to insert sounds into and delete sounds out of words.

They will be able to perform these skills proficiently in simple 3-, 4- and 5-sound words with the structures CVC, VCC, CVCC, CCVC, CCCVC and CCVCC.

They will learn that:

- We spell sounds one at a time from left to right across the page.

- Letters are symbols (spellings) that represent sounds.

- A sound may be spelled by 1, 2 or 3 letters.

And they will begin to have an understanding that:

- The same sound can be spelled in more than one way.

- Many spellings can represent more than one sound.

The Extended Code & Polysyllabic Words

Year 1 overview

	Autumn	**Spring**	**Summer**
Review	Content (inc. polysyllabic words) from previously taught units based on formative assessment		
Current unit	Review of Initial Code Extended Code Units 1-9 Introduction of polysyllabic words*	Extended Code Units 10-18	Extended Code Units 19-26
Reading and writing in connected text	Reading: decodable texts from at least one unit behind the current unit and begin introducing other carefully selected texts Dictation: content from at least two units behind the current unit		

*Polysyllabic Words are introduced from the second week of Unit 4 /oe/.

Year 2 overview

	Autumn	**Spring**	**Summer**
Review	Content (inc. polysyllabic words) from previously taught units based on formative assessment		
Current unit	Extended Code Units 27-34	Extended Code Units 35-42	Extended Code Units 43-49
Reading and writing in connected text	Reading: decodable texts from previously taught units and other carefully selected texts Dictation: content from at least two units behind the current unit		

Year 3 overview

	Autumn	**Spring**	**Summer**
Review	Content from previously taught units based on formative assessment		
Current Unit	Extended Code Units 1-17 (plus 'More spellings' 27, 29, 32, 34, 36 with their 'First spellings' unit*) using more challenging Polysyllabic Words	Extended Code Units 18-37 (plus 'More spellings' 43 with its 'First spellings' unit*) using Polysyllabic Words	Extended Code Units 38-49 using Polysyllabic Words
Reading and writing in connected text	Reading: decodable texts from previously taught units for children who still need this, otherwise, from a wider selection of texts Dictation: content from at least two units behind the current unit for children who still need this, otherwise, from a wider selection of texts		

*Note that Unit 27 'More spellings' for /ae/ would be taught along with Unit 1 'First spellings' /ae/ as a combined /ae/ unit. This is the same for all 'First spellings' and 'More spellings' units. This gives 33 'sound' units to be taught in Year 3.

Using three-, four- and five-syllable words, Year 4 students should systematically review the Extended Code (combining 'First spellings' and 'More spellings' as in Year 3). This is important as it allows students to review previously taught content and further develop their knowledge of sound-spelling correspondences, whilst extending their skills in reading and spelling polysyllabic words, and meeting the National Curriculum statutory spelling objectives. This will ensure that they have mastered the knowledge and skills needed to have efficient and effective strategies for reading and spelling unfamiliar words in the wider curriculum and in their everyday lives.

Years 5, 6 and beyond

At this stage, planning for discrete teaching of reading and spelling will depend on the needs of the cohort. Sounds-Write lessons should be used to teach the reading and spelling of domain-specific vocabulary as it is encountered in the wider curriculum and to meet the National Curriculum statutory spelling objectives. For example, Lesson 15 can be used to analyse words in subjects such as science, history and so on.

The Extended Code

The Extended Code follows on from the Initial Code.

Whilst working on the Extended Code, students are explicitly taught that:

- A sound may be spelled by 1, 2, 3 or 4 letters.

- The same sound can be spelled in more than one way.

- Many spellings can represent more than one sound.

The majority of the units focus on the phonemic nature of the code (sounds) with some units that focus on the graphemic nature (spellings) (see 'Learning objectives: The Extended Code' in the manual). The sounds and spellings are presented in the order which allows students to read the greatest number of words as early as possible. Some of the sounds are visited as 'First spellings' (the most common ways to spell the sound) and then 'More spellings'.

Conceptual understanding should be reinforced throughout, for example, by pointing out that it's two letters but it is one sound at every opportunity. This is part of the schema we're trying to build.

The complete sequence for the Extended Code can be found in the manual.

Once they have started the Extended Code, students are also taught to read and spell polysyllabic words. 80% of the words in the English language are polysyllabic, hence the need to introduce working with polysyllabic words as soon as possible.

The introduction of Polysyllabic Words will follow this sequence:

- CVC | CVC (e.g. sunset) and VC | CVC (e.g. upset) words with sound-spelling correspondences from the Initial Code. These are words in which syllables are comprised of single-letter or two-letter spellings, many of them are compound words.

- Increase levels of complexity by teaching words with a more complex structure containing sound spelling correspondences from the Initial Code: VC | CVCC (e.g., insect), CVC | CVCC (e.g., dentist), CVCC | CVC (e.g., desktop), CCV | CVCC (e.g., project), VC | CCVCC (e.g., inspect), etc.

- During this process you students can be primed to recognise schwas and develop strategies for spelling them correctly. This means you will need to:

    - Identify the weak and strong syllables in words which do not contain schwas. (e.g., sunlit)

    - Identify the weak and strong syllables in two-syllable words which contain schwas using sound-spelling correspondences from the Initial Code (e.g., collect)

- When students are secure in their knowledge, skills and understanding, move on to three-syllable words with sound-spelling correspondences from the Initial Code (e.g., equipment, contradict).

- Eventually, students will go through the Extended Code again using polysyllabic words with more complex structures, including those with suffixes and those with more than three syllables. We advise increasing structural complexity (the number of syllables and adjacent consonants) before adding less frequently encountered spellings of sounds and complexity of meaning.