

Reference Materials for Word Work

Guidance for Headteachers and English Co-ordinators

This Folio looks at some of the dictionary material available to schools for underpinning word level work in literacy lessons. A thumb nail sketch has been given of each title to enable you to decide which books you would like to consider adding to your book stock. We are grateful to Devon Schools Library Services for obtaining titles for us to review. This list includes the following:

- **Dictionaries**
- **Illustrated Dictionaries**
- **Etymological Dictionaries**
- **Rhyming Dictionaries**
- **Early Word Books and Alphabet Books**
- **Word Banks**
- **Phonics Word Books**
- **Speaking and Listening materials**

Using Dictionaries

Dictionaries are not primarily for spelling as many people think: in fact you have to be able to spell in order to look up a word in the first place, or at least have a very good idea how a word might be spelt. Dictionaries are for the meanings and derivations of words and figure as an important part in the acquisition of any language.

The National Literacy Strategy encourages Shared and Independent use of dictionaries and they are an important resource in every classroom. Many schools like to provide whole class sets of age appropriate dictionaries, supplementing these with a few copies of more specialist type dictionaries for rhyming and etymology. With a much greater initial expenditure, hard-backed class sets will probably work out cheaper in the long run, bearing in mind the amount of handling they are likely to get.

It is important to offer children a range of dictionaries and word books to choose from, remembering not only the more able pupils, but also those children who need illustrations and less cluttered text when looking up words.

Review of Dictionaries

Oxford School Dictionary (Oxford) hb. 0-19-911301-7 £9.99

New 2005 Edition.

Although written for secondary students, a copy of this dictionary would be useful to have in any **KS2** classroom. Up-to-date words, simple definitions, grammar and language tips, all presented in a clear accessible way.

Etymologies are given for most words. 45,000 words and phrases. Upper KS2 teachers try to get one or two copies if you can!

Oxford Concise School Dictionary (Oxford) hb 0-19-910969-9 £8.99

Abridged version of Oxford School Dictionary. This dictionary is aimed at 10-14 year olds and is set out in the same way as most adult dictionaries yet easy to use. A good choice for everyday use by **able Yr 5/6 children**.

40,000 words and phrases.

Oxford Junior School Dictionary (Oxford) hb 0-19-910885-4 £7.99.

Good choice for a **younger KS2** class set. Easy to use with the headword printed in bold and in red. Over 10,000 words and phrases. Definitions of verbs and adjectives are written as full sentences to make them clearer and easier to understand.

The Oxford Concise Dictionary (Oxford) hb. 0199109087 £6.99

This dictionary is aimed at **10-14 year olds** and is set out in the same way as most adult dictionaries, but is easier to use because it eschews the use of the abbreviations which often clutter and confuse. A good choice for everyday use by **able pupils in Yr6/7** and useful for those students who automatically reject any dictionary with the word 'children' or 'school' or 'primary' in the title.

The Oxford Primary Dictionary (Oxford) hb. 0199108811 £7.99

New edition (2002).

The Oxford primary dictionary contains over 30,000 words and phrases and contains many of the features of the previous edition. The main innovation is the introduction of **explanatory panels** to explore word origins and uses and to highlight potential confusions, e.g. under *goal* is a spelling information box which warns readers 'not to confuse *goal* with *gaol* which means prison.'

Appendices on prefixes, suffixes, grammar, spelling and 'countries and people' (although nothing like as comprehensive as the information in the equivalent Collins dictionary).

Chambers School Dictionary (Chambers) 0-550-10073-3 hb £7.99.

Designed for pupils aged 10-14. Headwords in bold with colour used to highlight particular parts of entries to make them easier to find. Over 70,000 words phrases and definitions. Contains many essential terms from **curriculum subjects** such as maths and geography. Useful notes to point out common confusions e.g. under the definition of **excess** it reads 'do not confuse with **access**'. Useful for able Y5/6 children.

Chamber's Compact Dictionary (Chambers) hb. 0550100024 £10.99

A new dictionary derived from the Chambers 21st Century Dictionary. A comprehensive (an adjective which, in dictionary terms, inevitably also means having very small print) adult dictionary with 170,000 references and definitions. Clear, concise definitions. Easy to use. Good on word derivations. Also includes a **World Reference section** which gathers together a host of facts and figures about the world today, e.g. major cities, the nations of the world, largest geographical features etc.

Chamber's Primary Dictionary (Chambers) hb. 0550100466 £7.99

Intended for KS2 use, the dictionary is easy to use and is set out with headwords and word classes picked out in blue to aid clarity. The dictionary includes a number of **clearly labelled diagrams**, e.g. the eye, the body parts of an insect, a bicycle and language panels, which explain about particular word classes (these panels also downloadable from the Chambers website for classroom use).

Collins Primary Dictionary (Collins) hb. 0003161579 £9.99; pb. 0003161587 £7.99

Aimed at the same audience as the Chambers and Oxford primary dictionaries, this is the most obviously attractive in terms of presentation. Very easy to find one's way around, with a good size font in use and a lot of white space. **Colour illustrations and photographs** add to the appeal, although many are there merely for that purpose, e.g. it is useful to have the photograph of a *gargoyle* (a word which a child may not know and where the photograph is there to confirm or add to the reader's understanding), whereas a photograph of an unlabelled and unidentified *leaf* clearly does not. The appendices contain **literacy and numeracy word banks** plus grammar support.

The ACE Spelling Dictionary – David Moseley (LDA) 1-8550-3214-7 £9.95

A unique dictionary, since the user finds the word by identifying the **initial vowel sound**, deciding whether it's **long or short**, counting the **number of syllables** and then using the special index to find the page where the word is spelt. Sounds complicated? Not once you have used it a few times and certain children (and adults) find this much easier to use than a conventional dictionary, especially good readers who experience problems with spelling. For some individuals it has proved a real boon.

The Cat in the Hat Dictionary - Dr Seuss (Collins) pb. 0007133685 £7.99

This dictionary was originally published in 1964 and contains some 500 words featuring characters familiar from the Dr. Seuss stories such as Aaron the alligator. Each word is placed in a phrase or sentence, many of them humorously; this would be a good choice for encouraging talk about words. N.B. This does reflect its American origins and contains words such as *automobile*, *sweater* and *truck*. Strange, therefore that it should include a definition for *trousers* rather than *pants*.

Also available: Dr Seuss's ABC (Collins) pb. 0001713086 £4.99

My ABC dictionary - Irene Yates (Collins) 0001984020 hb £8.99

Intended for children at the **Foundation Stage**, there is a double page spread for each letter of the alphabet with approximately 250 featured words.

Generously and humorously illustrated with a series of animal characters, one word is accompanied by an **alliterative sentence**, e.g. *The panda pulls the penguin out of the puddle*, while the remaining words are placed in simple sentences to show word usage.

My Oxford Reading Tree Dictionary (Oxford) hb. 0199106908 £8.99 pb.
0199106916 £4.99

Featuring words and characters from the popular reading scheme, this dictionary contains over 300 words from **Stages 1-5 of Oxford Reading Tree** as well as the **NLS sight recognition words for Reception to Year 2**.

Clearly set out and illustrated, each word is also placed in a short sentence.

Plurals are not given, but verbs are indicated by a blue square, and a section at the end of the dictionary gives the relevant past participle. Also included is a further un-illustrated alphabetical list of 'useful words for writing' and pages of colours, numbers, days of the week and months of the year. [Also available in small format.]

Illustrated Dictionaries

Oxford Children's Dictionary (Oxford) hb 0-19-911121-9 £7.99

Contains over 20,000 words and phrases. Headwords in bold and in red. Contains some pictures.

Oxford Junior Illustrated Dictionary (Oxford) hb 0-19-910882-X £10.99 pb £7.99 Age 6+.

Easy to use with over 300 **colour photographs** and illustrations. Headwords in red and bold with definitions of verbs and adverbs written in full sentences. Suitable for Yr 2-4.

Oxford Very First Dictionary (Oxford) hb 0-19-911118-9 £8.99 pb £5.99.

A first dictionary for **younger children**. Over 300 words each one accompanied in a picture. Useful to develop early dictionary skills in a simple and enjoyable way.

DK First Dictionary (Betty Root - Dorling Kindersley) hb 0-7513-6304-9 £9.99.

1000 entries clearly explained in simple vocabulary. **Large type**. Each word further explained with a full-**colour photograph or artwork**. Useful to develop early dictionary skills in a simple and enjoyable way.

Read it Yourself School Dictionary (Ladybird) pb 1-8442-2257-8 £4.99

Contains over 1000 words explained in simple language. Easy to read **comic sans style font** with headwords in bold and blue. Definitions from other curriculum areas such as science, technology and IT. Amusing pictures. Useful **up to Yr 3**.

Thesauruses/Thesauri

Did you know that the word thesaurus came to us from Greek via Latin in the 16th century, and means “storehouse, treasure”? The first *Thesaurus of English Words and Phrases* was published by Roget in 1852 and the modern dictionary entry for the word describes a book that lists words in groups of synonyms and related concepts. If we are encouraging children to expand their vocabulary and to select interesting words in their writing, a good thesaurus needs to be in every classroom. Generally speaking publishers do not make it easy for younger children to access the information they present, so look out for publications which give the **headword**, followed by the **alternative word in an illustrative sentence**, so that shades of meaning are immediately clear to the child. Consider buying in a thesaurus with limited words so that you can teach the skills needed in guided group work.

Oxford School Thesaurus (Oxford) hb 0-19-911125-1 £9.99

New edition, 2005.

Over 150,000 synonyms. Would be useful to have at least one copy in a **Y5/6 class**. Includes word classes, antonyms and up-to-date example sentences to show how words are used in context. Highlights words such as big and nice that are often overused.

Oxford Junior Thesaurus (Oxford) hb 0-19-910857-9 £7.99

Good choice for the **whole of KS2**. Quick and easy to use with over 20,000 synonyms. Generously set out. Example sentences help show the different meanings of the headword. **Coloured thumb tabs** help with alphabetical order.

Oxford Junior Illustrated Thesaurus (Oxford) hb 0-19-910859-5 £7.99

Suitable for whole KS2. Easy to use but the illustrations are few and not particularly helpful. 20,000 similar and related words. **Coloured thumb tabs** help with alphabetical order.

Oxford Children's Thesaurus (Oxford) hb 0-19-911120-0 £7.99

Suitable for the **whole of KS2**. Headword is printed in bold and in blue and each **headword is illustrated** by and of its use. No thumb tabs for alphabetical order.

The Oxford Concise School Thesaurus (Oxford) hb. 0199109079 £6.99

This is an abridged edition of the Oxford school thesaurus (see below) with over 100,000 synonyms. Easy to read and **easy to navigate**. A good choice for fluent readers and writers at **upper KS2**.

The Oxford First thesaurus (Oxford) hb. 0199107270 £9.99; pb. 0199107289 £6.99

This is intended as an introductory thesaurus for pupils in **Yr 2**. Generously set out on attractively illustrated pages (if you like the Oxford house style) with no more than **one head word per page**. The pupils are carefully guided through alternative word choices for a number of commonly used (and frequently over-used) words. **Deliberately limited in its scope** (angry is the only head word beginning with 'a') each page follows an identical format: a head word is selected, a definition is given and the word is placed in a sentence. Synonyms are then listed, each being placed in an example sentence. [Probably best suited to **guided group work** rather than as an individual aid to writing].

Chambers School Thesaurus hb (Chambers) hb 0-550-100074-1 £7.99. Designed for students aged 10-14. Useful for **more able KS2** pupils. Bold headwords and colour is used to highlight particular parts of entries to make them easier to find. **Expanded word study panels** provide extra information e.g. under education there is a list of different types of educational establishments. Much smaller print than the Oxford equivalent.

Chambers Primary Thesaurus (Chambers) hb. 0550100474 £7.99
This thesaurus can be compared directly with the Oxford primary thesaurus (below). Both are intended for the same audience, both list some 50,000 synonyms, they are easy to use, contain helpful **word study panels** to encourage vocabulary building and both are the same price. The differences? The Oxford is more generously set out, has more pages (483 against the 324 in Chambers) and lists **more examples**, but the introduction in the latter is more helpful, explaining the organisation and purpose of the thesaurus clearly and cogently.

Collins Junior Thesaurus pb (Collins) 0-00-715428-3 £13.99
A **bright and colourful** thesaurus with amusing illustrations. Well set out with **thumb tabs** to aid alphabetical order. Example sentences show how synonyms are used in speech and writing. Thumb tabs down the side of each page helps find the words in alphabetical order. Each sense of a word has a separate entry. Great for the **whole of KS2**, but expensive.

Junior Thesaurus-[Miles Kelly publishing Ltd.] pb. 1-84236-419-7 £7.99
Somewhat of an **unusual format**, this might appeal to reluctant writers or to younger children, although it is marketed at the Junior age in general. It claims that it will add colour and variety to the letters, emails and school projects you write and even to the things you say. There are fewer words than usual tackled, but these are very well illustrated and **sentence examples are of a high quality**, e.g. make: assemble, concoct, create, fashion, form, generate, manufacture, mould, produce. One example given is: 'The castaway fashioned a sail for the raft'. A chalkboard on some pages **gives opposites**, and a helpful index lists words with their synonyms

Usborne illustrated thesaurus Jane Bingham (Usborne) hb. 0746046103
£9.99; pb. 0746046111 £7.99

This is a frustrating thesaurus. In the main body of the book, the focus words are placed into phrases and sentences, and then **synonyms** (and some **antonyms**) are given. This is set out in a clear, straightforward fashion. Then there are the illustrated panels 'packed with words to provide inspiration for writing,'. For example, the fantasy panel which lists likely characters, creatures and potential settings, fantasy 'clues', e.g. words such as *dream, inscription, legend, prophecy* and possible actions, e.g. *accomplish a task, do battle, encounter danger*. Unfortunately, the print size is so **very small** and the presentation so **cramped** that they are likely to be disregarded. A shame, as they have considerable potential. The compilation of such a panel would be an excellent shared activity for the Literacy Hour at the beginning of a block on writing, providing a whole class resource to aid independent writing.

Etymological Dictionaries

Unless you can afford something like the **New Oxford Dictionary of English** or a **Chambers Etymological Dictionary**, designed for adults, you will probably have very little in your classroom to offer the children when you invite them to explore word origins, and might have had to rely on limited lists in literacy schemes. The excitement of finding out what words mean and discovering how they have arrived in our language can really motivate children in KS2 and the titles listed below are well worth considering.

Dictionary of Word Origins-John Ayto pb [Bloomsbury] 0-7475-5448-X
2001 £10.99

This is a delightfully **easy to use** etymological dictionary listing the types of word you might want to explore in **Yr 5/ 6. [8.000 words]** The definitions are chatty and give examples of when and how the word first appeared in the language, e.g. **television**-Television means etymologically "far vision." Its first element, **tele-**, comes from Greek "far off", a descendant of the same base as **telos**, "end" [source of English *talisman* and *teleology*]. etc. Television itself was coined in French and was borrowed into English in 1907. Of its abbreviations, telly dates from about 1940, TV from 1948.

The Oxford School Dictionary of Word Origins – John Ayto (Oxford) hb.
0199108080 £8.99

This useful reference book contains the word histories or etymologies of over **10,000 words** listed in alphabetical order. It includes words from other languages, acronyms, eponyms, invented words and shortened words. A fascinating book for looking up the origins of specific words, but also for browsing. Did you know that *nicotine* is an eponym relating to Jaques Nicot, French ambassador to Portugal in 1560? Or that a *nickname* was originally an *eke-name*, meaning an additional name rather than a familiar name

Rhyming Dictionaries

These are great as aids to poetry writing, and as part of learning how to spell by analogy. Some do the job of grouping words together very effectively whilst others even suggest ways to craft sets of words into poems. Watch out for the way they choose to index rhymes; by the whole word, or by the isolated ending. Some only tackle monosyllabic rhymes, and even younger children like to select more ambitious vocabulary when writing.

Oxford First Rhyming Dictionary-John Foster pb. [Oxford University Press] 0-19-910924-9 £6.99

Key words are listed in alphabetical order in red, with a rhyming sound after them and a group of words which belongs to that **rhyme family**. Every now and then some of the rhyming family words are crafted into a **poem**. There is a **letter-finding strip** down the edge of each page to help locate words, but generally, this dictionary is trickier to use, and there are few multisyllabic words to choose from, making it more appropriate for the **middle years**.

Chambers Rhyming Dictionary-preface by Benjamin Zephaniah pb. [Chambers] 0550-1006502 £7.99

As a poet, Benjamin suggests using this dictionary as a source for new ideas, and as a way of finishing those poems that will not be done by head-scratching alone. There follows a brief outline of different forms and schemes of rhyme and a clear description of how to use the book by looking up the word in the index at the back. Rhymes are arranged in sections according to **key sound patterns** and there are hints on how to come up with more unusual and satisfying rhymes. With 33,000 rhymes this is a useful tool to have available for **upper KS2** writers.

Chambers Primary Rhyming Dictionary-with brand-new poems by Benjamin Zephaniah hb. 0-550-10089-X £7.99

With 8000 rhyming words, 30 cartoons and **60 verses** written by the poet, this dictionary would be useful in **KS2**. Known words can be looked up in the index at the back to be matched with rhymes, but the main pages also have coloured straps featuring the **endings** of words, e.g. -een, -icious, -unny, so that rhymes can be found. Examples include multisyllabic and compound words.

Black's Rhyming and Spelling Dictionary-Pie Corbett and Ruth Thomson pb. [A&C Black] 0-7136-6510-6 £6.99

Words are arranged alphabetically in the book according to their **end vowel sounds**. Helpfully, this is picked up in the index at the back e.g. ammonite / -**ight** p 51. On the appropriate page there is a huge list of rhymes to choose from including compound and multisyllabic as well as phrases [streetlight, all-night, dead of night, fly-by-night] Great news for innovative **poets of all ages!** There are useful ideas about writing poetry and about different types of poetry.

Early Word Books and Alphabet Books.

Many titles published in this genre are for home use with young children, but we have included some here which you might choose to include in your book stock as a home-school link. Alphabet books are always popular, but not always of high quality. Look out for those which combine correct sounds and good text with interesting art work and multicultural or cross-curricular links.

The Alphabet Room-Sara Pinto [Bloomsbury Children's Books] hb. 07475-6459-0 £9.99

Letters are introduced one scene at a time in clear pastel colours and a flap, reveals each object in the Alphabet Room. By the final page, all the objects are in the room to be spotted and named.

This book is **well bound** with a cloth covered spine.

A is For Artist, an alphabet-Photography by Ells Doran. Design and Illustration Silence hb. [Tate Publishing] 1-85437-556-3 £12.99

An alphabet book full of all sorts of **visual art forms** and some **tactile** ones as well. There is even a page for the letter 'i' for imagine which invites the child to draw what they can imagine with chalk, and then wipe it off.

A Child's First ABC Alphabet-Alison Jay hb. [templar publishing] 1-84011-414-2 £9.99

Written in lower case throughout, each object is named against a crazed-paint effect picture. There is a link from each picture to the next, and **un-named objects** beginning with the same letter appear on every page for the child to spot.

A is for Arabia-Julia Johnson [Stacey International] pb, 1-900988-93-3 £4.99

Witty rhymes on each page illustrate the letters of the alphabet in the context of the country, people and customs:

"S is for souq.

What shall Samia buy?

See the sacks of spices

And the pots and pans piled high."

Lovely **water-colour illustrations** and quality text ensure that this is more than an alphabet book and can be used for **cross curricular** work in both key stages.

Ackee, Breadfruit, Callaboo: an edible alphabet – Valerie Bloom (Bogle L'ouverture) hb. 0904521842 £10

A colourful, **multicultural** alphabet which introduces foods of the Caribbean through the poet's lively rhymes:

"H fe Hot pepper that put flavour in de food,

H fe de Happiness, for this food loo so good,

H fe de Horror, soon as yuh begin to eat,

H fe some Honey dat will Help cool down de Heat."

A good resource for a school doing the QCA Geography unit on St. Lucia.

Black and White Rabbit's ABC – Alan Baker pb. (Kingfisher) 1-85697-404-9 £3.99

A gentle alphabetic story, beautifully illustrated, showing Rabbit's attempts to paint a picture of an apple for his mother. Good to see **verbs** being used as well as nouns to tell the story:

"E is for easel, to rest Rabbit's drawing on; F is for falling as the apple topples over; G is for glue, ooey-gooney glue."

A delight.

David Wojtowycz Presents Animal ABC – David Wojtowycz (Gullane Publishing) hb. 1862331073 £9.99; pb. 1862330433 £4.99

Take your seats for the animal ABC show with a host of **hilarious** animal characters. Meet five fighting fleas, telephoning toads, parading piranhas and even vacuuming vultures.

I Spy : an Alphabet in Art – Lucy Micklethwait (Collins) 0-00-664184-9 £7.99

Based on the traditional game, Lucy Micklethwait invites the reader to play I Spy with sumptuously reproduced paintings by **great artists**. Some are easy, such as Magritte's *apple* or Renoir's *umbrellas*. Others, such as Botticelli's *inkwell* or Seurat's *yacht* require more careful examination. A rewarding book and a good model for the children to make their own I Spy book in guided/independent writing.

I've Lost my Yellow Zebra – Angela Brooksbank (Deutsch) hb. 0590541579 £7.99;

Can you find yellow zebra? Through the alphabet and round the house, **lift the flaps** to find where he is hiding. Good to see an early ABC book which acknowledges that there are parts of speech other than nouns!

Zoe and her Zebra – Clare Beaton (Barefoot) pb. 1841483923 £4.99

A is for Alice but who is chasing her? **Felt-art collage** provides the background to this alphabet book which features 26 children and their unusual animals.

Kipper's A – Z - Mick Inkpen (Hodder) pb. 0340784849 £6.99

An entertaining alphabet story featuring this much loved character. When Kipper and his friend Arnold follow the bumblebee which had been in the box...

"Let's find something beginning with C," said Kipper.

But the caterpillar had already found them!

Cc is for Crawly Caterpillar."

The story carries on through the alphabet until finally Zebra, who has been following the story with great interest, is finally allowed his turn in the limelight and the story ends, at the zoo.

My First ABC – Jane Bunting (Dorling Kindersley) 0-7513-5071-0 £8.99
Some half dozen words for each letter of the alphabet with **high quality photographs**. Usual Dorling Kindersley production values. The alphabet games and the progressive alphabet which is built up by 'Alphie' at the bottom of each double page spread are welcome features. Sensible advice for parents.

My First ABC – Debbie MacKinnon and Anthea Sieveking (Frances Lincoln) pb. 0-7112-0897-2 £4.99
Bright, full page photographs of twenty six children with twenty six objects from *Adam's apple* to *Zack's zebra*.

Quentin Blake's ABC - Quentin Black (Red Fox) pb. 0099439646 £5.99
Riotous rhymes and riotous illustrations perfectly matched. **Highly original**, for example, in the choice of words. Which other ABC has '*I is for illness?*' And *While 'Y is for yak - he's our hairiest friend,'* uniquely '*Z is for zippers. That's all, that's the end.*' A modern classic.

Animal Worlds-Paul Hess [Zero to Ten Ltd] 1-84089-408-3
With sumptuous picture of **Safari** animals, **Rainforest** animals, **Polar** animals, and **Farmyard** animals, this book will appeal to both Key Stages. It is not in alphabetical order
"The Anteater' a nosey beast
With a sniffley, snuffley snout;
He comes out at night for his evening feast,
A shuffling, whuffling brute."

Word Banks

A First Word Bank – Ruth Thomson (Belitha) hb. 1841382647 £12.99

As with other word banks aimed at this audience (**KS1**) it contains lists of words according to a variety of subjects, e.g. *people at work, story characters, tools and machines*. What makes it potentially very valuable as a resource for writing is what else it contains, namely models such as the **shopping list** provided on the **going shopping** page, the description of what a person is wearing next to a labelled picture on the **clothes page**, the story language exemplified on the **story objects** page, '*The dragon showed the princess a magic chest.*'

Care is taken to provide a variety of text types as examples and the introduction provides guidance to the teacher about the purposes and features of each text type with links to appropriate word bank themes in the book. It also contains examples of word games and helpful, practical hints to help children develop their writing skills. A useful book for **guided writing** as well as for individual reference by children.

My First Oxford Book of Words – Neil Morris pb. 0-19-910745-9 £5.99

Over four hundred words grouped by theme relating to everyday experiences, e.g. *Off to school, at the beach, in the bath*. Words are listed in two columns on either side of the double page spread (not in alphabetical order) and the children are invited **to talk about** what they can see and to find the items listed in the sometimes strange pictures. What are those hippo-like creatures? It also contains sections on **shapes, opposites, weather** etc.

The Usborne Book of Everyday Words – Jo Litchfield (Usborne) pb. 0746062818 £4.99

In this word book, a family are featured in scenes from everyday life. Attractively presented using **clay models**, the family are shown in a variety of **familiar settings**, the garden, the camp-site etc, usually with the specious injunction that readers should '*find seventeen worms, find six cassettes, find two teddies*'. Clearly labelled, the book also contains pages with illustrated word lists, e.g. *parts of the body, actions, things to eat*. Good quality paper used.

Usborne Farmyard Tales First Words Book-Heather Amery pb. 07460-6007-6 £5.99

Poppy and Sam live at Apple Tree Farm and have simple adventures which are annotated using core vocabulary in simple sentences. There is plenty to talk about in the pictures and the text-type is **comic sans**.

My First Big Book [Kingfisher] pb. 0-7534-0873-2 £8.99

One of many such books on the market, this one is worth a look because of some **useful parent prompts** in how to share it, and a usable index. The **art work** is vibrant and pictures are clear and symbolic. Aimed at young children and toddlers, there might also be a place for this in your book borrowing box at school.

My World A First Word Book-Chez Picthall hb. [Picthall and Gunzi Ltd]
1-904618-23-5 £9.99

Many themes are covered e.g. In the garden, In the Workshop, What We Wear. Photographs are used well to present ideas in a colourful and age appropriate way There are **prompt questions** to aid discussion and the text is clear.

Phonics Word Books

My First Phonics Book – Sue Palmer (Dorling Kindersley)hb. 0-7513-5044-3
£9.99;

Potentially a very useful resource, with a single full colour page given to each of **42 phonemes**. Pictures with word labels show the main spelling patterns while, in the central panel on certain pages, 'Radio Joe' (the animated radio) 'broadcasts' rhymes, announcements and adverts which include **irregular spelling patterns**.

Superphonics abc – Ruth Miskin (Hodder) 0-340-79566-2 £6.99

Very similar in format and content to Ten Tiny Teddies (see below). Each letter and the three digraphs *ch*, *sh* and *th* are given a generous double page spread. The **notes for parents** are very clear and helpful. Part of the Superphonics series of books designed to help parents support the phonics work being undertaken in school.

Four Freckled Frogs – Ruth Thompson (Belitha) pb. 1841382086 £4.99

This book takes a number of **consonant clusters**, places each in an alliterative sentence, e.g. *The sleepy sloths slid slowly down the slope*, illustrates this and then invites children to spot other *sl-* words in the picture, e.g. *sledge, slice, slipper and sleeve*. Useful when focusing on how a particular phoneme gives the same sound when blended with a number of different consonants for reading, e.g. when looking at blending with *r*, the adult can easily demonstrate consistency whether that *r* is being blended with *t, p, g, f, c, b, d* or *st*.

Sixteen Fleecy Sheep – Ruth Thompson (Belitha) pb. 1841382094 £4.99

This book focuses on the **vowel phonemes** and alerts children to the main ways in which these sounds are likely to be represented as **graphemes**. Thus there are three pages devoted to the long /a/ phoneme with a page each for *ai*, *ay* and *a-e*. Each page follows the same format. There is a sentence constructed to focus on a particular vowel phoneme, e.g. *The vain mermaid waits for the sailors in the rain*. This is accompanied by a full page illustration with relevant words e.g. *mermaid, sailor, rail, paintbrush, rain, nail, sail, paint, tail, snail*, labelled in the margins for the children to spot in the picture. Useful, both as a visual aid for teaching vowel phonemes and as a reference book for checking those **tricky spellings**.

Ten Tiny Teddies – Ruth Thompson (Belitha) pb. 1841382108 £4.99
Part of the Belitha *Adventures in Literacy (First Steps in Phonics)* series, each attractive page has an alliterative sentence, e.g. *Six silly sailors selling socks by the sea* with additional words beginning with the same letter in the illustrated margins. Contains helpful **notes for parents** on the pronunciation of sounds and lists of the words hidden in the pictures.

My Very First Look at Opposites-Christine Gunzi [Two-Con Publishing] hb. 1-84301-181-X £4.99
Excellent photographs with bold print depicting empty/full, thick/thin, clean/dirty, old/new etc. This is aimed at very young children but with the possibility to **ask questions** e.g. tall flower, short flower, tall building, short building. What colour is the tallest flower?

Speaking and Listening materials

Speaking and Listening Books from Adventures in Literacy
(Chrysalis Books) Ruth Thomson and Pie Corbett. hb £12.99 each
Titles in the series

- Cats, Hats and Hippos (For ages 3-5)
- Spotty Dogs and Messy Monsters (For ages 4-6) 1-84458-036-9
- Yakety –Yak, the Alien’s Back (For ages 5-7) 1-84138-965-X
- Chatting Cheetahs and Jumping Jellyfish (For ages 6-8) 1-84138-966-8

Creative ideas for **developing speaking and listening**. Full of detailed pictures to pour over and stimulate talk. Careful scaffolding of questions encourages speaking in **simple and complex sentences**. Support for story telling, discussing issues and solving problems. Plenty of potential for use in both **guided and shared** sessions. Great pictures.