

## Introduction to fast and accurate decoding Level 2

The ability to recognize words both quickly and accurately is a skill necessary to fluent, competent reading. This applies equally to words that are phonically regular and can be sounded out or decoded and to words that do not follow a regular sound-symbol pattern, known as sight words or high frequency words. This handbook deals with helping children become proficient in fast and accurate decoding of words that are phonically regular. All the material you need to ensure students develop skills in decoding short vowels, double letters, consonant blends and consonant digraphs is contained in this handbook.

Part 1 of this handbook contains a description of the program, and an introduction to the methodology used – Precision Teaching. Part two contains all the program material for increasing fluency in reading words with short vowels, double letters, consonant blends and consonant digraphs. This includes assessment material and student record forms. Part 3 consists of the one-minute drills or charts for all the sounds.

### **What is decoding?**

Decoding is the ability to use knowledge of how the sounds of the English language are represented by particular letters or letter combinations in order to ‘sound out’ words. Decoding is a skill that is acquired through teaching and through practice in reading words that follow predictable sound-letter patterns. What makes decoding a formidable learning challenge for the beginning reader is that English is not completely phonetic and neither are all the sound-letter combinations predictable. However, there is enough phonetic regularity to make learning how to decode an essential skill.

### **What children have to know in order to decode**

Although an essential skill, decoding is not necessarily easy to learn. It depends on important prerequisite skills usually referred to as phonological awareness. Phonological awareness is the ability to perceive sounds in speech and to manipulate those sounds. Important phonological skills include the ability to rhyme, to spot the odd word out in a sequence (mad, hat, bad), to build words from parts (tell me what /b/ /at/ says) and to split words apart (tell me what two words you hear in campground). Children who can do these tasks without struggling are well on their way to becoming readers.