

Slingsby Community Primary School

Phonics Policy November 2019



1. Aims and Objectives

General Statement

Phonics is one of the many skills needed to become a reader and writer. We aim to give children the best possible start on their reading/writing journey by teaching them the essential phonological/phonemic skills and knowledge to decode and encode (spell) words independently from the outset. At the point of reading/writing, children will use phonics as their first strategy to read and spell unknown words until it is embedded and automatic for them. We recognise that the development of spoken language and the enjoyment and comprehension of quality literature go hand in hand to develop a lifelong love of reading and aim to nurture and develop these attributes alongside the phonics program.

Our policy sets out the means by which we ensure consistency and a systematic approach to the teaching and learning of synthetic phonics, as the prime method by which children learn to read and spell independently, automatically and confidently in the first years of their schooling. It aims to reinforce our high expectations for pupil progress. We follow the advice in 'Letters and Sounds', introducing the GPC's in the suggested order in phases 2 and 3, and the activities, games and teaching advice for phases 1 to 5.

Specific Aims

Children should:

- Learn the skills of blending and segmenting as a first priority as they are introduced to the grapheme/phoneme correspondences for reading and spelling. This ensures that from the outset children are able to read and spell simple CVC's with the GPC's they know.
- apply their phonic knowledge in the context of reading and spelling in the wider curriculum and understand how and when to do this.
- Develop their spoken language and comprehension simultaneously as they are learning phonics in the first years of school.
- Use phonics as their first strategy to decode and encode unknown words until a degree of fluency is reached.

2. Teaching Methods

A discreet session of at least 20 minutes daily is given to the teaching of high quality, systematic synthetic phonics until children are secure in Phase 5. Songs, actions and stories from 'Jolly Phonics' are used to aid memory when introducing and revisiting phoneme/grapheme correspondences as part of this multisensory approach during the first 3 phases of Letters and Sounds, and until the children are secure in using the initial alphabetic code (44 phonemes).

Phonics sessions are structured in the same way each day and build in strong consistent and familiar routines. In this way children know what to expect/are aware of expectations and are not distracted in their progress towards the learning objective. Practitioners are sufficiently free from organisational barriers (resourcing and onerous planning) to teach the important skills and concepts needed to enable children to make progress.

Transition between staff and classes or groups can be facilitated in a more seamless way.

A **multi sensory approach** to teaching and learning will be used in phonics sessions so that children learn from simultaneous visual, audio and kinaesthetic activities designed to secure essential phonic knowledge and skills.

Marking (spelling)

Staff ensure that invented spellings, e.g. *hoam* for *home*, are corrected sensitively and selectively so that a balance is achieved between acceptance of the child's application of current knowledge of phonics and ensuring that invented spellings do not become ingrained. The selection of spellings to correct will be based upon what the child has been taught, ie, if the grapheme has been taught, the spelling will be corrected if the child continues to spell incorrectly.

Learning Environment:

Resources in the classroom support the children in applying phonics to reading and writing. In each classroom throughout Reception and Key Stage 1 (and KS2 if appropriate) large grapheme/phonemes and tricky words are displayed with table mats offering support enabling children to be independent in their spelling. At the same time, this reinforces the link between discreet phonics teaching and learning and its purpose in reading and writing.

Grouping:

Grouping for phonics/spelling is decided in response to the needs of the children and the availability of staff. Our ideal scenario would be that class groups are taught together by their own teacher, but sometimes, smaller groups are arranged to enable more precise teaching or to give children access to appropriate year group content. Where this is the case, we use assessment data to ensure they are in appropriate groups and following their next steps accurately.

If children need intervention or boosters to reach age related expectations in phonics, this is provided in addition to the daily phonics session so that as many children as possible can access their year group learning objectives and reach age appropriate outcomes. Similarly, children who are exceeding their age related expectations have the opportunity to access the next year group's objectives for phonics and spelling (as detailed in NC appendix 1).

Phonically Decodable Texts:

Children are not expected to read texts which they cannot decode for themselves unsupported, until they are reaching fluency. However, we have a choice of phonically decodable books and alternative book band-linked texts for both guided and home reading. These are carefully selected to match the children's developing phonic and on-sight reading knowledge, so that every child can experience success in their reading by using the skills they have been taught so far.

3. Curriculum

We use the programme 'Letters and Sounds' to ensure a consistent system is followed, supplemented by Jolly Phonics resources, the Jolly Phonics books in Reception, and the Pearson's Bug Club reading schemes as children develop as young readers.

Blending and segmenting. Oral blending and segmenting are taught first before being applied to reading and writing. Children are taught that phonemes are blended in order from left to right, *'all through the word'* for reading. They are also taught how words are segmented into phonemes for spelling. These skills are taught throughout each Phase of Letters and Sounds so that as children meet more complex words or grapheme phoneme correspondences they are able to tackle them with confidence.

Common Exception Words

Children are taught high frequency words that do not conform completely to grapheme-phoneme correspondence rules. We call these 'tricky' words. Children are specifically taught the 'tricky' part of the word and strategies to remember this. They are taught to apply their knowledge of these words in reading and writing. The words are taken from phases 2 to 5 of Letters and Sounds in addition to those listed in the NC Appendix 1.

4. Assessment and tracking.

Foundation stage

In the foundation stage, children are assessed using the development matters statements for age related expectation each half term and tracked on the NYCC system.

Children in Reception have a discreet phonics session daily and are expected to secure phase 4 of letters and sounds as a typical benchmark by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage. If they are secure in the 30-50 months band for reading this will begin at the start of the F2 year. Children who are not yet secure in their pre-reading skills (30-50 months) will need more

time to do this and intervention may be used to ensure that these phonological skills are in place. This supports our school to be able to reliably identify children who are showing possible signs of dyslexia and other specific learning difficulties. Assessments are made using the Development Matters statements and further more specific assessments for phonological awareness skills can be found on the school server. A guide to intervention for children who are not developing phonological awareness at an age appropriate rate can be found on the school server, entitled 'The ultimate Guide to Phonological Awareness'.

Key Stage One

In Year One, children secure the content in Appendix 1 (Spelling) of the National Curriculum and the Phase 5 content of Letters and Sounds. At the end of Year One, children complete the Year One Phonics Screening Check, the results of which are a summative assessment of each child's ability to read/decode. During the spring term, children will undertake a 'mock' screening to identify any specific needs for intervention or booster sessions. This also applies to any children in Year 2 who did not meet the required standard in Year 1.

Additionally, until children have secured phase 5 and are working within phase 6 of Letters and Sounds, they are tracked against their developing knowledge of each phase of Letters and Sounds using the school Eazmag system on a regular basis.

Key Stage 2

Where children are meeting age related expectations when entering Key Stage 2, the main focus of their learning is spelling. We use the Word Craft spelling programme as a basis for our spelling teaching when children are secure in their use of phonics (end of phase 5). Phonic knowledge continues to underpin spelling with the developing of increasing understanding of the role of morphology and etymology.

Children's spelling is assessed and tracked within the writing assessment framework. If children do not meet their age related expectations in English, they will be identified through regular assessments. If decoding or spelling are identified as barriers to learning for any children, year group teachers will ensure that their planning includes provision for these children in the form of support or intervention as necessary. The English co-ordinator oversees spelling for the school and further information can be found in the English policy documents.

Children who have not met expectations in their phonics screening by the end of Key Stage One are monitored through the SEN policy and provision is made for them to be able to access an alternative reading programme such as 'Switch On Reading', Toe by Toe, or in some cases through the 'Rapid Phonics' reading program.

Monitoring and evaluation

The English co-ordinator will oversee teacher's assessments of all pupils and ensure that children receive intervention, catch up/accelerated learning where appropriate and needed. Monitoring is carried out using assessment evidence to generate data which provides a picture of what the needs for intervention and support or acceleration are, and the impact of teaching and learning. Any children causing concern will be discussed with the Special Needs co-ordinator and suitable action plans will be put in place.

5. Parental Involvement

At new starter meetings, parents will be made aware of the school phonics policy. Written information is given to new parents and can be found in the phonics file on the server. Copies are uploaded onto the school website in the phonics area. As children begin a formal phonics programme in Reception, parents are invited to a meeting to show them how their children will learn to read and how they are able to support them at home. Home learning activities related to phonics and reading/writing will also be explained and exemplified. The meetings will also include information on the importance of sharing books, playing games and singing nursery rhymes together.

Homework to support phonics is given to children at relevant points in their progression of skills.

Written information and suggestions of activities appear on half termly class curriculum newsletters when appropriate. Changes in the usual routines for children in phonics will be communicated to parents, and progress in reading and spelling development will be discussed at the usual parents evenings, or by appointment where necessary with individual parents and also through home school reading diaries.

Parents of children due to sit or re-sit the Phonics Screening Check will have information about this, usually as an organised meeting or workshop, and final results of the screening check are reported formally to parents with the child's end of year report.