

Phonics

Intent:

Teaching children to read is an essential part of their learning. Reading is a skill that helps to develop vocabulary and improve understanding of words. In synthetic phonics lessons, children learn the relationship between letters and sounds. Teaching them to recognise the sounds each letter makes and how to put them together, enables them to read. It also helps with spelling as they learn how to break up words into sounds, in order to spell them. The idea that surrounds synthetic phonics is that once they are comfortable with the letters and sounds that make up words, children should even be able to read 'nonsense' words that don't actually exist in the English language.

Our Aims:

- To establish a cohesive whole-school approach with progression and continuity in the teaching and learning of phonics throughout the school with a focus on quality first teaching.
- To ensure that systematic synthetic phonics is the first approach pupils use to help with their reading and spelling.
- To ensure children learn to read and write all 44 graphemes in the English language.
- To ensure children have specific strategies to identify and decode common exception words (tricky words).
- To have robust assessment procedures to check progress and identify pupils in need of intervention.
- For pupils to apply their phonic knowledge in their reading and writing across the whole curriculum.
- For pupils to develop a love of reading and enjoy reading for pleasure confidently across a range of genres.

Objectives:

- To provide consistent, high-quality phonics teaching that ensures all children have a strong foundation upon which to tackle the complex processes of reading and writing.
- To ensure that the teaching of synthetic phonics is systematic and progressive throughout the foundation stage, key stage one and key stage two for those children needing interventions to support phonetic knowledge and understanding.
- To ensure that children have strong phonetic knowledge, understanding and skills so that they can decode words confidently and engage with higher-order reading and writing skills.

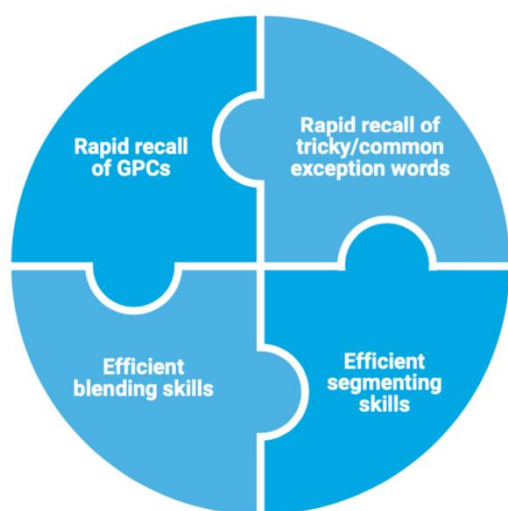
Implementation:

How We Deliver Our Phonics Teaching

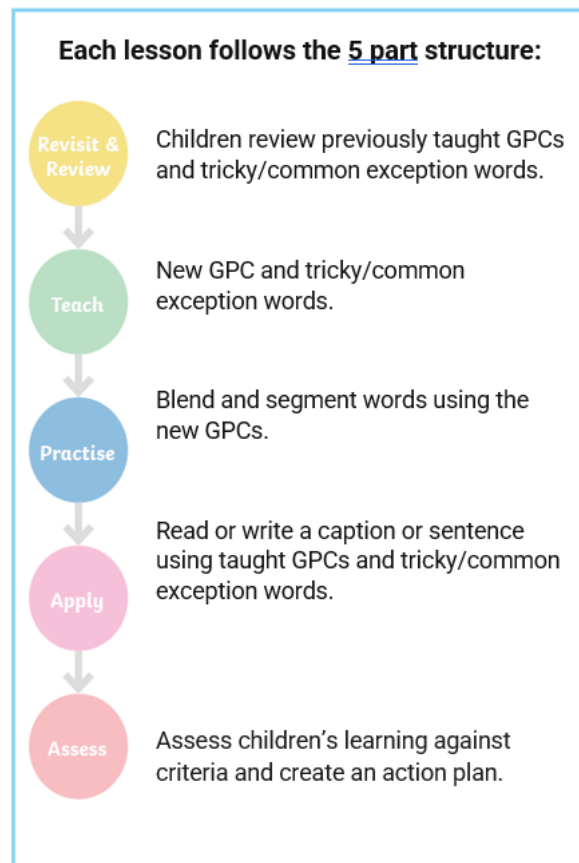
We have developed a bespoke systematic, synthetic phonics programme (SSP) that is high quality and robust in its purpose. With a clear, structured progression through the programme, it allows all of our pupils to meet or exceed the expected standard.

The Phonics approach combines rigorous progression with engaging learning materials. We believe that children learn best when they are enjoying their learning and that this comes from a mix of bright, fun and engaging lesson resources within a clear and systematic approach that builds on children's skills daily.

The structure of every Phonics lesson follows this familiar five-part structure to ensure that the four cornerstones of phonics are covered. During our phonics lessons, children will repeat the elements from the four cornerstones of phonics to ensure that they have rapid and automatic recall of GPCs and tricky/common exception words; each day, they will experience blending and segmenting activities to allow regular practice of these core skills.



Four Cornerstones of Phonics



As part of our wider SSP provision, there are also follow-up activities that the children can complete independently, in pairs or in groups that relate to the day's learning.

In addition, we use actions to help the children remember phonemes; this kinaesthetic, visual and auditory approach helps the children to retain the phonemes and supports children with SEND. Decodable reading books are also provided, matched to the children's phonic level through the use of Bug Club and Big Cat. We use both individual and guided reading (B.E.A.R Time and Focus Read) to teach reading alongside phonics. We also use a mix of eBooks and physical books.

In conjunction with the teaching of phonics, we also give our children phonics-based activities to take home at the appropriate level. These include parent information sheets, home learning booklets and weekly spellings. From Year 1 to Year 6, Spelling Shed, a web- and app-based platform, is utilised to support pupils in developing their spelling proficiency. The programme reinforces phonics, spelling rules, and high-frequency words, while also providing valuable support for parents and carers. This helps to consolidate what has been taught in school and encourages a cohesive whole-school approach.

Timetabling/Structure

Phonics is taught daily to all children in EYFS and key stage 1. Within reception, phonics sessions will increase in length over the year. By the end of reception, children spend about an hour a day consolidating previous learning, learning new content and practising and applying what they have learnt. This will consist of a mixture of carpet time and follow-up activities. Phonics will also form part of their continuous provision for children to access following their discrete phonics lesson.

In year 1 and 2, phonics lessons will last about 30 minutes each day. Some children may continue to need discrete phonics sessions in key stage 2. If this is the case, they will receive a daily 20 minute intervention session which will form part of an Individual Education Plan (IEP).

Children will be regularly assessed to ensure they are receiving phonics teaching at the correct level.

Impact:

Assessing in Nursery

In nursery, children will be assessed in line with the learning objectives/outcomes of each aspect. This is very much a personalised individual approach and should consider observations and assessments from children's independent play, involvement in group work and phonic lessons. It is important that all staff involved within a child's learning contribute to the child's learning journey/assessment to give a holistic and true reflection of the child's phonic ability.

Assessing in Reception & KS1

In reception, year 1 and year 2, children should be assessed on their knowledge of GPCs and tricky/common exception words each half-term, to establish their phonic level. Blending and segmenting assessments should also be carried out to ensure that children have the skills securely in place for reading and spelling.

Inclusion/ Intervention

Supporting the Lowest 20% Achievers

Regular assessment is vital to ensure the early identification of children who may need us to provide them with extra support, either through interventions or during daily classroom teaching. Ideally, these children will take part in daily, highly structured interventions, which will normally include recapping or relearning missing GPCs and tricky/common exception words and practising blending and segmenting skills. As soon as we identify any child who is struggling to succeed in phonics, the provision will be put into place to close the gap.

Extending and Challenging Fast Learners

Regular assessment is also vital to ensuring the early identification of children who may need us to challenge them further, either through extension activities or during daily classroom teaching.

Year 1 Phonics Screening Check

In the summer term, all children in year 1 will undertake the National Phonics Screening Check. This is an assessment carried out in school during which the children will be assessed on their ability to segment and blend a range of 40 real and 'alien' words. Alien words are a selection of phonetically decodable nonsense words. The words in this assessment gauge the children's understanding of the phonemes learnt and give the school the knowledge of where the gaps are. If the children are not secure in recognising, segmenting and blending these

words and therefore do not pass the assessment, they will be offered further support as they enter year 2 and will be able to repeat the assessment in the summer term of year 2. This assessment also allows us to put in specific and personal support for those children who require additional assistance. If a child does not meet the expected standard in year 2, then phonics teaching and learning will be continued into key stage 2. At this point, the child will also be monitored by the SENCo to assess for additional needs.

Home Learning Expectations

Parental involvement is key in the acquisition of phonics and supports us in developing a cohesive whole-school approach. A phonics workshop for reception, year 1 and year 2 parents is held in the autumn term. During these sessions, we will be sharing information on techniques, such as saying pure sounds and blending. We will also share support resources regularly, such as the parent information sheets, as these can help ensure that parents and carers are using the same strategies at home as the children are learning in school. Phonically decodable reading books are also sent home for parents to support their child's phonics/reading.

Bug Club and Big Cat Decodable Books

Our decodable reading books make sure children are well prepared to read, containing a 'before reading' page which allows children to rehearse the grapheme-phoneme correspondences and tricky/common exception words they will meet in the text. There are also blending practice activities, containing focus words with sound buttons. The 'after reading' activities are designed to encourage discussion, recall, sequencing, comprehension and inference at a level appropriate to the text.

This policy was written by the phonics subject leader, Mrs E. Collins