



THE BEDIFFERENT FEDERATION



PHONICS POLICY

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Introduction

Phonics is one of the many skills needed to become a reader and writer. We strive to ensure that all children become successful, fluent readers by the end of Key Stage One and believe this is achievable through strong, high quality, discrete daily phonics teaching.

The Rose Report (2006) emphasised high quality phonics as an important part of the word decoding skills required by children to develop higher level whole language and comprehension skills. Speaking and listening, together with reading and writing, are prime communication skills that are central to children's intellectual, social and emotional development. All these skills are drawn upon and promoted by high quality, systematic phonic work.

The teaching of phonics should be:

- Systematic
- Discrete
- Interactive
- Practical
- Engaging

This policy is aimed at reinforcing a consistent, high quality approach to the teaching of phonics across the Early Years Foundation Stage, (EYFS,) Key Stage One and on into Key Stage Two for children who still need this further support.

Aims

- To teach children aural discrimination, phonemic awareness and rhyme to aid reading, writing and spelling development.
- To encourage the use of segmenting and blending so that decoding skills provide a sound foundation for reading, writing and spelling.
- To ensure the teaching of phonics is lively, interactive and investigative.
- To enable children to use phonic awareness across the curriculum.
- To ensure that children know the 44 phonemes within the English language.
- To teach children to recognise the graphemes within words and associate them with the appropriate phoneme when reading.
- To provide children with strategies to identify and decode 'tricky words.'

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 sound phonetic knowledge, understanding and skills so that they can decode words confidently and engage with higher order reading and writing skills.

The Phonics Curriculum

We use the Essential Letters and Sounds framework to plan and provide daily engaging and active phonics lessons. In phonics, we teach children that the letters of the alphabet represent a different sound, that these can be used in a variety of ways and are put together to make words. The children learn to recognise all of the different sounds and combinations that they might see when they are reading or writing. Our phonics teaching starts in the Nursery and follows a very specific sequence that allows our children to build on their previous phonic knowledge and master specific phonic strategies as they move through school. As a result, all of our children are able to tackle any unfamiliar words that they might discover. We also model these strategies in shared reading and writing both inside and outside of the phonics lesson and across the curriculum. We have a strong focus on the development of language and language skills for our children because we know that speaking and listening are crucial skills for reading and writing in all subjects.

Our children are provided with a variety of opportunities to develop and extend their phonics skills in and across the Nursery, Reception and Key Stage 1. It will also be continued into Key Stage 2, where necessary to support those children who do not yet have the phonic knowledge and skills they need.

- **Planning:** The school follows the systematic approach laid out in Letters and Sounds. Staff complete weekly plans for phonics which ensure progression and effective, high quality teaching, see **Appendix 1**.
- **Lessons:** Discrete phonics lessons take place daily across Reception and Key Stage 1. They follow the structure of '**Review, Teach, Practise, Apply**' to ensure that children are consolidating phonic knowledge and skills over time and that they are able to apply them in context. Consequently, wherever possible, links between phonics knowledge and understanding are made to learning in both Reading and Writing. These lessons proceed at pace and incorporate a wide range of practical and interactive activities to engage the children. These activities are carefully chosen to ensure that children develop their skills in aural discrimination and phonemic and rhyme awareness, blending and segmenting as well as grapheme-phoneme correspondence.
 - **Streaming:** Children are taught in small groups. They are grouped according to their phonic knowledge which is assessed by the class teacher regularly. As children progress at different rates, these groups are changed regularly.
 - **Resources:** All phonics teachers have a range of resources to use which are appropriate for the level at which the children are working. They include practical resources such as letter fans, magnetic letters etc. which should be used in every lesson to create a point of resonance. These resources can be added to so that children are continually engaged with their learning. There should also be age and phase appropriate displays in both Reception and Key Stage 1 classrooms and intervention rooms to support the teaching





and application of phonics in reading and writing. We use 100% decodable books to support the phonics teaching and children are provided with books which are at their current phonics level. All teachers have access to the 'Big Cat Phonics' program which can be used as a pronunciation aide and is a source of interactive games.

- **Intervention:** Children who still need extra support to develop their phonic knowledge across Key Stage 1 and 2 are identified and targeted for intervention. There are a range of intervention strategies which the school uses and the most appropriate one is selected once a child's needs have been assessed.

The Organisation of Phonics

Children in the Nursery should be taught Phase 1 though a differentiated approach within the setting on a daily basis. The children will be encouraged to develop their speaking and listening skills in a variety of ways through general sound discrimination using environmental and instrumental sounds, rhythm and rhyme activities, voice sounds and oral blending and segmenting. Aspect 7 of blending and segmenting will be taught daily either in the phonics session or by staff members orally blending and segmenting at multiple points during the school day. Staff will teach phase 2 to any children identified as secure at phase 1.

Our Reception children will be taught a discrete phonics session daily for a 20-minute period either as a whole class or in 2 smaller groups for differentiation if needed. Initially phase 1. aspect 7 will be continued at the start of Reception before beginning Phase 2. The start of this phase will begin with recognising (for reading) and recall (for spelling) one grapheme to represent each of the 42 phonemes in the English language. Phonics skills are embedded in writing and reading tasks in Literacy sessions. Groups will be differentiated through assigned tasks and questioning to ensure that all children are reaching their full potential within a challenging and supportive environment. Continuous provision and the outdoor learning environment in the EYFS support children in closing the gap and consolidating their phonic knowledge. Phonics mats should be freely available in the in each area of learning and outdoors. The driving ethos should be for all children to complete Phase 4 ideally by the end of Reception and have a sound understanding in order to start Phase 5 by the start of Autumn Term 2 in Year 1. However, we are very aware that all children learn at different paces so there will of course be children who do not follow this ideal route in phonics. Children are introduced to the 'Rule Breakers' and aim to read and write the high frequency words for Phases 2 to 4 before they enter Year 1. For children who have not reached the expected level by Year 1 they will have extra individual phonics support.

Children in Year 1 have access to high quality daily phonics sessions for thirty minutes. At the start of Year 1 Phonics will initially be taught as a whole class and will be differentiated to ensure all children reach their full potential. Within Year 1 children will be taught alternative spellings for long vowel sounds, as





well as the alternative pronunciation and graphemes for other known phonemes. A particular focus within this year group is to support their understanding of how to read split diagraphs. The underlying aim of Year 1 should be to ensure that all children have completed Phases 4 and 5 and be ready to begin Phase 6 upon entry into Year 2. They should have plenty of practice in recognising 'Alien' or pseudo words, in readiness for the Phonic Screening Check and to give them the confidence to read any word. Children should aim to read and write all the common exception words for Years 1 and 2.

Children in Year 2 who did not pass their phonics screening test in Year 1 will continue to have access to high quality daily phonics interventions. Provision should be differentiated to ensure all children reach their full potential. Phase 6 will be taught through some of the weekly spellings that are sent home.

Assessment

Assessment is an integral part of phonics teaching and happens continuously within the phonics learning environment through questioning, observing, and discussion. We aim to ensure that our use of assessment is purposeful allowing us to assign work according to the needs of each child. By using precise assessment knowledge, children can complete work that is appropriate to their needs and are then able to experience success in phonics. It is the class teacher's responsibility to keep track of the progress made by all children in their class, regardless of their phonic group.

- **Assessment for Learning**

Assessment of learning happens continually throughout phonics teaching. Information for assessment can be gathered in a variety of ways, such as: talking with the children, reviewing their work, use of questioning, setting specific tasks with assessment in mind. This form of assessment can be used to inform future planning and target setting.

- **Assessment of Learning**

The attainment and progress of children in phonics is assessed regularly across the year, both discretely at the end of each phase and through Reading and Writing assessments. In both EYFS and KS1 pupil progress is assessed at different points throughout the year. For instance, in Year 1 the children are assessed at the end of every half term leading up towards the Phonics Screening Check. Year 1 children will be given practice papers to identify specific skills or any gaps in learning. At the end of Year 1 there is a statutory assessment - Year 1 Phonics Screening Check, which takes place in June of each year. This test contains a combination of real and pseudo words to test a child's phonetic awareness, their knowledge of grapheme phoneme correspondence and ability to blend. Those children who do not succeed in the phonics screening check are highlighted for further intervention and targeted support before completing the screening check again in the





autumn term of Year 2. For children who do not succeed a second time, provision is made for them to receive intervention and targeted support in Key Stage 2.

- **Feedback**

Children are provided with the constructive feedback as general teaching practise at different points within the lesson, at the class teacher's discretion. Parents will be informed of their child's progress and achievements on PAR Days, in the end of year report and through face to face communication, when deemed necessary. Assessment information is also passed on to the next class teacher as part of the transition process between year groups.

Classroom Environment

There are no hard and fast requirements for how phonics should be displayed within the classroom of phonics teaching year groups. However, it is expected that in each class there is a phase appropriate phonics display, concentrating on both the sounds and tricky words that the children are learning. Phonics mats should be available and accessible in every classroom to support children's early writing across the curriculum. In the Early Years, the displays could reflect the letters and sounds that the children have been taught and then update these as a working wall, as new sounds are taught. Or, if it is preferred, all phonics sounds that will be taught throughout the year can be displayed at once. Phonics games will be out in the provision. The outdoor learning environment should provide multiple opportunities to consolidate learning and both the indoor and outdoor environment is rich with print.

Homework

Parental involvement is key in the acquisition of phonics. Each child in Reception will have words containing the Phonic sounds that have been taught that week sent home to help in consolidating their understanding and knowledge of a particular sound(s). Similarly in Year 1, families will be provided with a weekly spelling list which their child will be required to learn. These spellings sent home each week will be linked to phonics sounds being taught for the week. In Year 2 the children will also be given a list of weekly spellings, except these will not link to any particular phonics teaching, as phonics is no longer taught explicitly in this year group. Year 2 children will be tested on these weekly spellings every Friday, so it is important to support your child with learning these words. Children in Key Stage 2 also receive weekly spellings to learn which parents are expected to support them with where necessary. A phonics workshop for Reception and Year 1 parents is held in the Autumn term which strives to support parents in understanding how phonics is taught as well as directing them to useful online resources to help them best support their child.

