

PARENTS GUIDE TO PHONICS

RATIONALE

At Tickhill Estfeld Primary School we use systematic teaching of phonics to support children in learning to read and write. As children progress in their phonic knowledge they will move on from learning phonemes and graphemes to using and applying this knowledge in their reading and writing with growing independence.

AIMS

To ensure that children progress in their phonic knowledge through:

- daily phonic sessions
- individual, group and class reading activities
- reinforcement of phonic skills as an integral part of lessons across the curriculum
- involving parents and carers in reading and spelling activities at home.

CURRICULUM

Reception follow the Jolly Phonics scheme, chosen because of its engaging, multi-sensory approach. Key Stage One follow a Phonic Pathway based on the phases of Letters and Sounds, revised to take account of the challenging spelling requirements of the 2014 National Curriculum.

As children enter our school in Reception their phonemic awareness is assessed to identify pupils who may have additional learning needs. Advice is sort from our Early Years partners at nursery or playgroup.

In KS1 children are grouped according to their ability and are streamed across the Key Stage and Year 3.

Phonics planning ensures consistency and progression, giving opportunity for sounds to be revised, new sounds to be taught, practised, applied in different situations and assessed. Children in Year 3 and 4 who have not completed the phonics programme or who did not pass the Phonic Screening at the end of Year 2 continue to have full access to phonics before moving on to the KS2 Spelling Programme.

ENTITLEMENT

Phonic lessons are streamed so that the task is directly matched to children's phonic level. Regular assessment is used to ensure that children are in the correct phonics groups. Streaming also allows children who benefit from learning in smaller groups to be accommodated. Able spellers are identified and work in groups, allowing them to progress at a faster pace than the rest of the class or to work on more challenging words using the same patterns as their class. Children with SEN either work in a group with a Learning Support Assistant or they work individually on their phonic targets, depending on their needs. Children that do not pass the Year One phonics screening test have the opportunity to repeat the test when they are in Year 2.

We feel it is vital to differentiate phonics and spelling work according to the needs of pupils, so that they are given sufficient challenge whilst experiencing success and a feeling of achievement.

CROSS CURRICULAR LINKS

In our school we recognise the impact good phonics teaching has on children learning to read and write, but we see it as one part of a rich literacy curriculum. Children are exposed to a wide variety of books and texts to encourage their love of reading. During English lessons we encourage children to apply their phonic knowledge to read and write. In Reception children are given the opportunity to develop their mark making into early writing through creating exciting contexts and writing for a purpose using their phonic knowledge.

Cross curricular links in school are strong, with a topic based curriculum enabling varied and engaging opportunities for reading and writing in each subject area.

ASSESSMENT

Assessment based on the phases is carried out at the end of each half term to assess the children's knowledge and to determine appropriate groupings. This information is used to identify areas that need to be revised or repeated. Weekly spelling tests of words using the focus phonemes help track progress and areas for development.

Spellings are assessed half termly using the Rising Stars scheme and the Common Exception Words lists for Year 1 and 2.

STANDARDS

In Year 1 children take part in the national phonics screening test. This assessment gathers information on the children's ability to blend and segment decodable words to read, and their recognition of 'tricky' non decodable words.

In 2016 87% of our Year 1 pupils passed the Phonics Screening Check compared to the national figure (2014) of 74%. (2015 data not available yet). Five pupils from Year 2 repeated the check. Of these, three passed and two failed, but with greatly improved scores (28 and 32 with the threshold set at 34).

INVOLVING PARENTS

Parents and carers have a vital role to play in supporting all aspects of learning but Phonics in particular offers the opportunity for fun, shared activities at home. We aim to involve and inform parents by:

- holding an informal meeting at the beginning of the year for Reception parents

- providing background information and ideas for activities in our 'Phonics Guide for Parents' available on our website and as a leaflet
- setting phonic based homework tasks as well as weekly spelling lists so parents can see the phonemes being taught at that time
- giving feedback on attainment and points to aid progress at Open Evenings.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Teachers will assess risks and assure adequate supervision for all activities undertaken within phonics lessons.

ROLE OF CO-ORDINATOR

- Ensure teachers are familiar with the curriculum and help them to plan lessons
- Lead by example in the way they teach in their own classroom
- Prepare, organise and lead INSET, with the support of the Headteacher
- Work co-operatively with the SENCO
- Monitor progress and development needs
- Attend relevant courses to keep up to date
- Discuss regularly with the Headteacher and English governor issues relating to the teaching of phonics in school.

Fiona Martin
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