

Phonics Statement

Phonics is taught through a highly structured programme of daily lessons across the Reception and KS1 age groups. Our phonic groups are streamed by ability, rather than age, to make sure that every child works within a group that is appropriate for their level of phonic awareness and development.

We follow the government's 'Letters and Sounds' programme which provides a synthetic approach to the teaching of phonics. This is supplemented within our school by the Jolly Phonics programme, Espresso, Phonics Play, Teach your Monster to Read and Mr Thorne's Phonics. Each phonic session gives an opportunity for children to revisit their previous experience, be taught new skills, practise together and apply what they have learned using a multisensory approach to their learning.

Phases of the Phonics Programme

Generally, children begin their Reception Year having been introduced to Phase 1 phonics. Phase 1 of the phonics programme encourages children to develop their listening and visual skills which are key.

In Reception, children begin by recapping some of these Phase 1 skills and are introduced to Phase 2 of the phonics programme. Phase 2 marks the start of systematic phonic work where grapheme-phoneme correspondence is introduced (GPC). The graphemes in this phase are generally made up of one letter, such as 'n' or 's' but can also be made up of two letters 'ck'. Children are encouraged to blend the graphemes together in order to read the words (s-a-t = sat). The process of segmenting whole words and selecting letters to represent these phonemes is also taught; writing the graphemes to spell words.

Phase 3 completes the teaching of the single letters of the alphabet and then moves on to introducing more graphemes including digraphs (generally a pair of letters that represent one sound, for example 'sh') and trigraphs (a set of three letters that represent one sound, for example 'igh').

When children become secure they continue into Phase 4 where they start to read and spell words containing adjacent consonants, known as consonant clusters (for example 'fl' and 'sp'). No new phonemes are introduced at this phase. Sometimes children need to revisit Phase 3 alongside Phase 4 before moving to the next phase. Revisiting the two phases together cements the children's understanding of segmenting and blending words and helps them to 'apply' their phonic knowledge more accurately in both reading and writing.

Phase 5 broadens children's knowledge of graphemes and phonemes for use in reading and spelling. They will learn new graphemes and alternative pronunciations for those they already know.

It is expected that children entering Year 2 will start Phase 6 which develops a variety of spelling strategies including homophones (word specific spellings) eg see/ sea, spelling of words with prefixes and suffixes, doubling and dropping letters where

necessary. Also the accurate spelling of words containing unusual grapheme-phoneme correspondences eg laughs, two.

We continuously revisit and revise all aspects of our phonics programme throughout the year to ensure there are no gaps in the children's learning of phonics.

The reading and spelling of high frequency and common exception words (also called tricky words) are taught continuously throughout each phase.

Phonics Assessment

Children's progress is continually reviewed to allow for movement between ability groups to best suit their phonic needs. Children are formally assessed at the end of each half term.

All Year 1 children take part in the national phonics screening check in June which assesses the phonics skills and knowledge they have learnt through Reception and Year 1. The check contains a set of forty words which children will read one to one with a familiar adult in school. The forty words are made up from a mix of real and non-real words (pseudo words) covering phonemes from phases 2-5.

The purpose of the screening check is to confirm that all children have learned phonic decoding to an age-appropriate standard. The children who do not meet the required standard for the check in Year 1 are given extra support and then enter the phonic screening check again when they are Year 2. Provision is made for any children entering KS2 who do not meet the Phonic Screening Check requirement or who we feel still require a programme of dedicated phonic teaching.

Prior to the phonic screening check, all Year 1 parents are invited to a phonics workshop which gives parents further information about the phonics screening check and also information about how they can support their children at home with phonics.