



Hall Meadow
Primary School



Phonics Policy

REVIEWED BY HEADTEACHER: November 2020

BY GOVERNORS: 29th January 2021

NEXT REVIEW DATE: November 2023

Hall Meadow Primary School is committed to ensuring the welfare and safety of all our children in school. We believe that pupils have a right to learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment which includes the right to protection from all types of abuse. All of our school policies and procedures reflect this priority.

Intent

At Hall Meadow Primary School, we are committed to the delivery of excellence in the teaching of Phonics. We aim to develop each child so that they are able to read with fluency as well as develop a love of reading that will stay with our children all their lives. Being able to read is the most important skill children will learn during their early schooling and has far-reaching implications for lifelong confidence and wellbeing.

The use of phonics is one of the many skills needed to be able to be a reader and writer. We aim to teach high quality phonics to ensure the children have the best start possible in reading and writing. The learning of phonics is the beginning of a child's body of knowledge, skills and understanding, that are an essential part of learning to read. In order to read and understand texts, children must learn to recognise/decode the words on the page. Good quality phonics teaching allows the child to be secure in the skills of word recognition and decoding which allows children to read fluently. This will result in children being able to read for pleasure and will allow them to move on to develop higher order, reading for meaning skills. These phonic skills need to be taught systematically and involve a variety of resources for all learners.

Our children are entitled to a Phonics curriculum which enables them to:

- Gain a progressively deeper understanding of the phonetic structure of the English language.
- Apply their phonic knowledge and skills to decode unfamiliar words fluently and accurately.
- Read rapidly to apply what they have learned across the whole curriculum.
- Create fluent readers, confident speakers and willing writers.
- Develop a lifelong love of reading.

Implementation

In line with the school's policy and commitment to excellence in Phonics, each class in Reception and KS1 will teach phonics as a discrete lesson every day and will include phonics as part of teaching and learning throughout other curriculum lessons on a daily basis. The structure of each lesson, combined with the journey of Phonics across the week, enables all aspects of the blending and segmenting of phonemes and graphemes. Lessons are uniquely planned and tailored to meet the needs of all our learners.

The teacher should provide stimulating experiences and opportunities to motivate the child, using a range of resources to engage individuals and groups of children.

Approaches to Phonics

We believe that phonics teaching should be:

- Systematic
- Discrete
- Interactive
- Practical
- Engaging
- Multi-sensory
- Differentiated

Teaching and Learning

At Hall Meadow, we follow the systematic approach laid out in the 'Letters and Sounds' document.

Our children are provided with a variety of opportunities to develop and extend their phonic skills in and across 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.

Discrete phonics lessons take place daily across Reception and Key Stage 1. They follow the cycle of 'Assess, 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 learning opportunities to engage the children. These learning opportunities are carefully chosen to ensure that children develop their skills in aural discrimination; phonemic and rhyme awareness; blending and segmenting; as well as grapheme-correspondence.

Age Related Expectations for the End of the School Year

By the end of EYFS children should:

- Read and understand simple sentences.
- Use phonic knowledge to decode common words and read them aloud accurately.
- Confidently read by sight the Stage 2 and 3 common exception words.
- Use phonic knowledge to write words in a way which matches how the sounds are said.
- Write some irregular common words.
- Covered Phases 1-3 as set out in 'Letters and Sounds'

By the end of Year 1 children should:

- Apply phonic knowledge and skill as the prime approach to reading unfamiliar words that are not completely decodable
- Read many frequently-encountered words automatically
- Read phonically decodable three-syllable words
- Read a range of age-appropriate texts fluently
- Demonstrate understanding of age-appropriate texts
- Read decodable words that end -s, -es, -ing, -er, -est
- Say the correct sound to grapheme for all the 40+ phonemes to Stage 5.
- Covered Phases 4 and 5 as set out in 'Letters and Sounds'

By the end of Year 2 children should:

- Read accurately most words of two or more syllables
- Read most words containing common suffixes
- Read and spell most common exception words for Year 2
- Read words accurately and fluently without overt sounding and blending
- Sound out most unfamiliar words accurately, without hesitation
- Segment spoken words into phonemes and represent these by graphemes
- Covered Phase 6 as set out in 'Letters and Sounds'.

All 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 the alphabetic code poster, sounds frieze, grapheme tiles, magnetic letters and phonic strips, etc., which should be used in every lesson to create a point of reference. These resources can be added to so that children are continually engaged with their learning. There should also be age and phases appropriate displays in both Reception and Key Stage 1 classrooms.

The Alphabetic Code

All readers should be taught four skills:

- Grapheme-phoneme correspondences (the alphabetic code) in a clearly defined, incremental sequence

- To synthesise (blend) phonemes (sounds) through a word in order to read it
- To segment words into their constituent phonemes for spelling
- That blending and segmenting reversible processes

English represents the sounds of the language and uses an alphabet to do this. It is generally accepted that English has 44 sounds (although this number varies slightly, depending on regional accents.).

The way the 26 letters of the alphabet are used in English (singly or in combination) to represent the 44 sounds is referred to as the alphabetic code. In the alphabetic code in English:

- A single phoneme can be represented (spelt) in different ways, using one, two, three or four letters. For example, the sound /aw/ can be represented as ‘or’, ‘saw’, ‘haul’, ‘fraught’ and ‘sought’
- One grapheme (that is, a letter or combination of letters) can represent different sounds. For example, the digraph (two letters) ‘ow’ sounds different in ‘crowd’ and in ‘low’; the four letters combined in ‘ough’ are pronounced differently in ‘thorough’, ‘rough’ and ‘bough’; the letter ‘c’ represents a /s/ sound at the beginning of ‘circus’ and a /k/ sound in the middle of the word.

The lack of one-to-one correspondence between a sound and a letter in English means it is important to up-skill all the children and provide them with opportunities to practise the reading and spelling of these words. The sounds are not taught in alphabetical order, but in order of usefulness, so that children can start to read and spell simple words as swiftly as possible. These are also phonetically irregular words, which we refer to as ‘common exception words’ such as ‘the’, ‘some’ or ‘once’ that are taught throughout the different phases.

A very common sequence begins by teaching children how to represent each of the following six sounds by a letter (as below):

Sound	Letter
/s/	s
/a/	a
/t/	t
/i/	i
/p/	p
/n/	n

If these sounds are learnt securely and the children are *also* taught the skill of blending sounds together to read whole words, they can then read (and spell, by segmenting) simple vowel-consonant (VC) words such as ‘it’, ‘in’, ‘is’ and ‘at’ and consonant-vowel-consonant (CVC) words such as ‘sat’, ‘pin’, ‘nip’. ‘tip’.

The Skills of Blending and Segmenting

Blending and segmenting are, ‘reversible’ processes: that is, if you can blend the sounds together to read a short word, you should also be able to identify and break down (segment) the individual sounds in a word you hear to spell it. To spell the word, you need to represent each sound you hear by a letter – or more than one letter.

The skill of blending sounds together needs to be taught directly. Children may be able to say the sound a letter ‘makes’ when shown the letter (for instance, on a flashcard), but this does not necessarily mean that they can blend individual sounds together to make a whole word. (Letters do not actually ‘make’ sounds: they are just a way of representing that sound in writing.) In segmenting to spell a word, the teacher or the child is listening to a whole word, identifying the individual sounds (not letters) that make up the word, and choosing a letter, or more than one letter, to represent each individual sound.

Correct Articulation

Correct articulation is vital in helping children to learn to blend sounds together. We make sure that the sound produced (each individual phoneme) is as precise and accurate as possible and that no additional sounds are added. For instance, the sound /m/ that starts 'mother' or is embedded in 'impress' needs to sound /mmmm/ and not /muh/. The clearer the sound, the easier it is for a child to blend together (synthesise) the individual sounds to read a word because there are no unnecessary sounds getting in the way.

Common Exception Words

Children will be taught words that are not completely phonically regular. These are called common exception words, but may be referred to as tricky words. Children need to be taught to read these words on sight, so that they not have to spend time puzzling them out. Teachers help children to practise their speedy recall of tricky words. In terms of spelling, children need to remember the tricky parts of a word, that is, the letters that do not match the usual grapheme-phoneme correspondences they have learnt. For example, the word 'said' is not phonically regular in that the sound /e/ in the middle of the word is normally written 'e' as in 'bed' (or sometimes 'ea' as in 'bread', 'dread' or 'read' – past tense) and not 'ai' as in 'paid'. However, the sounds at the beginning and end of 'said' are represented with 's' and 'd', just as one might expect; it is only the middle of the word that is tricky.

Multi-sensory Approaches

Multi-sensory learning opportunities feature strongly in high-quality phonics work and often encompass simultaneous visual, auditory and kinaesthetic activities involving, for example, physical movement to copy letters, shapes and sounds, and manipulate magnetic or other solid letters to build words.

Planning

The school follows the systematic approach laid out in the document 'Letters and Sounds', which we have adapted to meet the requirements of the new National Curriculum. Staff complete weekly plans for phonics which ensure progression and effective, high-quality teaching.

Intervention

Children who need extra support to develop their phonic knowledge across the EYFS, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 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.

Assessment

Assessment is regarded as an integral part of the teaching and learning of phonics and is a continuous process. We strive to make our assessment purposeful, allowing us to match the correct level of work to the needs of the pupils, thus benefitting the pupils and ensuring progress. It is the class teacher's responsibility to keep track of the progress made by all children in their class, regardless of their phonic ability. Each individual child has their own phonics tracker, which is updated termly and continues to be updated as the child moves through the school.

Assessment for Learning

We continually assess our pupils and record their progress. Information for assessment is gathered in various ways: by talking to children, asking questions, observing their work and setting specific tasks. Teachers use this assessment information to plan further work and set new targets.

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. At the end of Year 1, children participate in the phonics screening check which assesses their knowledge of grapheme-phoneme correspondence and their skills in blending. This information is submitted to the LA. 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 at the end 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 constructive and timely feedback in lessons. Teachers provide parents with feedback on their child's progress and achievement at parent's evening and through the end of year report. Assessment information is also passed on to the next teacher as part of transition between year groups and phases.

Organisation of Phonics

At Hall Meadow, the English Subject Lead is responsible for Phonics throughout the school. This includes:

- Ensuring continuity and progress from year group to year group and the transition from each phase.
- Providing all members of staff with guidelines and non-negotiables to show how aims are achieved and how the variety of all aspects of phonics is taught.
- Advising and supporting colleagues in the implementation and assessment of phonics in their phase of the school.
- Assisting with the requisition and maintenance of resources required for the teaching of phonics, within the confines of the school budget.
- Monitoring the quality of teaching and learning in phonics across the school.

The class teacher is responsible for:

- Ensuring progression in the acquisition of phonic knowledge and skills with due regard to the National Curriculum for English and the non-negotiables for each phase.
- Developing and updating skills, knowledge and understanding of phonics.
- Identifying needs in phonics and adapting planning to suit all children.
- Keeping appropriate on-going records.
- Planning effectively for phonics, liaising with the English Subject Lead when necessary.
- Informing pupils and parents of their progress, achievements and attainment.
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Inclusion

All children have equal access to the curriculum. We will ensure that phonics is accessible to pupils by:

- Setting suitable learning objectives and differentiated success criteria.
- Responding to the variety of learning styles.
- Overcoming potential barriers of individuals and groups.

This is monitored by analysing pupil performance throughout the school to ensure that there is no disparity between groups.

Highly Able

In phonics, staff will develop differentiated weekly plans to ensure pupils who are identified as gifted in Reading and Writing, and achieving exceptionally high levels of achievement, are catered for. For these pupils, accelerated learning experiences where programmes of study from the next phase, Key Stage or school, are accessed by the pupils through investigative work or enrichment activities.

Review

The governors will review this policy annually. The governors may, however, review the policy earlier than this, if the government introduces new regulations, or if the governing body receives recommendations on how the policy might be improved.