



Phonics Policy

(See also 'English' policy)

This policy represents the agreed principles for the use and application of Assessment throughout the school. This policy has been agreed by governors within the school and all teachers representing the Early Years Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.

School aims:

Our aims for the school are based on our agreed values and inform our vision for the school. These are:

- Learn and grow together within a safe, caring and happy environment;
- Continually encourage achievement in all aspects of school life;
- Motivate all children with a broad and challenging curriculum;
- Treat everyone with honesty and respect;
- Ensure opportunities for all.

Introduction:

The processes by which children comprehend spoken language are the same as those by which they comprehend the words on the page; the difference being that the first relies upon hearing the words and the second upon seeing the words in written form. In order to comprehend written texts children must first learn to recognise, that is decode, the words on the page. High-quality phonic teaching secures the crucial skills of word recognition that, once mastered, enable children to read fluently and automatically thus freeing them to concentrate on the meaning of the text. Children at Shepherd Primary School will secure automatic decoding skills and progress from 'learning to read' to 'reading to learn' for purpose and pleasure. The ultimate goal of learning to read is comprehension. To achieve this, practitioners and teachers are clear about which activities are designed to teach children to acquire word recognition skills, and which will help children develop high-level comprehension skills.

Principles of high-quality phonic work at Shepherd Primary School:

The Rose Report makes it clear that 'high-quality phonic work' should be taught systematically and discretely as the prime approach used in the teaching of early reading.

Beginner readers should be taught:

- Grapheme–phoneme correspondences in a clearly defined, incremental sequence
- To apply the highly important skill of blending (synthesising) phonemes in the order in which they occur
- To apply the skills of segmenting words into their constituent phonemes to spell
- That blending and segmenting are reversible processes

High-quality phonic work will be most effective when:

- It is part of a broad and rich curriculum that engages children in a range of activities and experiences to develop their speaking and listening skills and phonological awareness
- It is multi-sensory, encompassing simultaneous visual, auditory and kinaesthetic activities to enliven core learning
- It is time-limited, such that the great majority of children should be confident readers by the end of Key Stage 1
- It is systematic, that is to say, it follows a carefully planned programme (LCP) with fidelity, reinforcing and building on previous learning to secure children's progress

- It is taught discretely and daily at a brisk pace
- There are opportunities to reinforce and apply acquired phonic knowledge and skills across the curriculum and in such activities as shared, guided reading and 1:1 reading
- Robust assessment is used to carefully track the progress of each child and inform future planning

Letters and Sounds

The document 'Letters and Sounds' is designed to help practitioners and teachers to teach children how the alphabet works for reading and spelling. Systematic, high quality phonics teaching is essential and is needed for children to achieve the goal of reading. Letters and Sounds is designed as a time-limited programme of phonics work aimed at securing fluent word recognition skills for reading by the end of Key Stage 1 and as an intervention in Key Stage Two. The teaching and learning of spelling (which children generally find harder than reading) is a key part of 'Letters and Sounds'.

Shepherd Primary School has implemented the 'Letters and Sounds' programme whereby six structured phases are followed broadly to accompany the English National Curriculum 2014. However, in Letters and Sounds the phases are deliberately porous so that no children are held back or unduly pressured to move on before they are equipped to do so. We use the LCP Phonics Scheme (which links directly to Letters and Sounds) to help us to plan, organise and deliver our daily teaching sessions

Organisation of Phonics

Phonics at Shepherd Primary School is taught as a discrete lesson each day throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage One (Years 1 & 2). In Key Stage 2 (Years 3, 4, 5 & 6) it is used as an intervention for those who are not secure with Letters and Sounds Phase Six by the end of Year 2. All activities have learning outcomes specifically planned from the LCP Scheme and 'Letters and Sounds' document. Key Stage 2, teachers deliver high quality spelling lessons two or three times per week.

Early Years Foundation Stage

The children in Early Years have discrete phonics teaching input daily by teachers and practitioners. The sessions last between fifteen to twenty minutes. There are also constant and enhanced activities within the environment for the children to access during explore and learn time. Children are taught to use their 'robot' and 'blending' arms to segment and blend unfamiliar words.

Key Stage 1

The children in Key Stage 1 are taught phonics on a daily basis within year group classes. The children are taught through a 10-15 minute discrete session which is later followed by a 30 minute guided reading session, where children then have the opportunity to apply their phonic knowledge. Each classroom has displays for the children to use in order to 'apply' their knowledge from the taught sessions. Teaching Assistants work in conjunction with the Class Teacher to provide differentiated learning so that children can access phonics at their own ability level.

Key Stage 2

Where necessary, the children in Key Stage 2 are taught phonics within their classes through intervention sessions led by the class teacher or teaching assistant.

Resources

Copies of the LCP Phonics Scheme and Letters and Sounds can be found in each classroom. In addition to this, teachers have a supply of phonics resources to help them to deliver their phonics sessions in a Visual, Auditory and Kinaesthetic way.

Classroom Environment

Teachers ensure that the classroom environment has age-appropriate displays which show current learning and age-appropriate expectations in phonics, spelling patterns and tricky words.

National Phonics Screening

Since 2012, all Year 1 children have taken part in the National Phonics Screening check. The phonics screening check is a short, light-touch assessment to confirm whether individual children have learnt phonic decoding to an appropriate standard. Phonics Screening is undertaken in all state schools in Year 1 and children. Where children do not meet the required standard in the Year 1 screening, they are given one further opportunity to re-sit the check in Year 2.

The screening check itself consists of a list of 40 words - half real words and half non-words, which Year 1 children read to a teacher. Administering the assessment usually takes between four and nine minutes per child. Non-words (made-up words) are included because they will be new to all children, so there is no bias shown to those with a good vocabulary knowledge or visual memory of words. Children who can read non-words should have the skills to decode almost any unfamiliar word. All non-words are presented alongside a picture of an imaginary creature, and children can be told the non-word is the name of that type of creature. This helps children to understand that the non-word should not be matched to their existing vocabulary.

Examples of words include: star, shelf

Examples of non-words include: dov, vead

All children need to be able to identify sounds associated with different letters and letter combinations, and then blend these sounds together to correctly say the word on the page. The same skill is needed whether the word is a real word or a non-word. Ideally, children should not realise that they are being formally assessed. The check should be seen as part of their everyday phonics activities and not as a test.

Assessment and Monitoring

Class teachers use the Herts for Learning English assessment sheets to record how children are progressing with their phonic knowledge. Other supporting materials are used in order to track the children's specific skills and help determine their level. Children in every class are assessed on a 1:1 basis at the end of each term, the outcomes of which are kept on a 'phonics tracker' sheet. These are then used to inform the next term's planning. At the end of each academic year, children are formally assessed and the phase at which they are working at is passed on to the next teacher. Formal assessment is carried out at the beginning of each new school year to check for any regression over the summer break.

The following outlines the approach to teaching phonics in each year group:

Nursery	<i>Letters and Sounds</i> Phase 1 (environmental sounds) will be taught. Older nursery children will also cover Phase 2.
Reception	<i>Letters and Sounds</i> Phases 2 and 3 will be taught in groups, based on initial assessments. Assessments will take place at the end of Phase 2 in order to review groupings and ensure coverage for all children. More able children may be working on Phase 4 by the end of the year.
Year 1	Using Foundation Stage Profile data alongside initial assessments, children will be grouped according to their knowledge of sounds.

	<i>Letters and Sounds</i> Phase 3 and 4 will be taught (according to progress) and the programme continued systematically (assessment will be ongoing). More able children will progress to Phase 5. All Year 1 children will sit the 'Phonics Screening' test in June.
Year 2	Consolidation of Year 1 work and continue to progress through the <i>Letters and Sounds</i> programme based on continuous assessment. The great majority of children will complete Phase 6 by the end of the year. Children on lower phases require daily catch up phonics sessions. Children in Year 2 who did not achieve the required pass mark in the Year 1 Phonics Screening test will have one last opportunity to take the test in June.
Years 3 - 6	Teachers can refer to materials from Phase 6 of <i>Letters and Sounds</i> where necessary in order to support those children who are not yet secure.

Review

This policy will be reviewed at least every 2 years.