

UNSWORTH PRIMARY SCHOOL

PHONICS POLICY

This policy outlines the teaching, organisation, management and teaching of phonics at Unsworth Primary School.

What is Phonics?

If pupils are to develop as competent readers and writers, it is vitally important that they have secure understanding of the letter sounds and spelling system of the English language. Phonic skills need to be developed in a systematic way, based on a progressive stage by stage approach.

Phonics is:

- The knowledge of how the alphabetic sounds work and how these sounds are combined to correspond to the spoken word.
- Phonemes that are sounds, which are made by blending letters to correspond to the spoken word.
- Graphemes, which are the written equivalent of phonemes.

Aims at Unsworth Primary School

- To establish consistent practice, progression and continuity in the teaching and learning of phonics and spelling throughout the school.
- To differentiate phonics and spelling work according to the needs of pupils, so that all pupils are given sufficient challenge at a level at which they can experience success.
- To give pupils word work strategies that will enable them to become fluent readers and confident writers.

Phonics should be FAST, FUN and SYSTEMATIC

Effective phonic teaching and learning

Teachers and Teaching Assistants work towards the school aims by:

- Presenting pupils with high quality, systematic phonic work.
- Enabling pupils to start developing their phonic knowledge and skills on entry to YR with the expectation that they will become fluent readers, having secured word building and recognition skills, by the end of Key Stage One.
- Ensuring that pupils apply phonic knowledge as their first approach to reading and spelling, even though all words do not conform to regular phonic patterns.
- Ensuring that pupils are taught high frequency words that do not conform to regular phonic patterns.
- Ensuring pupils attempt to spell words for themselves, within the range of their phonic knowledge, by building an individual repertoire and the confidence and strategies to attempt the unfamiliar.
- Helping pupils to apply the skill of blending phonemes in order to read words.
- Helping pupils to segment words into their constituent phonemes in order to spell words.
- Showing pupils that blending and segmenting words are reversible processes.

- Showing pupils that phonemes should be blended from left to right through the complete word, in order for it to be read.
- Ensuring pupils know the sounds made by each letter of the alphabet, both upper and lower case. They need to know the letter names are not the same as the letter sounds.
- Ensuring pupils practise decoding a mix of real and pseudo words.
- Ensuring pupils know and use the correct terminology when making reference to letters and their sounds.
- Preparing Year One pupils for the phonics screening check. Pupils who do not achieve the appropriate standard should receive additional support in preparation for them retaking the phonics screening check the following year.
- Undertaking regular training in phonics teaching through courses, in house training and peer observations.

Effective learning of phonics takes place when:

- Phonics teaching 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 multisensory, encompassing simultaneous, visual, auditory and kinaesthetic activities that are tightly focused on the learning goal.
- It is time-limited, such that the great majority of the children should be confident readers by the end of Key Stage 1.
- It is systematic, following a carefully planned programme, reinforcing and building on previous learning and consolidation to secure good progress.
- It is taught as part of a planned literacy lesson both discretely and daily to ensure pace and progression.
- Children's progress in developing and applying their phonic knowledge is carefully assessed, tracked and monitored.

Phonics Programmes

At Unsworth Primary School we follow the Letters and Sounds principles and practice of high quality phonics (Primary National Strategy, 2007) supported by Nelson Phonics and the Bug Club plus any other additional resources the class teacher sees fit to cater for specific children's needs.

The six phases of the Letters and Sounds provides a structure for teachers to follow and plan progression from, although the boundaries between the phases are not fixed allowing teachers to plan across phases depending on the class needs.

Organisation

Each teacher plans phonics for themselves and their Teaching Assistant to deliver across a week so they know where each pupil is up to and what they need to practise and apply in class. This helps in planning guided reading and writing.

Sessions last for between 15-20 minutes depending on the age and stage of the child.

Children will be taught in ability groupings.

Expectations

Reception:

Phase 2 to be completed by Christmas

Phase 3 starts in January to be secure by end of Reception

Start Phase 4

Phase 1 activities may be done throughout YR alongside Phase 2 and 3

Year 1:

Phase 4 and Phase 5

Phonics Screening Check in June

Year 2:

Revisit Phase 5 and Phase 6

Screening Check re-visited for pupils who did not reach the standard in Y1

Key Stage 2

Children in years 3 & 4 who are assessed at working within phase 1-5 and below the level of whole class teaching should have phonics intervention.

Key Stage 2 phonics and spellings can be supported through the use of age-appropriate materials. See Reading Policy and Spelling Policy.

Planning and Assessment

Planning is done by the class teacher on a standard weekly phonics plan following the Letters and sounds structure of Revisit, Teach, Practise, Apply.

Teachers' assessment of individual pupils informs the rate at which they are able to progress through the phases and how pace should be adapted. Assessments are updated half termly on the Phonics Tracking Sheet. Notes are added on G2 if any additional interventions have been put in place.

Teaching Assistants annotate the phonics planning sheets to feedback to class teachers.

Each term class teachers check the number of pupils secure at each phase and inform the Headteacher so progress in phonics can be discussed at termly progress meetings. Termly assessments are carried out at the end of each term in order to inform planning for the new term and to check that pupils are appropriately placed in their groups.

Assessments may be:

Phonics test or similar activity to assess understanding of grapheme/phoneme correspondence depending on phase being assessed

A reading and spelling assessment of the tricky words/ High Frequency Words set out in letters and sounds either given in lists or dictated in sentences

At the end of Y1 there is a statutory assessment in phonics – *Assessment and Reporting arrangements, Y1 Phonics Screening Check (Standards and Testing Agency 2012)* which takes place in June each year and which is reported to parents and appears in RAISEonline. This is repeated in Y2 for pupils who did not reach the standard in Y1.

What do we do if we feel a child is not making progress?

Try another approach/resource
Change group
Consider Code of Practice/need for IEP
Consider additional needs e.g. hearing, speech
Consult the SENCO

For some pupils such as those with statements for speech and language and communication needs (SLCN) or those with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD), phonics as a first approach to reading and spelling may not be appropriate. For these pupils, alternative approaches will be given greater significance and the level of phonics teaching will be adjusted accordingly. If the decision is taken not to use a phonics approach this will be recorded in G2 and in the pupil's IEPs.

Home – School Learning

Pupils are encouraged to practise their phonic skills at home.

Parents are informed of the activities they can do at home with their children.

Workshops and leaflets are sent home to explain the school's approach to teaching phonics.

Classroom Environment

In YR and KS1 the classroom environment has age appropriate displays concentrating on both sounds, letters and tricky/key words – See Policy for Display.

Use of ICT

There are many different resources available to use. Staff should add useful links to the Learning Platform to share.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Speaking and Listening Policy, the Reading Policy, the Writing Policy, the Teaching and Learning Policy and the Assessment Policy.

Policy compiled by:

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