Phonics Policy and Guidelines 2023-24

Aim

At Hesters Way Primary we aim to ensure that all children have the best possible start in becoming confident, fluent readers by the end of Key Stage 1. We believe we can achieve this through a combination of high quality, discrete lessons that follow a comprehensive system to teach children to read, spell and write.

Our teaching of phonics aims to teach all key elements of conceptual understanding, factual knowledge and the three essential skills of blending, segmenting and phoneme manipulation necessary for learning to read and spell. This will result in children then being able to move onto developing higher order comprehension skills.

This policy is aimed at reinforcing a consistent, high quality approach to the teaching of phonics across the foundation stage, Key Stage one and into Key Stage two for children who still need this further support.

Objectives

- o To provide consistent, high quality phonics teaching that ensures all children have a strong foundation upon to become confident readers.
- o To ensure that the teaching of synthetic phonics is systematic and progressive throughout the foundation stage, key stage one and key stage two for those children who still need further support.
- o To ensure that children have strong phonetic knowledge, understanding and the skills enabling them to blend and segment so that they can decode words confidently.
- o To ensure children are taught how to identify and decode 'tricky words' within the English language.

Phonics Planning

We follow the Sounds-Write Programme to teach daily phonics. This includes a very structured approach in teaching phonics in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2, and in Year 3 when required. We:

- o Ensure all teaching staff are well trained in the Sounds-Write programme to ensure high quality phonic sessions are delivered.
- o Teach daily phonics for 30 minute sessions following the Sounds-Write scheme.
- o Reinforce and apply acquired knowledge and skills as they move through the units with a clear programme of learning to secure progression.
- o Promote the use of multi-sensory engagement by using a combination of visual, auditory and kinaesthetic activities at all times.
- o Ensure each lesson has pace and utilises an array of stimulating lessons and resources.
- o Differentiate challenges placed before the children in order to meet individual needs.

The Sounds-Write Programme

Sounds-Write is a linguistic programme that begins with the sounds in language before moving onto the sounds in written words. The programme is divided into three main teaching sections:

1. **The Initial Code -** Children are taught the essential skills (segmenting, blending and phoneme manipulation) needed in order to decode the English language. This section looks at words with the structure of CVC, VCC, CVCC, CCVC, CCVCC, CVCC and CCVC. It also looks at some spellings that can be written with a double consonant.
2. **The Extended Code -** The extended code continues to use the skills previously taught but moves on to the more complex concepts of 'one sound, different spellings' and 'one spelling, different sounds'.

3. **Polysyllabic Words -** This section uses previously taught skills, but this time with words that are made up of more than one syllable. It includes lessons where children use the skills they have learnt to help read and spell these words.

Teaching and Learning

Phonics takes place daily for 30 minute sessions. It will follow the Sounds-Write units and use the lessons provided in the programme. Each phonics session will consist of 3-4 of the lessons (short activities). The teaching of phonics will be cumulative so that any learning the children have encountered will be built upon at the next stage and again after that. There will be ample opportunities for children to rehearse, aloud, what they are learning. It is this process, repeated over and over again that enables their access to the alphabet code knowledge and phonemic skills to become totally automatic, internalised processes.

For this reason, it in unnecessary to demand 100% accuracy of each child at the end of each unit. 75% - 80% accuracy is sufficient to ensure pupils can progress to the next unit where they will encounter everything they have learnt in the previous units.

Once the next unit has started, the teacher will plug any inaccuracies in a child's knowledge while at the same time moving on to teach new code knowledge.

Reception:
- o Children in Reception are taught the 'Initial Code' as set out in the Sounds-Write programme. The Initial Code has 11 units.
- o Units 1-6 include the teaching of simple, one sound/one spelling, one syllable, CVC words broken into units.
- o By the end of the Autumn Term, Reception children will be up to Unit 7 the Initial Code. On average, each unit will take approximately 2 weeks. During Unit 7, children are gently introduced to 'two letters, one sound' whereby they represent the same sound as the individual letters do on their own - <ff>, <ll>, <ss> and <zz>
- o Unit 8 of the Initial Code begins at the start of the Spring Term. This unit introduces and teaches VCC and CVCC words with no new codes taught.
- o Unit 9 and 10 teaches CCVC, CCVCC, CVCCC and CCCVC words with no new codes being taught.
- o Unit 11 is the final unit of the Initial Code. It introduces 'two letter, one sounds' where the sound represented is not related to either of the individual letters involved, e.g. <sh>, <ch>, <th> etc.
- o By the end of Reception, children will be familiar with all the sounds in the Initial Code.
- o If there are children who appear to be picking the Initial Code up quickly and proficiently and they have good segmenting and blending skills, they may start to learn polysyllabic words which otherwise appear in Year 1 and 2.

Year 1
- o Based on their previous work children should now be able to:
  - ✓ Blend
  - ✓ Segment
  - ✓ Manipulate sounds and spelling
- o Most children will be ready to begin work on the Extended Code when they are achieving about 75% - 80% accuracy in their Initial Code knowledge.
- o There are 50 units in the Extended Code. Year 1 children will aim to get to Unit 26 by the end of the year.
- o Each unit should take approximately 2 weeks.
- o Throughout the units, children are taught that a *sound* can be represented by more than one *spelling* and the most common *spelling* which represent the target *sound,* e.g. /ae/ can be represented as <ai, ay, ea, a-e>
- o They are also taught that a *spelling* can represent more than one *sound* and the most common *sounds* represented by the target *spelling* – e.g. <ea> can make the sounds /ea/ /ae/ and /ee/
- o During Unit 4, the teaching of polysyllabic words begins.
- o The lessons that appear in the Extended Code and Polysyllabic Words section on Sounds-Write are used to teach each session.

Year 2
- o The Extended Code continues in Year 2, picking up from Unit 26.
- o There will be time at the start of the year to revisit units that appear before this as a recap.
- o Polysyllabic words are taught alongside the Extended Code with lessons beginning with 2-syllable words and moving on to 3-syllable words then longer words.
- o Children continue to learn the skills involved in segmenting to enable them to separate words into syllables and take each syllable and segment that into sounds which they can then blend then read the word.
- o Children will be taught strategies to identify the syllables in words, such as clapping the syllables out.

Expected coverage
The expectation is that children should be secure with the following units by the end of each term:-

Reception end AT2 IC4	Reception end SpT4 IC 8	Reception end SuT6 IC11
Year 1 end AT2 EC8	Year 1 end SpT4 EC16	Year 1 end SuT6 EC26
Year 2 end AT2 EC33	Year 2 end SpT4 EC41	Year 2 end SuT6 EC49

Teaching Points:
- o The lessons that appear in the Sounds-Write programme for the Initial Code, Extended Code and Polysyllabic Words are written in 'script' format to enable the teachers to use accurate language from the start.
- o The sound is always referred to, not the letter name (e.g. /t/ not 'tee' and /a/ not 'ay').
- o Post it notes will be written by the teacher (using lines to clearly show ascenders and descenders).
- o Precise pronunciation is vital, avoiding adding an attached vowel to a sound (e.g. /b/ not 'buh')
- o Teacher gestures are important when saying the sounds and reading the words. These are consistent across each class and children are taught to do the same.
- o Writing and spelling is a part of each lesson. Each child has something to write on such as a whiteboard.
- o The terminology used in each class has been agreed by the class teachers based on the Sounds-Write training undertaken. For example, 'digraph' will be referred to as 'two letters, one sound' and 'split digraph' will be taught as 'split sound'.
- o Error corrections are used throughout each lesson using the scripts in the programmes. Errors and misconceptions are addressed immediately.

Assessment
Children in Reception, Year 1 and 2 will complete the Sounds-Write diagnostic. This is done with children individually and identifies any gaps in their phonics skills that the class teachers can then address. The diagnostic tests are as follows:

- o Sound Skills Test – this looks at a child's ability to use the three phonemic skills essential for fluent reading and spelling. It is led by an adult who gives the child prompts such as, *I'm going to say some sounds and I want you to put them together to make a words.*
- o Alphabet Code Knowledge Test – This looks at a child's understanding of which sounds are represented by the individual letters. It will be completed at the start of Year 1 and Year 2 to identify any gaps in a child's knowledge.
- o The Diagnostic Tests are completed at the beginning of every long term. Reception class will only do the Sounds Skills Test at the start of Autumn term as they will not have been taught the alphabet code at this point.
- o Teachers will use their discretion to stop a section of a test if a child is not scoring.

- o Children are continually monitored throughout their learning. As previously discussed, whilst we do not expect 100% accuracy from each child, ay gaps are plugged because they continually revisit sounds from previous units.

- Where necessary, children who are identified as being at risk of not achieving 75% - 80% accuracy will complete daily small group work with the teacher or class TA.
- For Year 1, the phonics diagnostic is completed at the end of the Initial Code to ensure there is 75%-80% accuracy before moving onto the Extended Code. This will identify any gaps in learning that need to be addressed. After this, the diagnostic will be completed at the beginning of each term to measure progress.
- Children all complete writing on whiteboards during phonics lessons for teachers to assess informally and adapt teaching where necessary, for instance to support the Less Able or challenge the More Able.

Phonics Screening Check

- Year 1 children sit the Phonics Screening Check in June.
- A phonics after-school club will take place for Year 1 children during the Spring and Summer terms. Children who may be at risk of not passing the phonics screening test will be directly invited and encouraged the attend. Year 2 children who did not pass the Year 1 Screening test may also be invited if there are sufficient spaces.
- The Year 1 class teacher will complete 2 practice tests during the Spring and Summer term to generate a predicted score for each child and monitor progress. This will identify children who are at risk of not passing and enable us to provide additional provision to address this.
- Year 2 children who did not pass the screening test in Year 1 will re-sit the test. They will also do a practise test in the Spring term which is to be compared to their Year 1 result. Additional provision is to be put in place for these children across the year and in the run up to the test.
- Children who need it will continue learning Phonics into Year 3 and will follow the same guideline of teaching and assessment as the Year 2 class.
- Children that enter Key Stage 2 who may not have passed the Year 1 and Year 2 screening test may require further support. The phonics subject leader and Year 2 class teacher is to liaise with the relevant Key Stage 2 staff to highlight these children and provide the training and support needed.

Phonics Workshop

During the Autumn term, a phonics meeting takes place for all Reception and Key Stage 1 parents. The aim of the meeting is to inform parents about the teaching of phonics and ensure there is consistency between home and school. The meeting is useful for new parents who may be new to phonics but also serves as a good reminder to parents who are familiar with phonics, providing them with an opportunity to ask any questions and to watch a modelled lesson so they can see how we teach phonics at school.