



Phonics Policy

September 2020

Holly Primary School

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1. Aims and Objectives

General Statement

Phonics is one of the many skills needed to become a reader and writer. We aim to give children the best possible start on their reading/writing journey by teaching them the essential phonological/phonemic skills and knowledge to decode and encode (spell) words independently from the outset. At the point of reading/writing, children will use phonics as their first strategy to read and spell unknown words until it is embedded and automatic for them. We recognise that the development of spoken language and the enjoyment and comprehension of quality literature go hand in hand to develop a lifelong love of reading and aim to nurture and develop these attributes alongside the phonics program.

Our policy sets out the means by which we ensure consistency and a systematic approach to the teaching and learning of synthetic phonics, as the prime method by which children learn to read and spell independently, automatically and confidently in the first years of their schooling. It aims to reinforce our high expectations for pupil progress. We follow the advice in 'Letters and Sounds', introducing the GPC's in the suggested order in phases 2 and 3, and the activities, games and teaching advice for phases 1 to 5. Content of the daily phonics lessons in Year 1 and 2 is taken from the English Appendix 1: Spelling (National curriculum 2014).

Specific Aims

Children should:

- Learn the skills of blending and segmenting as a first priority as they are introduced to the grapheme/phoneme correspondences for reading and spelling. This ensures that from the outset children are able to read and spell simple CVC's with the GPC's they know.
- Be reading with increasing automaticity by the age of 6.
- Apply their phonic knowledge in the context of reading and spelling in the wider curriculum and understand how and when to do this.
- Develop their spoken language and comprehension simultaneously as they are learning phonics in the first years of school.
- Use phonics as their first strategy to decode and encode unknown words until a degree of fluency is reached.

2. Teaching Methods

A discreet session of at least 20 minutes daily is given to the teaching of high quality, systematic synthetic phonics until children are secure in Phase 5. Songs and actions from 'Jolly Phonics' are used to aid memory when introducing and revisiting phoneme/grapheme correspondences as part of this multisensory approach during the first 3 phases of Letters and Sounds, and until the children are secure in using the initial alphabetic code (44 phonemes).

Phonics sessions are structured in the same way each day and build in strong, consistent and familiar routines. Each phonics group follows the four-part structure of Revisit, Teach, Practise and Apply. In this way children know what to expect/are aware of expectations and are not distracted in their progress towards the learning objective.

A **multi-sensory approach** to teaching and learning will be used in phonics sessions so that children learn from simultaneous visual, audio and kinaesthetic activities designed to secure essential phonic knowledge and skills.

Marking (spelling)

Staff need to ensure that invented spellings, e.g. *hoam* for *home*, are corrected sensitively and selectively so that a balance is achieved between acceptance of the child's application of current knowledge of phonics and ensuring that invented spellings do not become ingrained. Selection of spellings to correct will be based upon what the child has been taught, ie, if the grapheme has been taught, the spelling will be corrected if the child continues to spell incorrectly.

Learning Environment

Resources in the classroom support the children in applying phonics to reading and writing. In each classroom throughout F2 and Key Stage 1 (and KS2 if appropriate) there are grapheme/phoneme displays, tricky word displays and word mats to support children to be independent in their spelling whilst at the same time reinforcing the link between discreet phonics teaching and learning and its purpose in reading and writing.

Grouping:

Grouping for phonics/spelling is decided in response to the needs of the children and the availability of staff. There is some whole-class teaching and sometimes smaller groups are arranged to enable more precise teaching or to give children access to appropriate year group content. Where this is the case, we use assessment data to ensure they are in appropriate groups and following their next steps accurately. As each group follows the same 4-part phonics structure; transition between groups can be facilitated in a more seamless way.

If children need intervention or boosters to reach age related expectations in phonics, this is provided in addition to the daily phonics session so that as many children as possible can access their year group learning objectives and reach age appropriate outcomes. Similarly, children who are exceeding their age related expectations have the opportunity to access objectives beyond their year group for phonics and spelling (as detailed in NC appendix 1).

Phonetically Decodable Texts:

Children are not expected to read texts which they cannot decode for themselves until they are reaching fluency. We have a choice of phonetically decodable books for both guided and home reading, which are carefully selected to match the children's developing phonic knowledge, so that every child can experience success in their reading by using the skills they have so far been taught.

3. Curriculum

We use the programme 'Letters and Sounds' to ensure a consistent system is followed, and that learning can be tracked and monitored within the systematic framework.

Blending and segmenting. Oral blending and segmenting are taught first before being applied to reading and writing. Children are taught that phonemes are blended in order from left to right, '*all through the word*' for reading. They are also taught how words are segmented into phonemes for spelling. These skills are taught throughout each Phase of Letters and Sounds so that as children meet more complex words or grapheme phoneme correspondences they are able to tackle them with confidence.

Common Exception Words

Children are taught high frequency words that do not conform completely to grapheme-phoneme correspondence rules. We call these 'tricky' words. Children are specifically taught the 'tricky' part of the word and strategies to remember this. They are taught to apply their knowledge of these words in reading and writing. The words are taken from phases 2 to 5 of Letters and Sounds in addition to those listed in the NC Appendix 1.

Comprehension and reading for meaning

Comprehension and meaning are addressed separately within the English and wider curriculum planning. Teachers and practitioners 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.

4. Assessment and tracking.

Foundation stage

In the foundation stage, children are assessed using the development matters statements for age related expectations each half-term and phonics phase development is tracked on the ScholarPack system.

Children in F1 are working towards becoming secure in Phase 1 of letters and sounds - phonological awareness and oral blending and segmenting. If appropriate, the children will start to become familiar with some grapheme-phoneme correspondences through a playful and multisensory approach using songs, actions and stories (Jolly Phonics) whilst they continue to learn to sequence, blend and segment sounds orally. The development matters statements are clear in that children who are within the 30-50 month band are working towards securing the skills of Letters and Sounds Phase 1 (phonological awareness). When children are securing the 30-50 months stage for reading and writing, they will enter the 40-60 month band and begin to learn to use the written graphemes for reading and spelling independently. Nursery (F1) children will develop their communication and language and in turn their understanding and appreciation of quality literature. To this end, children are invited to borrow books from the Nursery 'library' to share and enjoy at home with their parents.

Children in F2 have a discreet phonics session daily and are expected to secure phase 4 of Letters and Sounds as a typical benchmark by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage. If they are secure in the 30-50 months band for reading this will begin at the start of the F2 year. Children who are not yet secure in their pre-reading skills (30-50 months) will need more time to do this and intervention may be used to ensure that these phonological skills are in place. This supports our school to be able to reliably identify children who are showing possible signs of dyslexia and other specific learning

difficulties. Assessments are made using the Development Matters statements and further more specific assessments for phonological awareness skills can be found on the school server.

Key Stage One

In Year One, children secure the content in Appendix 1 (Spelling) of the National Curriculum and the Phase 5 content of Letters and Sounds. Towards the end of Year One, children complete the Year One Phonics Screening Check, the results of which are a summative assessment of each child's ability to read/decode. Throughout the year, children will undertake 'mock' screenings to get them used to the structure of the check and to identify any specific needs for intervention or booster sessions. This also applies to any children in Year 2 who did not meet the required standard in Year 1.

Additionally, until children have secured phase 5 and are working within phase 6 of Letters and Sounds, they are tracked against their developing knowledge of each phase of Letters and Sounds using the school ScholarPack system on a regular basis.

If there is a need for more detailed assessment for any children, there are phase assessments available to all on the school server, which may highlight specific problems so that teachers may address them accordingly. If children move into Key Stage 2 below age related expectation in word reading and spelling, these assessments may be used to inform precision teaching to individual needs.

Key Stage 2

Where children are meeting age related expectations when entering Key Stage 2, the main focus of their learning is spelling. We use the Twinkl spelling programme as a basis for our spelling teaching when children are secure in their use of phonics (end of phase 5). Phonic knowledge continues to underpin spelling with the developing of increasing understanding of the role of morphology and etymology.

Children's spelling is assessed and tracked within the writing assessment framework. If children do not meet their age related expectations in English, they will be identified through regular assessments. If decoding or spelling are identified as barriers to learning for any children, year group teachers will ensure that their planning includes provision for these children in the form of support or intervention as necessary. The English co-ordinator oversees spelling for the school and further information can be found in the English policy documents.

Children who have not met expectations in their phonics screening by the end of Key Stage One continue to be monitored and provision is made for them to be able to access an alternative reading programme such as 'Rapid reading'.

Monitoring and evaluation

The phonics co-ordinator will oversee teacher's assessments of all pupils and ensure that children receive intervention, catch up/accelerated learning where appropriate and needed. Monitoring is carried out using assessment evidence to generate data which provides a picture of what the needs for intervention and support or acceleration are, and the impact of teaching and learning. Any children causing concern will be discussed with the Special Needs co-ordinator and suitable action plans will be put in place.

5. Parental Involvement

At new starter meetings, parents will be made aware of the school phonics policy. Written information is given to new parents and copies are uploaded onto the school website.

F1 parents meetings will include some information on the importance of children developing their phonological awareness, including sharing books, playing games and singing nursery rhymes together. As children begin a formal phonics programme in F2, parents are invited to a meeting to discuss how their children will learn to read and how they are able to support them at home. Home learning activities related to phonics and reading/writing will also be explained and exemplified.

Parents are invited to phonics sessions or workshops in school during the year to see teaching and learning strategies in practice. Progress in reading and spelling development will be discussed at the usual parent's evenings, or by appointment where necessary with individual parents and also through home school reading diaries.

Parents of children due to sit or re-sit the Phonics Screening Check will have information about this and final results of the screening check are reported formally to parents with the child's end of year report.