

Great and Little Shelford CE (A) Primary School
CURRICULUM POLICY FOR PHONICS AND READING
Ratified - January 2017 Next review – September 2018

Aims:

- To provide a systematic programme of teaching and learning synthetic phonics that will enable children to learn phonic knowledge and skills with the expectation that they will become fluent readers and writers, having secured word building and recognition skills.
- To establish consistent practice, progression and continuity in the teaching and learning of phonics and spelling throughout the school.
- To equip children with strategies that will enable them to become fluent readers and confident writers.

Organisation

Reception:

- In the Reception class, phonics is learnt through differentiated whole class teaching based on a multi-sensory approach. Children are taught phonics appropriate to their level of development, beginning with Phases 1 and 2 of the Letters and Sounds programme. Pupil knowledge in this area of the curriculum is reinforced through the provision of independent activities. These structured activities take place within both indoor and outdoor provision in the Reception class and teachers ensure that opportunities are maximised for children to take advantage of them.
- Children are encouraged to apply their phonetic knowledge in their reading and writing from the start of their time in the Reception class.

Year 1:

- Phonics teaching and learning in Year 1 in the Autumn term follows the same pedagogical principles as Reception and is focused upon Phases 4 and 5 of the Letters and Sounds programme. Word lists following the spelling patterns learnt are sent home by the class teacher to allow parents and carers the opportunity to explore the phonics involved with their children but there is no weekly check. Once children are ready for a more formal approach - usually at the beginning of the Spring term - the Year 1 class begins Stage 1 of the Assertive Mentoring spelling programme and has weekly checks of the words they have learnt. This approach is tailored to suit the needs and abilities of individual children as necessary.

Year 2 and Key Stage 2:

- Children continue to follow the 'stage not age' approach of the school's Assertive Mentoring programme, learning spellings, spelling patterns and building their phonological awareness through daily 15 minute spelling lessons. Each group learns 10 – 15 words per week and has a weekly 'check' to assess pupil understanding and spelling of the words learnt. These groups are led by teachers and teaching assistants across the school, often meaning that children move classrooms in order to participate in learning that is most suited to their level of development with regard to spelling and phonics.

- Children with SEND or learners for whom spelling/phonics is an area of specific difficulty, also receive tailored interventions from class teaching assistants in order to develop their phonological awareness.

Teaching and Learning:

- As with all lessons, phonics/spelling lessons are characterised by planned structures with active participation from all children. There is clear evidence of progress within lessons. Phonics and spelling lessons follow the RTPA (Revisit, Teach, Practise, Apply) format and teachers plan for both their own groups and for those that will be led by teaching assistant. Lessons are fast-paced and multi-sensory to take account of the variety of learning styles within classes/groups. The use of ICT through interactive whiteboard flipcharts and classroom computers is actively encouraged.

Reading and Reading schemes

Reading books

In order for children to practise their phonic strategies and gain fluency when reading, Great and Little Shelford Primary School follows a structured approach to progression in reading. All children follow a colour banded progression of reading books (the National Book-Band Scheme), which allows children access to a wide range of texts and authors appropriate to their level of reading ability. As children progress through the colour bands, texts become increasingly challenging and lengthy. The texts within the various colour bands are drawn from a variety of sources such as books from reading schemes. Great and Little Shelford Primary School aims to engender and nurture a love of reading within all children, and we see a healthy balance between reading scheme texts and ‘real’ books as a vital ingredient towards achieving this aim. Once children are able to read books fluently (90% accuracy) from the highest band, they then become ‘free’ readers, allowing them a choice of any books to read from within the school library collection.

Children are also encouraged to choose and read books from their class libraries. Collections of books within these libraries (as well as those in the central school library) are updated, replenished and increased as necessary and whenever possible, depending on budgetary allowances.

Reading at school

In Reception, children read 1:1 with teachers and teaching assistants, as well as with volunteer adult helpers. Most pupils in Reception will experience group guided reading sessions by the end of the academic year.

Children in Years 1 to 6 all have weekly guided reading sessions with their class teachers as well as a variety of opportunities to read with other adults within the context of a school day. These may include 1:1 reading with a teaching assistant or reading with volunteer parent helpers. Children for whom phonics and/or reading present a specific challenge may receive additional support. Within group guiding reading sessions, children will have opportunities to develop their understanding and comprehension of texts and will be encouraged to make predictions and draw inferences from writing. Children across the school also benefit from “reading partnerships” where older children share books and enjoy reading with younger children.

Children will also experience class texts which will be read to them by their teachers, with passages sometimes studied in greater detail.

Children at Great and Little Shelford Primary School are also encouraged to read for pleasure and are given opportunities to do so, particularly in Key Stage 2 when most pupils can read independently with confidence.

Continuing Professional Development:

In order to ensure the best possible outcomes for all children, teachers and teaching assistants have relevant training to support their pedagogical knowledge relating to the teaching and learning of reading and phonics. This may take the form of courses, support from subject leaders or senior leaders or paired teaching opportunities with colleagues.

Assessment of progress:

Children's progress in developing and applying their phonic knowledge is carefully assessed and monitored, to inform future planning.

In Reception and Key Stage 1, children are assessed on being able to:

- Read graphemes
- Enunciate phonemes correctly
- Segment and blend
- Read and write high frequency and tricky words
- Decode sentences
- Comprehend sentences

It is expected that children will be in line with or above national standards when sitting the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1. Children who do not meet the expected standard have appropriate support provided for them in Year 2 in order to develop their phonological awareness and they re-sit the phonics check at the end of Key Stage 1.

In Year 1 and older year groups, children build on these skills and will be assessed and monitored additionally on areas including:

- Usage of dictionaries, thesauri, and other resources
- Comprehension of texts
- Inference and prediction
- Coverage of a range of genres

Parental support

Great and Little Shelford Primary School recognises the vital role that parents and carers have to play in the teaching and learning of phonics and reading and the impact this has on writing skills and creativity. In order to support them fully, briefing sessions are held for parents as appropriate throughout the school (especially in Reception with regard to the phases of letters and sounds) in order to develop parental knowledge in this area of the curriculum and equip parents fully to support their children. Parents are actively encouraged to seek advice from teachers and subject leaders should they have questions regarding the teaching and learning of phonics at school or how they can best support their children at home.