

## **Phonics at Connor Downs Academy**

At Connor Downs Academy we are using 'Letters and Sounds' to structure our phonics teaching. The teaching of phonics is an integral part of our curriculum across the school from Foundation Stage to Key Stage 1 and then on into Key Stage 2 where appropriate.

Children are regularly assessed on their phonic understanding and grouped according to the phase they are working on. Children have discrete, daily phonics sessions where they are introduced to new phonemes, can practise and revise previous learning and have plenty of opportunities to apply the knowledge they have using the 'Revise, Teach, Practise and Apply' structure to each phonics session. Both teaching staff and teaching assistants teach phonics in our school to enable smaller, focused groups. Our staff use a range of multisensory strategies to enthuse and engage the children, including the use of interactive whiteboards, games, magnetic letters, speaking and listening, songs, rhymes and practical activities. Children work with pace and are encouraged to apply their knowledge across the curriculum with any reading or writing activities.

What is Phonics?

Phonics is a way of decoding written letters and spoken sounds. This approach to learning to read encourages children to decode words by sounds, rather than by recognising whole words.

In the early years, teaching focuses on synthetic phonics, where words are broken up into the smallest units of sound (phonemes). Children are taught the letters (graphemes) that represent these phonemes and learn to blend them into words. At its simplest, pupils are taught to read the letters in a word like d-o-g, and merge them to pronounce the word dog. But, of course, phonemes can be represented by one, two, three or four letters (for example, 'igh' in 'night').

We hold phonics and reading workshop/meetings for Reception parents in the Autumn term. This gives parents the opportunity to learn more about how we teach phonics at Connor Downs Academy and how they can best support their child's reading progress.

In Year 1, we discuss the teaching of phonics in our 'Meet the Teacher' session. During this meeting, the Year 1 teacher will demonstrate the teaching of phonics and share resources that are used. This also gives parents the opportunity to ask questions. We hold another workshop prior to the Phonics Screening check.

## **Reading**

In Reception and Year 1 we use the Oxford Reading Tree to support early reading. Children read daily and are assessed regularly to ensure they are reading appropriate levelled books. At the end of Year 1 or prior if a child is ready, the children are screened for Accelerated Reader. At the start of Year 2, all children access Accelerated Reader.

Find out more about Accelerated Reader by visiting  
<http://www.renlearn.co.uk/accelerated-reader/>