

*Dream Big, Work Hard, Be Kind*



## **Phonics Policy**

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## **Our Aim**

At Redbridge Primary School, we are committed to ensuring that all children at our school become confident, fluent and passionate readers and writers from an early stage. We aim to ensure that every child, regardless of their background, ability or needs succeed and reach their full potential. We strongly believe that early reading ignites creativity, sparks curiosity, and stimulates the imagination in young children. Often, this leads to role-play as children grow which helps to develop other skills such as empathy, problem-solving, and morality.

## **What is phonics?**

Phonics is a way of teaching children how to read and write. It helps children hear, identify and use different sounds that distinguish one word from another in the English language. Teaching children to blend the sounds of letters together helps them decode unfamiliar words by sounding them out.

It is important for early readers to learn the relationship between letters and sounds. Phonics teaches this information to help children learn how to read. Children learn the sounds that each letter makes, and how a change in the order of letters changes a word's meaning.

## **What is Essential Letters and Sounds?**

At Redbridge primary School, use 'Essential Letters and Sounds' which is a complete systematic synthetic phonics programme (SSP). ELS teaches children to read using a systematic, synthetic phonics approach. It is designed to be used as part of an early learning environment that is rich in talk and story, where children experience the joy of books and language whilst rapidly acquiring the skills to become fluent independent readers and writers.

ELS teaches children to:

- decode by identifying each sound within a word and blending them together to read fluently
- encode by segmenting each sound to write words accurately.

We know that for children at the end of Key Stage 1 to achieve the age-related expectations, they need to read fluently at 90 words per minute. As children move into Key Stage 2, it is vitally important that even those who have made the slowest progress are able to read age-appropriate texts independently and with fluency.

For children to engage with the wider curriculum, they need to be able to read well, making inferences and drawing on background knowledge to support their developing understanding of a text when they read. To do this, they need to be able to draw not only on their phonic knowledge but also on their wider reading and comprehension skills, each of which must be taught.

The first step in this complex process is the link between spoken and written sounds. ELS, daily phonics teaching must begin from the first days of Reception. Through the rigorous ELS teaching programme, children will build an immediate understanding of the relationship between the sounds they can hear and say (phonemes) and the written sounds (graphemes).

### **NURSERY**

#### **Phase 1**

Children develop their listening skills through focusing on environmental sounds – e.g. they make a woosh noise for a rocket. They recognise animal sounds and different sounds that they can make with their voices, playing games such as bingo. They start to recognise musical sounds and sounds that you can make on your body. They begin to experience patterns rhythm and rhyme and an understanding of alliteration. Also, children start to experience the process of orally blending sounds to make words – e.g. d-o-g makes dog.

### **RECEPTION**

#### **Phase 2**

This phase starts with single sounds for each letter of the alphabet. Children learn the letter names and the sound that they make to be able to blend sounds for reading and segment sounds for spelling. They will learn how to blend and segment these sounds into words, thinking about how many sounds are in the word. Then, children move on to digraphs (2 letters that make 1 sound) such as ck, ll, ff, ss etc. In addition, children will learn how to read harder to read and spell words (HRSW) such as I, the, no, put, of, is, to go, into, pull as, his.

#### **Phase 3**

Children progress to more complex digraphs, vowel digraphs and trigraphs (3 letters that make 1 sound). Again, they learn how to blend, and segment sounds into words and start to recognise words that have two syllables. Children will move onto reading more harder to read and spell words, which are: he, she, buses, we, me, be, push, was, her, my, you. They will also practise reading and writing sentences and captions involving these HRSW and words with the focus sound.

#### **Phase 3-4**

In this phase, children are introduced to adjacent consonants alongside the Phase 3 teaching to extend children's sounding out and blending skills. Children learn more harder to read and spell words: they, all, are, ball, tall, when, what, said, so, have, were, out, like, some, come, there, little, one, do, children, love. This phase is taught for a full term to help children consolidate their learning.

#### **Phase 4**

The main focus of the phase is to practise blending words with two or three adjacent consonants. These adjacent consonant sounds can both be heard when you say the word which makes them different from a digraph. These are words such as – flat, last, crab etc.

Some children can find this tricky. Sometimes, they can miss sounds out (particularly when spelling) because they do not hear the sound such as the 'n' in send.

#### **Phase 5 Intro**

Children learn alternative ways of making sounds that they learnt in phase 3 – e.g. the 'ee' sound in s-ee-n, children will learn another way of making a long 'a' sound, such as 'ay' as in p-l-ay. Children will also learn split digraphs a-e (make), e-e (pete), i-e (kite), o-e (cone) and u-e (cube). More harder to read and spell words are also taught: oh, their, people, Mr, Mrs, your, ask, should, would, could, asked, house, mouse, water, want, very.

## *YEAR 1*

### **Phase 5 Intro**

Children will recap this phase from Reception in the Autumn term. In addition to the hard to read and spell words are also taught in this phase in Reception, they will also learn: please, once, any, many, again, who, whole, where, two.

### **Phase 5b**

This part of the phase introduces children to how some sounds can make an alternative sound – such as 'ch' (like chat) can make a 'c' sound as in (school) or a 'sh' sound as in (chef). Children are taught to use the initial sound that they know and ask themselves if the word makes sense? Then, they use the alternative pronunciation and blend the word to make sense. This can be quite a jump for some children to make as they have to realise that English isn't quite as straight forward as it once seemed. The last few harder to read and spell words are taught: here, sugar, friend, because.

### **Phase 5c**

Children will focus on alternative spellings of sounds. This phase introduces children to different ways of spelling and enables them to read more difficult vocabulary. Children will learn how to read polysyllabic words (more than one syllable) and these will include alternative pronunciations of sounds. Through the whole of phase 5, children will continue to learn and practice how to read and spell the harder to read and spell words.

## **DECODABLE BOOKS**

It is vital that whilst children are learning to read, they read books that match their phonic knowledge. These books have been carefully matched to every aspect of the programme and to the sounds that your child is learning in school.

These books are intended to be used during the Review lesson on Day 5 of each week and as home readers. They are also recommended for use in other reading sessions to give children plenty of opportunities to develop their phonic knowledge and reading fluency. Children keep the books for one week and need to aim to re-read them at least four times in this period. Re-reading ensures that children develop their reading skills and fluency. This, in turn, supports their learning in school; as children become more fluent at reading, they are able to focus on their new learning. The children's reading book will be match to the phase of phonics that they are currently learning.

## **The principles of ELS**

The principles of ELS are:

- the delivery of high-quality first teaching with well-structured daily lesson plans
- the use of consistent terminology by teachers, children and parents
- the use of consistent resources that support effective teaching
- repetition and reinforcement of learning
- regular and manageable assessment to ensure that all children 'keep up' rather than 'catch up'

For more details, refer to the 'Essential Letters and Sounds handbook

## ELS Overview – Phase 1 to Phase 5

Phase 1*	Phase 2	Phase 3**
<p><i>Nursery/Pre-School</i></p> <p>Seven aspects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environmental sounds</li> <li>• Instrumental sounds</li> <li>• Body percussion</li> <li>• Rhythm and rhyme</li> <li>• Alliteration</li> <li>• Voice sounds</li> <li>• Oral blending</li> </ul>	<p><i>Reception Autumn 1</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oral blending</li> <li>• Sounding out and blending with 23 new grapheme-phoneme correspondences (GPCs)</li> <li>• 12 new harder to read and spell (HRS) words</li> </ul>	<p><i>Reception Autumn 2, Spring 1 and Spring 2</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oral blending</li> <li>• Sounding out and blending with 29 new GPCs</li> <li>• 32 new HRS words</li> <li>• Revision of Phase 2</li> </ul>
Phase 4**	Phase 5 including alternatives and lesser-known GPCs	Beyond Phase 5
<p><i>Reception Summer 1</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oral blending</li> <li>• No new GPCs</li> <li>• No new HRS words</li> <li>• Word structures – cvcc, ccvc, ccvcc, cccvc, cccvcc</li> <li>• Suffixes</li> <li>• Revision of Phase 2 and Phase 3</li> </ul>	<p><i>Reception Summer 2</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction to Phase 5 for reading</li> <li>• 20 new GPCs</li> <li>• 16 new HRS words</li> </ul> <p><i>Year 1 Autumn 1 and 2</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revision of previously taught Phase 5 GPCs</li> <li>• 2 new GPCs</li> <li>• 9 new HRS words</li> </ul> <p><i>Year 1 Spring 1 and 2</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alternative spellings for previously taught sounds</li> <li>• 49 new GPCs</li> <li>• 4 new HRS words</li> <li>• Oral blending</li> <li>• Revision of Phase 2, Phase 3 and Phase 4</li> </ul>	<p><i>Year 1 Summer, Year 2 and Key Stage 2</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• With ELS, phonics teaching does not stop at the end of Year 1, but continues as children move through the school, with links being made between their GPC knowledge and spelling</li> <li>• Revision of all previously taught GPCs for reading and spelling</li> <li>• Wider reading, spelling and writing curriculum</li> </ul>

*\*Phase 1 of Letters and Sounds (2007) can be used in Nursery/Pre-School settings before starting ELS in Reception and can still be used throughout the school day in Reception. However, direct phonics teaching – the teaching of sounds, graphemes, word reading and vocabulary – must start from the very beginning of Reception.*

*\*\*Phase 3 of ELS covers more than just the Phase 3 graphemes – we introduce some challenge from Phase 4 (in the form of adjacent consonants) alongside the Phase 3 teaching to extend children’s sounding out and blending skills.*

## Planning

At Redbridge Primary School, we:

- follow the weekly planning overview given in 'Essential Letters and Sounds', broken down day by day, adding suggested words sentences that can be used in sessions.
- follow a planned programme, building on previous learning to secure progress (Revisit, teach, practise and apply)
- plan fun, exciting, visual and interactive games and activities.
- ensure lessons are engaging and motivating
- teach phonics daily during the morning when children are more attentive.
- plan group teaching across year groups
- ensure planning provides the opportunity for children to reinforce and apply acquired phonic knowledge and skills as they progress through their phonics.
- ensure children progress in developing and applying their phonic knowledge through formative assessment.
- stream and differentiate the lessons to provide for the needs of all children

## Resources

We offer a range of resources for staff to make full use of indoor and outdoor.

Both parents and teachers, can use the free resources online to help support the phonics programme. Resources for 'Letters and Sounds' (2007) can be used to support the teaching of ELS.

## Extra-Curricular Activities

We offer Phonics club for children in Years 1 and 2 (Spring term) to support their progress in developing and applying their phonic knowledge. In addition to this, we offer a 'Phonics Fun club' for children who are new to the county.

## Classrooms

In order to support children's progress in developing and applying their phonic skills, each class in EYFS and KS1 should have the following:

- a. A copy of the 'Essential Letters and Sounds' document.
- b. Phonics assessment booklet for each child.
- c. Sound mats.
- d. Flash cards
- e. Harder to Read and spell words (HRSW) on display
- f. Reading books for each phase.
- g. Sound families on display.



## Assessment and Recording

Summative Assessment is carried out once every half term to assess the children's knowledge and to determine appropriate groupings as well as progress towards the phonics screening check. It gives a good overview of the phase's children are working at, where to pitch whole class/group teaching and to fully explore particular children's strengths and needs and who require additional interventions. In addition to this, we use the analysis grid (QLA) to assess how the class has performed in the phonics screening check. Upon completing the assessment sheet, the data is then transferred onto OTrack. This will enable the teachers to identify children that have not made any progress from the previous term. A phonics intervention is completed, highlighting actions required to help the children reinforce and apply acquired phonics knowledge and skills to progress through their phonics.

Formative Assessment is carried out daily during the session through questioning and writing on whiteboards, providing instant assessment. Groups are fluid to ensure children are always challenged.

The results of the summative assessments are reported back to the SLT and the Governing Body.

## Skills and Cross-Curricular Approach

We do not see phonics as a standalone subject. In school we recognise the impact good phonics teaching can have on children learning to read and write. Children are exposed to a wide variety of books and texts to encourage their love of reading. The home reading books are linked directly to the phase the children are working within so that children can practise, at school and at home, their increasing knowledge of GPCs and their blending skills in a meaningful context. We encourage children to apply their phonic knowledge when reading and writing in all subjects.

## Inclusion & Equal Opportunities

Phonics teaching is made accessible to as many pupils as possible and adjustments to the programme will be made as required. Teachers will liaise with the literacy Lead and SENCO in order to analyse how children with specific needs respond to the teaching of phonics. It is the role of the teacher to ensure that every child in their class has equal and balanced access to the teaching of phonics and to ensure that it is differentiated appropriately.

Teaching should:

- be at a suitable pace for the child, through a programme which is much slower than for their typically developing peers
- be daily, with well-paced, well-planned lessons that are engaging and motivating
- take full account of the child's individual strengths, weaknesses, knowledge and understanding, and profile of needs

## Parental Involvement

It is of vital importance that regular home-school contact occurs if the delivery of a structured and rigorous phonics scheme is to succeed. As such parents will have the opportunity to:

- discuss the individual progress of their child with the class teacher.
- attend Parents workshops where they can learn more about the teaching of phonics.
- ensure the children practise their 'Letter, Sound and Word' card at home.
- attend training at the beginning of each term to support them with ideas for continuing the teaching of phonics in the home.
- be regularly informed of their child's targets and level for reading.

## The role of the Phonics Lead

The following roles are ways in which the Leader can contribute to the schools' success:

- Support, motivate and advise.
- Deliver and model exemplary lessons with matched impact on the children's progress.
- Coach colleagues to ensure a consistently high standard of teaching in all classes.
- Lead phonics Inset sessions.
- To monitor and assure the quality of teaching and learning for Phonics in line with the policy. This may include lesson observations, monitoring of planning and scrutiny of pupils work and assessment data, modelling of outstanding lesson delivery and inset.
- To ensure that all the children receive regular home reading books and 'Letters, Sounds and words' cards and feedback on how to improve.
- To review long term planning to ensure subject coverage, progression in Phonics.
- To regularly carry out monitoring, planning and display to quality assure progress and outcomes
- Liaise closely with the other key stage and subject leaders to ensure continuity and progression across the Key Stages.
- To monitor the standards of progress and outcomes.
- Monitor the quality of teaching and learning and secure improvement where needed.
- Evaluate pupils' progress, achievement and attainment and report to the Senior Management

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