

SHH Federation Phonics and Early Reading Policy

Intent

At **Stewart Headlam and Hague Schools Federation** we are proud to offer the pupils a text rich learning environment where imagination and creativity can be fuelled. Through our rigorous phonics curriculum, we ensure pupils develop the skills and knowledge they need to develop as confident readers who have a love of books. Through reading in particular, pupils have a chance to develop culturally, emotionally, intellectually, socially and spiritually. Literature, especially, plays a key role in such development. Reading also enables pupils both to acquire knowledge and to build on what they already know. All the skills of language are essential to participating fully as a member of society; only pupils who learn to speak, read and write fluently and confidently are able to effectively participate in wider society.

To achieve this, we ensure that:

- there is a **sharp focus on** ensuring that younger children gain **the phonics knowledge and language comprehension necessary to read and spell**
- **reading is prioritised** to allow pupils to access the full curriculum offer
- **a rigorous, sequential approach to the reading curriculum develops pupils' fluency, confidence and enjoyment in reading**
- at all stages, **reading attainment is assessed and gaps are addressed quickly** and effectively for all pupils
- at the early stages of learning to read, **reading materials are closely matched to the learners' phonics knowledge**

There are four key concepts that we teach to all pupils, these are:

1. Letters are symbols (spellings) that represent sounds.
2. A sound may be spelled by one, two, three or four letters:
E.g. dog street night eight
3. The same sound can be spelled in more than one way:
E.g. rain acorn cake day
4. Many spellings can represent more than one sound:
E.g. head seat break

There are three key skills that we teach to all pupils, these are:

1. Blending: the ability to push sounds together to build words.
2. Segmenting: the ability to pull apart the individual sounds in words.
3. Phoneme manipulation: the ability to insert sounds into and delete sounds out of words. This skill is necessary to test out alternatives for spellings that represent more than one sound.

In order for all pupils to make rapid progress through the cumulative stages of our programme, we ensure the teaching of synthetic phonics is systematic and progressive throughout the foundation stage, key stage one and key stage two for those children needing interventions to support phonetic knowledge and understanding.

Teachers rapidly identify and plug gaps in knowledge and/or skills already covered, while at the same time, moving on to teach new code knowledge and understanding of the concepts.

It must always be remembered that **phonics is the step up to fluent word recognition. Automatic and effortless reading of all words is the ultimate goal.** By repeated blending, segmenting and manipulation of words, pupils get to know them, and once this happens they should be encouraged to read them straight off in reading text, rather than continuing to sound and blend them aloud because they feel that this is what is required.

Implementation

At **Stewart Headlam and Hague School Federation** we follow the **DfE Letters and Sounds document principles** and practice across the EYFS and Key Stage One – **this is supported by following lesson plans and resources provided by THEP (Tower Hamlets Education Partnership)** to ensure fidelity to the programme and the effective delivery of phonics lessons.

Prior to beginning the programme of teaching GPCs (Grapheme Phoneme Correspondences), activities concentrate on developing pupils'

- speaking and listening skills,
- phonological awareness
- the key skills of oral blending,
- segmenting and manipulation.

These experiences are intended to be used as part of a broad and rich language curriculum that has speaking and listening at its centre, links language with physical and practical experiences, and provides an environment rich in print and abundant in opportunities to engage with high quality books. **This phase paves the way for pupils to make a good start when they begin learning GPCs.**

All Year One children take the 'Phonics Screening Check' - a statutory assessment required by legislation.

- Those who do not meet the pass mark will be given support and intervention programmes in Year Two, to provide them with sufficient knowledge and understanding to retake the 'Phonics Screening Check' and obtain a pass mark.
- Those children who do not obtain the required level set by the 'Phonics Screening Check' will receive phonics interventions in Year three and beyond until they have reached the end of Phase 5.
- In Key-Stage Two interventions are based around the gaps identified through teacher assessment. Lessons are quick in pace, multi-sensory, engaging and challenging for all children within the lesson.

Each Phonics lesson includes the following sections:

- **Revise** – Over learn the previous graphemes and words
- **Hear** – Introduce a new grapheme by tuning into its sound
- **Read** – Develop knowledge through reading focus GPC and words containing focus GPC
- **Write** – Accurately spell focus GPC in words containing GPC
- **Apply** – Use the focus GPC to read phrases/sentences or write dictated sentences to secure knowledge
- **Assess** – Monitor progress within each phase to inform planning

Organisation:

Children in Nursery

- Should be taught Phase 1 through a differentiated approach within the setting on a daily basis.
- Staff will teach phase 2 to any children identified as secure at phase 1.

Reception

- Will be taught a discrete phonics session daily for a 20 minute period as a whole class.
- Intervention groups are put in place if and when the need is identified to ensure learners successfully access and move through the programme.
- Phonics skills are embedded in writing and reading tasks in English sessions.
- During the apply section, the activities will be differentiated to ensure that all children are reaching their full potential within a challenging and supportive environment.
- Continuous provision and the outdoor learning environment in EYFS support children in closing the gap and consolidating their phonic knowledge.

- Phonics mats should be freely available in the in each area of learning and outdoors.
- **The driving ethos should be for all children to have completed or be accessing Phase 4 by the end of Reception.**

Year 1

- Will deepen their understanding in order to **start Phase 5 by the start of Autumn Term 2.**
- Children who have not reached the expected level by Year 1 will have extra phonics support.
- Children in Year 1 have access to high quality daily phonics sessions for 20/25 minutes.
- The 'apply' activities will be differentiated to ensure all children reach their full potential.
- The underlying aim of Year 1 should be to ensure all children have completed Phases 4 and 5 and be ready to begin the spelling programme upon entry into Year 2.

Classroom Environment

- Each class has a phase appropriate phonics display, concentrating on both sounds and key words that the children are currently learning.
- Phonics mats should be available in every lesson to support children's early writing across the curriculum and available in the Continuous Provision.
- In EYFS, the displays should reflect the letters and sounds that the children have been taught.
- The working wall will be updated weekly.
- Phonics games will be out in the provision.
- The outdoor learning environment provides opportunities to consolidate learning
- Both the indoor and outdoor environment is rich with print.

Early reading

As pupils move through the phonics programme, they will be **reading materials which are closely matched to the learners' phonics knowledge**, both in school and at home. **We mainly use Pearson Bug Club readers with access to the online phonics resources for home reading.** In this way, pupils will be encouraged to use their phonics skills and knowledge as their primary reading strategy. As pupils find that they can decode words quickly and independently, they will read more and more so that the number of words they can read automatically builds up. Increasing the pace of reading is an important objective.

Pupils will be encouraged to read aloud as well as silently for themselves. As pupils continue to progress through the phonics programme many pupils will begin reading longer texts with more complex words independently and with increasing fluency. This process culminates in a shift from learning to read to reading to learn. Pupils then move on to reading both for pleasure and for information.

Remote learning

- The schools provide links to Bug Club Phonics for online videos to maintain learning whilst not in the classroom or the (DfE Letters and Sounds YouTube videos
- We have invested in online access to decodable books using Bug Club which are monitored by the class teacher. All children in Year 1 Classes and those who do not have access to a device for early reading borrow a school chrome book.
- We provide training and support for parents to ensure effective home use.
- During lockdowns the class teacher and teaching assistants make recordings of class books with links to other videos to promote reading for pleasure.

Impact

Children are assessed every 6 weeks on their Phonics knowledge which is then used as the basis for intervention. Teachers use assessment to inform them of the progress children are making. It also enables teachers to adapt the provision if necessary to ensure the needs of individual pupils are met. Targeted interventions alongside high quality learning environments, ensure that no child is left behind.

As pupils begin to learn to read, they move to banded books and their progress through the bands is carefully tracked and analysed. Running records are used to identify particular strengths and weaknesses and next steps.

Policy status and review

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| Written by | THEP Consultant, reviewed with federation staff |
| Status | Agreed. |
| Approval date | September 2020. |
| Review date | Annually with the EYFS KS1 staff teaching team. |