



THOMAS'S FULHAM PHONICS POLICY

INTRODUCTION

At Thomas's Fulham we use the Letters and Sounds Programme, arranging and adapting its content to best suit the needs of our pupils in the development of their reading and spelling skills. Phonics consists of the following skills: segmenting and blending, knowledge of the alphabetical code and an understanding of the principles underpinning the way the code is used in reading and writing. Throughout our phonics programme children get to manipulate letters through multi-sensory learning.

AIMS

- To provide high quality, systematic phonic work, placing high priority on the development of children's speaking and listening skills for the teaching and learning of reading and writing for all children.
- To enable children to start learning phonic knowledge and skills as soon as they start in Reception with the expectation that they will become fluent readers, having secured word building and recognition skills through Key Stage 1.
- To ensure that children use phonics as their primary approach to reading and spelling, even though not all words conform to regular, phonetic patterns.
- To ensure children are taught high frequency words that do not conform to regular, phonetic patterns ('Common Exception Words' / 'Tricky Words')
- To ensure that children have opportunities to read texts and words that are within their phonic capabilities as early as possible, even though some words may not be de-codeable by the child unaided; teacher support will always be available where needed.
- To encourage the children to attempt to spell words themselves, within their range of phonic knowledge, by building an individual repertoire and the confidence and strategies to attempt the unfamiliar.
- To teach the children that phonemes should be blended from left to right through the complete word, in order for it to be read.
- To help the children to apply the skill of blending phonemes in order to read words.
- To help the children to segment words into their constituent phonemes in order to spell words.
- To learn that blending and segmenting words are reversible processes.

What is Phonics?

Phonics is the knowledge of how the alphabet sounds work and how these sounds are combined to correspond to the spoken and written word. Phonics has a large technical vocabulary:

- Phoneme – a sound in a word
- Grapheme – a letter or sequence of letters that represents a phoneme.

The letters are introduced to the children in groups but these letters are not introduced in alphabetical order. They are introduced in an order so that the letters learnt can quickly be turned into words. There are 40+ sounds (phonemes) in English but only 26 letters that are used to represent these sounds. For reading and writing the children need to be fluent at saying the sounds that go with the letters/groups of letters. The children learn:

- the letter sounds and their pronunciation
- the formation of letters, including lower case and capitals
- to segment and blend words. Decoding for reading and encoding for spelling. The skill of blending is known as synthesising
- identifying sounds in words
- identifying grapheme–phoneme correspondence (GPC) within words

High frequency words are introduced to the children as they progress through the phonic programme. High frequency words have often been regarded in the past as needing to be taught as 'sight words' – words which need to be recognised as visual wholes without much attention to GPC in them, even when those correspondences are straightforward. Research has shown, however, that even when words are recognised apparently at sight, this recognition is most efficient when it is underpinned by grapheme–phoneme knowledge. Even the core high frequency words which are not transparently decodable using grapheme–phoneme correspondence usually contain at least one GPC that is familiar. We approach these words as if they are tricky and use a strategy called 'Train your brain' to identify the regular and irregular parts of these words. e.g. was, said, my.

Delivery and Organisation of Phonics

Sounds taught should be 'pure' ie. 'b' not 'buh'. The latter contains an additional sound and makes decoding and encoding difficult; pure sounds are central to phonics teaching and ability to recognise sounds in words. During teaching, pupils should be able to see the adult's mouth in order to learn correct pronunciation of sounds.

Children are to be taught that the number of graphemes in a word doesn't always correspond to the number of phonemes; this greatly aids spelling. Sound buttons are used in phonics teaching to illustrate this eg.



Early Years and Key Stage 1

In Early Years and KS1, our aim is to teach phonics on at least 4 days per week for 20–30 minutes, following the structure of Review/Teach/Practise/Apply/Plenary. Our phonics programme is differentiated as appropriate. Letter groups for each week are uploaded on to the TLP.

Pupils are taught by form teachers and extra pupil support is given based on a variety of data: pupil performance in EY, reading and spelling ability in a range of lessons in Y1, Year 1 Phonics Screener results. Groups are flexible and cover the relevant phases from Letters and Sounds. Different sounds are introduced and revisited until secure.

Phonics work is taught discreetly and is also incorporated into daily Literacy lessons and referred to in all subjects. Our reading materials support the Letters and Sounds programme, in particular the use of Dandelion Readers from Reception.

Although Letters and Sounds is followed, teachers will use their professional judgements, based on their assessments as to the detailed delivery of phonics and the materials used.

Multisensory activities will be included in the teaching of phonics so that various learning styles can be accommodated for.

Key Stage 2

Teachers should be aware of the value of over-learning (revisiting and practising words). Little and often is the most effective method and linking phonics revision to cross-curricular work.

Phonics teaching will continue in Years 3 and 4 through the use of the Ruth Miskin 'Read Write Inc.' scheme which is a structured approach to Spelling that incorporates strategies that will have been used in Key Stage 1, including the "language" of phonics (grapheme, phoneme etc) and the use of sound buttons. In Year 5, the children are given differentiated, weekly spelling lists which follow a particular rule, for example, a_e. In both Year 5 and 6, the children are encouraged to correct spelling mistakes in their work either by copying out the correct spelling or by using a dictionary.

Assessment

Assessment is carried out regularly to plot the progress of individual pupils. In Early Years and Year One, phonics homework may occasionally be set where necessary. In Year Two there may be an occasional phonics homework task which involves learning and applying phonics skills (word hunts or word searches) rather than simply a list of words to learn by rote. High frequency words will be tested approximately once a month. Years 3 and 4 are assessed half-termly in accordance with the Ruth Miskin 'Read, Write Inc.' programme.

Assessment informs subsequent lessons and is evidence to share with form teachers and parents where necessary.

Assessment sheets are passed onto the next teacher to ensure continuity of progression.

As a result of assessments, children are enabled to progress at their own pace and according to their own needs.

RESOURCES

Ruth Miskin 'Read Write Inc' practice books and log books
 Letters and Sounds handbooks and resources
 Online Bug Club Books
 Reading Scheme books (which include Dandelion books)
 Phonics Play website (including online planning and resources)
 Galactic Phonics
 ICT Literacy Games
 BBC Online

See also: Curriculum Policy,
 Fulham Teaching and Learning Policy

This policy will be reviewed annually and/or when needed			
Latest Review: January 2020	By:	Charlotte Gregory, Head of Lower School	No changes
Next Review: January 2021	By:	Charlotte Gregory, Head of Lower School	