



## Phonics Policy

### Aldermaston CE Primary School

**Version:** 1

**Reviewed by:** SLT (non-statutory)

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**Review by:** September 2024 (2 years)

## 1) Intent

**‘We learn to read, so that we can read to learn.’**

At Aldermaston CE School, we believe that phonics is a body of knowledge that is necessary for children to learn to read and spell. We aim to give children the best possible start on their reading/writing journey by teaching them the essential phonological/phonemic skills and knowledge to decode and encode (spell) words independently from the outset, children will use phonics as the step up to fluent word recognition. Automatic and effortless reading of all words – decodable and tricky – is the ultimate goal. We recognise that the development of spoken language and the enjoyment and comprehension of quality literature go hand in hand to develop a lifelong love of reading and aim to nurture and develop these attributes alongside the phonics program.

Our policy sets out the means by which we ensure consistency and a systematic approach to the teaching and learning of synthetic phonics, as the prime method by which children learn to read and spell independently, automatically and confidently in the first years of their schooling. It aims to reinforce our high expectations for pupil progress. We follow the structure of a validated DfE SSP scheme, introducing the GPCs (Grapheme-Phoneme Correspondence) in the suggested order using the resources from the Twinkl Phonics Programme. This ensures that both the EYFS Early Learning Goals and National Curriculum content are delivered.

### **Through the teaching of phonics children should:**

- Develop listening skills and awareness of sound in the environment.
- Develop vocabulary and ability to identify and recall the difference between sounds.
- Learn the skills of blending and segmenting as a first priority as they are introduced to the GPCs for reading and spelling. This ensures that from the outset children are able to read and spell simple CVC words with the GPCs they know.
- Apply their phonic knowledge in the context of reading and spelling in the wider curriculum and understand how and when to do this.
- Use phonics as their first strategy to decode and encode unknown words, and be reading with increasing fluency, speed and accuracy by the age of 6.

### **Disadvantaged children and those with SEND are given full access to the curriculum. Teachers use a range of strategies to enable all children to become successful readers, including:**

- Small group phonics support
- Using a range of activities to ensure children are engaged, motivated and enjoy their learning
- Encouraging the use of resources to support their learning in phonics and early reading and writing

## 2) Implementation

*‘When teachers are engaging and motivating, children mirror their teacher’s mood and attitude, pay attention and enjoy learning.’*

### **The Reading Framework – January 2022 DfE**

We ensure that children have sufficient opportunities to practice and apply their knowledge in phonics. High quality, targeted activities are designed to enable the children to be successful and recognize that they are learning to read and write.

We ensure all children are participating in the phonics sessions using a variety of techniques including ‘call and response’, paired and collaborative activities to ensure the time for practice is used effectively.

Phonic sessions have a consistent structure to them, including revisit, direct teaching, practise and apply sections each day during the 20-30 minutes (thus enabling the children to focus on the content of the learning with an expected routine).

Expectations are clear from the start, establishing the early skills in reading and writing; sitting at a table to write with a taught pencil grip to support good posture for writing; focusing on accuracy and practice in reading in order to gain

fluency.

### **Discrete Sessions**

In **FS2**, a discrete session of initially 10 minutes daily, based on the seven aspects of Level 1, differentiated to take account of children's starting points. This builds to 30 minutes daily where the teaching of high quality, systematic synthetic phonics is delivered until children are secure in Level 3/4. In addition to this children will take part in daily storytime, poetry/singing time as well as other related activities.

**In Year 1**, a discrete session of 30 minutes daily is given to the teaching of high quality, systematic synthetic phonics until children are secure in Level 5. In addition to this children will take part in daily storytime, poetry/singing time as well as other related activities.

**In Year 2**, children have a discrete 30 minute session everyday which follows the Level 6 and beyond and applies the spelling rules and guidelines, as listed in the NC English Appendix 1.

Children who did not meet the threshold for the Year 1 phonics screening check continue to receive daily phonics sessions tailored to meet their needs.

### **In KS2**

For those children who have not achieved the expected standard in phonics at the end of KS1, additional phonics interventions are provided. Teachers continue to monitor the children's progress and will ensure those children who are still not yet fluent readers, are supported to use their phonic knowledge to decode and encode words.

### **Teaching Groups**

FS2 Phonics is taught by the class teacher with the support of TAs for those children needing extra intervention or support.

The teacher of the mixed Yr1/2 class plans and manages the teaching of phonics with TA support used flexibly to extend or consolidate learning for targeted children where necessary.

Songs, actions and stories from the Twinkl scheme are used to aid memory when introducing and revisiting GPCs as part of this multisensory approach during the first 3 levels, and until the children are secure in using the initial alphabetic code (44 phonemes).

**At every stage**, if children need intervention or boosters to reach age related expectations in phonics, this is provided **in addition** to the daily phonics sessions so that as many children as possible can access their year group learning objectives and reach age appropriate outcomes. Similarly, children who are exceeding their age related expectations have the opportunity deepen and broaden their learning.

### **Structure of the Discrete Phonics Sessions**

Phonics sessions are structured in the same way each day and build in strong, consistent and familiar routines. In this way children are aware of expectations and are not distracted in their progress towards the learning objective.

Teachers have a focus on clear and correct pronunciation and model phonemes to children accurately (ensuring that pronunciation is 'pure' i.e. without 'schwas' e.g. 'b' not 'buh', 'c' not 'cer' etc).

Teachers also take the opportunity to provide spelling rules where appropriate, (e.g. ck only found at the end of a word, use of u after q etc).

**Use of different media should be selected appropriately and carefully.**

Phonics sessions from Level Two onwards follow the sequence below (variation of the format will be age/level appropriate):

Part of the Session	Content	Details
<b>Introduction</b>	Objectives and criteria for success	Ensure clarity These may be weekly – displayed on flip chart or working wall – Referred to during the lesson/week
<b>Revisit/Review</b>	Practise previously learned graphemes, tricky words and/or blending and segmenting	On carpet Quick fire Use of mini wbds
<b>Teach</b>	Teach new graphemes and tricky words, making links with previous work where appropriate Expect all children to participate using ‘call and response’	Model Support the children to connect new knowledge with previous learning Call and response can be verbal or on Mini wbds On carpet
<b>Practise</b>	Practise blending and reading words and decodable phrases/sentences with the new GPC. Practise segmenting and spelling words with new GPC	Model activity Work independently or in a group/pairs
<b>Apply</b>	Read or write a sentence using one or more HF words and words containing new graphemes Dictation activity (When writing remind about handwriting rules/conventions)	If dictation activity – move to tables (to be developed across the phases)
<b>Assess</b>	Learning against criteria	Use Learning Intentions

We use the validated DFE Twinkl scheme to ensure a consistent system is followed, and that learning can be tracked and monitored within the systematic framework.

**Blending and segmenting.** Oral blending and segmenting are taught first before being applied to reading and writing. Children are taught that phonemes are blended in order from left to right, ‘*all through the word*’ for reading. They are also taught how words are segmented into phonemes for spelling. These skills are taught throughout each level of the scheme so that as children meet more complex words or grapheme phoneme correspondences they are able to tackle them with confidence.

### Common Exception Words

Children are taught high frequency words that do not conform completely to GPC rules. We call these ‘tricky’ words. Children are specifically taught the ‘tricky’ part of the word and strategies to remember this. They are taught to apply their knowledge of these words in reading and writing. The words are taken from level 2 to 5 of the scheme in addition to those listed in the NC English Appendix 1.

### Levels

#### **Level 1: Underpinning All Phases (Key Focus at the start of FS2)**

Level 1 is made up of 7 aspects. While there is considerable overlap between these aspects, the overarching aim is for children to **experience regular, planned opportunities to listen carefully and talk extensively** about what they hear, see and do. The boundaries between each strand are flexible and not fixed: practitioners should plan to integrate the activities according to the developing abilities and interests of the children in the setting.

- Aspect 1: General sound discrimination – environmental sounds

- Aspect 2: General sound discrimination – instrumental sounds
- Aspect 3: General sound discrimination – body percussion
- Aspect 4: Rhythm and rhyme
- Aspect 5: Alliteration
- Aspect 6: Voice sounds
- Aspect 7: Oral blending and segmenting

Each aspect is divided into three strands;

- **Tuning into** sounds (auditory discrimination)
- **Listening and remembering** sounds (auditory memory and sequencing)
- **Talking** about sounds (developing vocabulary and language comprehension).

Activities within the seven aspects are designed to help children:

1. listen attentively;
2. enlarge their vocabulary;
3. speak confidently to adults and other children;
4. discriminate phonemes;
5. reproduce audibly the phonemes they hear, in order, all through the word;
6. use sound-talk to segment words into phonemes.

**The ways in which practitioners and teachers interact and talk with children are critical to developing children's speaking and listening. This needs to be kept in mind throughout all phase one activities.**

#### **Level 2: FS2**

Children entering Level Two will have experienced a wealth of listening activities, including songs, stories and rhymes. They will be able to distinguish between speech sounds and many will be able to blend and segment words orally. Some will also be able to recognise spoken words that rhyme and will be able to provide a string of rhyming words, but inability to do this does not prevent moving on to Level Two as these speaking and listening activities continue.

**The purpose of this level** is to teach at least 19 letters, and move children on from oral blending and segmentation to blending and segmenting with letters. By the end of the level many children should be able to read some VC and CVC words and to spell them either using magnetic letters or by writing the letters on paper or on whiteboards. During the level they will be introduced to reading two-syllable words and simple captions. They will also learn to read some high-frequency 'tricky' words: the, to, go, no.

#### **Level 3: FS2**

Children entering Level Three will know around 19 letters and be able to blend phonemes to read VC words and segment VC words to spell. While many children will be able to read and spell CVC words, they all should be able to blend and segment CVC words orally.

**The purpose of this level** is to teach another 25 graphemes, most of them comprising two letters (e.g. oa), so the children can represent each of about 42 phonemes by a grapheme.

Children also continue to practise CVC blending and segmentation in this phase and will apply their knowledge of blending and segmenting to reading and spelling simple two-syllable words and captions. They will learn **letter names** during this phase, learn to read some more tricky words and also begin to learn to spell some of these words. **At Aldermaston, the children will need to learn the order of the alphabet and they need to be introduced to the terms 'consonant' and 'vowel' and be told that there is a vowel in nearly every word, at this stage.**

#### **Level 4: FS2/Year 1**

Children entering Level Four will be able to represent each of 42 phonemes by a grapheme, and be able to blend phonemes to read CVC words and segment CVC words for spelling. They will have some experience in reading simple two-syllable words and captions. They will know letter names and be able to read and spell some tricky words.

**The purpose of this level** is to consolidate children's knowledge of graphemes in reading and spelling words containing adjacent consonants and polysyllabic words. The teaching materials in this phase provide a selection of suitable words

containing adjacent consonants. These words are for using in the activities – practising blending for reading and segmenting for spelling. This is not a list to be worked through slavishly but to be selected from as needed for an activity.

**It must always be remembered that phonics is the step up to word recognition. Automatic reading of all words – decodable and tricky – is the ultimate goal.**

#### **Level 5: Year 1/Year 2**

Children entering Level Five are able to read and spell words containing adjacent consonants and some polysyllabic words.

**The purpose of this level** is for children to broaden their knowledge of graphemes and phonemes for use in reading and spelling. They will learn new graphemes and alternative pronunciations for these and graphemes they already know, where relevant. Some of the alternatives will already have been encountered in the high-frequency words that have been taught. Children become quicker at recognising graphemes of more than one letter in words and at blending the phonemes they represent. When spelling words, they will learn to choose the appropriate graphemes to represent phonemes and begin to build word-specific knowledge of the spellings of words.

#### **Level 6: Year 2**

By the beginning of Level Six, children should know most of the common Grapheme-Phoneme Correspondences (GPCs). They should be able to read hundreds of words, doing this in three ways:

- reading the words automatically if they are very familiar;
- decoding them quickly and silently because their sounding and blending routine is now well established;
- decoding them aloud.

Children's spelling should be phonemically accurate, although it may still be a little unconventional at times. Spelling usually lags behind reading, as it is harder.

**During this level**, children become fluent readers and increasingly accurate spellers.

**The principles of these levels are continuously revisited.**

### **Links to Early Reading**

#### **Comprehension and Reading for Meaning**

Comprehension and meaning are addressed separately within literacy and wider curriculum planning and policy. Teachers and practitioners are clear about which activities are designed to teach children to acquire word recognition skills, and which will help children develop high-level comprehension skills.

#### **Individual Reading Books**

Children are provided with books that are matched to their phonic ability (including wordless books from the start of FS2), which children take home to read with parents. These books are monitored closely by the class teacher during individual reading sessions. Children are read to by an adult every day. Children are heard read on an individual level at least once per week (sometimes more frequently for those children needing greater intervention).

#### **Class Readers**

Phonics/Word reading, comprehension and a love of reading is also supported in class by exposure to high quality literature from the school's core texts and authors.

#### **Phonically Decodable Texts**

Children are not expected to read texts which they cannot decode for themselves until they are reaching fluency. We have a choice of phonically decodable books for both guided and home reading, which are carefully selected to match the children's developing phonic knowledge, so that every child can experience success in their reading by using the skills they have so far been taught.

## **Reading Records**

Reading records are completed in partnership with parents and carers. They are used to record reading at home and in school. They support us to track children's progress through our reading scheme and allow us to monitor that books are matched to phonics levels.

## **Leadership of Phonics**

***The Phonics Leader is responsible for Phonics through the school. This includes:***

- Ensuring continuity, progression and good transition in Phonics and early reading from FS to KS1.
- Providing all members of staff with guidelines and a scheme of work to show how aims are achieved and how the variety of all aspects of phonics is to be taught.
- Advising on in-service training in Phonics and Early Reading to staff where appropriate. This will be in line with the needs identified in the School Development Plan.
- Advising and supporting colleagues in the implementation and assessment of phonics and Early Reading throughout the school.
- Assisting with the requisition and maintenance of resources required for the teaching of phonics.
- Monitoring the quality of teaching and learning in phonics across FS and KS1.

Ensure teachers are aware of the potential barriers that may hinder learning (see p53 'The Reading Framework' DfE Jan 22)

**The English Leader is responsible for Reading through the school. This includes:**

Ensuring continuity, progression and good transition in reading and spelling from year group to year group across the school.

- Advising on in-service training in Reading and Spelling to staff where appropriate. This will be in line with the needs identified in the School Development Plan.
- Advising and supporting colleagues in the implementation and assessment of reading and spelling throughout the school.
- Assisting with the requisition and maintenance of resources required for the teaching of reading and spelling.
- Monitoring the quality of teaching and learning in reading across the school.

***The class teacher is responsible for:***

- Ensuring children progress in the acquisition of early reading and phonic knowledge and skills with due regard to the ELGs and National Curriculum for English.
- Developing and updating skills, knowledge and understanding of phonics.
- Identifying needs in phonics and take advantage of training opportunities.
- Keeping appropriate on-going records.
- Planning effectively for phonics, liaising with phonics leader when necessary.
- Informing pupils and parents of their progress, achievements and attainment.

Knowing the requirements of all the phonic phases and ensure they know which phase their children are at.

Ensuring their teaching is at a suitable pace for those children with SEND and make additional provision where/when needed.

## **3) Impact**

**'We learn to read, so that we can read to learn.'**

At Aldermaston CE School we have a passion to ensure that the culture of reading is embedded and the teaching of reading and spelling is as effective as possible.

The impact of our approach is to ensure our children become confident readers and develop a life-time love of reading. To enable this, we have adopted a rigorous and systematic phonics programme that includes structured and accessible resources to ensure all children make sufficient progress and meet or exceed age-related expectations.

We have developed a variety of strategies to engage our families in supporting their child's reading journey from when they start at the school to when they move on to secondary school.

## **Assessment**

### **Formative Assessment**

Verbal feedback – the vast majority of feedback is in conversation with the pupil, allowing misconceptions to be spotted and effectively addressed at a timely stage

Teachers gaining feedback from other adults involved with the child – including parents in the Reading Record and adults in school during 1-1 reading sessions

Assessments from each lesson to inform next step planning

### **Summative Assessment**

Half-termly tracker summarises phonics check assessments – GPC, Tricky Words, Blending, and Segmenting

All Year One take the 'Phonics Screening Check' (those who do not meet the pass mark are tested again in Year Two)

Assessments from each point to inform next step planning.

### **Assessment for Each Year Group**

#### **Foundation stage**

In the Foundation Stage, children are assessed using the school Phonics Progress Tracking Sheet but also against the Development Matters statements each half term.

Children in FS2 have a discreet phonics session daily and are expected to secure Level 4 as a typical benchmark by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage. If they are secure in the 30-50 months band for reading this will begin at the start of the FS2 year. Children who are not yet secure in their pre-reading skills (30-50 months) will need more time to do this and intervention may be used to ensure that these phonological skills are in place. This supports our school to be able to reliably identify children who are showing possible signs of any specific learning difficulties. Assessments are made using the Development Matters statements. The data collected is passed on to year one teachers.

#### **Key Stage One**

In Year 1, children secure the content in Appendix 1 (Spelling) of the National Curriculum and the Level Five content. At the end of Year 1, children complete the Year One Phonics Screening Check, the results of which are a summative assessment of each child's ability to read/decode.

Every half term teachers complete phonics checks the data from which is recorded and used in planning. At the end of each term, children will undertake a screening check using past screening check materials to identify any specific needs for intervention or booster sessions. This also applies to any children in Year 2 who did not meet the required standard in Year 1.

In Year 2, children secure the content in Appendix 1 (Spelling) of the National Curriculum and the Level Six content. Additionally, until children have secured Level Five and are working within Level Six, they will continue to be tracked against their developing knowledge of each level. Data collected at the end of Year 2, including the phonics screening check from year 1 or 2, is discussed with the Year 3 teacher as part of transition.

#### **Key Stage 2**

Where children are meeting age related expectations when entering Key Stage 2, the main focus of their learning is spelling. We use the Twinkl spelling programme as a basis for our spelling teaching when children are secure in their use of phonics (end of Phase Five). Phonic knowledge continues to underpin spelling with the developing of increasing understanding of the role of morphology and etymology.

Children's spelling is assessed and tracked and shared with parents as part of our homework provision. If children do not meet their age related expectations in English, they will be identified through regular assessments. If decoding or spelling are identified as barriers to learning for any children, teachers will ensure that their planning includes provision for these children in the form of support or intervention as necessary. The English Subject Lead oversees spelling for the school.

Children who have not met expectations in their phonics screening by the end of Key Stage One are monitored through the SEND policy and provision is made for them to be able to access further intervention in Key State Two.



**At all stages**, children's reading/phonics progress and attainment are discussed with SLT at pupil progress meetings each term.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

The Phonics Lead will oversee teacher's assessments of all pupils and ensure that children receive intervention, catch up/accelerated learning where appropriate and needed. Monitoring is carried out using assessment evidence to generate data which provides a picture of what the needs are for intervention and support or acceleration, and the impact of teaching and learning. Any children causing concern will be discussed with SENCo and suitable action plans will be put in place.

## **4) Parental Involvement**

At new starter meetings for FS2, parents will be made aware of the school phonics approach. Written information is given to new parents on how to support their children with phonics and early reading. These meetings will include some information on the importance of children developing their phonological awareness, including sharing books, playing games and singing nursery rhymes together.

As children begin a formal phonics programme in FS2, parents are invited to attend one or more of our 'Phonics Coffee Mornings', to show them how their children will learn to read and how they are able to support them at home. A Home Learning Pack of activities related to phonics and reading/writing will also be explained and exemplified and additional resources are provided to supplement this pack throughout the year. Homework to support phonics is given to children at relevant points in their progression of skills from KS1. Progress in reading and spelling development will be discussed at the usual parents' evenings, or by appointment where necessary with individual parents and also through home school reading records.

Parents of children due to sit or re-sit the Phonics Screening Check will be provided with information about this, usually as an organised meeting or workshop, and final results of the screening check are reported formally to parents with the child's end of year report.