

Phonics Teaching at Harrow Gate Academy

Intent

At Harrow Gate Primary Academy, we know that to be able to read, children need to be taught an efficient strategy to decode words. That strategy is phonics.

Children are actively taught and supported to use phonics as the only approach to decoding. Phonic decoding skills are practised until children become automatic and fluent reading is established. Fluent decoding is only one component of reading. Comprehension skills are taught to enable children to make sense of what they read, build on what they already know and give them a desire to want to read. Reading increases children's vocabulary because they encounter words they would rarely hear or use in everyday speech.

Implementation

Phonics teaching at Harrow Gate Primary Academy embodies the following seven features of effective phonics practice:

- direct teaching in frequent, short bursts
- consistency of approach
- secure, systematic progression in phonics learning
- maintaining pace of learning
- providing repeated practice
- application of phonics using matched decodable books
- Early identification of children at risk of falling behind, linked to the provision of effective keep-up support.



All phonics sessions at Harrow Gate Academy follow the systematic, synthetic phonics programme outlined in the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised programme. All staff follow the programme with fidelity and understand the benefits of a clear and consistent programme of SSP.

All children benefit from an early start from week 1 in Autumn 1 and phonic sessions happen daily in Reception, Y1 and Y2 and where necessary throughout KS2.

Each year group has a strategic programme of study which maps out which phase and sounds are taught weekly so that every child can be closely tracked; ensuring that no one is at risk of falling behind. For those children who do struggle to keep up, a catch-up plan is identified and implemented as a matter of urgency so that any gaps are diminished as quickly as possible.

Phonic sessions follow the sequence of teaching outlined in the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised programme however the application of decoding and encoding of taught sounds is the focus of authentic reading and writing opportunities offered in daily Power of Reading Sessions.

Alongside daily assessment, RAG testing is carried out half termly and results are used to inform all catch up and intervention plans.

Teachers are highly trained to instil the principles of phonics and can identify the learning needs of young children; they can recognise and overcome barriers that impede learning.

A phase baseline assessment will be carried out for children who are new to school so that we can identify their starting point and ensure that their progress in phonics is rigorous.

Children also experience success through independent reading of closely matched phonics books. These books are also sent home so that parents can share in the success of their child's reading journey.

High quality phonics training is carried out regularly so that HGPA staff are able to develop their expertise and become highly skilled phoneticians whilst supporting early reading.

Impact

Through implementing a systematic synthetic phonics programme, consistently across the school, we ensure that all children become fluent and engaged readers. We want our pupils to grow into confident readers, who can competently access a wealth of literature and who embrace a love for reading. Careful teaching and frequent practice of phonics will lead to children developing fluency in reading.