

Phonics Policy



Name of subject leader: Lauren Godfrey

Date policy formulated: June 2024

Date of review:

At Highfield Community Primary School, we are committed to the delivery of excellence in the teaching of Phonics. We aim to develop each child so that they are able to read with fluency as well as develop a love of reading that will stay with our children all their lives. Being able to read is the most important skill children will learn during their early schooling and has far-reaching implications for lifelong confidence and well-being.

The use of phonics is one of the many skills needed to be able to be a reader and writer. We aim to teach high quality phonics to ensure the children have the best start possible in reading and writing. The learning of phonics is the beginning of children's body of knowledge, skills and understanding that are an essential part of learning to read. In order to read and understand texts children must learn to recognise/decode the words on the page. Good quality phonics teaching allows the child to be secure in the skills of word recognition and decoding which allows children to read fluently. This will result in children being able to read for pleasure and will allow them to move onto developing higher order reading for meaning skills. These phonic skills need to be taught synthetically and systematically involving a variety multi-sensory resources for all learners.

Phonics intention

At our school we strive for each child to be able to:

- Recognise, say and write all phonemes within each phase of the phonic bands
- Learn tricky and common exception words by sight within each phase of the phonic bands
- Confidently write the tricky words specified within each phase of phonics

- Read and write common words containing unusual grapheme, phoneme correspondences (GPCs)
- Use their phonic knowledge to blend and segment phonetically decodable words
- Use their phonic knowledge to attempt to read and write more complex words
- Read confidently and fluently with good understanding using age appropriate texts
- Develop the habit of reading widely and often, for both pleasure and information
- Write clearly, accurately and coherently, using phonic knowledge

Phonic implementation

At Highfield Community Primary School, we are users of Bug Club which is a validated phonics programme. Phonics sessions are undertaken daily in EYFS and KS1 using the following sequence:

- Alphabet song
- Introduction
- Revisit and review
- Teach
- Practise
- Apply
- Assess learning

Our children's phonics learning journey begins in EYFS. In Autumn term, children will be assessed on whether they are secure in their Phase 1 phonics knowledge. This includes Environmental Sounds, Instrumental Sounds, Body Percussion, Rhythm and Rhyme, Alliteration, Voice Sounds and Oral Blending and Segmenting.

Phase 2, 3 and 4 is taught in Reception and Phase 5 in Year 1. Phase 6 will be covered in Year 2 during the Autumn Term followed by Purple Mash spellings.

All children are exposed to the Tricky Words linked to their phase during their daily phonics sessions and cross curricular where applicable.

A supplementary approach has been taken to the use of the BUG Club Programme to meet the needs of our children at Highfield. We use the below sound mats for phase 2 and 3.

Phase 2 Sound Mat

s	a	t	p	i	n	m	d
g	o	c	k	ck	e	u	r
h	b	f	ff	l	ll	ss	

Tricky words...
I no the to go into

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Phase 3 Sound Mat

j	v	w	x	y	z	zz	qu
ch	sh	th	th	ng	ai	ee	igh
oa	oo	oo	ar	or	ur	ow	oi
ear	air	ure	er	Tricky words... he she we be me you are her was all they my			

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Bug Club sound mats are used for Phase 5 phonics.

Phase 5: Units 13-21

Sound Mat

wh	ph	ay	a-e	eigh	ey	ei	
ea	e-e	ie	ey	y	ie	i-e	y i
ow	o-e	o	oe	ew	ue	u-e	u oul
aw	au	al	ir	ear	ou	oy	

Phase 5: Units 22-27

Sound Mat

ere	eer	are	ear	ch	c(e)	c(i)	c(y)	sc	st(l)	se
se	g(e)	g(i)	g(y)	dge	le	mb	kn	gn		
wr	tch	c(ial)	c(ian)	ss(ion)	t(ion)	ch	ea			
s(ion)	s(ure)	s(ual)	(w)a	o						

In order for our school to achieve the intent at Highfield we ensure the below:

- All staff are trained on the delivery on Bug Club phonics
- Opportunities for whole class enrichment
- Planned opportunities and workshops for EYFS parents to show clearly how phonics is taught and the importance of 'pure sounds'
- Parents evening to keep parents updated on their child's progress
- Year 2 children who did not pass their phonics screening in Year 1 will be provided with intervention and an opportunity to retake the screening
- Daily phonic sessions are taught throughout EYFS and KS1, whereby the children learn new grapheme-phonemes correspondents to improve their ability to segment and blend sounds which they can then apply to reading, writing and spelling
- KS2 intervention is provided for those who are new to the country with English as an additional language and to support children with phonological gaps
- Children have access to the Active Learn programme both within school and at home to support reading

We have implemented our own 'Highfield actions' to support and engage learning of phonics:

Phase 2

s – hand wiggling

a – fingers moving up arm

t – moving head from side to side

p – finger to lips

i – index finger dotting the air

n – aeroplane arms

m – rubbing tummy

d – banging a drum

g – hand making circular movements, fingers pointing down

o – index finger making a circle in front of mouth

c/k – fingers to thumb, open and close

e – two hands breaking an egg

u – pointing upwards

r – roaring tiger hands

h – breathing on pal of hand

b – bouncing a ball

f – two hands apart, bring them together

Phase 3

j – wobbly like jelly
v – driving a van
w – blowing on open palm
x – make x with arms
y – playing with a yoyo
z – buzzing bee
qu – hands to create queen's crown
ch – one hand chopping
sh – finger to lips
ng – show your muscles
ai – hand cupped around ear
ee – finger pointing (at something horrible)
igh - salute
oa – hand to head (oh dear)
oo – finger to bottom lip
ar – whole arm, pirate
or – hand out to the side
ur – waft hand in front of nose
ow – quick movement, hand to upper arm
oi – quick movement, pointing finger
ear – hold ear lobe
air – both hands over head and round
ure – one hand moving from left to right in front of you
er – quick head movement to the left

We have implemented our own 'Highfield Letter Rhymes' to help children remember the correct letter formation:

a – curly c, up, down, flick

b – down for the bat, bounce up for the ball

c – curly c (over the top, round the back, underneath)

d – curly c, right up, down, flick

e – get into bed, pull the covers over your head

f – over the top, straight back, monkey tail

g – curly c, up, down for the monkey's tail

h – stick all the way down, back up, over the hill, little flick

i – very straight, little flick, dot

j – down for the monkey's tail

k – straight back, loopy leg, straight leg

l – very straight, little flick

m – stick down, back up, over the hill, over the hill, little flick

n – stick down, back up, over the hill, little flick

o – curly c, all the way round

p – stick all the way down, back up, head at the top

q – curly c, up, down, straight flick

r – stick down, back up, to the top of the hill

s – curl it this way, curl it that way

t – very straight, curl it round, line through

u – smiley face, down, little flick

v – down, up (look for the pointy bottom)

w – down, up, down, up (look for the pointy bottoms)

x – down this way, down that way

y – smiley face, down for the monkey's tail

z – zig, zag, zig

Number formation

1 – start at the top, straight down

2 – curl over the top, round and straight across

3 – curl over the top, round, curl round to the bottom

4 – straight down, straight across, line through

5 – flat hat, straight back, big fat tummy

6 – start at the top, curl all the way round to the middle

7 – flat hat, down to the line

8 – s, back to the top

9 – curly c, up, straight down

Phonics impact:

Through the implementation of the above, we strive our Highfield children to be able to:

- Develop a life-long love of reading
- Confidently use our Highfield actions to support learning in EYFS and KS1
- Segment and blend words that are age appropriate independently
- Read and write words confidently using a phonetic approach
- Attempt the spelling of unfamiliar words using their phonic knowledge
- Confidently use and apply high frequency words within their year group to support reading, writing and spelling
- Year 1 children will confidently access and pass the screening test
- A culture where a secure knowledge of phonic sounds enables reading for pleasure as part of our reading curriculum

Phonics screening results:

2021-2022 - 71%

2022 - 2023 - 79%

2023 - 2024 - 72%

Phonics Terminology

Phoneme	the smallest unit of sound in words
Grapheme	the written representation of a sound
Grapheme-Phoneme Correspondence (GPC)	being able to match a phoneme with the correct grapheme and vice versa
Blending	joining individual speech sounds together to read a word
Segmenting	breaking down words into individual speech sounds to spell a word
Digraph	two letters making one sound e.g. 'sh'
Trigraph	three letters making one sound e.g. 'igh'
Split Digraph	two letters making one sound which are divided by a consonant e.g. the i_e sound in the word 'side'
Tricky/Common Exception Words	words that are not fully decodable such as 'the' and 'was'
Sound buttons	circles or spots that can be written underneath a sound to support reading
Sound bars	lines that can be written underneath digraphs or trigraphs to show that the letters make one sound
Mnemonic	a visual prompt to help children remember a sound