

Castleton&Glaisdale Federation

Phonics Policy Statement

June 2015

Introduction

Language is at the heart of children's learning. Through language they receive much of their knowledge and acquire many of their skills. Language enables children to communicate with others effectively for a variety of purposes, and to examine their own and others' experiences, feeling and ideas, giving them order and meaning. Because language is central to children's intellectual, emotional and social development it has an essential role across the curriculum and helps pupils' learning to be coherent and progressive."

-English Language 5-14 Guidelines

Knowing the alphabetic patterns of English is an advantage for anyone wanting to read or write the language and. This is the role of phonics – to teach children to use the alphabetic patterning of English to read and spell. Phonics is not a subject in itself – it is a part of reading and writing.

By mastering the necessary knowledge and skills early, children are freed up to use their reading and writing for thinking and learning. However, this is not to say that children should only learn phonics in the early stages of their literacy careers. Reading and writing are much more complex processes than simply decoding and recoding and so phonics learning is set into a whole network of other literacy practices which teach children about the purposes, uses, practices, meanings and understandings that are part of reading and writing. Phonics without stories, rhymes, book browsing, shared reading, mark making and labelling would be ineffective and unproductive.

Statutory Requirements

Pupils should be shown how to segment spoken words into individual phonemes and then how to represent the phonemes by the appropriate grapheme(s). It is important to recognise that phoneme-grapheme correspondences (which underpin spelling) are more variable than grapheme-phoneme correspondences (which underpin reading). For this reason, pupils need to do much more word-specific rehearsal for spelling than for reading.

At year 1, pupils will be spelling some words in a phonically plausible way, even if sometimes incorrectly. Misspellings of words that pupils have been taught to spell should be corrected; other misspelt words should be used to teach pupils about alternative ways of representing those sounds.

Writing simple dictated sentences that include words taught so far gives pupils opportunities to apply and practise their spelling.

In year 2, pupils move towards more word-specific knowledge of spelling, including homophones. The process of spelling should be emphasised: that is, that spelling involves segmenting spoken words into phonemes and then representing all the phonemes by graphemes in the right order. Pupils should do this both for single-syllable and multi-syllabic words.

At this stage children's spelling should be phonically plausible, even if not always correct. Misspellings of words that pupils have been taught to spell should be corrected; other misspelt

words can be used as an opportunity to teach pupils about alternative ways of representing those sounds.

Pupils should be encouraged to apply their knowledge of suffixes from their word reading to their spelling. They should also draw from and apply their growing knowledge of word and spelling structure, as well as their knowledge of root words.

By Key Stage 2, pupils should continue to be supported in understanding and applying the concepts of word structure so that they can draw on their knowledge of morphology and etymology to spell correctly.

Rationale for teaching

The phonemes are the smallest parts of spoken language that combine to make up words. They are the speech sounds, not the actual letters, in a word. The English alphabet has 26 letters but around 43 phonemes (accurate calculations of the exact number are difficult due to variations resulting from different accents and dialects).

Phonics teaching involves helping children to understand that there are systematic relationships between the individual sounds of spoken language (phonemes) and the written letters (graphemes) of the alphabet (even though the vagaries of the English language mean that these relationships are not always entirely predictable).

The processes by which children comprehend spoken language are the same as those by which they comprehend the words on the page; the difference being that the first relies upon hearing the words and the second upon seeing the words in written form. Obviously, in order to comprehend written texts children must first learn to recognise, that is decode, the words on the page. Knowledge of phonics helps children recognize familiar words and apply skills to decode new words.

Learning and understanding phonics enables children to read fluently and automatically, thus freeing them to concentrate on the meaning of the text, and enabling them to enter and enjoy the world of words and reading.

The Use of ICT in phonics

Children acquire phonic knowledge and skills through active, well-paced teaching which uses plenty of visual, oral and physical stimuli. As such, use is made of the electronic whiteboard to allow children to see the graphemes in and out of words, hear the phonemes and see blending taking place.

In order to maximise the effectiveness of the electronic whiteboard, teaching is supplemented with children's use of magnetic letters, letter or grapheme cards and fans, and the playing of active games.

There are many different ICT resources available to support the teaching and learning of phonics which teachers utilise using their professional judgement regarding appropriateness for whole class, small group or individual work. The primary sources used for ICT programmes are those recommended in Letters and Sounds and those located on the Phonics Play website.

Cross-curricula Literacy Opportunities for phonics

In addition to discrete daily phonics lessons at KS1, there are many other opportunities in both key stages for applying, practising and securing new knowledge and skills. Planned opportunities include activities such as shared and guided reading and writing. Incidental opportunities can arise at any point during the day for example during individual reading sessions, children's self and peer assessment of writing, individual writing conferences.

Teaching Approaches and Organisation of phonics

Phonics is taught systematically to ensure that children develop an understanding of common representations of the spoken word. Teachers aim to develop children's awareness that words are composed of letters set out in particular combinations to correspond with these spoken sounds and to help children to secure automatic decoding skills so that they can progress from 'learning to read' to 'reading to learn' for purpose and pleasure.

The teaching of phonics follows an agreed order and pace incorporating:

- Development of phonological awareness
- Knowledge of sound – symbol correspondence
- Skills of blending and segmenting
- Sight knowledge of common irregular words and their spellings
- Morphemic content

Systematic, high quality phonics teaching is essential and is needed for children to achieve the goal of reading. As such, the school follows the Read Write Inc. (RWI) programme through which children are systematically taught the phonemes associated with particular graphemes. (See Appendix 1- how RWI addresses the requirements of the 2014 National Curriculum for phonics teaching and learning). Children are taught these at a fast rate, - usually four or more phonemes each week. Children are expected to blend phonemes to make words and segment words into phonemes right from the beginning of the structured programme.

RWI is designed as a time limited programme of phonics work aimed at securing fluent word recognition skills for reading by the end of Key Stage 1 and as an intervention in Key Stage Two, although the teaching and learning of spelling, which children generally find harder than reading, continues.

Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1:

High quality phonics sessions are taught daily in Reception and Key Stage 1 classes, enhanced by a multi-sensory teaching approach which sees the use of simultaneous visual, auditory and kinaesthetic activities to enliven core learning and to accommodate children's different learning styles

The children are introduced to a variety of activities to develop awareness of initial, final and dominant sounds in words, including: reading the letters that represent these sounds; writing letters in response to sounds; identifying and writing initial and final phonemes (sound units).

They are introduced to the skills which reinforce understanding of: discrimination of all phonemes in consonant, vowel, consonant words; blending of phonemes into words for reading; segmenting words into phonemes for spelling.

Year 2 is a period of revision and consolidation of skills which is linked to greater awareness and confidence in employing a wide range of spelling skills in a variety of situations

Key Stage 2

Children in Key Stage 2 will have been taught phonics previously and the majority of children will have a secure understanding of the alphabetic code and its application to reading and writing. However, those children who have not secured this understanding continue to follow the RWI phonics as part of a structured, individualised intervention programme...

Word work is taught explicitly and regularly to all children. This ensures that children not only acquire a phonological knowledge and understanding of spelling patterns but also an understanding of the structure of words (morphology) to direct their spelling.

Assessment and recording

Formative assessment is carried out regularly during everyday written work in order to monitor children's progress in phonics and diagnose specific problems.

During the first few weeks in school phonic assessments are carried out of Foundation Stage children to determine their entry level which is largely dependent on their level of pre-school experience.

All pupils in year 1 must take a phonics screening check, unless they have no understanding of grapheme-phoneme correspondences. Children's scores are checked against a national threshold mark to establish whether they have achieved the expected standard and these are then reported to the LA. Parents are notified as to whether or not their child has met the expected standard to ensure they are aware of their child's progress in developing phonics skills.

Summative formal assessment in the form of SATs takes place at the end of both KS1 and KS2 (Years 2 and 6), and results form part of the overall English level awarded to each child. Years 3, 4 and 5, children sit a spelling test as part of the Optional SATs tests and Year 1 undertake single word spelling tests. These take the format of lists and dictation sentences containing focused words.

Results from all summative phonic and spelling tests are used to help build a more focused picture of each child's ability and to inform future planning and groupings. Each child's progress is recorded on individual spelling tracker grids.

Children who are finding the learning of Phonics and Spelling rules/patterns difficult are highlighted to the SENCo and extra support from Teaching Assistants as part of a Literacy Support package may be offered. Children who are more able will be identified on the gifted and talented register and a separate spelling programme may be utilised to further extend their abilities.

Equal Opportunities

All children are entitled to learn level appropriate phonics and spelling patterns and rules. Teachers appreciate that children may have differing abilities in a year group and therefore ensure that level specific learning and teaching is used for the different groups or individuals within the class.

Inclusion is achieved through analysis and assessment of children's needs, by monitoring the quality of teaching and the standards of pupils' achievements and by setting targets for improvement. Learning for all children is given equal priority and available resources are used to maximum effect.

All pupils have equal access to the elements in the National Curriculum and are taught spelling rules accordingly.

Children on the SEN and/or AGT register are provided with different phonic or spelling work which is appropriate to their ability and may be identified on their IEP (Individual Education Plan).

The Governing Body

Regular reports are made to the literacy governor and the full governing body on the progress of phonics provision in the school. The phonics policy is reviewed every three years or in the light of changes to legal requirements.

Role of the Co-ordinator

The subject co-ordinator is responsible for improving standards of teaching and learning in literacy.

This involves

- Monitoring and evaluating progress and standards of attainment in both key stages
- Producing an annual action plan identifying targets for the year
- Developing and reviewing the phonics policy
- Developing guidelines for the teaching of phonics
- Providing support and advice for colleagues
- Attending phonics courses to update knowledge of the subject and cascading this information to staff
- Reporting to the governors on the development of phonics within the school
- Ordering and organising resources for phonics
- Reviewing and updating reading books and reference books
- Ensuring the provision of a quality learning environment

Literacy Co-ordinators: Jane Douglas, Hayley Webster, Rachel Grace **Revised:** June 2015