



*to question is to grow*

## Wood End Park Academy

# Phonics Policy & Handbook

Updated September 2016

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# **Wood End Park Academy Phonics Policy**

**This policy outlines the rationale, age related expectations, planning, teaching and assessment of Phonics at Wood End Park Academy.**

## **Phonics - Rationale and Overview**

Phonics is the essential body of knowledge we need for reading and spelling in an alphabetic writing system such as English. At Wood End Park Academy, we are passionate about Phonics teaching because we are absolutely committed to our children becoming fluent readers and skilled writers. We believe that children who can read and write easily are more likely to love reading and writing. Teaching Phonics is about teaching children the basic mechanics of reading and spelling: once these become automatic, children are able to put all of their energy into the higher order skills of comprehension and composition.

Phonics teaching involves giving children an understanding of the alphabetic code: there are 44 phonemes (smallest unit of sound) in the English language and these are represented by various combinations of the 26 letters of the Alphabet. Phonics teaching involves teaching children the Alphabetic code in a highly-structured way, moving from simple to complex.

Although phonics is taught as a discrete session, it is vital that it is not seen 'in isolation' and that we give children opportunities to apply what they have been taught in phonics outside of the sessions. It is particularly important that children in EYFS have access to high quality phonics games and activities that match the structure of the phonics scheme being followed.

Children also need decodable reading books, carefully matched to their stage of phonic knowledge. Such books give children confidence and set them up for success in reading since they learn that they are able to read the words if they apply the sounding out and blending skills taught in phonics. Reading from decodable books regularly will embed the recognition of phonic patterns and blending routine so that children become fluent decoders quickly. Children can then go on to enjoy real books and read widely, which in turn will enhance their general knowledge and verbal intelligence. This is our ultimate aim. To quote, Sir Jim Rose, "In short, learning to read progresses to reading, effortlessly, to learn." (*Independent review of the teaching of early reading* March 2006, p. 35)

Phonics coordinator, Wood End Park Academy, September 2016

# Phonics – Age Related Expectations

## End of KEY STAGE 1 Expectation:

1. Children to be able to read and write all common graphemes for the 44 phonemes of English.
2. Children to apply this phonic knowledge to their reading and writing so that they are able to:
  - a. Read fluently and accurately from age-appropriate books.
  - b. Segment spoken words into phonemes and represent these by graphemes, spelling many words correctly.

In order to be on track to meet the end of KS1 expectation, children need to attain the following milestones by the end of Year 1 and EYFS:

## End of Year 1 Age Related Expectation (ARE)

Lower band of ARE	At Phase 5b (alternative pronunciations)
Higher band of ARE	At Phase 5c (correct spelling choices)

### **To be meeting ARE, children:**

1. respond speedily and correctly to Phase 2, Phase 3 and Phase 5 graphemes (in isolation).
2. are able to read words, including 2 syllable words, containing the above graphemes.
3. know ‘alternative’ ways of pronouncing graphemes (e.g. y as in yo-yo, sky and mummy, as taught at Phase 5b Phonics)
4. read Phase 2, 3, 4 and 5 Tricky words.
5. are able to segment spoken words into phonemes and represent these by graphemes, making correct spelling choices for *some* words. (NB. Children at higher ARE will make more correct choices than lower ARE as they will be working on spelling choices at Phase 5c)
6. spell many of the Tricky words (to Phase 5) accurately.

## End of Reception Age Related Expectation (ARE)

Lower band of ARE	Beginning Phase 4
Higher band of ARE	Beginning Phase 5a (New Graphemes)

### **To be meeting ARE, children:**

1. respond correctly to Phase 2 and Phase 3 graphemes when shown in isolation.
2. recognise Phase 2 and **the majority of Phase 3** graphemes **in words**.
3. **blend** words of **at least Phase 3 Level, including those containing Phase 3 consonant and vowel digraphs/ trigraphs** E.g. shop, thin, much, wait, queen, night, coat

NB. Higher ARE is to be able to blend words at **Phase 4 Level. This means words containing consonant clusters as well as Phase 3 digraphs/trigraphs.** E.g. train, fright, screech

4. read the Phase 2 and 3 Tricky words (and Phase 4 tricky words if higher band ARE).
5. are able to segment spoken words for spelling and use Phase 2 and 3 graphemes to represent them.
6. spell some Phase 2 and 3 Tricky words accurately.

# **Phonics Planning**

We teach phonics systematically following the clearly defined Phases set out in the Wood End Park Academy planning (based on 'Letters and Sounds' and Curriculum 2014 Spelling rules). See **Appendix A** for WEPA Overview Planning and Weekly Planning.

The expectations for Phases are as follows:

Phase 1 – Nursery

Phase 2 – Reception

Phase 3 – Reception

Phase 4 – Reception/Year 1

Phase 5 (divided into Phase 5a, 5b and 5c) – Year 1

NB. The Phonic phases should be completed by the end of Year 1 so that Year 2 can concentrate on Spelling Rules (as set out in Appendix 1 Curriculum 2014) and reading fluency. Year 2 Overview 'Spelling Rules' Planning is included in **Appendix B**.

## **Frequency and length of Phonics Sessions**

Children in Reception have a daily lesson of 30 minutes and children in Year 1 have a daily lesson of 35 minutes. Reception should also play fun phonics games (in classes) daily outside of the phonics lesson in order to give extra opportunities to practise/apply.

It is important that:

- Phonics lessons are not missed as the daily frequency is needed in order to give children the best chance of remembering the new GPCs;
- Phonics lessons begin on time so that all elements can be included.

## **Phonics Teaching**

The main, underlying principle of phonics teaching is that children must know the alphabetic code. We begin with the simple code [Phase 2-3 'Letters and Sounds'] where children are taught one grapheme (letter or combination of letters) for each of the 44 phonemes of English. We then progress to the complex alphabetic code [Phase 5 'Letters and Sounds'] where we teach children that the same grapheme can represent different sounds in different words (**bread**; **bead**) and the same sound may be spelt in different ways (**night**; **pie**; **nice**).

Other key principles of Phonics teaching are that we:

1. start off by teaching children to say the sounds represented by letters (not the letter names);
2. teach children to articulate the 'pure' sounds;
3. teach children to read words as soon as they know the sounds of the first few letters (e.g. s a t p i n) by saying the sounds the letters represent and blending them together to make the word (e.g. s-a-t sat);
4. teach children to spell by segmenting (chopping up) words into separate sounds and writing (or choosing) the letters that represent that sound;
5. teach children that blending and segmenting are reversible processes.

## **The Phonics Lesson**

The Phonics lesson should:

1. have a clear objective;
2. have a clear structure;
3. be pacy;
4. be multi-sensory;
5. involve the participation of *all* children;
6. include sounding-blending words for reading and segmenting words for spelling;
7. include the teaching of reading and spelling 'Common Exception Words', explaining why such words are 'tricky';
8. (in Year 1) include 'alien' words in order to prepare children for reading invented words as part of the Year 1 Phonics Screening Check.

## **Phonics Display**

Clear, well-positioned phonics displays are integral to the teaching of Phonics as it is essential for children with poorer memories to have a constant visual reminder of the GPCs/tricky words taught in order to commit them to memory. Consequently, all Reception and KS1 classrooms display:

- 'Smart Kids' phonics friezes (at relevant Phases) in a position where children can easily see them and teachers can easily refer to them during Literacy teaching.
- Tricky/Common Exception Words.
- The application of Phonics/Spelling patterns to words as relevant/helpful to teaching (e.g. on sugar paper/working walls).

NB. In addition, Reception display, the 'Sound of the Day' both at the front of the classroom and on the classroom door/window for parents to see.

## **Applying Phonics to Reading and Writing**

It is essential that children are given opportunities to apply the phonics taught outside of the Phonics lesson to their reading and writing.

### **Reading**

Teaching and support staff need to be aware that, in line with the Curriculum 2014, Phonics is **the** strategy to be used for decoding ('Word Reading') and children should not be taught any other decoding strategies (e.g. guessing from picture clues).

Children should be given books which are carefully matched to their Phonic Phase so that they successfully apply their knowledge of phonics and tricky words in order to read. At Wood End Park Academy, we use the following decodable books, ranging from Phase 2 to Phase 6:

#### ***Reception:***

*Phonics Bug, Dandelion Phonics and OUP Floppy's Phonics*

#### ***Year 1:***

**Home reading core book:** *Read Write Inc.*

**Guided Reading:** *OUP Project X: Alien Adventures; OUP Traditional Tales and Dandelion Phonics*

See **Appendix C1** for Guidance on using Phonics-based books during Guided Reading.

See **Appendix C2** for a Reading chart showing how ReadWrite Inc levels and colour-banded books link to age-related expectations.

### **Writing**

During Literacy lessons, teachers model spelling words by segmenting and drawing the children's attention to the GPCs on the Phonics friezes.

Children in Reception and KS1 have Phonics cards or Spelling Cards (depending on Phase) on their tables in order to support them in applying the Phonics taught to their independent writing.

In Year 1, weekly spellings linked to Phonic Phase are sent home to practise for a spelling test on Friday. See **Appendix D** for the list of Spellings by Phonic Phase.

## **Monitoring the Quality of Phonics Teaching**

Wood End Park Academy has high expectations for Phonics Teaching. Phonics Refresher Training will be given at the beginning of the academic year. If teachers are unsure about anything, they should contact the Phonics Teacher for further advice.

All teachers are expected to familiarise themselves with the Phonics Policy and Phonics resources, and to follow the structure and teaching techniques, as set out in detail in the exemplar Daily Plans. See **Appendix E**.

Phonics Drop-ins will be carried out by the Phonics Teacher, The EYFS Inclusion Lead for Reception and/or the Senior Leadership Team using the Drop-in sheet attached in **Appendix F**.

Basic expectations will include:

- children seated in rows
- all children able to see the flashcards and/or any writing (be careful that rows are not too long so that children on the edges cannot see)
- pace and enthusiasm
- use of 'My Turn, Your Turn'
- correct resources used
- lesson taught following the structure set out in the exemplar Daily Phonics plans.
- use of teaching techniques (e.g. Saying the sound followed by picture for GPCs; Magic Pencils for formation, Magic Pencils for Sound Buttons when reading, Sounds on Fingers when segmenting for spelling) as set out in the exemplar Daily Phonics plans.
- Target GPC clearly displayed (or example consonant clusters for Phase 4)



# **Streaming, Assessment, Tracking and Interventions**

## **Reception**

Reception children are taught Phonics in their base classes for the first six weeks. Their progress is then assessed and they are placed into streamed groups. Larger groups are taught by the Class Teachers and smaller groups by Nursery Nurses/ LSAs.

Phonics assessments of the whole year group continue to take place once every half term during the Reception Year. The EYFS Inclusion Lead analyses the assessment data and sets up groups and interventions as appropriate.

**It is the responsibility of Class Teachers to be aware of the attainment of children in their classes and to do their best to ensure the progress of all children, including children with SEN. Such responsibility includes:**

**being aware of any children in their class who are not keeping up with the Phonics teaching and doing their best to ascertain the reason for this (see advice below);**

**trying to prevent children in their class from falling behind by putting in support strategies as appropriate;**

**keeping additional running records on children whose progress is of concern;**

**keeping parents informed and advising them of how they can help their child at home.**

At the end of the Reception Year, final phonics assessments will be carried out so that the Phonic Teacher and/or Senior Leadership Team can arrange the Phonics sets ready for the beginning of Year 1.

## **Year 1**

In Year 1, children are taught in Phonics sets by teachers, with LSAs supporting as appropriate. The role of the LSA during Phonics Lessons is set out in **Appendix G**.

During Year 1, the whole year group will be take Mock Phonics Screening Checks in December and March so that children's progress towards the expectation of the Phonics Screening Check (mid-June) can be tracked.

Certain groups of children may undertake additional Mock Phonics Screening Checks as directed by the Senior Leadership Team and/or the Phonics Teacher.

Following the Mock Phonics Screenings, the Phonics Teacher will analyse the data and, in conjunction with the Senior Leadership Team, make adjustments to Phonics sets and set up interventions/boosters as appropriate.

**However, it should be understood that assessing Phonics is an integral part of the 'Word Reading' dimension of Year 1 Reading (Curriculum 2014) and it is the responsibility of Class Teachers to be aware of the attainment and keep track of the progress of children in their class, putting in strategies to support children as appropriate.**

**Children who enter Year 1 below Expectation (see above) or about whom there are progress concerns should be assessed regularly using tracking grids. Class teachers should keep parents informed and advise them of how they can help their child at home.**

Assessment sheets are found in **Appendix H**.

## **Year 2**

Children who did not meet the standard required by the Year 1 Phonics Screening Check will receive extra support with Phonics during Year 2 so that they are prepared to take the Screening Check in June of Year 2.

## **Children with EAL and Phonics in Key Stage 2**

Synthetic phonics should be used as the first approach for teaching reading and spelling to EAL children and to Key Stage 2 children who have poor reading/spelling skills.

Depending on the age/needs of the child, it may be more effective to follow a specific intervention programme (e.g. 'Catch-up' Dandelion Phonics or 'Bear Necessities') rather than the usual WEPA Phonics planning.

## **Children who are not making expected progress in Phonics**

Teachers and support staff need to have an understanding of the reasons why children may find it difficult to make progress in Phonics. Common reasons include the following:

### **Poor short term memory**

Some children find it difficult to remember the GPCs because they have poor short term memories. Such children may need to see a new GPC several times a day (in addition to the Phonics lesson) in order to remember it.

Multi-sensory activities also help to embed new information into children's long term memories. These need only be simple, for example:

Show the GPC and say it to the child. The child repeats the sound, tracing over the GPC simultaneously. The child then writes the GPC in the sand/finger paints it/rainbow writes it, saying the sound as he/she does so.

### **Poor phonemic awareness**

Some children have poor phonological processing. They are able to hear whole words but it is difficult for them to hear the sounds that make up words, particularly the smallest units of sound (phonemes). These children may need to do lots of extra blending activities, beginning with oral blending before they are able to hear the phonemes in words.

Please see 'Progression in Blending' sheet in **Appendix I** for more detail on blending.

## **Home – School Links**

At Wood End Park, we hold Parent workshops in Reception and Year 1 in order to inform parents of how we teach Phonics and how they can help support their children at home. In Year 1, talks are given to explain the Year 1 Phonics Screening Check to parents.

Reception and Year 1 also regularly send home Phonics Parents packs containing Sound cards and Phonics activities.

In addition, we have a lot of Phonics information for parents on our website including Phonics information/advice for parents and Phonics games for children.

## **Phonics in Nursery**

**Please see Appendix J for the Phonics policy for Nursery**

## **Phonics Glossary**

**Phoneme** – the smallest single identifiable sound in a word

**Grapheme** – a letter or group of letters representing one sound (e.g. t, sh, air)

**Grapheme-Phoneme Correspondence (GPC)** - the relationship between sounds and the letters which represent those sounds

**Digraph** – two letters representing one sound (e.g. ch, th, ai, oa)

**Split digraphs** – two letters, split, representing one sound, e.g. a\_e in 'cake'; i\_e in 'dice'

**Trigraph** – three letters representing one sound (e.g. igh, air, ear, ure)

**Consonant Cluster** – letters that make separate sounds e.g. the first two letters of 'croak' are a consonant cluster as they keep their individual sounds 'c' and 'r' (whereas, in contrast, 'oa' is a digraph as it represents one sound)

**Blend** – to push individual sounds together for reading, e.g. c-a-t, blended together reads 'cat'

**Segment** – to split up a word into its individual phonemes in order to spell it e.g. break the word 'cat' up into its three phonemes: c a t

### **Word Structures:**

VC: vowel- consonant e.g. in, am

CVC: consonant- vowel- consonant e.g. cat, rain, mouth

CCVC: consonant- consonant- vowel- consonant e.g. stop, throat, fright

CVCC: consonant -vowel -consonant- consonant e.g. hand, text

CCCVC: consonant -consonant- consonant- vowel -consonant e.g. strap, struck