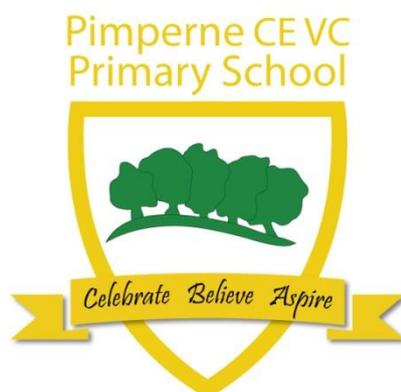


# Pimperne Primary School



## Phonics Policy

# **Pimperne CE VC Primary School**

## Phonics Strategy

The teaching of phonics underpins and is intricately linked to early reading and writing in the Foundation stage and Key Stage 1. At Pimperne Primary School, we aim to provide high quality and systematic synthetic phonic teaching, to equip children with the skills needed to become fluent readers and confident writers. Synthetic phonics introduces phonemes individually in a structured and sequenced way, teaching children the relationship between phonemes and graphemes. Phonics equips children with the tools needed to decode and segment unfamiliar words so that they are able to read, write and spell with understanding, fluency, confidence and accuracy, thus achieving the capabilities of an independent reader. In our pursuit to ensure all children achieve this, we have adopted the Letters and Sounds document across Phonics planning and teaching. We ensure early on that we embrace a multi-sensory approach to phonics development and begin with the 'Jolly Phonics' approach in Early Years and build on this using the Read Write Inc. approach across Key Stage 1 and 2.

### What is Phonics?

Phonics is a way of teaching reading and spelling. Children are taught to read letters or groups of letters by saying the sound(s) they represent. They are then taught how to merge the sounds together to read words (the skill of blending) and to spell by splitting the word up into the sounds that make it and recording them in the correct order (skill of segmenting).

There has been a huge shift in the past few years in how we teach reading in UK schools. This is having a big impact and helping many children learn to read and spell. Phonics is recommended as the first strategy that children should be taught in helping them learn to read. It runs alongside other teaching methods such as Guided Reading and Shared Reading to help children develop all the other vital reading skills and hopefully give them a real love of reading.

### School Aims

- To teach pupils aural discrimination, phonemic awareness and rhyme awareness in order to encourage good spelling
- To encourage pupils to segment and blend
- To learn to read and write all 44 graphemes in the English language
- To teach pupils specific strategies to help them remember high frequency words tricky words
- To ensure that the teaching of phonics is lively, interactive and investigative
- To provide opportunities for children to apply their phonological knowledge in their reading and writing in purposeful contexts
- To differentiate the phonics taught according to the needs of the children, making effective use of teaching assistants
- To use regular and accurate assessment to gain an understanding of the areas of strength, to track the progression of phonological knowledge and to identify areas of weakness
- To ensure that those teaching phonics have a secure knowledge and understanding of phonics, including the Read Write Inc. approach to ensure children receive high quality teaching.

## Teaching

At Pimperne CE VC Primary School we use the Letters and Sounds planning document to support the teaching of phonic skills. There are 6 phonics phases which the children work through. Reception – children are taught Letters and Sounds through ‘Jolly Phonics’, daily for up to 25 minutes. Although we are aware that children progress at different rates, we aim for all children to have completed phase 2 and 3 by the end of the year and be ready to start phase 4 in Year One. Year One - children are taught Letters and Sounds five times a week for approximately 15 minutes. Groups are differentiated to ensure pupils are reaching their full potential. The aim is for all pupils to have completed phase 4 and 5 by the end of the year and be ready to start phase 6 in Year Two. Year Two - children are taught Letters and Sounds four times a week for up to 25 minutes. Groups are differentiated to ensure pupils are reaching their full potential. The aim is for all pupils to have completed phase 6 by the end of the year and to also regularly revisit the sounds and tricky words learned throughout the Letters and Sounds programme. Key Stage Two - interventions are put in place for children who did not meet the standard in the Phonics Screening Check retake and/or who have not completed the Letters and Sounds document. Phonic sessions include games and strategies that are lively, interactive and multi-sensory. Children, who are finding reading particularly challenging, will be placed in a phonic intervention group where they will receive a comprehensive Read Write Inc. (RWI) programme. Children who are identified as pupils who may benefit from this programme will be assessed at the beginning of the term in September. Like in Letters and Sounds, the children will learn the 44 sounds and corresponding letters, to blend sounds to read words and to segment sounds to spell words. When children recognise sounds and become more confident at blending, they read storybooks that are carefully matched to the sounds they have been taught. This scaffold approach means that children are equipped with the skills and a bank of words that they know they can decode so they achieve greater success in reading. Children also learn to build sentences orally using vocabulary they have previously encountered and they start to write simple sentences using these words. If it is thought the child has made very good progress then the need for this intervention may be removed. Both phonic programmes are rapid and include opportunities for consolidation.

In phonics lessons children are taught three main things:

### **GPCs**

They are taught GPCs. This stands for grapheme phoneme correspondences. This simply means that they are taught all the phonemes in the English language and ways of writing them down. These sounds are taught in a particular order. The first sounds to be taught are **s, a, t, p**.

### **Blending**

Children are taught to be able to blend. This is when children say the sounds that make up a word and are able to merge the sounds together until they can hear what the word is. This skill is vital in learning to read.

### **Segmenting**

Children are also taught to segment. This is the opposite of blending. Children are able to say a word and then break it up into the phonemes that make it up. This skill is vital in being able to spell words.

### **What makes phonics tricky?**

In some languages learning phonics is easy because each phoneme has just one grapheme to represent it. The English language is a bit more complicated than this. This is largely because England has been invaded so many times throughout its history. Each set of invaders brought new words and new sounds with them. As a result, English only has around 44 phonemes but there are around 120 graphemes or ways of writing down those 44 phonemes. Obviously we only have 26 letters in the alphabet so some graphemes are made up from more than one letter.

**ch th oo ay** (these are all digraphs - graphemes with two letters)

There are other graphemes that are trigraphs (made up of 3 letters) and even a few made from 4 letters.

Another slightly sticky problem is that some graphemes can represent more than one phoneme. For example **ch** makes very different sounds in these three words: **chip, school, chef**.

## **So why bother learning phonics?**

In the past people argued that because the English language is so tricky, there was no point teaching children phonics. Now, most people agree that these tricky bits mean that it is even more important that we teach phonics and children learn it clearly and systematically. A written language is basically a kind of a code. Teaching phonics is just teaching children to crack that code. Children learn the simple bits first and then easily progress to get the hang of the trickier bits.

### **Expectations and Assessment**

- On-going formative assessment will be used by the class teacher and teaching assistants to determine how successful the children have been in their ability to recognise and write graphemes, orally blend and segment words and their ability to read and spell phonetically regular words. This is mainly achieved through questioning and observations made during the phonics sessions, in addition to the writing that the children produce during their literacy sessions.
- Formal assessment takes place every half term using a letters and sounds assessment and the assessment format provided by the Read Write Inc. programme, for those receiving Read Write Inc. phonics. Teachers will record, track and analyse results in order to assess the progress and understanding of individuals and to adapt plans and phonic groupings, where necessary. This is in addition to the on-going use of formative assessment to inform planning, intervention and teaching.
- Children in year one will undertake the Phonics Screening Check towards the end of the academic year. We expect the vast majority of children to reach the expected standard and to therefore pass this. For children who fail to achieve the expected standard, the reasons for this are considered and additional support is provided and progress more closely monitored in an attempt to ensure the Phonics Screening Check is securely passed during the retake in year two. If children fail to achieve the expected standard in the retake, they will receive intervention in year three to address gaps in their learning.

### **Spellings**

From Reception to Year 6, our children are asked to focus on particular spellings both in school and at home. In the earlier years, these spellings are a mix of common (phonetically spelt) words and 'tricky' or 'common exception' words. Each Year group will give you a list of the spellings that they will be focusing on across the year.

### **Parental Support**

Parents can gain an understanding of our phonics strategy through phonic workshops, held at various points in the year for Reception, Year One and Year 2. These workshops focus on developing parents' subject knowledge in the teaching of phonics and on supporting them to work alongside their children in phonics activities. Parents will also be made aware of the phonics being taught through the spellings and books that are sent home. Parents can refer to our phonic support pack booklet, which provides advice on how you can help support your child at home. This information can be found on our school website. Teachers are willing to provide parents with advice and resources to support their child's learning in phonics at home. Parental help with spellings is always appreciated. Children need to learn spellings in such a way that they can recall them when they need them e.g. when they are writing. There are a variety of ways that parents can help their child do this – as you might expect, some strategies work better with some children than others!