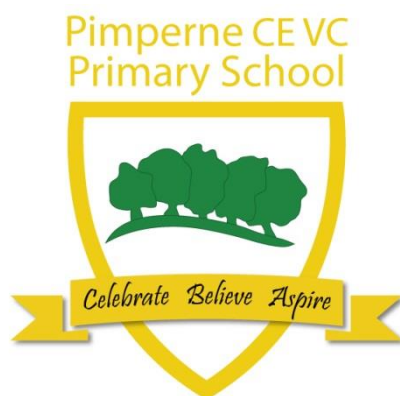


# Pimperne Primary School



## Phonics Policy

# **Pimperne CE VC Primary School**

## **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 (the 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.

## **Phonics Strategy**

The teaching of phonics underpins, and is intricately linked to, early reading and writing in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage One. At Pimperne CE VC Primary School, we aim to provide high quality, systematic synthetic phonics teaching; this equips children with the skills needed to become fluent readers and confident writers. Synthetic phonics introduces sounds individually, in a structured and sequenced way, teaching children the relationship between phonemes (sounds) and graphemes (written form of the sounds). Phonics provides children with the tools needed to decode and segment unfamiliar words so that they are able to blend them to read and spell with understanding, fluency, confidence and accuracy. In our pursuit to ensure all children achieve these independent reading and writing skills, we have adopted the Letters and Sounds document across Phonics planning and teaching. We ensure that we embrace a multi-sensory approach to phonics development and begin with the 'Jolly Phonics' approach in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Where intervention is needed, we use the Read Write Inc. approach across Key Stage One and Two.

## **School Aims**

At Pimperne CE VC Primary School, we aim to:

- Teach pupils aural discrimination, phonemic awareness and rhyme awareness in order to encourage good spelling
- Encourage pupils to segment and blend
- Teach pupils to read and write all 44 graphemes in the English language
- Teach pupils specific strategies to help them remember common exception words (tricky words)
- Ensure that the teaching of phonics is lively, interactive and investigative
- Provide opportunities for children to apply their phonological knowledge in their reading and writing in purposeful contexts
- Differentiate the phonics taught according to the needs of the children, making effective use of teaching assistants
- 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
- Ensure that those teaching phonics have a secure knowledge and understanding of phonics, and where needed include the Read Write Inc. approach to ensure all 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 phonics skills. Letters and Sounds centres teaching around 6 phonics phases, which the children work through in Reception, Year One and Year Two. In Reception, children are taught Letters and Sounds through 'Jolly Phonics'. Jolly Phonics encourages the use of pictures, rhymes and actions to help children learn each new sound, each day.

Although we are aware that children progress at different rates, we aim for all children to have completed Phase 2, Phase 3, Phase 4 and the majority of Phase 5 by the end of their Reception year, allowing them to focus on applying these skills to more complex texts and spelling in Year One. Phase 6 is completed in Year One and Year Two. Phonics teaching is differentiated to ensure pupils are reaching their full potential. Each year group regularly revisits the sounds and common exception words (tricky words) learned throughout the Letters and Sounds programme.

In Year 2 and 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. Children, who are finding reading particularly challenging, will be placed in a phonics intervention group where they will receive a comprehensive Read Write Inc. 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; this encourages them to start writing simple sentences using these words. If it is thought that a child has made very good progress, after a review, their intervention will cease. Progress will then be monitored in class using Quality First Teach.

Both phonics programmes are rapid and include opportunities for consolidation. In phonics lessons children are taught three main things:

**1. Grapheme Phoneme Correspondences (GPCs)**

This simply means that they are taught all the sounds in the English language and ways of writing them down. These sounds are taught in a particular order. The first phonemes to be taught allow children to read and write simple words. These sounds are: **s, a, t, p, i, n.**

**2. Blending**

Children are taught the listening skills needed 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.

**3. Segmenting**

Children are taught the listening skills needed to segment. This is the opposite of blending. This is when children are able to say a word and then break it up into the sounds 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.

**Digraphs**

Graphemes with two letters are called digraphs: ch, th, oo, ay, etc.

**Trigraphs**

Graphemes with three letters are called trigraphs: igh, ear, ure, etc.

**More?**

Some words are even made up of graphemes containing four letters: eigh.

Another slightly tricky 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 complicated, there was no point teaching children phonics. Now, most people agree that these complicated elements mean that it is even more important that we teach phonics and that 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 English 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 phonics 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, and future years if necessary, to address the gaps in their learning.

### **Spellings**

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

### **Parental Support**

Parent(s)/carer(s) can gain an understanding of our phonics strategy through phonics workshops, which are held at various points in the year for Reception, Year One and Year Two. These workshops focus on developing the phonics knowledge of parent(s)/carer(s) so that they are able to support their child in completing phonics activities at home. Parent(s)/carer(s) will also be made aware of the phonics being taught through weekly learning updates (WINKs), through spelling home learning and through home reading books/daily phonics sentences. Parent(s)/carer(s) can refer to the phonics support material they receive in Reception and Year One for ideas and resources to help support their child at home; Sound Mats found on our school website. Teachers are also willing to provide parent(s)/carer(s) with advice and resources to support their child's learning at home. In Reception, parent(s)/carer(s) can also find examples of teaching ideas/activities on Tapestry. 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 parent(s)/carer(s) can help their child do this – as you might expect, some strategies work better with some children than others. Home learning ideas are shared with parent(s)/carer(s) at the beginning of each year; please speak to your child's class teacher(s) if you would like these ideas further explained.

Review date: October 2018

To be reviewed: October 2019