

Thurnham C E Infant School



Phonics and Spelling Policy

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Position	English Leader
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Policy for the Teaching of Phonics and Spelling in EYFS and KS1

Introduction

High quality phonic teaching secures the crucial skills of word recognition that, once mastered, enable children to read fluently and automatically thus freeing them to concentrate on the meaning of the text.

The Rose Report made it clear that high quality phonics should be taught systematically and discretely as the prime approach used in the teaching of early reading. We adopt this principle at Thurnham.

This policy is underwritten by our school Christian values of kindness, trust, sharing, respect, love and friendship. These all form an integral part of all Phonics and Spelling teaching.

Aims

High quality phonic work will be most effective when:

- It is part of a broad and rich curriculum that engages children in a range of activities and experiences to develop their speaking and listening skills and phonological awareness.
- It is multi-sensory, encompassing simultaneous visual, auditory and kinaesthetic activities to enliven core learning.
- It is time-limited, such that the great majority of children should be confident readers by the end of Key Stage 1.
- It is systematic, that is to say, it follows a carefully planned programme with fidelity, reinforcing and building on previous learning to secure children's progress.
- It is taught discretely and daily at a brisk pace.
- There are opportunities to reinforce and apply acquired phonic and spelling knowledge and skills across the curriculum and in such activities as shared and guided reading.
- There are regular opportunities for children to learn high frequency words within each phase alongside their phonic learning.
- Children's progress in developing and applying their phonic knowledge is carefully assessed and monitored.

The Teaching and Learning Of Phonics and Spelling

Words are made up from small units of sound called phonemes. Phonics teaches children to be able to listen carefully and identify the phonemes that make up each word. This helps children to learn to read words and to spell words.

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**.

At Thurnham C.E. Infant School the "Letters and Sounds" programme is taught throughout EYFS and Year 1. Children who need a little extra support are helped using Read Write Inc.

Letters and Sounds is also supported by a range of games and resources from other schemes and internet sites. In Year 2 we follow the Raintree No Nonsense Spelling Programme, with support from the Letters and Sounds Phonics programme and Read, Write Inc for those children who need this additional support.

Letters and Sounds is a phonics resource published by the DfE. It aims to build children's speaking and listening skills in their own right as well as to prepare children for learning to read by developing their phonic knowledge and skills. The programme is organised into six structured phases building on acquired phonic knowledge and skills learnt at each phase.

Phase	Phonic Knowledge and Skills
Phase One (Nursery/Reception)	Activities are divided into seven aspects, including environmental sounds, instrumental sounds, body sounds, rhythm and rhyme, alliteration, voice sounds and finally oral blending and segmenting.
Phase Two (Reception) up to 6 weeks	Learning 19 letters of the alphabet and one sound for each. Blending sounds together to make words. Segmenting words into their separate sounds. Beginning to read simple captions.
Phase Three (Reception) up to 12 weeks	The remaining 7 letters of the alphabet, one sound for each. Graphemes such as ch, oo, th representing the remaining phonemes not covered by single letters. Reading captions, sentences and questions. On completion of this phase, children will have learnt the "simple code", i.e. one grapheme for each phoneme in the English language.
Phase Four (Reception) 4 to 6 weeks	No new grapheme-phoneme correspondences are taught in this phase. Children learn to blend and segment longer words with adjacent consonants, e.g. swim, clap, jump.
Phase Five (Throughout Year 1)	Now we move on to the "complex code". Children learn more graphemes for the phonemes which they already know, plus different ways of pronouncing the graphemes they already know.
Phase Six (Throughout Year 2 and beyond). <i>We introduce the Raintree Programme here to provide a structure for following the Year 2 Spelling expectations in the National Curriculum.</i>	Working on spelling, including prefixes and suffixes, doubling and dropping letters etc.

The National Curriculum details further aspects to cover.
The Appendix 1 in the English Curriculum sets out clearly the teaching of spelling progression throughout Key Stage 1.

Organisation and planning

Phonics or Spelling is taught daily across EYFS and KS1 for approximately 20 minutes. Sessions are delivered in a variety of ways to include whole class, small group and individual teaching tailored to the children's needs.

Whilst the Class Teacher plans and delivers the main phonic focus, Teaching Assistants are actively involved and may support small groups or individuals during the session.

Sessions for phonics and spelling follow the same planning format: Review, Teach, Practise and Apply, although by Year 2 these may not all be present in every lesson, to allow time to consolidate tricky skills.

Sessions are quick moving, balance writing with games and practical activities and include kinaesthetic opportunities wherever possible.

One important aspect of Letters and Sounds is the teaching of nonsense words. It is vital to incorporate nonsense words as they enable the children to use their phonics just through decoding skills. Nonsense words are taught as an integral part of phonic sessions.

As well as daily phonic teaching, there are opportunities for children to apply their phonic knowledge and skills across the curriculum; especially in shared and guided reading. Every opportunity is taken to ensure the children use their phonics knowledge in every aspect of their learning.

Assessment

Each Class has an individual phonics tracking grid. This tracks when pupils are secure in each Letters and Sounds Phase and therefore enter the next phase of teaching and learning. This is monitored by the English Leader and Head teacher 3 times a year to ensure pupils are progressing at expected levels and provision is matched pupils needs.

Spelling checks are undertaken regularly using the lists recommended by Kent Literacy or the National Curriculum Common Exception word lists.

Year 1 Phonics Screening:

The phonics screening check is a statutory assessment for all children in Year 1 (first introduced in 2012). The phonics screening check is designed to confirm whether individual children have learnt phonic decoding to an appropriate standard.

Children who do not achieve the appropriate threshold at the end of Year 1 will receive support from the school to improve their phonic decoding skills. These children then retake the phonics screening check towards the end of Year 2.

The phonics screening check comprises a list of 40 words that children read one-to-one with a teacher. The list is a combination of both real and nonsense words.

As nonsense words are new to all children, they do not favour children with a good vocabulary knowledge or large visual memory of words.

The nonsense words will be shown to children alongside pictures of imaginary creatures to show the child that it is a nonsense word and not a word which they will already know.

Teachers will report to parents whether or not their child met the required standard to ensure they are aware of their child's progress in developing phonics skills.

Equality Statement

We will take into account the needs of all pupils in terms of abilities and stage of development. Pupils with Special Education needs will be entitled to the same access to Phonics as their peers. In planning lessons, teachers will identify challenge for all pupils, modifying or adapting the task and/or equipment to include the least able and to stretch the most able children. Teachers will liaise with the SENCO and additional adult support will be sought if needed.

Conclusion

The ability to decode and spell is a specific skill which needs to be learned by children. Children at Thurnham will secure automatic decoding skills and progress from "learning to read" to "reading to learn" for purpose and pleasure. The ultimate goal of learning to read is comprehension. To achieve this, teachers are clear about which activities are designed to teach children to acquire word recognition skills, and which will help children develop high-level comprehension skills.

EYFS and KS1 staff ensure the application of phonics and spelling skills across all areas of learning so that children understand how to make use of their learning across the curriculum.

Children are reminded of our school Christian values of kindness, trust, sharing, respect, love and friendship in all of their phonics and spelling learning.