

**Phonics and Early Reading Policy**

**2022-23**

**Intent**

At the Schools of Woolton Hill, we are committed to the delivery of excellence in the teaching of phonics. We are steadfast about ensuring all children become confident readers, writers and effective spellers. Phonics is a key skill that supports the development of early reading skills and our mission is to teach every child to read and write. High quality phonics teaching enables children to decode new words confidently and independently leading to improved understanding.

The Schools follow a clear structure, based on the Essential Letters and Sounds sequence, incorporated in “Floppy’s Phonics”, to teach children to read. The Infant and junior school follow “Floppy’s Phonics” teaching schedule, clear teaching routines and procedures, for blending to read and segmenting to spell. The overall progression is split into six phases, from learning about sounds in the early years, to becoming fluent readers around age 7. The phonic progression in Floppy’s Phonics underpins Oxford Reading Tree decodable texts and later Project X Code, which are utilized in order that:

- Each child is able to master the alphabetic code, blend smoothly, and read with fluency and good understanding.
- Every child reads decodable texts matched to their taught phonic phase and set.
- Each child learns to segment sounds in order to spell.
- All children master helpful/tricky words, with unusual spellings, for both reading and spelling.
- Each child is engaged from the outset and this enables them to read, spell and write accurately.

## **Implementation**

The schools approach includes synthetic phonics instruction, focused on teaching each individual letter sound. The children sound each letter or letter combination one at a time and then blend these back into word pronunciations (reading). The school uses the Oxford Reading Tree (ORT) Program, Floppy's Phonics. This is used in the Infant School and into Year 3/4 for children not yet secure in their phonics. If children continue to need phonic support for reading and spelling in Year 5/6 they follow the Oxford Reading Tree (ORT) Program Project X Code intervention which is more age appropriate than the Floppy's Phonics scheme. There is fidelity to the Floppy Phonics teaching schedule throughout the schools choice of decodable texts, to ensure consistency of learning. A range of ORT decodable texts are used to supplement reading at each phonic phase, so mastery is achieved in decoding. Floppy's Phonics is a core scheme for children aged 4 to 7. For those children needing longer to achieve mastery, the use of decodable texts continues into the juniors. At the Schools of Woolton Hill the "Floppy's Phonics" six step teaching sequence is used for phonics teaching.

1. Revisit and review –using flash cards.
2. Teach the next focus sound (using the Floppy's Phonics online book).
3. Practise with activity sheets.
4. Apply with cumulative texts.
5. Consolidate using a decodable books.

Furthermore the children are clearly taught two main routes, first to master the alphabetic code (linking phonemes with graphemes) and alongside this the alphabet. The alphabet is taught to ensure that children understand the order of letters, upper and lower case letters and know where letters sit on the line for writing. Phonics teaching adheres to clear teaching procedures for blending to read and segmenting to spell using "Floppy's Phonics" guidance.

The children are provided with a variety of opportunities to develop and extend their phonics skills across Reception and Key Stage 1 (and continued into Key Stage 2 where necessary). In the Reception Year and Key stage 1, each class will be taught phonics as a discrete lesson every day and will also be taught/apply phonics throughout other curriculum lessons on a daily basis. It will also be

continued into Key Stage 2, where necessary to support those children who do not yet have the phonic knowledge and skills they need. Children are grouped according to their phonic knowledge, into smaller group sizes for tuition as necessary, using the 6 step teaching sequence outlined above. In upper key stage 2 some children are taught through the Project X Code intervention programme.

From Year 3, children who have passed the phonics screening check (with a score of over 36/40) and are reading above book band Green but who also present with weaker than average spelling and phonic acquisition their learning and progress is enhanced through the use of Nessy Reading/Spelling intervention programme.

The teacher provides systematic teaching based on detailed assessment of each child's phonics knowledge. As phonic phases are mastered, the children apply their knowledge by reading and re-reading decodable texts. A range of resources are used to engage individuals and groups of children. These lessons include pace and practical and interactive activities to engage the children, such as multi-sensory activity sheets and cumulative texts from "Floppy's Phonics" scheme. Visual prompts are provided in class, e.g. phonic mats, alphabet and phonic charts, to support children's learning. ICT resources, such as electronic books, and phonic programs to teach each phase of letters and sounds, deepen learning and accelerate progress. Activities are carefully chosen to develop each child's skills in oral discrimination and phonemic and rhyme awareness, blending and segmenting as well as grapheme-phoneme correspondence. We believe that teachers need both a scheme based on synthetic phonics and effective training in order to provide high quality phonics teaching. We maintain that phonics teaching should be:

- Systematic
- Discrete
- Interactive
- Practical
- Engaging
- Multi – Sensory
- Differentiated
- Enjoyed by all

All children also learn helpful/tricky words alongside phonetic decoding, helpful/tricky words are harder because they are irregular i.e. do not decode easily. Children must learn to read these words confidently, both through

understanding the parts of the word that are not tricky first and as taught sight vocabulary.

### **Shared texts.**

Books that are too hard can be frustrating – and can risk putting a child off reading, so independent reading in the early stages is based on decodable texts, matched to a child’s phonics acquisition. However, children also need exposure to other books to share with an adult or fluent reader (at our schools this also includes a weekly Library book of their choice). To avoid any confusion some books will be labelled “shared reading book”. A shared text is a book that contains some words a child may not be able to read yet. This means the book needs to be shared with an adult, or competent reader, who can support in reading harder, unknown words. It is vital that children have a range of books for breadth and balance of reading experience. Once a child has reached the end of Book Band green, they are able to decode books, using all 44 phonemes proficiently.

### **Intervention**

After a child’s needs have been assessed, children who still need extra support to develop their phonic knowledge across Key Stage 1 and 2 are identified and targeted for additional intervention.

### **Inclusion**

All children have equal access to the curriculum as expressed in our Equal Opportunities Policy. We will ensure that phonics is accessible to pupils by:

- Setting suitable learning objectives and differentiated success criteria
- Overcoming potential barriers of individuals and groups
- Making use of age appropriate texts, matching children’s maturity and interest level.
- Have access to ICT to support and accelerate progress in phonic acquisition and independence in learning.

This is monitored by analysing pupil performance throughout the school, ensuring that phonic, reading and spelling skills increase in proficiency.

### **Children working at Greater Depth Standard**

In phonics, staff will develop weekly plans to ensure pupils who are identified as reading and achieving at an exceptionally high level, are catered for. For these

pupils accelerated learning experiences are offered, such as enriching and advancing their reading, spelling and writing opportunities.

### **Assessment**

Assessment is regarded as an integral part of teaching and learning and is a continuous process. We strive to make our assessment purposeful, allowing us to match the correct level of work to the needs of the pupils, thus benefiting the pupils and ensuring progress. It is the class teacher's responsibility to keep track of the progress made by all children in their class, regardless of their phonic ability. Where children are not making expected progress teachers will use assessments and diagnostic tests, to help identify the specific area of phonics they are struggling with. Interventions to address these areas of weakness then follow.

### **Assessment for Learning**

We continually assess our pupils and recording their progress. Information for assessment is gathered in various ways: by talking to children, asking questions, observing their work, setting specific tasks. Teachers use this assessment information to plan further work and set new targets.

### **Assessment of Learning**

The attainment and progress of children in phonics is assessed regularly across the year and tracked closely until children achieve mastery of the phonic system. When children reach the end of the green book band, they are deemed to have sufficient mastery of phonics to read beyond purely decodable texts. Children have assessments to show which phonemes they have mastered, until they securely pass the year 1 phonic screening check (score of at least 36/40) and/or have mastered all 44 phonemes, including their application to reading/spelling.

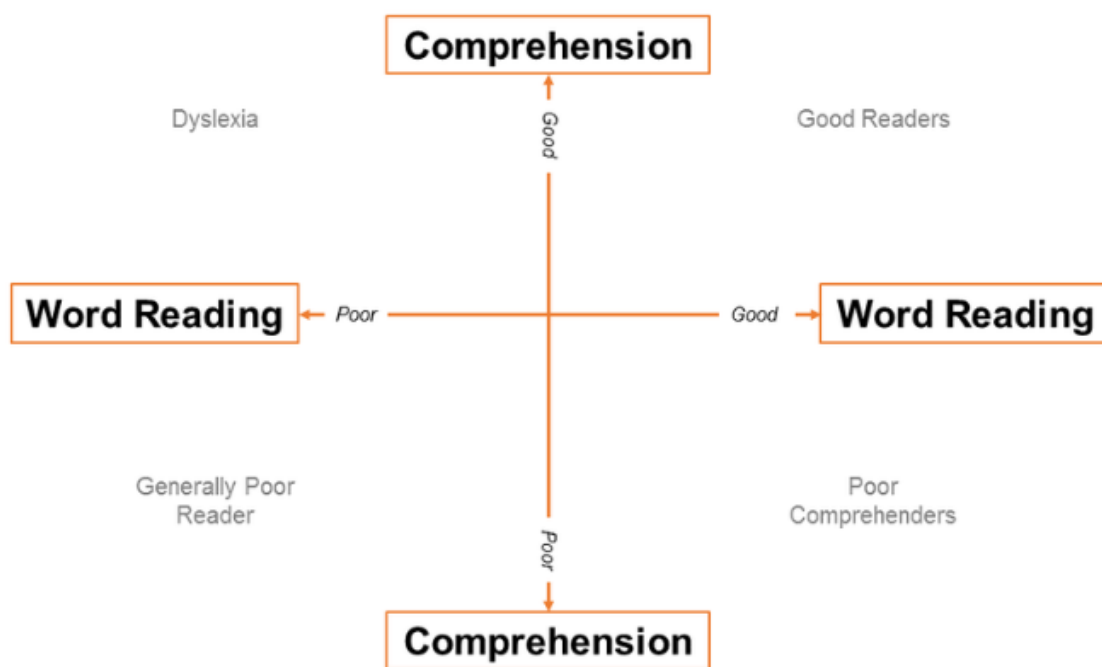
Children are assessed for each phonic phase and set until mastery of phase 5 is acquired. Individual gap analysis informs future teaching.

Once children can read at the end point of Book Band Green, they are assessed through Book Banding and PM Benchmark if needed. Tracking book bands ensures that both comprehension and phonetic decoding are tracked.

At the end of Year 1, children participate in the phonics screening check which assesses their knowledge of grapheme-phoneme correspondence and their skills in blending. This information is submitted to the local authority. Those children

who do not succeed in the phonics screening check are highlighted for further intervention and targeted support before completing the screening check again at the end of Year 2. For children who do not succeed a second time, provision is made for them to receive intervention and targeted support in Key Stage 2.

Phonics is assessed in the context of a broader model of reading acquisition (the simple view of reading).



### Feedback

Children are provided with constructive and timely feedback in lessons. Teachers provide parents with feedback on their child's progress and achievement at parent's evening and through the end of the year report. Assessment information is also passed onto the next teacher as part of transition between year group and phases.

### Special Needs:

Intervention for phonics and its application to reading and writing is provided where necessary. Progress is defined by children's responses to intervention. Where there are difficulties further assessment may be necessary, to provide the best intervention.

## **Organisation**

SLT, English Lead and SENDco are responsible for:

- Ensuring continuity and progression from year group to year group
- Providing all members of staff with guidelines, to show how aims are achieved and how the variety of all aspects of phonics is to be taught
- Advising on in-service training to staff where appropriate
- Advising and supporting colleagues in the implementation and assessment of phonics throughout the school
- Assisting with the requisition and maintenance of resources required for the teaching of phonics, within the confines of the school budget
- Monitoring the quality of teaching and learning in phonics across the school

## **The class teacher is responsible for:**

- Ensuring progress in the acquisition of phonic knowledge and skills
- Developing and updating skills, knowledge and understanding of phonics
- Identifying needs in phonics and take advantage of training opportunities
- Keep appropriate on-going records and assessment
- Planning effectively for phonics, liaising with English Lead, SENDco and SLT when necessary
- Informing pupils and parents of their progress, achievement and attainment

## **Impact**

Through implementing the above and careful monitoring from SLT, English Lead and SENDco

- Pupils will be confident in their phonic knowledge
- Pupils will be able to blend and segment words confidently
- Pupils pass the Phonics Screening Test
- Pupils master reading and spelling through fun but challenging phonic activities
- A culture where a secure knowledge of phonic sounds enables reading for pleasure as part of our reading curriculum.

**Review**

The governors review this policy annually. The governors may, however, review the policy earlier than this, if the government introduces new regulations, or if the school/governing body receives recommendations on how the policy might be improved.