



Phonics and Early Reading Policy

Review Date: September 2023

At Lady Royd Primary, we teach systematic synthetic phonics using the Validated Essential Letters and Sounds scheme. Children are taught to read letters or groups of letters by saying the sound(s) they represent. Children can then start to read words by blending the sounds together to make a word. Children are taught to apply the skill of segmenting words into phonemes to spell and that blending and segmenting is a reversible process. We do this through a 20-minute teaching session per day in Reception, year 1 and year 2 alongside integrating phonics in cross curricular activities throughout the day.

We work through six phases from Reception to Year Two. Phonics instruction continues in Year Three and beyond for children who have been identified as needing additional phonics teaching. Phonics is also present in all cross curricular learning.

Phase 1 is consolidated during the first few weeks of children settling into reception and continues discreetly throughout key stage 1 as required.

Essential letters and sounds consist of five phases to be delivered from Reception to Year 2.

Phase Two - This begins in the first few weeks in Reception. The purpose of Phase Two is to move from oral blending and segmenting to blending and segmenting with graphemes (written phonemes). The children will learn 19 letters and should be able to read and write words with three sounds e.g. cat, tip, rock.

Phase Three - Continues in Reception. The children will learn 25 more sounds including digraphs (two letters that make one sound e.g. sh) and trigraphs (three letters that make one sound e.g. air). The children will continue to practise how to blend and segment along with learning to read and write two syllable words. The children also begin to learn the letter names. Children should have learnt all 44 phonemes and graphemes by the end of Autumn term in Reception.

Phase Four - Continues in Reception to the end of the Reception year. The purpose of Phase Four is to practise children's knowledge of sounds and to read and spell words with adjacent consonants that contain four sounds e.g. skip, boost, float. Children should be Phase Five ready by the time they leave Reception.

Phase Five - This begins in the first few weeks of Year One. Children will learn alternative ways of spelling the sounds e.g. 'oi' in coin and 'oy' in boy. Children will practise spelling a range of two and three syllable words phonetically. Children should be Phase Six ready by the time they leave Year One. This is then reviewed again during the Autumn term.

Phase Six - This begins in Year Two through SPAG in English lessons alongside phase 5 phonics lessons. Children apply their phonic knowledge to recognise and spell complex words. They read increasing numbers of high frequency words independently and automatically. They also learn spelling conventions e.g. when using past tense, add suffixes - *ended*.

Please note that the teaching of phonics does not stop after Year Two. It continues rigorously throughout all lessons and key stages from reception to KS4.

Terminology

It is crucial that staff use consistent terminology with children so that children do not become confused and their working memory is at optimum use.

Term	Definition	Term used with children
Pure sounds	The correct pronunciation of phonemes so that children can more easily blend to read words.	Pure sounds
Phoneme	The smallest unit of sound in a word.	Sound or phoneme
Grapheme	A written letter or group of letters representing one sound e.g. t, ck, igh	Grapheme <i>Say 'See the graphemes and say the sounds'. Marked with a dot under (sound button)</i>
Digraph	A combination of two letters representing one sound, as in 'ai' and 'ph'.	Digraph Marked with a dash under
Consonant digraph	Two consonants which make one sound e.g. sh, ch, th	Consonant digraph (From Year One) Marked with a dash under
Vowel digraph	A digraph in which at least one of the letters is a vowel e.g. oa, ar	Vowel digraph (From Year One) Marked with a dash under
Split digraph	A digraph that is split by a consonant. Usually a long vowel sound e.g. 'a-e' (cake), u-e (rule).	Split digraph Marked with a curve under the split digraph 
Trigraph	Three letters which together make one sound e.g. igh	Trigraph Marked with a dash under
Blending	The process of using phonics for reading. Children identify and synthesise the phonemes in order to make a word. E.g. s-n-a-p, blended together, reads snap.	Blending <i>Sound out using a finger for each phoneme and then point across the fingers to blend.</i>
Segmenting	Separating words into their constituent phonemes to spell.	Segmenting Say – sound it out. <i>segment on the arm each letter and point across the arm for the whole word.</i>
Nonsense words	Tool to assess phonetic decoding – shows that the word hasn't been memorised or learnt by sight.	Alien words <i>Action- fingers on head as antennae</i>
High frequency words	The most common words used in English- a combination of phonetically decodable words and common exception words.	High frequency words
Common exception words	Words in which the English spelling code works in an unusual or uncommon way e.g. the, you, was.	Harder to read and spell words
Cvc, ccvcc	The abbreviations used for consonant- vowel consonant and consonant- consonant-vowel – consonant- consonant words, used to describe the order of sounds.	n/a

Consistent Approach

Commitment to the 'Essential Letters and Sounds' programme is imperative. Everyone in the school follows the same programme, using the same terms and tracks progress in the same way to ensure pupils do not fall through any gaps. Consistency is key so that children are given a clear approach from all staff and year groups so that children retain learning and working memory is not overloaded. The following methods should be used.

Concept	Method
Lesson structure	Staff follow the five-part lesson sequence: revisit, teach, practise, apply, review. If teachers need support materials these can be found in the Phonics subject folder on the v drive.
Introducing a new sound	Children encouraged to listen and repeat several times. Children are shown the letter with a rhyme for letter formation.
When blending words	Robot arm and hands together to blend.
When segmenting words	Robot arm and hands together to blend.
Sound buttons	Buttons for single sounds and longer buttons for digraphs and trigraphs. Cat ship light ... - _ .
Pure sounds	All staff must pronounce the letters in the correct way e.g. 'mmm' not 'muh'. This makes it easier for children to blend words to read.
Frequency and duration	Each class in Reception and year one will have a 20-30 minute phonics lesson per day.
Harder to read and spell words	Following Essential Letters & Sounds HRS word progression.

Assessment

Formative assessment should be occurring in daily phonics sessions and children should be given appropriate challenge at the correct phonics level. Children are taught in a whole class approach. Interventions can happen swiftly during the apply section. Children who are falling behind should be quickly identified and strategies put in place to ensure they catch up through extra intervention.

Summative assessment using the 'Essential Letters and Sounds' assessment should be used every half term (usually during week 5) and this should be used to inform planning and raise any concerns with senior leaders.

Phonics screening practise tests should occur at the end of each half term. The results of these will be discussed at Pupil progress meetings.

Decodable Books

Children practise early reading with fully decodable books that:

- are matched to phonic knowledge and which do not require use of alternative strategies.
- are closely matched to the phonics phases.
- are decodable at the child's current level and not mixed with non-decodable books for independent reading.
- include a small number of 'HRS' words which have been taught.
- are continued in the progressive sequence of 'Essential letters and sounds' phases until a child can confidently decode words involving most common grapheme representations of all phonemes.

If you would like further support and information please see Stacy Hanson, phonics leader.

Long Term Plan for teaching Phonics

Phase One provision ongoing	Reception	
	Autumn One (from week 3)	Phase Two
	Autumn Two	Phase Three
	Spring Term	Consolidate Phase Two and Three
	Summer Term	Phase Four

Phase One provision ongoing	Year One	
	Autumn One	Consolidate Phase Four
	Autumn Two	Phase Five part 1
	Spring one	Phase Five part 2
	Spring 2	Consolidate phase 5 P1 + P2
	Summer Term	Phase Five part 3

Reception		
Term	Week	Phonics
1	1,2	Phase 1
	3-8	Teach Phase 2
2	1,2	Teach Phase 2
	2-7	Teach Phase 3
3	1-4	Teach Phase 3
	5,6	Phase 3 review
4	1-6	Phase 3 review
5	1-5	Teach Phase 4
6	1-5	Phase 4 review

Year 1		
Term	Week	Phonics
1	1,2	Phase 4
	3 – 8	Phase 4
2	1	Teach Phase 5
	2-7	Phase 5 review (phonics test mock)
3	1	Phase 5 review
	2-6	Phase 5 review
4	1-6	Teach Phase 5 alternative graphemes (ay and ai etc.)
5	1-5	Gap fill before phonics check.
6	1	Gap fill before phonics check.
	2	Phonics screening check
	3-5	Teach alternative sounds. (soft c etc.)

Year 2 recap phase 5 gaps and alternatives during Autumn term.