

Early Reading and Phonics

Through reading, we recognise that pupils have a chance to develop culturally, emotionally, intellectually, socially and spiritually. It also allows them to build on what they already know. All the skills of language are essential to participating fully as a member of society and early reading is therefore a priority across our Federation.

What is phonics?

The term 'phonics' is used to describe the process of matching the spoken sound (phoneme) to the written symbol (grapheme) and is one of the first strategies that young children learn in order to support them in beginning to read simple texts.

How do we teach phonics?

Phonics is taught using 'Letters and Sounds' which is a phonics resource published by the Department for Education and Skills. 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. It sets out a detailed and systematic programme for teaching phonics for children starting in Early Years, with the aim of them becoming fluent readers by age seven.

Phase	Time spent on Phase	Likely point Secure at Phase	Phonic Knowledge and Skills
Phase one	Throughout Nursery and early Reception	End of Autumn Term 1	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	End of Autumn Term in Reception	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	End of Summer Term 1	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/ Early Year 1 4-6 weeks	End of Summer Term 2,	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 5	Throughout Year 1	End of Year 1	Children 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 6	Throughout Year 2	End of Year 2	Working on spelling, including prefixes and suffixes, doubling and dropping letters

At the Federation of Follifoot and Spofforth, we recognise that consistency and regularity of delivery is of core importance to the teaching of phonics and we ensure that our sessions are taught at the same time daily and in the same format across both schools and in all classes for approximately 20 to 30 minutes in fun, interactive, multi-sensory sessions which follow the structure of revisit, teach, practise and apply.

Starting in Reception and continuing into Year 1, children are taught as a whole year group by the class teacher. Where necessary, teaching extends beyond 'dedicated time' and is applied and reinforced when appropriate throughout the day by both the class teacher and teaching assistants. From Year 2 to Year 6, children continue to learn phase 6 phonics and beyond in daily sessions using 'No Nonsense Spelling' programme. This guidance allows us to teach the strategies, knowledge and skills children need to learn in a systematic manner as it has clear progression through blocks of teaching throughout the year for each age range.

Staff training in phonics

Quality teaching of early reading is essential for children to develop competence, fluency and automaticity when decoding and recognising familiar and unfamiliar words. At the Federation of Follifoot and Spofforth we adopt a determined approach to teaching phonics and reading to ensure that all children have the fluency required to access all reading material. It is therefore important that staff knowledge enables all pupils to achieve their potential. When staff are new to a year group or to the teaching of phonics, they attend professional training (for example, with North Yorkshire Education Services) early in the Autumn Term. Ongoing dialogue, refreshers and observations and feedback take place for all staff, led by the English Leader and or the SENDCO to ensure that their phonic subject knowledge remains up to date, that they have a good overview of phonics teaching in school and use an agreed terminology. When phonics is taught by a teaching assistant, for example during an intervention or when in groups/ interventions are (beyond dedicated phonics teaching time), supportive supervision and monitoring takes place by the class teacher and/or English leader.

How do we assess phonics?

Every child's progress and attainment in phonics is assessed on a weekly basis to ensure that there are no 'gaps' in learning and then at least once a half term throughout Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 through low stakes assessments, sense checks and screenings. This is in order to ensure that they are receiving lessons within the correct Phase for their ability.

Each year, Year 1 pupils are assessed in their ability to read both 'real' and 'alien' (nonsense) words through the national Phonics Screening which confirms whether individual children have learnt phonic decoding to an appropriate standard. Through the teaching that take place during the year children are well prepared for this and the results of this assessment are fed back to parents in end of year reports. Those children that do not reach the expected level are given further support through interventions which may include phonics consolidation, 1:1 daily reading, and precision teaching. Pupils are then re-screened during Term 6 of Year 2.

Further phonics information for parents

Information for parents about the teaching of phonics is provided in a phonics information evening in the Autumn Term for pupils in Nursery and Reception. A copy of the slides and a useful glossary can be viewed on the Federation website as can our parent guide to reading. Further useful information can be found on the following websites:

<https://www.oxfordowl.co.uk/for-home/reading/phonics-made-easy>

<http://www.letters-and-sounds.com>

<http://www.teachyourmonstertoread.com>

<http://www.phonicsplay.co.uk>