



Phonics and Early Reading Policy



Avonwood Primary School

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Avonwood Primary School Vision

At Avonwood we see it as our moral imperative for all children, regardless of background, to achieve their very best. Our children read classic literature, study modern foreign languages, experience the science of dissecting organs and even learn a new musical instrument every year as a right, not a privilege. These high expectations enable us to develop and deliver a curriculum rich in carefully sequenced and embedded powerful knowledge. We expect teachers to deliver lessons that fulfil this expectation whilst living up to our ambition of inspiring wonder and intellectual curiosity.

Our curriculum is at the centre of every education decision we take at Avonwood. We do not see the curriculum as a finished product, far from it. On a weekly, termly and annual basis we review plans, consider our intent and make sure we deliver the very best academic and enrichment diet to our children. All curriculum areas have a subject lead that is responsible for the design, implementation and ongoing monitoring and evaluation of this area.

If 'powerful knowledge' is the head of our school, then reading for pleasure and progress is its heart. Our school environment and curriculum crystallises reading for pleasure as a valued and purposeful part of our curriculum. We agree with the view of Thompson (2020) when she states the importance of becoming a reader who teachers and a teacher who reads is a pedagogy with far reaching consequences. Reading progression is carefully mapped to provide opportunities for exposure to a wide variety of genres, authors of different backgrounds and a mixture of classic and contemporary texts. Every afternoon we 'Drop Everything and Read' to end our school day with a high quality whole class reading session. We wholeheartedly believe reading is the golden key to unlocking the potential of every child's success.

We are honoured to be the only United Nations Earth Charter Primary School in Europe. We believe it is vital that all children have an understanding of their responsibility as global citizens and our eight Earth Charter principals are referenced throughout our curriculum and daily life. From the importance of peace and respect for all living creatures through to the consideration of the past and future of our planet, this ethos gives our Avonwood curriculum a very current and relevant perspective that all stakeholders within our community hold strong. This runs deep within our "Avonwood DNA" and is optimised by our school mantra... it starts with one!

Avonwood is an exceptionally positive, happy and inspiring place to learn. Children are excited to come to school to discover the rich learning experiences teachers have planned each and every day. It is this nurtured thirst for learning that has been carefully engineered through the awe and wonder of our curriculum that we feel makes Avonwood such a unique, academically rich and special place to grow and learn.



Phonics and Early Reading - Intent

Introduction

At Avonwood Primary School, we strive to ensure all pupils are confident and fluent readers by the end of Key Stage One; we believe that reading is the key to success and underpins all learning. Having high expectations and a consistent approach to phonics ensures children are given the best possible foundation for reading, writing and communication and language skills.

We follow the DfE validated phonics scheme of Unlocking Letters and Sounds (ULS) to deliver progressive, high-quality, and well-paced phonics lessons. All staff across the school have received ULS CPD to ensure delivery of the scheme is with expertise and absolute fidelity.

Aims

- To provide consistent, high quality phonics teaching ensuring all children have a strong foundation to begin their journey for the complex processes of reading and writing;
- To ensure that the teaching of synthetic phonics is systematic and progressive;
- To ensure that children have a sound knowledge and understanding of phonics, developing the skills to decode words confidently and independently;
- To ensure children are taught strategies to identify and decode high frequency and common exception words
- To ensure that children are provided opportunities to read texts and words that are within their phonic capabilities
- To ensure children's language and comprehension skills are developed alongside one another
- To ensure children read with ease, fluency and understanding
- To develop a lifelong love of reading alongside our phonics teaching
- To acquire a wide vocabulary, an understanding of grammar and knowledge of linguistic conventions for reading, and spoken language
- To provide and develop an appreciation of a variety of rich texts

Reading begins from the very beginning of our children's learning journey in Foundation. Through reading, pupils have a chance to develop culturally, emotionally, intellectually, socially, and spiritually. Literature, especially, plays a key role in such development. We therefore place high importance on ensuring that our reading curriculum is rich with opportunities to explore and learn about the world that we live in and the key figures in it. Reading also enables pupils both to acquire knowledge and to build on what they already know. All the skills of language are essential to participating fully as a member of society. Our whole school vision is to promote high standards of language and literacy by equipping pupils with a strong command of the spoken word, and to develop their love of literature through widespread reading for enjoyment.

What is phonics?

Phonics is the first strategy in helping children to read as it provides children with the knowledge of the alphabet and the sounds that letters make. Children are taught to listen to and identify the sounds that make up words, phonemes (a unit of sound in a word) and graphemes (a letter or sequence of letters that represents a phoneme).

Children are taught the skills to segment and blend. Segmentation is needed for both reading and spelling. Children need to segment (sound out) each individual phoneme in words. Blending is the reversal of segmentation. It is a skill for reading where after segmenting a word into phonemes the children then need to merge these together to create the whole word.

Common exception words, also known as tricky words (words that need to be recognised by sight) are taught as a part of phonics sessions. In addition, children are taught the alphabet name and letter formation alongside each new sound.

Phonic phases and progression at Avonwood - Implementation

Through ULS children will learn the 150+ graphemes that are represented by the 44 phonemes of the English language along with common exception words (CEWs) and some KS1 National Curriculum objectives in a planned, progressive way. This is achieved through daily phonics lessons, reading practice using fully decodable books matched to the child's phonic knowledge and daily handwriting practice.

Phase 1

Listening games are played to aid discrimination of different sounds. This is done through listening to different sounds in the environment, instruments, and body percussions; rhythm and rhyme; alliterations; oral segmentation of words/objects and using voice sounds. This phase forms the foundation of developing children's early reading ready for when they start school and will continue to be taught alongside other phases to further support listening skills.

Phase 2 – Foundation Stage

The purpose of this phase is to teach at least 19 letters and to move the children on from oral blending and segmentation to blending and segmenting with letters. By the end of the phase many children should be able to read some VC and CVC words and to spell some of these simple words too. During the phase they will be introduced to reading simple captions. The sounds below are taught in the following order within Phase 2.

- Set 1: s, a, t, p
- Set 2: i, n, m, d
- Set 3: g, o, c, k
- Set 4: ck, e, u, r
- Set 5: h, b, f, ff, l, ll
- CEWs: I, the, to, go, no, the

Phase 3 – Foundation Stage

Children entering Phase 3 will know around 19 letters/sounds and will be able to blend phonemes to read VC words and segment VC words to spell. Whilst many children will be able to read and spell CVC words, they all should be able to blend and segment CVC words orally.

The purpose of Phase 3 is to teach another 25 graphemes, most of them comprising two letters (e.g. oa), so that by the end of this phase the children will be able to represent each of the 42 phonemes by a grapheme. The children continue to practise CVC blending and segmentation in this phase and will apply their knowledge of blending and segmenting to reading and spelling simple two-syllable words and captions. Children will also learn letter names during, learn to read some more common exception words and begin to learn to spell some of these words.

Phase 3 Mastery then gives all children the opportunity to develop a deep understanding and competence in the phase. Revisiting GPCs taught in this phase and asking children to retrieve previously taught knowledge will support their retention of sounds and common exception words. Phase 3 Mastery also further builds the children's understanding, allows teachers to address any common misconceptions and further develops children's fluency and automaticity when using these sounds. The sounds below are taught in the following order within Phase 3.

- Set 6: j, v, w, x
- Set 7: y, z, zz, qu
- Consonant digraphs: ch, sh, th, ng
- Vowel digraphs: ai, ee, igh, oa, oo, ar, or, ur, ow, oi
- Trigraphs: ear, air, ure, er
- CEWs: he, she, we, me, be, was, you, my, they, are, all, her

Phase 4 – Foundation Stage

Children entering Phase 4 will be able to represent each of 42 phonemes by a grapheme and be able to blend phonemes to read CVC words and segment CVC words for spelling. They will have some experience in reading simple two-syllable words and captions. They will know letter names and be able to read and spell some common exception words.

The purpose of this phase is to consolidate children's knowledge of graphemes in reading and spelling words containing adjacent consonants and polysyllabic words.

- CVCCs: sand, paint
- CCVC: plum, train
- CEWs: said, have, like, so, do, some, come, were, there, little, one, when, out, what

Phase 5 – Year 1

Children entering Phase 5 will know how to read and spell words containing adjacent consonants. They will also know how to read and spell some polysyllabic words.

The purpose of this phase is to teach further graphemes and phonemes for reading and spelling, and to extend the children's knowledge of the phonetic code. This includes alternative pronunciations for graphemes that have already been met and alternative spellings for phonemes. The children's pace will quicken when recognising graphemes of more than one letter (e.g. digraphs) in words and when blending the phonemes they

represent. The children will be taught the appropriate grapheme choice to represent phonemes and will begin to build word-specific knowledge of the spellings of words. It must

always be remembered that phonics is the step up to word recognition: automatic reading of all words - decodable and non-decodable - is the ultimate goal.

New graphemes: ay, ou, ie, ea, oy, ir, ue, aw, wh, ph, ew, oe, au, ey, a-e, e-e, i-e, o-e, u-e

Year 2 Onwards

Children will consolidate learning from previous phonic phases. In the Autumn Term of Year 2, children will have a daily phonics session to recap Phase 5 spellings and to develop mastery in Phase 5 b and c (alternative pronunciations and spellings). Once children are reading with fluency, they will progress onto the whole school reading scheme. From the Spring Term, phonics teaching will continue as an intervention for those children who still require it (see 'Assessment and Interventions' section) and all children will move on to learning spelling as per National Curriculum requirements daily.

Children in Key Stage 2 requiring further phonic support will receive one to one phonic intervention with their class teacher or teaching assistant. The interventions follow one of six, tailored to meet the needs of the specific skill(s) each individual may be struggling to grasp. Please see the 'Interventions' section of this policy also.



Phonics Expectations at Avonwood Primary School

To be consistent across the school and ensure absolute fidelity with the ULS programme, it is important that all members of teaching staff are following the same expectations outlined below.

Lesson Structure

At Avonwood Primary School, each week four new GPCs are taught; the week also includes a revision lesson. Phonics is taught for 20-30 minutes, and all sessions follow the exact same sequence from Unlocking Letters and Sounds. Each lesson will be structured in the same way – see below.

- 1. Revisit** - practise and consolidate previously taught GPCs/words. Practise oral blending and segmentation.
- 2. Teach** – new phonemes, graphemes or spellings taught.
- 3. Practise** - practise blending or segmenting words using the new phoneme/grapheme.
- 4. Apply** - children use their new knowledge in reading or writing whole sentences.
- 5. Review** – new sound, CEW, and opportunities for addressing misconceptions.

Pronunciation and Articulation

When teaching new GPCs, the ‘pure’ sound needs to be taught. It is important that an unnecessary ‘uh’ sound (schwa) is not added to the end. For example, /m/ should be articulated as ‘mmmmmm’ and not ‘muh’ as this adds an additional sound and makes it difficult when children then need to decode words. GPCs are also taught in a certain order so that words can be built quickly.

Actions, Handwriting, and Resources

The ULS actions must be used when introducing new GPCs. All ULS letter formation patterns must be used. Only ULS resources must be used in classrooms including sound mats, friezes, and flashcards. There must be absolutely no mixing of other schemes or resources.

Terminology

It is important that during all phonics lessons and interventions, the same terminology is being used to ensure consistency. There should be high expectations in the use of terminology.

Sound Buttons and Syllables

Sound buttons will be used across the whole school to aid children in reading words within their phonics learning and whole class reading sessions.

Any vocabulary within the EYFS setting will be supported using sounds buttons to aid children in their decoding skills.

Throughout Key Stage One and Two, sound buttons or chunking (syllables) will be used at the beginning of whole class reading to introduce new vocabulary. The use of sound buttons or chunking will support all children in decoding new or unfamiliar vocabulary.

Sound buttons will be used consistently in the following way:

- Singular sound – one dot



- 2 or more letters making one sound – a dash



- Split digraph – arch over the top



Visual Teaching Support

- Segmenting (oral blending) – palms outwards, clawed fingers, begin in the middle, stretch outwards for each individual phoneme heard. Hands back to the centre and sweep outwards for the blend.
- Phoneme Fingers (to support segmenting to spell simple words) – right hand, palm forward, starting from little finger, one finger raised to represent each sound. Index finger of other hand swipes from little finger inwards over the top for the blend.
- Blending to read – point to each sound button, then sweep finger left to right to blend.
- Actions as set out by ULS for Phase 2 and 3

Role of the Phonics Lead - Impact

The role of the Phonics Lead at Avonwood includes:

- Working towards the ambition of every Avonwood teacher being an excellent teacher of phonics.
- Has a secure and outstanding knowledge and understanding of teaching and learning phonics.
- Works closely with SLT to determine the appropriate Phonics / Early Reading scheme for the school.
- Co-ordinates and manages training of staff e.g. organise whole school training, further staff support, team-teaching.
- Developing, coaching, and leading a team through observing and monitoring phonics lessons.
- Monitor consistency and high standards in ULS lessons across EYFS and KS1, ensuring ULS model/progression is being followed with fidelity
- Monitor consistency in the delivery of ULS interventions across the school
- Monitor phonic assessment using ULS tracker across the school
- Remind teachers to be alert to any children who may not be keeping up, proactively supporting staff to make sure every child can read at expected standards by the end of KS2.
- Ensure careful matching of children's reading book with their phonics attainment using summative assessment (children must be SECURE).
- Work alongside the Literacy Lead, English Lead and our Avonwood Speech and Language Therapist.
- Lead parent workshops and keep website up to date with helpful and relevant materials.
- Auditing and organisation of phonic books and resources.
- Collaborating with other members of staff including SLT and SENDCo.
- Support our ambition for Avonwood children to be a school where we #ReadForPleasure

Assessment

Formative & Summative Assessment

Daily assessment is incorporated into phonics sessions. Children are assessed individually on taught content every 3 weeks. In addition, at the end of every phase children are assessed again on all content from that phase (phonemes, CEWs and blending). Pupil progress is tracked using the ULS Phonics Tracker. Quickly identifying gaps in children's phonological knowledge enables us to immediately put interventions in place to fill these gaps. These are specific and delivered quickly and expertly to accelerate children's learning. Children requiring additional phonics support from Year 2 and KS2 onwards will receive interventions and monitoring outlined in the interventions section below.

Phonics Screening

At the end of Year 1, children have a phonics screening check; this will assess their knowledge of grapheme/phoneme correspondence and their skills in blending. Children will learn to read a mixture of real and alien words. Children's results are sent to the local authority. Any children who do not succeed in the phonics screening check in Year 1 will be identified and receive targeted support and interventions to aid them. At the end of Year 2, the children who did not pass will undertake the screening check again.

Interventions

Following the Unlocking Letters and Sounds scheme, we use the 'Ambitious Expectations' document which provides 6 distinct interventions to support children in the lowest 20%. These interventions support children in keeping up from EYFS through to the end of KS2.

The six interventions focus on the following skills:

- Oral blending
- GPC and CEW recognition
- Blending to read

The intervention strategies support children in overcoming barriers in reading. They will be carried out on a 1:1 basis by either a class teacher or teaching assistant, for no more than 3-5 minutes each time. Interventions will be carried out across all key stages using the same 6 interventions outlined in the 'Ambitious Expectations' document and resources to ensure consistency. Across the school, individual assessments are carried out by the class teacher or teaching assistant to check impact and on-going progress for all children receiving interventions across the key stages. These assessments will be used to identify an individual child's exact barrier in reading enabling targeted interventions for the area of difficulty.

Early Reading

The ULS lessons give children daily opportunities to practise and apply their phonics and recognise familiar words. In addition to these lessons, it is also vital that children have opportunities to read fully decodable books that match **their** current phonics attainment. Children will be given decodable books to practise their reading at home. It is the expectation that the book children take home is read at least 3 times. This is to ensure 3 key skills are practised – fluency, prosody, and comprehension/vocabulary. Children will receive 1:1, guided or group reading opportunities and from KS1 onwards, daily whole class reading lessons. Reading lessons are planned against our 8 Key Principles of Reading. This ensure consistency within the teaching of reading from KS1 onwards and children are exposed to key skills that promote reading for pleasure within all lessons. All classes enjoy a DEAR time in the afternoon; a time dedicated entirely to enjoying and sharing a story together.

Across all the Key Stages, children and parents are encouraged to read together daily. This may be a mixture of reading their school reading book as well as being read to. In the Foundation Stage, children have the sounds of the week sent home to practise as well as CEWs. In Year 1 and 2, children have spellings sent home that are linked to the phonics sessions/spelling rules that have been taught during the week. Parents are also invited into school to attend phonic and reading workshops to ensure they are approaching reading with a consistent approach to what is being taught in school.

	What does this mean?	How do we do this?	What books do we use?
Word Recognition	Readers are able to decode words and read CEWs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Daily phonics lessons Reading practice through guided reading lessons and individual reading 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fully decodable books that precisely match current phonics attainment
Fluency and prosody	Readers are able to read aloud without sounding out GPCs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Daily phonics lessons Reading practice through guided reading lessons and individual reading Adults model this when reading 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fully decodable books that precisely match current phonics attainment Adults model using a range of books and texts
Vocabulary	Readers are introduced to a range of vocabulary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There will be some opportunities to introduce new vocabulary during phonics lessons and guided reading lessons Richer vocabulary will be found by reading children a range of rich and powerful books, texts and poems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A rich range of books, texts and poems
Comprehension	Readers develop understanding of what they have read and make links with their own lives and the wider world through their reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There will be some opportunities to develop comprehension skills during guided reading lessons More opportunities will be found by reading children a range of rich and powerful books, texts and poems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A rich range of books, texts and poems

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