

St Thomas More Phonics Policy

Overview

- Phonics sessions should be taught discretely every day and practitioners should ensure a high quality, systematic, synthetic approach at a brisk pace.
- The aim is that all children will begin to develop their phonic knowledge and decoding skills throughout key stage one in order to become fluent readers.
- A multi-sensory approach is favoured, which suits all visual, auditory and kinaesthetic learners. Sessions should include opportunities for active involvement and creative activities.
- Children should be taught that phonemes should be blended from left to right in order to read and that words can be segmented into their phonemes for spelling and that this is the reverse of blending. It is essential that this is demonstrated to children throughout the phonics session and reinforced whenever appropriate in other sessions, differentiated group activities and within continuous provision.
- Throughout the 6 phases, all children should be taught the grapheme/phoneme correspondences, high frequency words (including those that do not conform completely to grapheme/phoneme correspondence rules) and how to use their phonetic knowledge to read and write both regular and irregular words.
- Children's progress should be assessed through observations during phonics sessions, through reading and writing and through termly phonics assessments.

Organisation

- Phonics sessions are taught by class teachers in individual classes. Learning outcomes and support are differentiated, based on the needs of children working on different phonics phases. Teaching assistants support key children during the phonics session as well as conducting intensive interventions, if needed, in order to progress and develop understanding. Sessions should last approximately 20 minutes. Groups should be swapped around regularly to ensure that children who need extra support get a range of teacher and teaching assistant input.

Expectations

(Expectations are dependent on the ability of each individual year group. Groups should be assessed and the needs of individual children met through sessions and interventions)

- In Reception, classes will be assessed on phonic knowledge upon entry and will begin phonics at phase 1 or 2. Throughout the year, the children will progress onto phase 3/4 depending on the ability of individual year groups.
- In Year One, classes will follow on from the work done in Reception and aim to cover phase 5 by the end of year.
- In Year Two, classes will follow on from the work done in Year One and aim to recap alternative phonemes/spellings in phase 5 and complete phase 6 by the end of the year.
- Phonics work should be continued throughout Key Stage 2 through guided group work where appropriate.

Planning

- Planning should follow the DfE approved 'Twinkl Phonics' scheme.
- Planning should be split into four sections (Revisit and Review, Teach, Practice, Apply) and include differentiated learning outcomes based on the needs of the children in the class.
- Activities should be as interactive and creative as possible, in order to maintain children's interest and enable all children to be engaged.

Consistent Strategies

- Staff should model segmenting words using phoneme fingers and blend words by either blocking words together (short words i.e. cvc – phase 2 and 3) or stretching words out of the mouth (longer words – phase 4 onwards).
- Phonics grids should be provided in writing areas to provide visual support when writing.
- Each key stage one classroom should have a phonics area and/or interactive display within their continuous provision.
- Staff must maintain the use of correct language during phonic sessions and encourage the children to do the same whilst also translating into child friendly understanding i.e. explaining that a phoneme is a sound.

Phoneme – the individual sounds in a word e.g. **C a t**

Grapheme – a written form of sounds in a word e.g. **Ch i p** (all individual graphemes)

Digraph - Two letters which together make one sound, e.g. **sh, ch, ee, ph, oa**.

Split digraph - Two letters, which work as a pair, split, to represent one sound, e.g. **a-e as in cake, or i-e as in kite**.

Segmentation - hearing the individual phonemes within a word e.g. **crash is c – r – a – sh**.

Blending - merging the individual phonemes together to pronounce a word e.g. **'th-i-n-k is think**.

Phoneme-grapheme correspondence – relationship between sound (phoneme) and written symbol (grapheme).

Assessment

- Children should be assessed through observations during phonic sessions and evidence in reading and writing. They should also be assessed using the phonics tracker.
- Teachers should update their class phonics tracker at the end of every term. Names should be recorded in the appropriate box based on what phase each child is currently working on. Names of children who have moved up a phase should be highlighted. A copy of each class phonics tracker should be handed in to the phonics co-ordinator at the end of each term.
- Children will be tested towards the end of year one as part of the Phonics Screening Check, which will assess their phonetic decoding abilities. As part of the screening check, children will demonstrate their knowledge of grapheme-phoneme correspondences (GPCs), simple word structures and complex word structures, including two syllable words.
- Pupils who have not reached this standard at the end of Year 1, will receive support from school to ensure they can improve their phonic decoding skills. Pupils will then have the opportunity to retake the screening check in Year 2.

Targeting children who are not making progress

If children are not making the expected progress, there are a number of ways this can be addressed.

- Interventions may be put in place to develop phonic knowledge of a small group of children. This should be monitored by the class teacher and feedback given by the adult leading the group, which should be shared to inform planning. Interventions can include focused work on phoneme/grapheme correspondences or developing reading using phonetically decodable books.
- Termly tracking meetings are used to highlight individuals/small groups who are not meeting the learning outcomes within differentiated sessions and next steps can be decided.
- Discussions with the SENCO highlight any concerns with individuals/small groups that may need to be addressed and appropriate strategies which will be put into place.

EAL/AEN

- The needs of all children should be met within phonics sessions and this should be assessed and planned for at the beginning of each year through discussions with previous class teachers and the SENCO. Potential barriers to learning should be removed.
- Specific teaching strategies can be implemented into whole class teaching or small guided group work during phonics sessions to meet the needs of individual pupils.
- Teaching assistants are to support children during sessions and bilingual support can be given.

Phonics in Continuous Provision

- Teachers will aim to develop a phonics based area and/or interactive display in their classrooms. The area will include a focus on phonemes/graphemes and high frequency words from the phase being covered, as well as resources that will support and develop their learning in phonics. This will encourage children to develop their phonics skills and allow an opportunity for staff to work with children in order to meet their needs and address any misconceptions.