Phonics
Policy 2024

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Phonics

Policy Statement 2024

School Vision

Together, we are committed to creating a supportive environment, built on care and respect, in which all children are encouraged to believe in themselves and aspire to be the best they can be.

Our Curriculum Drivers

At Wardley Primary School, our curriculum is built around an agreed set of core values which we feel are important for all of our children. We aim to promote these values throughout our entire curriculum:

Ambitious - We want our curriculum to inspire pupils to be ambitious so that they develop an understanding of possibilities and opportunities available to them. Experiences within the curriculum are designed to broaden their horizons and build up an understanding of choices available to them in life.

Determined – We want Wardley pupils to be the best they can be. We encourage our children to stretch themselves so that they can reach and achieve their goals. They develop perseverance, determination, initiative, independence and problem-solving skills.

Healthy – We want to provide our children with the knowledge and understanding that they need to lead active, healthy lifestyles, both physically and emotionally. We hope that our children will grow up to lead happy and successful lives and will have the skills to keep themselves and others safe from harm in the real world and online.

Inclusive – We want our children to celebrate diversity, value and respect others and strive to support their community. Our curriculum is designed to allow pupils to develop an understanding of the importance of inclusion and what it means to be a positive member of a community.

Policy Aim

Our Phonics policy aims to establish an entitlement for all pupils. It states the school's approach to the subject in order to promote understanding of the Phonics curriculum on offer at Wardley Primary School for all stakeholders. It makes clear the expectations of teaching the subject for all members of staff. Most importantly, the policy (in addition to any linked policies) promotes continuity and coherence across the school.

Intent

The ability to read is within the reach of every child. The most direct route to reading for the vast majority of children is through systematically taught, 'synthetic phonics'. At Wardley Primary School, we believe that the teaching of Phonics plays a vital role in teaching children to read, write and spell. We follow the 'Sounds-Write' phonics scheme, which is a high-quality program that is endorsed by the Department for Education.

Our aim is for the vast majority of children to be confident readers by the end of Key Stage 1. High quality Phonics teaching enables children to decode new words confidently and independently and leads to improved understanding. This will enable the children to read for pleasure and develop their comprehension skills. Sounds-Write phonics also teaches children how to spell words and help them to become confident writers.

Implementation

We adopt a quality first synthetic phonics programme, with a linguistic approach. This provides a comprehensive system with which we teach reading, spelling and writing throughout the primary years. We have carefully selected our phonics programme to meet the needs of our most vulnerable pupils by taking a phonographic approach, which means we start with what all pupils acquire naturally and right from the start: the sounds of their own language. We teach that letters, or combinations of letters, called spellings, are the agreed ways in which we represent these sounds. A key part of our programme is the reduction of the cognitive load, which can lead to particular groups of pupils not making rapid progress. Our focus is on long term learning by: practicing the skills, learning the code and enhancing conceptual understanding. These aspects will be encountered again and again throughout a carefully designed cumulative programme At Wardley Primary School, we teach phonics following the Sounds Write Programme There are four key concepts that we teach to all pupils, these are:

1. Letters are symbols (spellings) that represent sounds.
2. A sound may be spelled by one, two, three or four letters.
3. The same sound can be spelled in more than one way.
4. Many spellings can represent more than one sound.

There are three key skills that we teach to all pupils, these are:

1. Blending: the ability to push sounds together to build words.
2. Segmenting: the ability to pull apart the individual sounds in words.
3. Phoneme manipulation: the ability to insert sounds into and delete sounds out of words. This skill is necessary to test out alternatives for spellings that represent more than one sound.

Sounds Write Lessons
Sounds Write has designed sessions that follow a consistent script and structure. Each session is taught for half an hour. Within that session, teachers select lessons, from either the initial or extended code, to teach. This is dependent on where they are on their Sounds Write journey. During a session, teachers will teach 2 lessons from the Sounds Write scheme with a separate and additional dictation lesson. Teachers have been trained on how to deliver these sessions and ensure the fidelity of Sounds Write. Each lesson has a different structure and focusses on different skills.

Early Years - The Initial Code (Reception)
From the very start of Reception, pupils begin to learn the Initial Code (Units 1-11) using the key skills to read and spell CV, CVC, VCC, CVCC, CCVC, CCVCC, CVCCC and CCCVC words. Lesson structures 1-5, establish a clear structure for the teaching of phonics sessions, prioritising word building whilst also teaching the key skills. Alongside, pupils are taught high frequency words ("words that you find in books") which may use alternative sounds or spellings that pupils will not yet have encountered as part of the programme, but are likely to encounter in their reading (e.g. is and the).

Key Stage One - The Extended Code (Year 1 and Year 2)
This is a continuation of the Initial Code, but moves pupils on to vowel digraphs (Units 12-50). Units are taught in blocks of common sounds, which are later returned to and extended in a systematic way. Lesson structures 6- 10 build upon the lessons taught in the Initial Code, whilst extending skills and concepts. The consistent underlying approach enables pupils to make links and develop their skills and knowledge highly effectively.

Key Stage One and Key Stage 2 - Polysyllabic Words (Year 1 onwards)
Lesson structures 11-15 teach the following key skills:
• Segmenting: separating words into syllables and taking each syllable in turn and segmenting it into sounds
• Blending: blending sounds into syllables and in turn blending syllables into the word.

The key knowledge taught is:
• Some words are made up of more than one syllable
• The spelling of some common syllables, such as prefixes and suffixes
• Some polysyllabic words contain "schwas".

A schwa is an unstressed vowel sound. It is the most common vowel sound spoken in English. It sounds like an undifferentiated blowing out of breath, such as; 'the,' 'about,' 'fountain,' and 'moment'. We begin with teacher led sessions (Lessons 11-12), and the move to pupil led sessions (Lessons 13-14) and eventually onto analysing polysyllabic words (Lesson 15) as the pupils become more proficient.

Impact

Assessment and Recording

On-going formative assessment will be used by the class teacher and teaching assistants to determine how successful the children have been in the three key skills of Sounds-Write which are:

1. Blending
2. Segmenting
3. Phoneme manipulation

Children in Year 1 (and those in Year 2 who didn't pass their Year 1 Phonics Screen) will take practise Phonics Screen tests once a half term to monitor their progress. Assessment results will be shared with the Phonics Leader and analysed and used to determine which children need to join a Phonics intervention group

Phonic Screening Check
In the Summer term, the children in Year 1 undertake a national Phonic Screening Test. This is a short test to confirm whether the children have learnt phonic decoding to the expected standard. The check consists of 20 real words and 20 pseudo-words (nonsense) that children read aloud to the teacher. If children do not pass the test in Year 1 they have another opportunity in Year 2. Parent/carers will receive a letter stating whether their child has met the expected standard. This will go out with the child's end of year school report.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Improvement
The Phonics Leader will monitor and evaluate the planning and teaching of Phonics within the school thorough observations, learning walks, displays, coaching and on-going discussions with class teachers. All teachers and Teaching Assistants delivering Sounds-Write will receive Sounds-Write training to ensure that lesson delivery is of high quality and consistent with the School Phonics Policy.

Resources
There is a LTP in place for the teaching of phonics and a number of resources are used across school to support the teaching of phonics:

- Copy of the Sounds-Write manual and supplementary materials booklet for trained members of staff to deliver the programme using a systematic approach.
- Initial Code, Extended Code and Poly-syllabic Code interactive whiteboard presentations available from the Resource Drive.
- Dandelion Readers, Dandelion Launchers and Sounds-Write reading scheme which matches the units.
- Supplementary materials available as PDF downloads from Sounds-Write website.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following:

- Subject Leadership Policy
- Subject policies for each individual subject
- Feedback on Learning Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- SEND Policy
- Reading Policy

Policy Agreed by Governors: May 2024
Policy will be reviewed: May 2027

Signed: _____ (chair of curriculum committee)