



***'Together we nurture the seeds for success'***

Subject:	Phonics Policy
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## **Safeguarding Statement:**

At Foley Infant Academy, we respect and value all children and are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all our pupils so they can learn, in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. We believe every pupil should be able to participate in all school activities in an enjoyable and safe environment and be protected from harm. This is the responsibility of every adult employed by or invited to deliver services at Foley Infant Academy. We recognise our responsibility to safeguard all who access school and promote the welfare of all our pupils by protecting them from physical, sexual and emotional abuse, neglect and bullying.

## **Intent:**

At Foley Infant Academy, we are committed to the delivery of excellence in the teaching of Phonics. We aim to develop each child so that they are able to read with fluency as well as develop a love of reading that will stay with our children all their lives.

Being able to read is the most important skill children will learn during their early schooling and has far-reaching implications for lifelong confidence and well-being. The independent review of early reading conducted by Jim Rose confirmed that 'high quality phonic work' should be the prime means for teaching children how to read and spell words. The review also highlighted the importance of developing from the earliest stages children's speaking and listening skills, ensuring that beginner readers are ready to get off to a good start in phonic work by the age of five. Such work should be set within a broad and rich language curriculum.

The use of phonics is one of the many skills needed to be able to be a reader and writer. We aim to teach high quality phonics to ensure the children have the best start possible in reading and writing. The learning of phonics is the beginning of children's body of knowledge, skills and understanding that are an essential part of learning to read. In order to read and understand texts children must learn to recognise/decode the words on the page. Good quality phonics teaching allows the child to be secure in the skills of word recognition and decoding which allows children to read fluently. This will result in children being able to read for pleasure and will allow them to move onto developing higher order reading for meaning skills. These phonic skills need to be taught systematically and involve a variety of resources e.g. multi-sensory resources, for all learners.

## **Implementation:**

The school follows the systematic approach laid out in Floppy's Phonics Sounds and Letters programme, which we have adapted to meet the requirements of the new National Curriculum.

Our children are entitled to a Phonics curriculum which enables them to:

- Gain a progressively deeper understanding of the phonetic structure of the English language
- Apply their phonic knowledge and skills to decode unfamiliar words fluently and accurately
- Read rapidly to apply what they have learned across the whole curriculum
- Create fluent readers, confident speakers and willing writers
- Develop a life-long love of reading

In line with the School's commitment to excellence in Phonics, each class in Reception and KS1 will teach phonics as a discrete lesson every day and will include phonics as part of teaching and learning throughout other curriculum lessons on a daily basis. The structure of each lesson at Foley and the journey of Phonics across the week enables all aspects of the blending and segmenting of phonemes/graphemes; lessons are uniquely planned and tailored to meet the needs of all our learners.

The teacher should provide stimulating experiences and opportunities to motivate the child, using a range of resources to engage individuals and groups of children.

### **Approaches to phonics**

At Foley Infant Academy, we believe that phonics teaching should be:

- Systematic
- Discrete
- Interactive
- Practical
- Engaging
- Multi-sensory
- Differentiated

### **Teaching and Learning**

Our children are provided with a variety of opportunities to develop and extend their phonics skills in and across Nursery, Reception and Key Stage 1. It will also be continued into Key Stage 2 at Brindley Heath Academy, where necessary, to support those children who do not yet have the phonic knowledge and skills they need.

Discrete phonics lessons take place daily across Reception and Key Stage 1. They follow the cycle of 'Assess, Teach, Practice, Apply' to ensure that children are consolidating phonic knowledge and skills over time and that they are able to apply them in context. Consequently, wherever possible, links between phonics knowledge and understanding are made to learning in both Reading and Writing. These lessons proceed at pace and incorporate a wide range of practical and interactive learning opportunities to engage the children. These learning opportunities are carefully chosen to ensure that children develop their skills in aural discrimination and phonemic and rhyme awareness, blending and segmenting as well as grapheme-phoneme correspondence.

All teachers have a range of resources to use which are appropriate for the level at which the children are working. They include practical resources such as the alphabetic code poster, sounds frieze, grapheme tiles, magnetic letters and phonic strips etc, which should be used in every lesson to create a point of reference. These resources can be added to so that children are continually engaged with their learning. There should also be age and phase appropriate displays in both Reception and Key Stage 1 classrooms and intervention rooms to support the teaching and application of phonics in Reading and Writing.

### **Non-negotiables for teaching and learning of Phonics in KS1**

At Foley Infant Academy we follow the systematic approach laid out in Floppy's Phonics Sounds and Letters, which we have adapted to meet the requirements of the new National Curriculum. Staff complete weekly plans for phonics which ensure progression and effective, high-quality teaching.

In every discrete phonics lesson:

- In each class there will be a focus phoneme for the week for the whole class to be working on. The sound will be differentiated according to the ability of each child in the class. Planning of this phoneme will show a journey across the week and will develop so that are levels of ability are
- All lessons start with a clear learning objective which is linked to the phase of letters and sounds that the year group are working on.
- The learning objective will be called 'WE ARE LEARNING TODAY...'
- The learning objective will specify if the phoneme is a 'reading' focus (blending) or a writing focus 'segmenting'. This will be covered throughout the week so the children can investigate and explore both aspects in and out of context.
- Success criteria will be shared with the whole class and this will be differentiated according to ability e.g. colour coded so it follows the same proforma as all other lessons.
- Success criteria will be very specific and linked to letters and sounds.
- Success criteria will be called 'WHAT I AM LOOKING FOR', be in child friendly terminology and start with 'I can...'
- New phonemes will be taught using the correct articulation and terminology and all children will use this terminology in their learning. E.g. phonemes, digraphs, trigraphs, split-digraph,
- At the start of every lesson phoneme flashcards are used as a quick warm up to refresh and rehearse previous sounds for each phase. This will be differentiated for each year group. Phoneme flashcards can also be used throughout mini-plenaries and independent learning when children are practicing phonemes.
- Lessons follow the structure outlined below through the teaching of skills and sub-skills
  - **REVISIT & REVIEW:** Revise previously taught sounds and graphemes using flashcards, frieze and Say the Sounds Posters
  - **TEACH:** Introduce new sound and grapheme using flashcards, frieze and the Interactive Resources.
  - **PRACTISE:** Pupils practice new and revised sounds and graphemes with Sounds & Letters Books and Activity Sheets
  - **APPLY:** Pupils extend their core skills with words and sentences using Cumulative Texts and Grapheme Tiles
  - **CONSOLIDATE:** Pupils use the Interactive Resource activities and the end pages of the Sounds & Letters Books to consolidate code knowledge and their skills
  - **PRACTISE READING:** Pupils read Floppy's Phonics fiction and non-fiction books as independently as possible
- Feedback will be given throughout the lesson to individuals to move learning forwards and drive progress. Children will be given extensions to learning opportunities for children to apply phonemes in context.
- Other adults will impact learning throughout the whole phonics lesson by using questions and reinforcement of key strategies taught with individuals.
- Other adults will model and demonstrate new learning with groups/individual children.
- Outcomes to learning will be demonstrated in a variety of ways depending on the strategy/learning opportunity. E.g. multi-sensory resources will support learning in a practical

way but there will also be opportunities to rehearse and explore the writing of key phonemes and words.

- The teacher/TA will use higher order questions when asking the children to explain strategies used and ways to read and spell a new word.

### The alphabetic code

All readers should be taught four skills:

- grapheme–phoneme correspondences (that is, the alphabetic code) in a clearly defined, incremental sequence
- to synthesise (blend) phonemes (sounds) in order all through a word to read it
- to segment words into their constituent phonemes for spelling
- that blending and segmenting are reversible processes

English represents the sounds of the language and uses an alphabet to do this. It is generally accepted that English has 44 sounds (although this number varies slightly, depending on regional accents).

The way the 26 letters of the alphabet are used in English (singly or in combination) to represent the 44 sounds is referred to as the alphabetic code. In the alphabetic code in English:

- A single phoneme can be represented (spelt) in different ways, using one, two, three or four letters. For example, the sound /aw/ can be represented as 'or', 'saw', 'haul', 'lore', 'fraught' and 'sought'
- One grapheme (that is, a letter or combination of letters) can represent different sounds. For example, the digraph (two letters) 'ow' sounds different in 'crowd' and in 'low'; the four letters combined in 'ough' are pronounced differently in 'through', 'rough' and 'bough'; the letter 'c' represents a /s/ sound at the beginning of 'circus' and a /k/ sound in the middle, and so on

The lack of a one-to-one correspondence between a sound and a letter in English is frequently used as an argument against using phonics in teaching reading (and spelling). Therefore, it is important to upskill all the children and provide them with opportunities to practice the reading and spelling of these words. The sounds are not taught in alphabetical order, but in order of usefulness, so that children can start to read and spell simple words as swiftly as possible. There are also phonically irregular words, which we refer to as 'common exception words' such as 'the', 'some' or 'once' that are taught throughout the different phrases.

A very common sequence begins by teaching children how to represent each of the following six sounds by a letter (as below):

Sound	Letter
/s/	s
/a/	a
/t/	t
/i/	i
/p/	p

/n/	n
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If these sounds are learnt securely and the children are *also* taught the skill of blending sounds together to read whole words, they can then read (and spell, by segmenting) simple vowel-consonant (VC) words such as 'it', 'in', 'is' and 'at' and consonant-vowel-consonant (CVC) words such as 'sat', 'pin', 'nip', 'net', 'tip'.

### **The skills of blending and segmenting**

Blending and segmenting are, 'reversible processes': that is, if you can blend the sounds together to read a word, you should also be able to identify and break down (segment) the individual sounds in a word you hear to spell it. To spell the word, you need to represent each sound you hear by a letter – or more than one letter.

The skill of blending sounds together needs to be taught directly. Children may be able to say the sound a letter 'makes' when shown the letter (for instance, on a flashcard), but this does not necessarily mean that they can blend individual sounds together to make a whole word. (Letters do not actually 'make' sounds: they are just a way of representing that sound in writing.) In segmenting to spell a word, the teacher or the child is listening to a whole word, identifying the individual sounds (not letters) that make up the word choosing a letter or more than one letter to represent each individual sound.

### **Correct articulation**

Correct articulation is vital in helping children to learn to blend sounds together. We make sure that the sound produced (each individual phoneme) is as precise and accurate as possible and that no additional sounds are added. For instance, the sound /m/ that starts 'mother' or is embedded in 'impress' needs to sound /mmm/ and not /muh/. The clearer the sound, the easier it is for a child to blend together (synthesise) the individual sounds to read a word because there are no unnecessary sounds getting in the way.

### **Common exception words**

Children will be taught to read words that are not completely phonically regular. Foley Infant Academy adapts the Floppy's Phonics language and we refer to them as 'tricky words'. Children need to be taught to read these words on sight, so that they do not have to spend time puzzling them out. Teachers help children to practice their speedy recall of tricky words. In terms of spelling, children need to remember the tricky parts of a word, that is, the letters that do not match the usual grapheme-phoneme correspondences they have learnt. For example, the word 'said' is not phonically regular in that the sound /e/ in the middle of the word is normally written 'e' as in 'bed' (or sometimes 'ea' as in 'bread', 'dread' or 'read' – past tense) and not 'ai' as in 'paid'. However, the sounds at the beginning and end of 'said' are represented with 's' and 'd', just as one might expect; it is only the middle of the word that is tricky.

### **Multi-sensory approaches**

Multi-sensory learning opportunities featured strongly in high quality phonic work and often encompassed, variously, simultaneous visual, auditory and kinesthetic activities involving, for example, physical movement to copy letters shapes and sound, and manipulate magnetic or other solid letters to build words. Sometimes, mnemonics, such as a picture of a sun or an apple in the shapes of 's' and 'a', were used to help children memorise letters.

### **Intervention**

Children who still need extra support to develop their phonic knowledge across the EYFS, Key Stage 1 and 2 are identified and targeted for intervention. There are a range of intervention strategies which the school uses and the most appropriate one is selected once a child's needs have been assessed.

### **Assessment**

Assessment is regarded as an integral part of teaching and learning and is a continuous process. We strive to make our assessment purposeful, allowing us to match the correct level of work to the needs of the pupils, thus benefiting the pupils and ensuring progress. It is the class teacher's responsibility to keep track of the progress made by all children in their class, regardless of their phonic ability. Each individual child has their own phonics tracker, which is updated termly and continues to be updated as the child moves through school.

### **Assessment for Learning**

We continually assess our pupils and recording their progress. Information for assessment is gathered in various ways: by talking to children, asking questions, observing their work, setting specific tasks. Teachers use this assessment information to plan further work and set new targets.

### **Assessment of Learning**

The attainment and progress of children in phonics is assessed regularly across the year, both discretely at the end of each phase and through Reading and Writing assessments. At the end of Year 1, children participate in the phonics screening check which assesses their knowledge of grapheme-phoneme correspondence and their skills in blending. This information is submitted to the LA. Those children who do not succeed in the phonics screening check are highlighted for further intervention and targeted support before completing the screening check again at the end of Year 2. For children who do not succeed a second time, provision is made for them to receive intervention and targeted support in Key Stage 2 at Brindley Heath Academy. Children need to be taught the alphabetic code – the relationship between sounds and letters in English – and the screening check is designed to assess how much of it they know. The non-words in the check are useful for identifying children who may **know** the alphabetic code (or at least parts of it) but are struggling with the **skills** of blending sounds together to make whole words. There may also be children who are finding it difficult to learn to read whose problems are not related to blending or knowing the alphabetic code. The screening check still acts as an important diagnostic tool in the first instance. The check is intended as a test of phonic decoding – not as a wider test of reading – to assess whether children have learnt key knowledge and skills by the end of Year 1. Comprehension is a separate dimension and is tested at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2.

### **Feedback**

Children are provided with constructive and timely feedback in lessons. Teachers provide parents with feedback on their child's progress and achievement at parent's evening and through the end of year report. Assessment information is also passed onto the next teacher as part of transition between year groups and phases.

## **Impact:**

Our curriculum design will lead to outstanding progress for all pupils, regardless of their starting points, over time. Planned learning will progressively build on prior knowledge and understanding and support children in producing outcomes of the highest quality. Teaching and learning is adapted to cater for the needs of all pupils; providing support for children with special educational needs and enrichment and challenge for more able children.

### **End of EYFS**

By the end of EYFS children should be able to:

- Read and understand simple sentences
- Use phonic knowledge to decode common words and read them aloud accurately
- Confidently read by sight the Stage 2 and 3 common exception words
- Use phonic knowledge to write words in a way which matches how the sounds are said
- Write some irregular common words

### **End of Year 1**

By the end of Year 1 children should be able to:

- Apply phonic knowledge and skill as the prime approach to reading unfamiliar words that are not completely decodable;
- Read many frequently encountered words automatically;
- Read phonically decodable three-syllable words;
- Read a range of age-appropriate texts fluently;
- Demonstrate understanding of age-appropriate texts
- read decodable words that end –s, –es, -ing, -ed, -er, -est
- Say the correct sound to grapheme for all the 40+ phonemes up to Stage 5.

### **End of Year 2**

By the end of Year 2 children should be able to:

- Read accurately most words of two or more syllables
- Read most words containing common suffixes
- Read and spell most common exception words for year 2
- Read words accurately and fluently without overt sounding and blending
- Sound out most unfamiliar words accurately, without hesitation
- Segment spoken words into phonemes and represent these by graphemes

### **Inclusion**

All children have equal access to the curriculum as expressed in our Equal Opportunities Policy. We will ensure that phonics is accessible to pupils by:

- Setting suitable learning objectives and differentiated success criteria
- Responding to the variety of learning styles
- Overcoming potential barriers of individuals and groups



This is monitored by analysing pupil performance throughout the school to ensure that there is no disparity between groups.

In phonics, staff will develop differentiated weekly plans to ensure pupils who are identified as gifted in reading and achieving exceptionally high levels of achievement are catered for.

**Review:**

This policy will be reviewed **every 2 years** by subject leads, SLT and Governors.

The Governors may however review the policy earlier than this if Government introduce new regulations or if the Governing Body receive recommendations about how the policy may be improved.