



## **HALLAM FIELDS JUNIOR SCHOOL**

### **PHONICS POLICY 2021**

(Phonics is the skills of segmenting and blending and a knowledge of the alphabetical code.)

*The Rose Report stated that “best practice for beginner readers provides them with a rich curriculum that fosters all four interdependent strands of language: speaking, listening, reading and writing. The indications are that far more attention needs to be given, right from the start, to promoting speaking and listening skills to make sure that children build a good stock of words, learn to listen attentively and speak clearly and confidently. Speaking and listening, together with reading and writing, are prime communication skills that are central to children's intellectual, social and emotional development. All these skills are drawn upon and promoted by high quality, systematic phonic work.”*

#### **OUR AIM –To raise spelling and reading standards across school.**

As stated in our literacy policy, our aim is to ensure that each child reaches their potential as an independent speaker, listener, reader and writer. However, in order to reach that potential some children still require discrete phonics teaching when they reach Junior School. By highlighting the importance of phonics in every year group, our aim is to raise the reading and spelling standards across the school.

#### **THE IMPLEMENTATION OF OUR AIMS**

The most recent phonics training was delivered across the school in the Spring and Autumn Term of 2021 to all staff. Teachers understand the nature of the English alphabetic code. Teachers also understand the principles underpinning a programme of synthetic phonics. The school has adopted a systematic synthetic phonics (SSP) programme called Sound Discovery. Direct teaching of phonics takes place regularly for all children who still require it. Interactive lessons ensure all children participate fully and quality first teaching is our aim. Children receiving phonics instruction are given a ‘decodable’ reading book which provides practice of the phonics sounds learnt (in addition these children are also given a book to ‘share and love’ to take home too).

#### **ASSESSMENT**

All children are initially assessed as they enter year three during their first few weeks in school. Using our own assessments, any data from KS1 teachers and the Sound Discovery Placement Tests, we are able to analyse any gaps in children’s understanding of phonics at different phases. This then

accurately pinpoints individual pupil needs and informs planning and the start point on the Sound Discovery Programme.

The children are then tracked during their time at Junior School to ensure needs are met and assessments continue throughout each phonic step. Older pupils who need to catch up with reading and those pupils with poor decoding skills, are therefore identified as soon as possible and sufficient support put in place to accelerate progress.

### **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

Once the personalised learning needs for phonics are identified, teachers should be able to then plan for whole class, small group or 1:1 work, depending on the individuals and teaching assistants available. Teaching is well paced and discreetly matched in order to meet needs in a systematic, time limited and multi-sensory way. For plugging gaps at our Junior School, children take part in at least three 20 minute sessions a week. These are separate catch up lessons and not the main bulk of literacy teaching. This is to ensure that children get the exact phonics input required in order to fully access the reading and writing expectations for their year group.

After assessments are completed, teachers can plan and follow the Sound Discovery Steps at the exact phoneme needed and move through the programme from that point. Further Comprehension, Precision Monitoring and Speedreads are also used to provide good opportunities for independent writing activities that build on phonics understanding. Phonics does not remain a stand alone lesson only and is encouraged across the curriculum and supported through 'decodable' books which are sent home with the children and read in school to support the practice of the phonics learned.

Phonics sessions should follow the same pattern:

- Review any letter/sound matches already taught.
- Teach new letter sound match.
- Teach the phonological skill of blending for reading.
- Teach the phonological skill of segmenting for spelling.
- Make clear the reversibility of that code.
- Make clear that spoken words can be written down.
- Make clear that what is written down can be read back.

### **SPEAKING AND LISTENING**

In order to blend and segment well, children will be encouraged to develop good speaking and listening skills, which are initially modelled by the teachers and teaching assistants. Children need to be reminded of all the phonics terminology they used in KS1 and therefore teaching staff used part of the training, revisiting phonic vocabulary and making sure that staff are all confident using it.

### **READING**

The two dimensions to reading are word recognition and language comprehension. Beginner readers are taught grapheme-phoneme correspondences in a clear sequence. They are also taught to apply the skills of blending and segmenting when reading and understand how they are reversible.

## **WRITING**

Children should improve their spellings when writing independently by building on clear phoneme-grapheme work. Any problems with spellings may make it possible to quickly identify potential problem areas and gaps in phonics by using the assessment sheets. Where possible, reading and spelling are taught alongside one another, so that pupils understand that they can read back words they have spelt.

## **MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

The phonics trackers are currently in place for each year group, these support and monitor individual progress. The effects of the phonic input will be evaluated at the end of 2021/22 school year to assess the impact of the new phonics policy.

## **SPECIAL PROVISION**

Children with SEN have planned programmes within their My SEND Learning Programme to cater for any phonics difficulties they may have. The children are included in mainstream teaching but may receive one-to-one teaching from assistants within the school or with outside agencies. New arrivals and pupils who are learning English as an additional language, plus any pupil receiving extra support are also profiled to identify any potential special educational needs or disability (if not already identified). Children are also monitored for any speech, communication and language needs as this can impact on phonics teaching and learning. Since Lockdown, children are now also monitored for their attendance, time in school, and previous teaching and learning experiences in order to plug any potential phonic gaps.

## **REVIEW**

This policy is currently in line with other school policies. The aim is to review and evaluate the policy biannually in consultation with staff and governors.

**S COWLEY**

**Approved at Full Governing Body Meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> January 2022**

**Chair of Governors**

**Signed .....** **Date .....**