

## **Phonics and early reading at Plymouth Grove**

### **Intent**

We recognise that every step in word reading development requires deep, and secure phonologic integration. Academic research informs our intent to deliver the most effective pedagogical approaches ensuring all pupils succeed in learning the English phonic code, and those who struggle are identified and supported to make sustained progress. Learning takes place within a language rich environment where pupils are exposed to background knowledge, with vocabulary and syntax explicitly taught through a carefully sequenced curriculum.

### **All pupils:**

- To become primed to learn to read and write through a comprehensive and systematic phonetic approach to early reading and writing.
- To learn the phonic code and the ability to blend and segment through consistent, cumulative teaching and learning, underpinned by a robust monitoring system.
- To develop a sight vocabulary, moving from letter-sound knowledge to phonic decoding, and ultimately to orthographic mapping at which point the reading process demonstrates increasing automaticity.
- To develop fluency, (*accuracy, automaticity, prosody*), and deepen their understanding and ability to communicate what has been read, (*vocabulary acquisition, knowledge of grammar, comprehension*).

### **Implementation**

#### **Reading and writing at Plymouth Grove:**

The Plymouth Grove Reading and Writing Progression documents state the objectives and KPIs teachers refer to when planning the learning journey for children who are beginning the reading and writing process. Both documents complement the Statutory Framework for the EYFS and exemplify the ELGs and small steps in learning necessary to achieve automaticity in key skills.

#### **Phonic scheme:**

The accredited phonics programme adopted at Plymouth Grove is Twinkl. After careful consideration we settled on this scheme because:

- The font links directly to our handwriting scheme.
- It follows the order of Letters and Sounds which matches our approach to the introduction of new graphemes and 'tricky' words.
- Lesson delivery follows a similar format to current practice.
- Twinkl Rhino Readers – reading books match the order of Letters and Sounds and complement our current decodable reading stock.
- Twinkl training videos mirror current practice and are available to all staff to ensure consistency in knowledge.
- There is an opportunity to develop a digital offer for parents through Twinkl Go.

The Twinkl scheme is being implemented in a graduated form starting in Nursery and Reception and into KS1, this is to ensure our rigorous approach to closing gaps in learning, as a result of the pandemic, remains on-track.

### **The school learning environment:**

- Classroom teaching walls and pupil's individual alphabet mats are consistent in their use of Twinkl font and images, (from Nursery to Y2 and into KS2).
- Handwritten displays reflect the adopted font and methodology for decoding.
- The EYFS/KS1 library is stocked with fully decodable books for those children working within the phonic phases, (predominantly from the PhonicBooks scheme). Books are organised in-line with the phonic phases of Letters and Sounds and the library is ready to integrate Twinkl Rhino Readers with Phase 2 books in the first instance.
- The EYFS/KS1 library is also stocked with graduated 'free-readers' leading to books fully compatible with Accelerated Reader.
- EYFS/KS1 guided reading book packs are organised numerically, in-line with the phonic phases of Letters and Sounds.
- The LKS2 phonics library is stocked with fully decodable books for those children working within the phonic phases, (Moon Dogs, Magic Belt and Totem from the PhonicBooks scheme, catering for the interests of mature readers).
- CAPER - Children and Parents Enjoy Reading - story books are taken home weekly from Nursery to Y3 for families to share alongside 2 phonetically decodable reading books.

### **How do we teach phonics?**

- Phonics lessons follow the format: Review, Teach, Practise, Apply.
- In EYFS the implementation of the Twinkl scheme has led to a greater emphasis being placed on the teaching and learning of phonics with whole class quality first teaching sessions followed by focused, differentiated activities taking place four mornings per week. These sessions, together with carefully planned independent activities during continuous provision, provide teachers with the opportunity to continually assess and monitor the progress of all children on a daily basis.
- In KS1, Rosenshine's principles of instruction underpin our approach to teaching, with new material presented in small steps along with clear and detailed instruction. Active practice forms a large part of the lesson with teachers using questioning to check for understanding. Teachers think aloud and model steps and strategies using the correct vocabulary. They expect high engagement from all pupils, and for learners to explain their thinking to one another and to the whole class. Feedback within a lesson is prompt and corrections or misunderstandings are addressed to ensure a high success rate is achieved.
- Throughout KS1, priority is placed on pupils consolidating their phonic skills within foundation subjects through carefully planned reading and writing activities. Teacher modelling of phonic reading and writing strategies occur within all lessons.

### **How do we organise the teaching of phonics and what format do we use?**

#### **Nursery**

Preparing for phonics:

- Planning: Key worker group activities. Practical resources. 4 sessions x 15 mins per day
- Mnemonic introduction to letters of the alphabet
- Emphasis on spoken language and vocabulary acquisition
- Speech sounds including Nuffield activities

Teaching phonics:

- Planning: SMART Notebook interactive and PowerPoint slides. 4 sessions x 15 mins per day
- Pupils are taught in ability groups within the year group
- Focused activities take place in ability groups and in continuous provision

## **Reception**

Teaching phonics:

- Planning: SMART Notebook interactive and PowerPoint slides. 5 sessions x 20 mins per day
- Pupils are taught in 2 groups across the year
- Focused activities take place in ability groups and in continuous provision

## **KS1**

Teaching phonics:

- Planning: SMART Notebook interactive. 5 sessions x 35 mins per day
- Pupils are taught in 4 groups across the Key Stage
- Focused activities take place in English and guided reading

## **KS2**

Teaching phonics:

- Planning: PDF SMART Notebook. 4 sessions x 30 mins per week for those pupils in Y3 who did not pass the phonics screening test. Reading and writing outcomes are carefully monitored for evidence of application.
- Identified pupils undertake intervention within KS2 year groups following individual assessment.

## **How do we assess phonics and early reading?**

Phonic understanding is assessed using the Plymouth Grove Phonic Reading Assessment document. It follows the order in which graphemes and tricky words are taught whilst identifying common difficulties experienced by our learners.

These difficulties include:

- Hearing and pronouncing short vowel sounds and linking them to the correct grapheme. (Sounds which are often unfamiliar in pupils' home language).
- Reading VC words with capitalization and confusion as to the use of the personal pronoun 'I'.
- Issues with tracking text and establishing left to right directionality.
- Confusion when reading letters of a similar shape - 'b', 'd', 'p'.
- Retaining whole words once a caption is decoded.
- Fluency at the earliest stages of reading captions in Phase 2.
- Fluency throughout each phonic stage 3-5 and the ability to recognise new di/trigraphs in words and progress towards automaticity.

Early reading skills and behaviours are identified using the Plymouth Grove Progression in Reading document and the Progression in Writing document.

- Both documents combine to provide detailed insight into pupils' emerging literacy skills and developing competency in reading and writing. They provide teachers with wider information in order to plan for next steps in learning.
- KS2 pupils undertake further assessment using the Star Reader programme.

### **KS1 spelling tests**

- Spelling tests are undertaken every week in KS1 linked to pupil's phonic groups and ability. Pupils practise their spellings by segmenting new words containing taught graphemes.
- The spelling test also includes dictated sentences at the appropriate phonic phase to ensure transcription skills are cemented and sentence level objectives secured.
- Being able to form letters automatically reduces cognitive load and enables pupils to focus their working memory on transcription skills. Pupils practise letter formation at home every week in order to secure accurate formation. They are supported via a Loom video which models where to start and finish writing letters using a line guide to understand size, orientation and the relationship of one letter to another.

### **Key assessment points:**

The Progression in Planning Map lists the programmes we teach at Plymouth Grove. All programmes are consistent in format and use of Twinkl font and images. They differ in pitch and pace in order to cater for the learning needs of different groups of pupils - SEN, INA, EAL and GD pupils. Expectations are clearly stated at specified points within, and at the end point of each programme.

The programmes, and assessment end points are as follows:

#### **EYFS**

- Nursery - TPhase 1 and 2 - week 7
- Reception - TPhase 2 - week 7
- Reception - TPhase 3 (lower) - weeks 13
- Reception - TPhase 3 (higher) - week 13
- Reception - TPhase 4 - week 5

#### **KS1**

- Year 1 - TPhase 2 - week 10
- Year 1 - TPhase 2,3,4 - week 15
- Year 1 - TPhase 5 - week 15 (followed by preparation for phonics screening)
- Year 2 - SPAG - Week 16 - Ongoing assessment - Teacher Assessment Framework
- Year 2 - TPhase 5,6 Week 32 - Ongoing assessment - Teacher Assessment Framework

## **KS2**

- Year 3 - Accessing Y1 and Y2 programmes. Individual phonic assessments and Star Reader test. (Phonics screening conducted during the summer term alongside KS1 pupils).
- KS2 - Individual phonic assessments - focus on securing the phonic code during intervention.

### **How do we respond to assessment information including ongoing Afl to group and monitor pupils?**

Pupils are tracked from Nursery to the end of KS1 using two systems. The systems are updated half-termly by teaching staff and enable a fluid response to pupils' emerging skills and next steps for learning.

1. Phonic Group tracking grids - determine which teaching group pupils access, (the phonic phase, pitch and pace). Y1 and Y2 pupils are grouped across the key stage. Reception pupils are grouped within their cohort, as are Nursery.  
Phonic Group tracking in Nursery - exemplifies pupils' emerging skills in preparation to begin the reading process. It dovetails into the Reading Book Tracker.
2. EYFS/KS1 Reading Book Tracker - monitors which books pupils are reading to consolidate graphemes and develop fluency and how pupils are progressing through the scheme. Tracking runs from Nursery to Y2 and directly mirrors the organisation of reading books in the EYFS/KS1 library.

Tracking, combined with assessments, are used in Pupil Progress meetings to finely-tune intervention groups and identify further actions such as referrals and parent's meetings.

### **How do we support parents and carers of early readers to engage with their child's reading development?**

- Face-to-face meetings with all parents and carers to share information about each year group's expectations take place at the beginning of the year. The importance of establishing a strong reading habit is emphasised. Follow up parent mornings providing greater detail as to how best to support the reading process, elaborating on the phonics teaching in school.
- Seesaw - messages to parents and carers guide the focus for home-school learning and include Loom videos to assist understanding.
- The use of Parent Reading Cards to:
  1. Empower parents and carers to forge learning links between school and home.
  2. Empower pupils through their growing knowledge of Article 28 - A right to an education - Teachers actively support pupils to develop agency in directing and monitoring their learning.
  3. Enable pupil voice from the very beginning of their school experience, (use of pictorial support).
- Pupils monitor their own reading each day, completing a bookmark to indicate the number of times they have read. The bookmark also provides an opportunity for parents and teachers to share comments.
- Our school prioritises building effective reading and learning habits right from the start of Nursery using Parent Reading Cards alongside CAPER books.

## **Training**

All staff have undertaken phonics training including how to assess children using the Plymouth Grove Phonic Reading Assessment.

In EYFS and KS1, staff undertake phonics reviews as part of ongoing CPD and are kept up to date through team-teaching and observing one another.

Teachers have undertaken research case studies with pupils to enhance their understanding of the science behind reading instruction and the barriers learners face. Twinkl training videos mirror current practice and provide a new opportunity for all staff to access, thereby ensuring consistency in knowledge.

## **Impact**

Data:

- Those children who undertake the full Plymouth Grove teaching programme achieve well by the end of KS1, broadly in-line with National Expectations.
- Robust assessment, tracking and monitoring enable prompt identification of pupils who are falling behind. Teachers act on information addressing gaps and barriers to learning.

Pupils' application of phonics in reading and writing:

- Evidence of pupils making accelerated progressing through the phonic phases is exemplified in independent writing samples, (Big Write).
- Book scrutinies indicate secure application across foundation subjects.
- Pupils at each stage of their phonic development display confidence as 'readers' and 'writers'. They show respect for one another's achievements in the process of becoming skilled at applying the phonic code.
- Pupils demonstrate perseverance and willingness to practise reading and transcription skills, aiming for automaticity. They are aware of themselves as learners and demonstrate independence in the use of resources to support learning. (Early metacognitive strategies).
- Enthusiasm for reading is evident during shared reading activities and when pupils demonstrate their own reading abilities to peers and adults.
- Achievement in reading and writing is celebrated in assemblies, motivating others through making the behaviours and skills necessary for learning explicit.

Teaching and learning:

- Teachers continue to develop and deepen their expertise in teaching within all phonic phases and are able to respond to the full range of ability within their classes, effectively scaffolding the small steps necessary to make accelerated progress.
- Consistency in approaches to teaching within and across key stages, results in a common shared language of learning, enabling pupils to internalise and consolidate skills within a culture of respect for individual starting points and proficiency in English.