



DUDLEY INFANT ACADEMY

Phonics Policy

<i>Approved by staff</i>	<i>October 2021</i>
<i>Review date</i>	<i>October 2022</i>

Aims

- To sustain the high quality teaching of phonics so that all staff are experts in teaching systematic, synthetic phonics and understand their role in developing children as readers.
- To transfer phonic skills across the curriculum.
- Purposeful monitoring takes place across the academy to ensure that there is a rigorous and sequential approach to the teaching of phonics.
- Reading books connect closely to the phonics knowledge pupils are taught when they are learning to read.

The Curriculum

Words are made up from small units of sound called phonemes. Phonics teaches children to be able to listen carefully and identify the phonemes that make up each word. This helps children to learn to read words and to spell words.

In some languages learning phonics is easy because each phoneme has just one grapheme to represent it. The English language is a bit more complicated than this. This is largely because England has been invaded so many times throughout its history. Each set of invaders brought new words and new sounds with them. As a result, English only has around 44 phonemes but there are around 120 graphemes or ways of writing down those 44 phonemes. Obviously, we only have 26 letters in the alphabet so some graphemes are made up from more than one letter.

ch th oo ay (these are all digraphs - graphemes with two letters) There are other graphemes that are trigraphs (made up of 3 letters) and even a few made from 4 letters.

Another slightly sticky problem is that some graphemes can represent more than one phoneme. For example **ch** makes very different sounds in these three words: chip, school, chef.

At Dudley Infant Academy the “Letters and Sounds” programme is taught throughout EYFS, Year 1 and Year 2. Children who need a little extra support are supported through structured interventions and the use of Read Write Inc. mnemonics. Letters and Sounds is also supported by a range of games and resources from other schemes and internet sites such as Phonics Play. In addition to Letters and Sounds children in Years 1 and 2 are also introduced to the Liverpool Spelling Toolkit to further embed the spelling patterns children are expected to learn as part of the National Curriculum. Please see the separate spelling policy. Phonics is clearly linked with early reading, with children taking home phonetically decodable books that match their needs and abilities

Letters and Sounds is a phonics resource published by the DfE. It aims to build children's speaking and listening skills in their own right as well as to prepare children for learning to read by developing their phonic knowledge and skills. The programme is organised into six structured phases building on acquired phonic knowledge and skills learnt at each phase.

Phase	Phonic Knowledge and Skills
Phase 1 (Nursery and Reception)	Activities are divided into seven aspects, including environmental sounds, instrumental sounds, body sounds, rhythm and rhyme, alliteration, voice sounds and finally oral blending and segmenting.

Phase 2 (Reception) up to 6 weeks	Learning 19 letters of the alphabet and one sound for each. Blending sounds together to make words. Segmenting words into their separate sounds. Beginning to read simple captions.
Phase 3 (Reception) up to 12 weeks	The remaining 7 letters of the alphabet, one sound for each. Graphemes such as ch, oo, th representing the remaining phonemes not covered by single letters. Reading captions, sentences and questions. On completion of this phase, children will have learnt the "simple code", i.e. one grapheme for each phoneme in the English language.
Phase 4 (Reception) 4 to 6 weeks	No new graphemes taught. Phoneme correspondences are taught in this phase. Children learn to blend and segment longer words with adjacent consonants, e.g. swim, clap, jump.
Phase 5 (Throughout Year 1. Recapped in Year 2)	Now we move on to the "complex code". Children learn more graphemes for the phonemes which they already know, plus different ways of pronouncing the graphemes they already know.
Phase 6 (Throughout Year 2)	Working on spelling, including prefixes and suffixes, doubling and dropping letters etc.

Organisation and Planning

Phonics or Spelling is taught daily across EYFS and KS1 for approximately 25 minutes. Sessions are delivered in a variety of ways to include whole class, small group and individual teaching tailored to the children's needs.

Both the Class Teachers and Teaching Assistants plan and deliver phonics sessions using Phonics Play to support the planning process and Phonics Tracker to provide the starting points. Sessions for phonics and spelling follow the same planning format: Review, Teach, Practise and Apply, although by Phase 6 these may not all be present in every lesson, to allow time to consolidate tricky skills. Sessions are quick moving, balance writing with games and practical activities and include kinaesthetic opportunities wherever possible.

One important aspect of Letters and Sounds is the teaching of pseudo (nonsense) words. It is vital to incorporate pseudo words as they enable the children to use their phonics just through decoding skills and ensure that they are reading for the Year 1 phonics screening. Pseudo words are taught as an integral part of phonic sessions.

As well as daily phonic teaching, there are opportunities for children to apply their phonic knowledge and skills across the curriculum; especially in shared and guided reading. Every opportunity is taken to ensure the children use their phonics knowledge in every aspect of their learning.

Assessment and Reporting

At Dudley Infant Academy children are assessed using Phonics Tracker in line with the academy's Assessment timetable. This assessment tool enables Teachers and Teaching Assistants to identify the gaps in children's learning and ensure that the activities planned are well matched to their phonics needs and therefore make progress. Children identified as 'stuck' or behind are provided with additional phonics and reading based interventions. See academy SEN policy.

Year 1 Phonics Screening

The phonics screening check is a statutory assessment for all children in Year 1 (first introduced in 2012). It is designed to confirm whether individual children have learnt phonic decoding to an appropriate standard.

Children who do not achieve the appropriate threshold at the end of Year 1 will receive support from the school to improve their phonic decoding skills. These children then retake the phonics screening check towards the end of Year 2.

The phonics screening check comprises a list of 40 words that children read one-to-one with a teacher. The list is a combination of both real and pseudo words. As pseudo words are new to all children, they do not favour children with a good vocabulary knowledge or large visual memory of words which is why it is imperative that they feature in the day to day phonics teaching.

The pseudo words will be shown to children alongside pictures of imaginary creatures to show the child that it is a pseudo word and not a word which they will already know.

Teachers will report to parents whether or not their child met the required standard to ensure they are aware of their child's progress in developing phonics skills.

Covid -19 impact

Phonics Screen

Cancellation of the phonics screening check in June 2020 means incoming year 2 pupils did not take the check in year 1. In the 2020/21 academic year only, it is statutory for schools to administer a past version of the phonics screening check to year 2 pupils during the second half of the 2020 autumn term and return results to the LA. Year 2 pupils who meet the expected standard in phonics in the autumn check will not be required to complete any further statutory assessments in phonics. Year 2 pupils who do not meet the expected standard in the autumn check will be expected to take the statutory check in June 2021, alongside year 1 pupils.

Teaching and Learning

At the current time, children will remain in their classrooms and lessons will be delivered by their class teacher to maintain the integrity of each bubble. Class teachers will utilise Phonics Tracker and target teaching to address the greatest gaps within the class.

Appendix A
Phonics Glossary-

- **blend** (vb) — to draw individual sounds together to pronounce a word, e.g. s-n-a-p, blended together, reads snap
- **cluster** — two (or three) letters making two (or three) sounds, e.g. the first three letters of 'straight' are a consonant cluster
- **trigraph** — a phoneme which consists of three letters, e.g. air, ear, ure, igh, tch,
- **digraph** — two letters making one sound, e.g. sh, ch, th, ph.
- **vowel digraph** — two letters which, together, make one vowel sound, e.g. ai, oo, ow
- **split digraph** — two letters, split, making one sound, e.g. a-e as in make or i-e in site
- **grapheme** — a letter or a group of letters representing one sound, e.g. sh, ch, igh, ough (as in 'though')
- **grapheme-phoneme correspondence (GPC)** — the relationship between sounds and the letters which represent those sounds; also known as 'letter-sound correspondences'
- **mnemonic** — a device for memorising and recalling something, such as a snake shaped like the letter 'S'
- **phoneme** — the smallest single identifiable sound, e.g. the letters 'sh' represent just one sound, but 'sp' represents two (/s/ and /p/)
- **segment** (vb) — to split up a word into its individual phonemes in order to spell it, e.g. the word 'cat' has three phonemes: /c/, /a/, /t/
- **VC, CVC, CCVC** — the abbreviations for vowel-consonant, consonant-vowel-consonant, consonant-consonant-vowel-consonant, which are used to describe the order of letters in words, e.g. am, ham, slam.