

Phonics Policy

Approved: April 2023

Review date: April 2024

Intent

At The Baird Primary Academy, we place an emphasis on the teaching of reading to ensure all pupils are able to read fluently and accurately. We use the DfE approved scheme, Sounds Write, to achieve this.

We believe that all pupils should leave primary school as fluent readers, who have a love of reading, and are able to comprehend a range of texts – we believe that this increases the accessibility of the wider curriculum for pupils.

To achieve this, we ensure that we follow a DfE approved scheme where;

- There is a sharp focus on ensuring that younger pupils gain the phonics knowledge and language comprehension necessary to read and spell
- Reading is prioritised to allow pupils to access the full curriculum offer
- A rigorous, sequential approach to the reading curriculum develops pupils' fluency, confidence and enjoyment in reading
- At all stages, reading attainment is assessed and gaps are addressed quickly and effectively for all pupils
- At the early stages of learning to read, reading materials are closely matched to the learners' phonics knowledge.

Phonics is taught systematically and discretely as our initial approach for the teaching of early reading so that pupils have the skills they need to decipher new words and read fluently and confidently by the end of KS1. Alongside phonics, pupils engage in a broad and rich language and literacy curriculum to build vocabulary, narrative and storytelling skills to enable pupils to be able to read with understanding and enjoyment as they progress through KS1.

Implementation

Throughout the Academy, 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 The Baird Primary Academy, 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:

dog	street	night	dough
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3. The same sound can be spelled in more than one way:

rain	One sound – different spellings	break	gate	stay
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4. Many spellings can represent more than one sound:

head	One spelling – different sounds	seat	break
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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 3 or 4 lessons from the Sounds Write scheme. 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. For example, lesson one focusses on the skill of segmenting and blending, then lesson three focusses on manipulating sounds, segmenting sounds and blending. During the initial code sessions, pupils will experience different activities such as word building, symbol search, sound swap. Once on the extended code, pupils will complete sound reviews, seek the sound, and learn how to write and read one spelling, different sounds.

The Initial Code (Reception)

From the very start of Reception, (day one), 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, which are clearly identified in the Sounds Write Teacher Manual, 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).

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.

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. These sessions are taught at least weekly, in addition to the Code.

We understand that new sounds learned may only be held in “temporary custody” and pupils require many opportunities to rehearse and consolidate before they are ready to use sounds learned to write independently. For this reason, pupils are not asked to spell using code that is new to them. Instead, pupils revisit prior learning for the writing component of their sessions.

By the end of Key Stage One (KS1), pupils will have been taught all units from both the initial code and up to unit 25 in the extended code. Pupils will be able to blend, segment and spell words taught from the previous units. At the end of KS1, if pupils have completed prior needed units, pupils will be introduced to polysyllabic words. In year 2, pupils will continue with the extended code (from unit 25) with units helping to consolidate

known spellings and include more spellings. In Key Stage two, there may be some pupils who are not fluent in the initial or extended code. Therefore, in year 3, pupils will continue to receive support until they are achieving 75-80% accuracy in the initial and extended code.

Phonics in the Broader Curriculum

Reception pupils apply their phonic skills when reading both at school and at home, using texts which are fully decodable, using their phonic knowledge.

Early Reading

As pupils move through the Initial Code, they will be reading materials which are closely matched to the learners' phonic knowledge. In this way, pupils will be encouraged to use their phonics skills and knowledge as their primary reading strategy. As pupils find that they can decode words quickly and independently, they will read more and more so that the number of words they can read automatically builds up. Increasing the pace of reading is an important objective. Pupils will be encouraged to read aloud as well as silently for themselves.

In EYFS and KS1 teachers will adapt their Talk for Writing model texts to reinforce target phonics which have been identified through summative assessments for their class.

There is an expectation that pupils will apply their phonics learning for reading and spelling across the curriculum and pupils can use resources such as displays and sound mats.

Impact

Throughout the teaching sequence, formative teacher assessment is used to identify pupils who are not grasping 75-80% of new learning. These pupils are targeted for rapid intervention, delivered in a timely fashion.

In Reception, pupils will be assessed termly on the codes, and not the skills, they have been taught. Teachers will continue to use formative assessment to identify any gaps in learning. In Year 1, a mock phonics screening is carried out at the end of term 2, 4 and term 5, this will then also help to identify individual gaps in knowledge and understanding, as well as any systemic gaps. This data is stored on Sonor.

We use Sonor from Reception to Year 2 to support our analysis of individual pupil's progress. This tracks pupil's progress against our curriculum.

In line with statutory requirements, all pupils in Year 1 undertake a phonics screening in Term 5. The results of this screening will be included in the annual summary report to parents for each individual pupil. Prior to this, in Terms 2 and 4, pupils will gain experience of accessing similar test materials as those used in the screening. This data is stored in Sonor.

In line with statutory requirements, any pupils who do not meet the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screen will be rescreened in Term 2 and 4 of Year 2 and again formally in Term 5. From September, they will be monitored and supported through close teacher assessment and regular phonic interventions.

Any individual pupils who still are receiving phonics support after Year 2 will be assessed in Term 2 and 4, using Sonor, and this will be tracked by the Phonics Subject Leader and SENCo and intervention provided.