

MILL HILL PRIMARY SCHOOL

Phonics Policy

Phonics is the main route into reading and writing and is at the core of our Literacy Provision in EFYS and Year 1. We understand that the boundaries between the phases described in 'Letters and Sounds' should not be regarded as fixed, to allow each child to progress and demonstrate their full talents and skills.

High-quality phonics teaching secures the crucial skills of word recognition that, once mastered, enable children to read fluently and automatically. Once children are fluent readers, they are able to concentrate on the meaning of the text. The 'simple view of reading' shows that both dimensions are necessary to achieve fluent reading.

However, the balance between word recognition and language comprehension shifts as children acquire secure and automatic decoding skills and progress from 'learning to read' to 'reading to learn' for purpose and pleasure. The ultimate goal of learning to read is comprehension.

Aim: The main aim of this policy, is to secure a consistent approach to the teaching of Phonics across EYFS, Key Stage 1 and into Key Stage 2 where appropriate.

Key Objectives: To ensure that all children, regardless of their background, disability or home language, receive high quality multisensory phonics teaching. To help children make accelerated progress because the books they read will be carefully matched to their current phonic/reading skills.

Fundamentals to ensure a consistent approach:

- All staff will demonstrate fidelity to the Letters and Sounds Programme.
- Until children are competent with Phase 5, only decodable books will be used for guided/shared reading and will continue to be sent home (this includes children in Key Stage 2 also, who have not progressed beyond Phase 5).
- Formative assessment take places during all phonics lessons to quickly identify those sounds and skills that children need to practise, to keep up.
- **Crucially, children experiencing profound difficulties, should have regular diagnostic assessments to ensure interventions are appropriate and meeting children's specific needs.**

- For the purpose of clarity, all staff will use the same phased sound mats and terminology.



My Phase 2 Sound Mat



My Phase 3 Sound Mat



My Phase 5 sound mat

Structure of Phonics Lessons:

- All dedicated lessons must include a **revisit** of previously taught sounds.
- The **teaching** part should include articulation of the letter(s) sound and how to write it.
- Children should **practise** blending and/or segmenting the sound in the context of words, phrases and/or sentences.
- Children should have the opportunity to **apply** new sounds and key words in purposeful reading and writing activities in the dedicated session or in continuous provision.

Critically, staff should use every opportunity throughout the day to draw out and reinforce phonics learning, regardless of the curriculum area being covered.

Timetable: The expectation is that children in **EYFS** will begin Phase 2 immediately on entry to the Reception class, with Phase 1 ongoing throughout the year. Phase 3 will begin no later than the end of November, leaving enough time for a revisit of trickier sounds and the introduction of cvcc and ccvc words (Phase 4) before the end of the summer term.

In **Year 1**, children continue their phonics learning as soon as they arrive, reviewing Phase 3 graphemes and consolidating the 42 graphemes through blending and segmenting CCVC and CVCC words with adjacent consonants, as Phase 4 of Letters and Sounds. Phase 5 teaching should begin no later than half-term and should focus primarily on alternative spellings, leaving alternative pronunciations until after the screening check in June.

At the beginning of **Year 2** children will revisit Phase 5 before moving on to Phase 6 with its emphasis on learning prefixes and suffixes. Children are also taught to explore etymology and develop spelling patterns based on their understanding of the root of a word.

Assessment: A pupil's current grapheme/sound correspondence knowledge will be shown on an annotated sound mat inside their individual reading record. Staff will complete a half-termly summative assessment tracker for all children working in phases 1-5, which will be passed on to their next teacher.

Children in Year 1 (and those children entering Year 2 who did not 'pass' the check), will regularly complete a sample phonics screening check paper, beginning at the end of autumn 1.

Individual staff may also complete assessments and trackers to identify next steps and to meet the needs of individual members of their class.

Finally, if you are concerned about the phonics learning progress of one of your children, please investigate the points below:

- Can they give you a rhyming word and hold a steady beat?
- Can they read enough common exception words to enable fluency?
- Are they stuck in a particular Phase (research reveals it's Phase 3 most children with difficulties are stuck in)?
- Have they got momentum when they're blending or do they simply need some speedy blending practise or precision teaching as an intervention?
- Can children distinguish Phase 3....5 sounds in words and therefore have the skill to blend those sounds in the context of a word?
- Do they have a strategy to blend the sounds in words of more than 1 syllable?

If you are still concerned about the progress of a child, please speak with one of the English Leaders who will work with you to investigate further.

THIS POLICY IS IN ADDITION TO THE EXPECTATIONS OF THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM FOR YEARS 1 AND 2.

Pauline Grainger

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