



Lickey Hill Primary School and Nursery

'Dream together, Believe together, Achieve together'

Phonics and Early Reading policy 2023

"Once you learn to read, you will be forever free." Frederick Douglass

1. Intent, Implementation, Impact

Intent

At LHPSN we know that being able to read fluently and with understanding is the key to unlocking learning across the whole curriculum. Our curriculum is one that is rich in talk and story, where children experience the joy of books, hearing high quality texts read aloud every day, and language whilst rapidly acquiring the skills to become fluent independent readers.

Our intent is to ensure every child becomes a confident, fluent, and passionate reader, quickly, so reading is planned from EYFS. Reading is developed through teaching a coherent and progressive sequence of phonics lessons, paired and guided reading and home reading so that children will learn to read widely, fluently, accurately, frequently and with good understanding and pleasure.

Implementation

Learning to read is one of the most important things a child will learn and underpins everything else. We will develop enthusiastic and fluent readers by delivering high quality teaching of phonics with access to texts linked to their current phonological awareness and foster a love of reading by inspiring pupils through high quality class texts and storytelling.

At LHPSN our children will learn to read through rapid acquisition of phonic skills using a consistent and engaging approach to phonics, following the validated Essential Letters and Sounds (ELS), systematic, synthetic phonics programme. Phonics and reading activities are taught as a whole class and teachers model the application of this through discrete phonic lessons, shared

reading and writing across the curriculum. A term by term progression map sets clear expectations for progress and includes a robust assessment procedure to check progress, identify areas for development and children in need of intervention or further support fostering a "A Keep up not Catch Up approach." This guarantees that children are consolidating phonic knowledge and skills over time and that they are able to apply them in context.

Impact

The impact of following the ELS phonic programme is that children will use an increased and varied vocabulary and have the knowledge and skills to read. Children's progress in phonics is continually reviewed through daily informal and half termly assessments. Assessment is used to monitor progress and to identify any child needing additional support as soon as they need it. This ensures that the children are prepared for the statutory year 1 Phonics Screening Check, achieving the national standard, and meet KS1 age expected reading outcomes assessed by NFER reading papers. By the end of KS1 children will be able to read hundreds of words, automatically if they are very familiar or decoding them quickly and silently. Children will not only read well, but understand what they are reading and gain enjoyment from reading.

2. Phonics

The teaching of phonics and early reading is of the highest priority at LHPSN. A consistent, systematic high quality, whole school approach to teaching phonics begins as soon as children begin their learning journey with us. This continues at least until the point where children can read words almost fluently, following the validated Essential Letters and Sounds (ELS), systematic, synthetic phonics programme.

2.1. In Nursery

Children work daily on aspects of Phase 1, as outlined in Letters and Sounds, to develop their listening skills, to listen purposefully, and talk about the sounds around them. These include:

- Sharing high-quality stories and poems
- Attention to high quality language
- Learning a range of nursery rhymes and action rhymes

- Activities that develop focused listening and attention

During the Summer term greater emphasis is placed on aspect 4 (rhythm and rhyme) and 7 (oral blending and segmenting). These activities teach phonemic awareness so children make a strong start in Reception in learning phase 2.

2.2 In Reception and Year 1

Phonics is taught daily, in the morning, for at least 30 minutes. In Reception, we build up from 10 minute lessons to the full-length lesson as quickly as possible. It is important to embed the learning behaviours for both reading and writing so the pace of learning may be slowed during the autumn term and the review period of overlearning shortened to keep on track. This will ensure that the children build on their growing knowledge of the alphabetic code, mastering phonics to read and spell as they move throughout the school.

2.2.1 Keep-up lessons

Any child who needs additional practice, identified during the lesson or from assessment data as needing extra support, has at least two extra 'keep up' sessions for sounds taught in that week. Keep-up lessons match the structure of class teaching, but in smaller steps with more repetition so that every child secures their learning.

2.3 Year Two

In the autumn term of Year 2 a recap of phase 5 will take place. This is essential for children who scored 32-36 in Year 1 Phonic Screening, to secure their phonic knowledge. This may not be all the taught sounds, it may be gaps noted in assessments or fluency read observations. Children then progress to learning the statutory spelling conventions (**See English policy**) whilst revisiting GPC (Grapheme phoneme correspondence) from phase 5, to secure reading and spelling whilst developing into more fluent and expressive readers.

Children who did not pass the Phonics Screening check in Year 1 are taught in small groups, inline with ELS lessons and assessment, to secure Phase 5 knowledge before re-sitting the Phonics Screening Check at the end of Year 2.

2.4 Non negotiables for teaching phonics in EYFS and KS1

A consistent approach is key to delivering excellent results so the focus of each lesson must be on the children learning new sounds and words, rather than new methods of learning. With this in mind we have created non-negotiables for all staff to follow to ensure a high-quality and consistent approach to deliver the ELS whole class phonics programme

- Watch the ELS training videos before delivering lessons (see phonic lead)
- Pronounce each sound correctly, 'pure sound' ([Phonics: How to pronounce pure sounds | Oxford Owl - YouTube](#))
- Use phonics terminology correctly (see appendix)
- Use ELS lesson presentations consistently, following the lesson structure Review, teach, practise, apply, review
- Lessons should be paced well, with all children having a clear view of the teacher and actively involved with a 'drum roll' to introduce the new sound, using 'robot arms' and a 'reading finger'
- Phoneme-grapheme(s) of the day and newly taught 'harder to read and spell' (HRS) words should be displayed to support independent tasks
- EYFS will use letter sounds to introduce digraphs; KS1 will use letter names
- When teaching new 'harder to read and spell' words, identify the graphemes that make it tricky.
- Letter and digraph rhymes to aid children's recall should be used. Matched actions for the rhymes are consistent across EYFS and KS1 (see phonics lead).
- Maintain a supportive learning environment, with GPC/s and HRS words displayed with table prompts, sound mats and key words available.
- Children are assessed every 5 weeks to ensure that they are keeping up.
- The lowest 20% are quickly identified and given additional support through the ELS structured intervention programme.
- Staff must actively target the lowest 20% of children for support during teaching

Teachers **MUST** model ALL reading and writing behaviours:

- model, where possible, the reading of the decodable text that the lowest 20% are using during the paired read sessions.
- Model re-reading text three times, reading to decode, re-reading for fluency and a final read with expression and intonation.

- Model the correct pencil grip, correct letter formation, writing on the line and where possible sitting at a table using a visualiser.

During the apply section teaching staff MUST ensure that children are sat at a table for written work, as per the guidance in the 2021 Reading Framework.

In Reception

- Teacher implements the 'in lesson' intervention for the lowest 20%
- TA must move about the children to address incorrect posture, pencil grip and letter formation.

In Year 1

- Teacher supports the lowest 20% either by implementing 'in lesson' intervention OR completing the apply section in the workbook.
- Teacher to actively mark work 1 table group per day
- Any extra adults MUST be actively addressing incorrect posture, pencil grip, handwriting and spelling.

2.5 Assessment

It is important to assess the children on a regular basis, as this provides an analysis of each individual child's learning gaps. Children's progress in phonics is continually reviewed through daily informal and half termly formal phonic assessments (see table). These half termly assessments, via ELS Tracker, allows us to plug gaps efficiently and identify children who need extra support in their phonics (see interventions).

LHPSN expectations of progress and assessments are detailed in the table below.

	Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
Nursery	Phase 1 Aspects 1-6				Phase 1 focus on aspects 4 & 7 Phase 2	
Reception	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 3 Phase 4	Phase 3 Phase 4	Phase 4	Introduce Phase 5
Expectations ELS assessment	70% GPCs	78% GPCs 50% real words	75% GPCs >66% real words	>70% real words	>70% real words	68% GPCs >68% real words
Screening check					Test 1 >68%	Test 2 >80%
Year 1	Phase 5a		Phase 5b+c		Consolidate Phase 5 Reading Fluency	
Expectations ELS assessment	75% GPCs 75% real words	85% GPCs 75% real words	>75% real words	>75% real words	Statutory Assessment 32/40	Fluency extract read >1 min 20 sec
Screening Check	> 17/40	> 25/40	> 30/40	> 32/40		
Year 2	Revisit ELS Y1 Summer	Y2 spelling rules (No Nonsense Spelling)				

2.6 Phonics Interventions

In EYFS and KS1 it is important to provide interventions to children who are not currently achieving the expected standard. If the difficulty is linked with visual discrimination and auditory memory, providing additional interventions linked with these skills will help children in their development and understanding of phonics (see phonic lead). ELS has three interventions that are to be delivered on a one-to-one basis: 'Oral Blending', 'GPC Recognition' and 'Blending for Reading'. These are to be short and concise and last no longer than five minutes (see appendix).

- Oral Blending: This intervention supports children struggling with oral blending and those with any auditory processing difficulties.
- Grapheme-phoneme correspondence (GPC) recognition: This intervention involves deliberate over-learning, re-teaching and repeated exposure.
- Blending for Reading: This intervention supports a child who requires additional practice for blending. You will need to be aware of any GPC weaknesses and ensure that these are targeted within the session. There is a strong focus on word-building, listening to the sounds within a word and identifying these.

2.7 KS2

Children who did not pass the phonics screening check by the end of KS1 and those new to LHPSN and EAL (English additional language), may need additional

support. During the first few weeks in Autumn 1 an ELS diagnostic assessment will be carried out to determine gaps in their phonic knowledge. Interventions to target the sounds that they are not secure with will be planned following the ELS system. (See English policy for interventions for the lowest 20% of children).

3. Reading in EYFS and KS1

3.1 Overview

Reading is an essential skill for all and by the end of KS1 children should be able to read confidently for meaning and regularly enjoy reading for pleasure. Children listen to fluent reading being modelled daily during story time, so they are exposed to and come to love all sorts of stories, poetry and information books. These texts are chosen to contain rich language to develop the children's vocabulary and their knowledge and confidence to discuss a wide range of authors, illustrators, a variety of text types and genres. We encourage our children to see themselves as readers for both pleasure and purpose.

3.2 Teaching early reading (EYFS and Year 1)

In EYFS and year 1 the focus of the reading sessions is on decoding and fluency (the speed, accuracy and prosody). The longer it takes to read each word, the harder it is to connect the words in a sentence or paragraph together to make meaning.

Reading is built into every phonics lesson so there is the opportunity to apply newly acquired phonic knowledge immediately to read text. In two phonic lessons a week, children will read increasingly longer text extracts, which are highly focused on the new GPCs taught, to build reading stamina.

Discrete reading sessions are designed to focus on the key reading skills of decoding unfamiliar words and prosody (teaching children to read with understanding and expression). They occur three times a week (15-20min) and use fully decodable books matched to the children's secure phonic knowledge. At the start of each lesson the teacher will model the reading procedure using the decodable text that the lowest 20% readers will be using. In each session the adults will listen to 1 group of children read (up to 6 children) on a 1:1 basis,

whilst the rest of the class are 'paired reading', taking it in turns to read aloud to their partner. To increase automaticity, fluency and confidence levels children keep the same book for a week.

3.3 Reading in Year 2

Reading sessions occur daily in Year 2. Primarily these revolve around a class text in which the VIPERS approach is adopted and children are given the opportunity to comprehend what they are reading. In addition, children are given the opportunity once a week to read a phonetically decodable text with an adult, developing their fluency.

The lowest 20% of children are in daily targeted phonic interventions, if needed, and will pre-read their home reading text with the teacher before it goes home.

3.4 Comprehension skills

For children to engage with the wider curriculum, they need to be able to read well, making inferences and drawing on background knowledge to support their developing understanding of a text when they read. To do this, they need to be able to draw not only on their phonic knowledge but also on their wider reading and comprehension skills, each of which must be taught. VIPERS is our whole school system for teaching comprehension skills and is an acronym to aid the recall of the 6 reading domains

V - Vocabulary

I - Infer

P - Predict

E - Explain

R - Retrieve

S - Sequence

Children are taught the comprehension skills retrieval and prediction in Reception, and the other domains are introduced in year 1. KS1 children are taught the skills of reading through a VIPERS lesson once a week using the high-quality texts from the 'Power of Reading' or 'Babcock Prime' from our writing unit.

3.5 Issuing of Books

Every week, each child will get two new books, one will be an independent read (I) and the other a book to share (S).

(I) Fully decodable books that match the teaching sequence of ELS phonics programme. They match the sounds and words each child is currently learning so any words the children do not recognise can be decoded using phonic knowledge and not by any other reading strategy e.g. looking at the pictures. This book will be read 3x in the week at school to develop fluency, pace and prosody before taking it home. The decodable readers sent home will support the repetition and re-reading that takes place within school and, where possible, a link to an electronic version (through Oxford Owl) to ensure success is shared with the family.

These books are labelled as I for independent reading and should not be issued beyond a child's first GPC gap. Exposure to the weekly phonic learning in this case will be through the shared reader, S labelled books.

(S) Shared readers are aimed at developing and inspiring a love of reading through the shared experience of reading together. These books will match as closely as possible the ELS teaching sequence, but contain some sounds and HRS words that the children are not expected to decode. We fully believe that the books are needed to provide challenge in comprehension and meaning as well as exposure to different types of text.

At LHPSN we value the importance of re-reading books, and therefore we may issue the same book more than once, so children can become familiar with key texts.

3.6 Home Reading Expectations

LHPSN recognises and values the important role parents play in education. Consequently, we encourage parents to engage in an active partnership with the school. Parents have opportunities to attend phonics and reading workshops at school to gain further insight into how they are taught and how they can support their child. Parents are expected to hear their child read at least three times a week and that they log each read in the diary. Class teachers must keep a log of this and follow the 3 steps below

1st instance of no reading per half term - note in diary and/or conversation
 2nd instance of non reading per half term- note in diary and/or conversation
 3rd instance of non reading per half term- inform the Assistant Head Teacher
 Plastic wallets are provided to keep the reading books and diary in good condition. A fee of £5 will be charged to those who fail to return these books or return them in a damaged state.

3.7 Additional Support

For children who are not yet reading at the age expected standard, or who are not making expected progress, additional support is provided. This may be an additional 1:1 read with an adult each week, teaching of HRS words, or phonic interventions.

APPENDICES

Language:

The correct terminology is critical when teaching phonics to the children. This terminology needs to be used from nursery through to Year 6.

Term/ word	Meaning
Phoneme	The smallest unit of sound in a word
Grapheme	A letter or group of letters representing one sound (phoneme) e.g sh, th , igh
Grapheme- Phoneme Correspondence (GPC)	The relationship between sounds and the letters which phoneme represent those sounds; also known as 'letter-sound correspondence correspondence'.
Digraph	Two letters which together make one sound. There are different types of digraphs - vowels, consonant and split.
Trigraph	Three letters which together make one sound.
Split Digraph	Two letters, which work as a pair to make one sound, but are separated within the word e.g. a-e in cake.
Segmenting	Breaking a word up into individual sounds-e.g. cat segments to c-a-t. We refer to this as sound talking or robot talking.

Robot Arms	When sound-talking a word (orally segmenting it into the phonemes within the word), use robot arms to physically make the link between the separating of the sounds.
Blending	Blending or merging the individual sounds in a word together, and in order, to say the word e.g. c-a-t blends to cat
Blending hands	Push your hands together like a silent clap as you blend the sounds together to say the whole word.
Pure sounds	Pronouncing each letter clearly and distinctly without adding additional sounds to the end. E.g. /f/ not /fuh/
Adjacent Consonants	Two or more consonants that appear next to one another within a word and they each represent a different sound e.g. s-t-r in the word strap.
Syllables	A unit of pronunciation containing one vowel sound, forming the whole or part of a word e.g. water has two syllables wa ter.
Polysyllabic	Words that contain two or more syllables e.g. chimpanzee
Alternative Pronunciation	An alternative way to say a known letter (grapheme) e.g. the grapheme 'ow' makes a different sound in 'cow' and 'snow'.
Alternative Spelling	Alternative graphemes to spell a sound in a word e.g. /oa/ in goat is spelt 'ow' in snow
Pseudo words	Words that do not make sense but are made up of decodable sounds.
Harder to read and spell words (HRS)	Words that are not phonetically decodable with an unusual or uncommon spelling e.g. people, because
High Frequency Words	Common words that appear often in written text. These are a mixture of decodable and HRS words.
Decodable words	Words that can be segmented and blended together.
Homophones	Two or more words that have the same pronunciation, but different meaning, or spelling e.g. knew, new
Contractions	A word or group of words resulting from shortening an original to form e.g do not - don't

Suffixes	Added to the end of a word to form a derivative e.g -ing, -s, -es, -ed
Prefix	Added to the beginning of a word to form a derivative e.g pre, un, dis
Consonants	A speech sound in which the breath channel is at least partly obstructed and which can be combined with a vowel to form a syllable (i.e. the letters b, c, d, f, g, h, j, k, l, m, n, p, q, r, s, t, v, w, x, y, z).
Vowel	A speech sounds in which the breath channel is not blocked and does not cause friction when making vocal sounds (i.e. the letters a, e, i, o, u).

Overview of Phases:

Phase	Learning
1	This is split into 7 aspects and is a vital part of phonics. It focuses on hearing and talking about environmental sounds, instrumental sounds, voice sounds, oral blending and segmenting.
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Oral blending * Sounding out and blending with these graphemes * Phoneme correspondences (GPCs) * 12 new harder to read and spell (HRS) word
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Oral blending * Sounding out and blending with 29 new GPCs * 32 new HRS words * Revision of Phase 2 * Introduction of adjacent consonants
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Oral blending * No new GPCs * No new HRS words * Word structures - CVCC, CCVC, CCVCC, CCCVC, CCCVCC * Suffixes * Revision of Phase 2 and Phase 3
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * 22 new GPCs * 25 new HRS words

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Revision of previously taught Phase 5 GPCs * Alternative spellings for previously taught sounds * 49 new GPCs * 4 new HRS words * Oral blending * Revision of Phase 2, Phase 3 and Phase 4
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Revision of all previously taught GPCs for reading and spelling * Wider reading, spelling and writing curriculum

Phonic Interventions

Oral Blending: This intervention supports children struggling with oral blending and those with any auditory processing difficulties.

Oral blending	
Review	Orally blend up to three words that the child has successfully orally blended before. Using robot arms, model sounding out, and then the child repeats the sounds (if necessary) and says the whole word.
Teach	Model sound-talking and blending a whole word with less familiar GPCs; for example, /r/ /ai/ /n/ – rain. The child repeats this. Do the same with up to six words, which can contain any GPCs. Take care not to use words that are too long for the child to recall and blend.
Practise	Sound-talk a word – do not blend the whole word, as the child needs to practise blending independently. The child repeats the sounds and says the whole word. Repeat with up to six words, which can contain any GPCs. Take care not to use words that are too long for the child to recall and blend.
Apply	<p>Oral storytelling: read aloud a pre-planned short extract*. Choose six words within the extract to be sounded out. These words should vary in length and include GPCs children have already learned and ones they have not yet been taught. The focus here is on ensuring that the child can sound-talk the word and blend. Model sounding out the word, and then the child repeats the sounds in the word and says the whole word. Continue with the story.</p> <p>When the child is more confident with their oral blending, they do not need to sound-talk the word first; they can just blend it.</p>

GCP Recognition: This intervention involves deliberate over-learning, re-teaching and repeated exposure. It will support children with English as an additional language, those new to ELS, those with additional needs and those with auditory processing weaknesses or a fluency block.

GPC recognition	
Review	Review up to 12 known sounds using grapheme cards. Where appropriate, model reading the sounds using 'Me, then you'.
Teach	Say the new sound for the child to repeat. Repeat the sound multiple times. Show the grapheme for the sound – say the sound, then show the grapheme. Repeat multiple times. Show the picture and mnemonic for the grapheme. Model running your finger over the grapheme whilst saying the sound. The child then repeats this.
Practise	Spot the grapheme in known words from the lesson or from the word list provided (see Week-by-week Progression Appendix i). Use sound tiles or magnetic letters to make the word. Identify the focus grapheme within the word. Point to the grapheme, sound-talk the word and then blend to read the whole word. The child repeats this.
Apply	Use a decodable reader to show the child sentences that have words with the new sound, known sounds and known HRS words. The child reads the sentences (not necessarily the whole book).
Review	Review the focus sound by showing the grapheme and using 'Me, then you' to model saying the sound. Show the focus grapheme throughout the day and ask the child to say the sound.

Blending for reading: This intervention supports a child who requires additional practice for blending. You will need to be aware of any GPC weaknesses and ensure that these are targeted within the session. There is a strong focus on word-building, listening to the sounds within a word and identifying these. Again, this intervention particularly supports the needs of children with auditory processing weaknesses, those new to English and those who are struggling to apply their understanding of digraphs, trigraphs and quadgraphs as their phonic knowledge builds and their awareness of alternative spellings and pronunciations increases.

Blending for reading

Review	Review reading words with known sounds, including those recently taught, to build fluency and accuracy.
Teach	<p>Show the focus grapheme/s, for example <ai>. Say the sound and ask the child to repeat. Do this multiple times.</p> <p>Say a word with the focus sound, for example 'rain'. The child repeats.</p> <p>Sound-talk the word using robot arms and then blend using blending hands.</p> <p>Say the sound and show the grapheme (using a grapheme card or magnetic letters).</p> <p>Make the word using grapheme cards or magnetic letters.</p> <p>Point at each grapheme and read the word.</p> <p>Repeat with up to four other words that include the focus sound.</p>
Practise	<p>Use word cards to read words with the focus grapheme and other known words.</p> <p>First read-through for each grapheme card: spot the grapheme, sound-talk the word, read the word.</p> <p>Second read-through for each grapheme card: model reading the word quickly. The child repeats.</p>
Apply	Use decodable readers that include the focus sound for spotting sounds. Read words from the book, particularly those with the focus sound. Read sentences that contain words with the focus grapheme and other known graphemes.