



Evercreech Church of England Primary School

Phonics Policy

Intent

At Evercreech Church of England Primary School, we strive to equip our learners with a secure phonic knowledge that enables them to be confident, fluent and enthusiastic readers by the end of Key Stage One; we want all of our learners to love reading as much as we do!

We strongly believe that following a systematic, structured and rigorous phonics programme is fundamental to realising our intent, and aim to reduce the cognitive load on our learners by embedding a consistent approach to facilitate optimum learning and progress.

We have chosen to use Unlocking Letters and Sounds, a systematic synthetic phonics programme validated by the DfE, to support and develop our pupils to read, write and spell fluently and quickly. Through Unlocking Letters and Sounds, we endeavour to deliver high-quality first teaching, facilitate progress, ensure consistency and perform timely interventions to enable success for all. Alongside this, we promote a love of books and create a climate of reading for pleasure; we aspire to develop amongst our learners the habit of reading widely and often, across a range of genres, non-fiction and poetry. Through daily story times, we aim to expose children to a wealth of high-quality literature and breadth of vocabulary, delivered with passion and enthusiasm.

Phonics is the key through which we unlock doors to the rest of the curriculum for our learners; our ultimate aim is for children to see themselves as readers and writers which will have a huge impact on their self-esteem and future life experiences.

"It is important early in life to acquire the power of reading sense wherever you happen to be."

C.S. Lewis

"Reading is the one ability, that once set in motion, has the ability to feed itself, grow exponentially and provide a basis from which possibilities are limitless."

Michael Morpurgo

Implementation: How we teach phonics and early reading

Phonics lessons are taught daily across the Early Years and Key Stage One, with timely same-day interventions following ongoing formative assessment. Children in Key Stage Two identified as needed further phonics support also receive daily interventions.

Phase One: Preschool (Acorns)

Phase 1 is fundamental in securing a sound basis for the more formal phonics instruction from Reception onwards. Throughout their time in Preschool, the children experience a wealth of listening activities and language play to develop their auditory discrimination skills as they explore sounds and language. Our skilled EYFS practitioners plan for activities and opportunities



to develop the **seven aspects** contained with Phase 1, as well as identifying 'in the moment' teachable moments:

- Aspect 1: General sound discrimination – environmental sounds
- Aspect 2: General sound discrimination – instrumental sounds
- Aspect 3: General sound discrimination – body percussion
- Aspect 4: Rhythm and rhyme
- Aspect 5: Alliteration
- Aspect 6: Voice sounds
- Aspect 7: Oral blending and segmenting

Story time (using high-quality, well-chosen picture books) and singing and exploration of nursery rhymes and simple songs is crucial to preschool's provision; children enjoy playing with sounds and words as they develop their language skills, spotting rhythm, rhyme and alliteration in songs and stories they hear. Children will begin to explore the skill of oral blending and segmenting. For some, this will be a skill they master quickly; for others, they may need support to listen carefully to the sounds and tune in their ears to be able to put the phonemes together and hear the word that the adult is segmenting. Practitioners have been trained in Unlocking Letters and Sounds so that, when appropriate, they can perform incidental teaching of Phase 2 actions and letter formation to ensure children are well-placed to begin formal phonics learning on entering school, alongside teaching of the alphabet letter names.

Acorns Preschool is an ICAN accredited setting and is recognised as a Supportive Level service. Early Talk Boost is used as an intervention with rising fives who are identified as having delayed language to boost their language skills and narrow the gap between them and their peers.

Phases Two to Five: Reception – Year Two

Unlocking Letters and Sounds uses a clear progression of grapheme-phoneme correspondence (GPC) for Phases 2-5, supplemented with actions for Phases 2 and 3 and handwriting 'patters' to support letter formation. This gives our reading and writing a multi-sensory approach and helps children to remember the sounds and their written correspondence.

As well as teaching the phonemes and graphemes that help us to read, children are discretely taught to read and write common exception words (CEWs) which are not decodable. These are again sequenced according to the progression within Unlocking Letters and Sounds.

All of the resources used in our Phonics provision are fully aligned with the Unlocking Letters and Sounds to ensure consistency and fidelity to the programme.

All staff in our school have received accredited Letters and Sounds phonics training in January 2021. This was supplemented with specific Unlocking and Letters Sounds transfer top-up training in January 2023 as we moved across to the programme. The Fosse Federation of Schools is well-supported by the Unlocking Excellence English Hub through CPD opportunities. The Phonics Lead attends termly Phonics Leaders Network training run by both Unlocking Letters and Sounds and the Unlocking Excellence English Hub, cascading relevant information and support to teaching and support staff.



Lesson Format

Across our Reception and Key Stage One classes, Phonics is timetabled daily and taught for a 20-30 minute session in the morning. Lessons are delivered using direct whole-class teaching using a quality wave one teaching sequence.

Each lesson follows the same five-part format for structure and consistency:



To ensure sufficient pace and progression through our Unlocking Letters and Sounds programme, direct teaching of phonics begins in Reception following our phased induction period (typically **Week Three**). Throughout Phases 2 and 3, children are taught four GPCs a week (one a day, Monday to Thursday) with a 'review' day at the end of the week to consolidate all four new GPCs. As children progress through Phases 4 and 5, the emphasis shifts to a different teaching focus every day. During lessons, teachers will also discretely teach common exception words for reading and writing, as planned in the Unlocking Letters and Sounds summary progression.

All lessons are delivered using the Unlocking Letters and Sounds lesson slides; the slides are clear and concise, reducing cognitive overload for learners and ensuring a consistent, pacy delivery. Lesson overviews and walkthroughs provide planning, support and guidance for teachers to teach effectively; master copies of planning documents are stored centrally to enable ease of access in the event of a supply teacher or LSA needing to deliver phonics in the teacher's absence to ensure continuity for the children. Lesson slides are displayed digitally on interactive boards; any physical resources used to support/enhance lessons (e.g. flashcards and display materials) also show fidelity to Unlocking Letters and Sounds.

Incidental phonics teaching happens in addition to timetabled lessons to continually reinforce phonics throughout the day, such as through using the Unlocking Letters and Sounds flashcards. In Reception, children are given opportunities to practice their phonics during their explore time (continuous provision) with close monitoring by practitioners to ensure they are not rehearsing misconceptions. Specific phonic challenge tasks are also introduced as the year progresses. Application of phonics is reinforced in children's learning across the National Curriculum; e.g. using sound buttons to support the decoding of new scientific vocabulary.



Pace and Progression

The following chart gives an overview of the pace and progression through the phases from Preschool to Year Two. A detailed week-by-week progression exemplifying the GPCs and CEWs taught is contained in the appendix document.

Preschool					
Phase 1					
Reception Term 1	Reception Term 2	Reception Term 3	Reception Term 4	Reception Term 5	Reception Term 6
Phase 1					
Phase 2	Phase 3	Continue Phase 3 & Phase 3 Mastery	Continue Phase 3 Mastery	Phase 4	Phase 4 Mastery plus NC requirements
Year 1 Term 1	Year 1 Term 2	Year 1 Term 3	Year 1 Term 4	Year 1 Term 5	Year 1 Term 6
Phase 4 Revision plus NC requirements	Phase 5a	Phase 5a Mastery	Phase 5b	Phase 5c	Continue Phase 5c
Year 2 Term 1	Year 2 Term 2	Year 2 Term 3	Year 2 Term 4	Year 2 Term 5	Year 2 Term 6
Phase 5a and 5b Mastery	Phase 5c Mastery	Phase 5b and 5c Mastery as part of spelling lessons		Continue teaching discrete Y2 spelling lessons. Provide regular intervention and robust assessment for children who need support to master phonics skills.	

Assessment

To ensure that children are 'on track' in their phonics progress, we assess them at regular intervals using a combination of formative and summative assessment. Children are assessed on their knowledge of GPCs, ability to blend taught GPCs, ability to read taught CEWs, oral blending and oral segmentation.

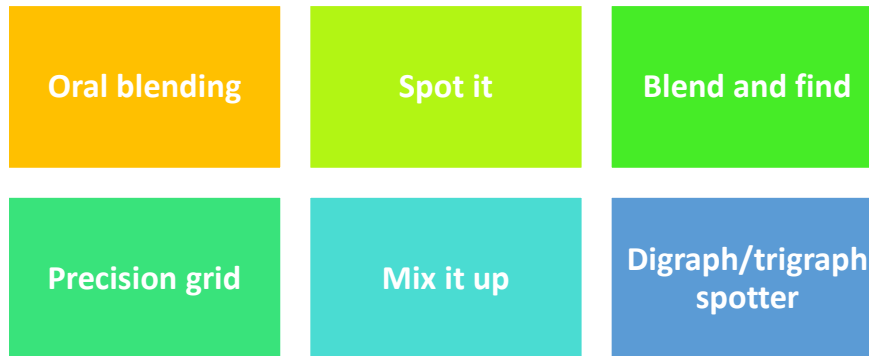


Immediate and specific intervention if a child is falling behind at any point.



Summative outcomes are recorded on a spreadsheet which is saved on a shared drive to enable monitoring.

Assessment outcomes are used to quickly identify gaps in learning for individuals, groups and classes. Targeted interventions are delivered to accelerate progress and narrow any gaps, and to support the identified lowest 20% to unlock their potential. Depending on the area of difficulty, there are six distinct Unlocking Letters and Sounds interventions to support children struggling with phonics and reading:



Interventions are focused on **pace** and **repetition**; they are performed same day, 1:1 and quick (take a maximum of two minutes).

The **Unlocking Potential Progress Sheet** is used to support staff in identifying the exact barrier to a child's reading and suggests the most appropriate intervention(s) to help move their learning forward. Children identified as **disadvantaged** are monitored in greater detail on a further Disadvantaged Tracker; any phonics and reading interventions they receive are recorded in this document, with outcomes and progress.

Any children struggling to make progress after initial intervention will receive further targeted support. Any phonics interventions take place **in addition to** whole class phonics lessons, and **outside** of daily story times.

Key Stage Two

If children are not fluent readers and past reading phased reading books by the time they reach Key Stage Two (Year 3), they continue with the phonics teaching as necessary. The provision will depend on what is appropriate for the particular learner(s); it might be a small group session that takes place during the school day with a trained adult or, if appropriate, they may join a lower cohort for their daily phonics input. 1:1 interventions are also used to help them to develop automaticity with their reading to enable them to access the higher reading demands of the Key Stage Two curriculum.



Statutory Assessments

In Preschool, cohorts are tracked as to whether they are 'on track' or 'not on track' according to check- and end-points within the age-bands of 0-3 years and 3-4 years.

On entering Reception, all children take the statutory **Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA)** within six weeks of starting school. The RBA assesses children's starting points to enable progress to be measured by the end of primary school and includes assessment of their early vocabulary, phonological awareness and early comprehension. Throughout the Reception year, children are assessed as to whether they are 'on track' or 'not on track' for the **specific area of learning of Literacy**, based upon the expectations for 4-5-year olds for each term in order to progress towards meeting their **Early Learning Goals (ELGs)**. At the end of the Reception Year, children are assessed as to whether or not they have met the ELG for **Word Reading**, part of the Literacy area of learning. The Word Reading ELG contributes to whether or not a child has achieved a **Good Level of Development**.

In Year One, children take the statutory **Phonics Screening Check (PSC)** in the summer term. Children who do not meet the pass threshold score retake the PSC in Year Two.

Home reading books

Once children are secure in reading and blending that set of sounds, they will be sent home with a phonetically decodable reading book.

At home, the child is to read the book twice, once for decoding and then again to develop fluency and expression.

Once children are secure in Phase 5 of phonics, they will be guided by school staff on making an independent reading book choice that is appropriate for their age, stage and interest level.

Children will also bring home a book that they have chosen from the library each week to develop reading for pleasure and reading with their family. This book may not be able to be read independently by the child, which is clear to parents by use of a stamp.

Reading books sent home will be recorded by school staff to keep track of the books that a child has read and the progress made.

Where possible, children choose their own reading books from the box that is of their reading level.

Impact

Throughout our school setting, children enjoy and have confidence in their phonics learning and see themselves as readers. Children recognise the importance of phonics and reading and how it supports their learning across the curriculum; they transfer and apply their decoding and encoding skills with increasing accuracy, showing resilience and perseverance as they encounter unfamiliar and pseudo-words. Children confidently use specific terminology and know more and remember more about phonics. They also increasingly recognise CEWs and spell them with growing accuracy in their cross-curricula writing.



Unlocking Letters and Sounds has already had a positive impact on our phonics provision; staff have responded enthusiastically and committed themselves fully to the programme, consistently following the lesson structure and resource materials, and children have quickly adapted to the new format and are already showing evidence of accelerated progress compared to our prior provision.

Children will progress through the different phases of phonics in line with age-related expectations and make progress from their individual starting points. Pupils achieve broadly in line with age-related expectations and national results in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile and Phonics Screening Check. Disadvantaged pupils form a significant group but Pupil Progress Meetings and disadvantaged trackers illustrate how these children make progress. SEND children will receive targeted support to address identified gaps in order to continue developing their knowledge and application of phonic skills.

Through **believing** in themselves, **learning** GPCs, CEWs and blending and segmenting skills, and **growing** their reading skillset, we are enabling our learners to have high aspirations that will help to shape their future achievements.

"One child, one teacher, one book, one pen can change the world."

Malala Yousafzai