

Hose Church of England Primary School



Phonics Policy

"Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart" Colossians 3.23.

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Values

We give our children the chance to develop culturally, emotionally, intellectually, socially and spiritually so that they might prosper and flourish in all that they do.

At Hose Church of England Primary School, we are proud to offer pupils a language-rich environment where imagination and creativity can be fuelled through high quality texts. We teach Phonics through a rigorous Phonics curriculum using the systematic synthetic Phonics scheme Sounds-Write. We ensure pupils develop the skills and knowledge they need to develop as confident readers who can access a range of books and enjoy reading for pleasure. We believe that literature, especially, plays a key role in such development. Reading also enables pupils to acquire knowledge and to build on what they already know.

Aims and Objectives

Through our systematic approach to Phonics we aim to:

- Maintain a sharp focus on ensuring that younger children gain the Phonics knowledge and language comprehension necessary to read and spell.
- Ensure that reading is prioritised to allow pupils to access the full curriculum.
- Offer a rigorous, sequential approach to the reading curriculum which develops pupils' fluency, confidence and enjoyment in reading through the implementation of the sounds write linguistic programme.
- Track, at all stages, reading attainment to assess and address gaps quickly and effectively for all pupils.
- Ensure that at the early stages of learning to read, reading materials are closely matched to the learners' Phonics knowledge.

Sounds-Write Structure

Phonics Teaching begins within the first week of Autumn Term and from the very beginning of the Sounds-Write programme we teach three essential skills:

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.

These are explicitly taught and practised in the context of reading and spelling words in every Phonics lesson so that they become automatic. We also begin to develop students' conceptual understanding of how our alphabet works. From the start of the programme in EYFS, children learn the following:

1. Letters are symbols that represent sounds.
2. A single sound may be represented by 1, 2, 3 or 4 letters (e.g. dog street night dough).
3. The same sound can be spelled in more than one way (e.g. rain break gate stay).

4. One spelling can represent more than one sound (e.g. head seat break).

All Phonics lessons are scripted and our teachers and teaching assistants are trained in delivering the lessons with fidelity to the programme. We are consistent in our language throughout: letters or combinations of letters spell sounds (they do not 'say' or 'make' sounds) so as not to undermine this conceptual understanding.

Throughout the school, we adopt the Sound Write programme, a quality-first synthetic Phonics programme, with a linguistic approach. This provides a comprehensive system with which we teach reading, spelling and writing from EYFS into Key Stage Two. The Sounds Write program meets the needs of our most vulnerable pupils by taking a phonographic approach. We start with what all children acquire naturally: the sounds of their own language. We teach that letters, or combinations of letters, called graphemes, are the agreed ways in which we represent these sounds. A key part of the Sounds Write programme is the reduction of the cognitive load. Our focus is on long-term learning by practicing the skills, learning the code and enhancing conceptual understanding. These aspects are repeatedly encountered throughout the carefully designed cumulative programme.

The Initial Code (Reception)

From the very start of Reception, pupils begin to learn the Initial Code using the key skills to read and spell CV (consonant/vowel), CVC, VCC, CVCC, CCVC, CCVCC, CVCCC and CCCVC words. Lesson structures establish a clear structure for the teaching of Phonics sessions, prioritising word building whilst also teaching the key skills. At first, children learn to read and write simple one syllable words with a CVC structure. Complexity of word structure systematically builds up so that children apply their code knowledge to monosyllabic words with up to 6 sounds. Alongside this, pupils are taught high frequency words ("everyday words") which may use 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)

The Extended Code moves pupils on to vowel digraphs. Units are taught in blocks of common sounds (initial spellings), which are later returned to and extended (more spellings) in a systematic way. Lesson structures 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 focusing on polysyllabic words 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”.

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

Early Reading

As pupils move through the Initial Code, they read books which are closely matched to their Phonics knowledge. In this way, pupils are encouraged to use their Phonics skills and knowledge as their primary reading strategy. Our expectation is that pupils should be reading with 90% fluency before moving up to the next reading level. As pupils become efficient in decoding words quickly and independently, their reading increases as does the number of words they can read automatically. Increasing the pace of reading is an important objective in order to support developing reading comprehension. Pupils are encouraged to read aloud as well as silently. As pupils progress through the Extended Code, many begin reading longer texts with a greater number of complex words independently and with increasing fluency. This process culminates in a shift from learning to read to reading to learn where pupils progress to reading both for pleasure and for information.

Equal Opportunities

The timeline set out above will always be adjusted and adapted to meet the needs of all learners and to ensure that every child gains the building blocks they need to become a successful reader. Each child is recognised as an individual in our learning community: if a pupil continues to need to support with their developing phonemic understanding throughout their primary school years, it will be provided through targeted interventions. Careful thought will always be given to the provision of appropriately structured work for pupils with SEND, and additional support through intervention groups so that all our children are able to prosper and flourish in their learning. Our approach is multisensory: oral rehearsal, listening and then the physical process of writing.

Assessment

Throughout the teaching sequence, teacher assessment is used to identify pupils who are not grasping 80% of new learning. These pupils are targeted for rapid intervention. Diagnostic tests are carried out to identify individual gaps in knowledge and understanding, as well as any systemic gaps.

As pupils’ reading fluency increases they will move on to use the Accelerated Reader programme to select books which are targeted to their reading ability. Children will complete termly reading assessments to track their progress in reading and also complete a quiz after completing each reading book. This data is then tracked by staff to ensure children are making the appropriate progress with reading and that any gaps or appropriate interventions can be delivered quickly and effectively.