

# Wellgate Primary School

## PHONICS POLICY (Supporting reading through to writing)

### MISSION STATEMENT

*It is our school mission that high-quality phonic work is not a 'strategy' so much as a body of knowledge, skills and understanding that has to be learned.*

**Aims** (outlined in 'The phonics and early readers; an overview', Primary Framework for literacy, Primary National Strategy 2006)

The processes by which children comprehend spoken language are the same as those by which they comprehend the words on the page; the difference being that the first relies upon hearing the words and the second upon seeing the words in written form. Obviously, in order to comprehend written texts children must first learn to recognise, that is decode, the words on the page.

High-quality phonic teaching secures the crucial skills of word recognition that, once mastered, enable children to read fluently and automatically thus freeing them to concentrate on the meaning of the text.

Children at Wellgate will secure 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.

To achieve this, practitioners and teachers are clear about which activities are designed to teach children to acquire word recognition skills, and which will help children develop high-level comprehension skills.

### **Principles of high-quality phonic work at Wellgate Primary School**

The Rose Report makes it clear that 'high-quality phonic work' should be taught systematically and discretely as the prime approach used in the teaching of early reading.

Beginner readers should be taught:

- grapheme–phoneme correspondences in a clearly defined, incremental sequence
- to apply the highly important skill of blending (synthesising) phonemes in the order in which they occur, all through a word to read it
- to apply the skills of segmenting words into their constituent phonemes to spell
- that blending and segmenting are reversible processes.

High-quality phonic work will be most effective when:

- it is part of a broad and rich curriculum that engages children in a range of activities and experiences to develop their speaking and listening skills and phonological awareness
- It is multi sensory, encompassing simultaneous visual, auditory and kinaesthetic activities to enliven core learning
- it is time-limited, such that the great majority of children should be confident readers by the end of Key Stage 1
- it is systematic, that is to say, it follows a carefully planned programme with fidelity, reinforcing and building on previous learning to secure children's progress
- it is taught discretely and daily at a brisk pace
- there are opportunities to reinforce and apply acquired phonic knowledge and skills across the curriculum and in such activities as shared and guided reading
- children's progress in developing and applying their phonic knowledge is carefully assessed and monitored.

**Letters and Sounds** (*outlined in 'Letters and Sounds: Principles and Practice of High Quality Phonics' Primary National Strategy 2007*)

Letters and Sounds is designed to help practitioners and teachers to teach children how the alphabet works for reading and spelling. Systematic, high quality phonics teaching is essential and is needed for children to achieve the goal of reading. Letters and Sounds is designed as a time limited programme of phonics work aimed at securing fluent word recognition skills for reading by the end of Key Stage 1 and as an intervention in Key Stage Two. Although the teaching and learning of spelling, which children generally find harder than reading, will continue.

Wellgate has implemented the programme whereby six structured phases are followed broadly to accompany the Primary National Strategy's pace and progression. However, in Letters and Sounds the phases are deliberately porous so that no children are held back or unduly pressured to move on before they are equipped to do so. Therefore, in Foundation and Key Stage One children are streamed into high quality, phased phonics groups.

**Organisation of Phonics**

Phonics at Wellgate is taught as a discrete lesson each week throughout the Foundation Stage and Key Stage One. In Key Stage Two it is used as an intervention for those who have not succeeded phase six in year two.

**Foundation 1**

The children have a discrete phonics teaching input once a week working towards twenty five minutes, by teachers and practitioners. Foundation one is working towards having constant and enhanced activities within the environment for the children to access during independent learning. The activities have learning outcomes specifically planned from the Letters and Sounds Document.

**Foundation 2**

The children in Foundation Two have discrete phonics teaching input daily by teachers and practitioners. The sessions last between fifteen to twenty minutes. In the F2 unit there are also constant and enhanced activities within the environment

for the children to access during independent learning. The activities have learning outcomes specifically planned from the Letters and Sounds Document.

### **Key Stage One**

The children in Key Stage One are streamed into phased groups. They meet on a daily basis for twenty five minutes. The Key Stage One classrooms have displays for the children to 'apply' their knowledge from the taught sessions within literacy sessions.

### **Key Stage Two**

The children in years three and four in Key Stage Two (*as of January 2009*) have phonics sessions as an intervention delivered by teaching assistants and tracked by the Reading Coordinator.

### **Classroom Environment**

In Foundation and Key Stage One teachers are developing the classroom environment to have an age appropriate display concentrating on both sounds and key words.

### **Assessment and Monitoring**

The foundation stage, Key Stage One and lower Key Stage Two use the document 'Assessing Pupil Progress in Phonics' (See Appendix). This is broken up into each phase and has specific learning targets that the teachers plan, teach and assess from. Other supporting materials are used in order to track the children's specific skills to determine their level. All of these objectives and activities are fully supporting the Letters and Sounds document.

### **Links with the National Curriculum**

Within the core literacy sessions, teachers plan and deliver the objectives outlined in the Literacy Framework during daily literacy and guided reading sessions. Predominantly strand five and six link closely with the Letters and Sounds document and enable the children to learn new skills and 'apply' skills taught through phonics sessions. (see appendix)

## **APPENDICES**

- Planning Grid
- Assessing Pupil Progress in Phonics
- Letters and Sounds and the Literacy Framework
- Grapheme – Phoneme correspondences
- Phase 2 spelling, reading, segmenting and blending tool
- Phase 3 spelling, reading, segmenting and blending tool
- Phase 4 spelling, reading, segmenting and blending tool

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