



Townlands C of E Primary Academy

Phonics Policy

Approved by: Rachael Johnson (Chair of Governors)

Date: January 2025

Next review due by: January 2028 (but can be revised as needed)

Introduction

Every child in our school deserves the right to be taught to read and write. At Townlands we want every child to love reading and we will do our best to foster a love and passion for books.

This policy has been written in accordance with the DfE document The Reading framework (first published in July 2021) and our systematic synthetic programme (SSP) which shows fidelity to one programme. The chosen programme here at Townlands is Sounds-Write. In accordance with the DfE, by following and showing fidelity to one programme improved literacy levels will: 'give all children a solid base upon which to build as they progress through school. Help children to develop the habit of reading widely and often, for both pleasure and information.'

Aims

The main objective of the teaching and learning of phonics is to enable all children to access reading and writing at an age appropriate level.

In order to achieve this, we will:

- have a consistent whole school approach to the teaching of phonics
- rigorous planning, assessment and tracking
- sufficient training provided to enable the implementation of the Sounds-Write programme

We want our children:

- to learn to read and write all 44 speech sounds in the English language
- to learn specific strategies to help them remember common exception words
- to have daily phonics lessons in EYFS and KS1 and spelling lessons in KS2
- to apply their phonic skills in all curriculum areas

Teaching staff and teaching assistants will:

- model good practice in use of phonics strategies
- ensure that classrooms have a purposeful phonics display
- keep up to date with record keeping and assessment
- ensure training is kept up to date and relevant to match the needs of groups and individual children they teach

Phonics Teaching and Learning at Townlands C of E Primary Academy

The sounds Write programme begins with the sounds in the language and moves from the sounds to the written word.

Teaching and Learning

Here at Townlands, we are committed to using the Sounds-Write (linguistic phonics) approach to assist the children from EYFS to year 2 to learn to read, write and spell independently with accuracy, understanding and confidence.

The Sounds-Write approach ensures that:

- children develop key concepts about the way English is written
- children practise the skills essential for reading and spelling accurately
- children learn the sounds and the spellings of English

Concepts

Through the Sounds-Write programme children will understand that:

- Letters represent sounds NB: Letters do not 'make' sounds they represent them and, as teachers and learning support assistants, we should be careful that, when we are teaching children to read, we use appropriate phrases to reinforce this e.g. 'what sound do you say for this?' (pointing to letter or letters) not 'what sound does this letter make?'
- A sound can be spelled with 1,2,3 or 4 letters. The English language contains single letter spellings. For example, in the word 'cat' c-a-t. These are relatively simple to read and spell. However, many sounds are spelled with two or more letters e.g. oa in boat, ou in out and igh in high. These present more of a problem for a nonskilled reader and will need to be pointed out by the teacher and practised by the child. It is important to understand that letters don't make sounds, they represent or spell them.
- In English the same sound is often written with different spellings (same sound, different spellings). In English every sound that we say can be represented by at least 2 different spellings. In many cases the number of different spellings of the same sound is much larger; maybe 8 or 9. The sound 's' for example is written in different ways in these words: sat, city, voice, mess, house, listen, scent. There are 44 speech sounds and around 175 different ways to spell those sounds, using a combination of the 26 alphabetic letters. New readers must learn that there are more ways than one to represent the same sound so that they learn to look very carefully in order to spell well.
- In English, the same spelling can spell different sounds. For example, 'd' spells the sound /d/ in dog, /de/ in go and /do/ in do. Readers need to be able to swap sounds (phoneme manipulation) to read the word accurately if another possible sound for that spelling has been tried first.

Skills

Blending - words are composed of sounds, in order to read we need to be able to blend sounds together and at the end 'hear' a meaningful word. Daily practise in the Sounds-Write lessons will develop good blending.

Segmenting - the English written language is a sound > spelling code it is important that children are taught to segment the sounds in words so they can read and spell with ease. Through segmenting, children have the opportunity to notice the ways in which the individual sounds are spelled.

Phoneme Manipulation - skilled readers are able to add, change or omit sounds in words and understand how this manipulation of sounds makes new words. This skill of phoneme manipulation is essential so that a new reader can swap sounds around to deal with same spelling different sound.

Code Knowledge

For skilled fluent reading it is vital that children have a thorough knowledge of the spelling code of the 44 speech sounds of English. The code is taught through multi-sensory activities and lessons where the children are building whole words sound by sound, reading words and writing words. Initially we work with words where the spellings are 1:1 (sound: letter). Later we move to 2 letter spellings and we teach the spelling alternatives for the sounds. In each school year, we extend the number of sounds taught and also the number of spellings covered. Children need to be taught explicitly and extensively how the sounds of English are written. This teaching and learning should be repeatedly revised and reinforced during daily reading and spelling activities. The code should not be allowed to remain a mystery to pupils. The Sounds-Write (linguistic phonics) programme is based on extensive research which has isolated and examined the processes involved in learning to read and spell. Each component of the programme is carefully designed so that the developing reader/writer can be guided by explicit instruction at every critical point.

Through whole class instruction, extension activities, small group practice our children will be equipped with the necessary concepts, skills and knowledge to become independent in reading, writing and spelling. As with all tasks some children will learn more quickly and some will need extra practice and teaching. Each child's progress will be commensurate with their level of ability.

We teach phonics as follows:

EYFS

Autumn Term Initial Code (Sounds-Write Units 1-7)

Introduce an average of two 'new' sounds per week always in the context of word building (i.e. sound to letter) and practised through reading, writing sound swapping, symbol search activities etc. By Christmas (or very shortly after), pupils will understand that two letters can spell one sound (e.g. bell, boss, buzz) and be able to read and spell words containing sounds from Units 1-7.

Spring Term Initial Code (Sounds-Write Units 8 – 11)

Children will be able to read and spell words containing adjacent consonants (four and five sounds). No new sounds/spellings will be introduced at this stage.

By Easter (or shortly after), children will have completed Unit 11 (sh, ch, th, ck, wh, ng, qu)

Summer Term Bridging Lessons into the Extended Code using lesson 6, 7 & 8

Sound /f/ spellings < f ff > Sound /k/ spellings < c k ck q > Sound /l/ spellings < l ll le > Sound /c/ spellings < ch tch > Sound /s/ spellings < s ss > Through the teaching in these lessons children will come to understand that the same sound can be spelled in different ways.

Year One

Extended Code Lessons Unit 1 – /ay/- first spellings

Unit 2 – /ee/- first spellings

Unit 3 – same spelling – different sound

Unit 4 - /oe/ first spellings

Unit 5 – same spelling – different sound

Unit 6 – 'er'- first spellings

Unit 7 /e/ spellings

Continue teaching the concepts, skills and knowledge using Sounds-Write Extended Code Lessons 1-10 taking 1-2 weeks per phoneme unit using Sounds-Write Lessons 6, 7, 8 & 9 and doing Lesson 10 for the grapheme units regularly, throughout the year. By doing Sounds-Write S-W Lesson 10, children will understand that the same spelling in English can represent different sounds.

The term 'first spellings' refers to a limited number of the common ways to spell a sound.

By unit 4 in the Extended Code, children will also begin the work on reading and spelling words of more than one syllable (polysyllabic words). They will start with 2 syllable words and progress to 3 and even 4 syllable words for reading and writing. Sounds-Write Lesson 11,12 and 13 &14 will be used and Lesson 15 to analyse the spelling of polysyllabic words.

Year 2 and 3

We will continue to and revise the sounds and spellings of the Extended Code progressing through the Sounds-Write Units. In many cases we will revisit a sound and cover 'more spellings' (complete list of spellings for a sound). Children will continue to practise reading and spelling poly-syllabic words.

Poly-syllabic Words - Children will be taught that longer words comprise of separate syllables and that within each syllable the sounds are spelled. The syllables can be segmented and blended to read and spell these longer words. The lessons will allow pupils to read and spell 2, 3 and 4 syllable words accurately. Children will be taught about the common schwa (weak vowel) and how to deal with it in reading and spelling.

Reading

The teaching and development of reading skills is prioritised at Townlands to ensure our pupils can access the full curriculum. At Townlands we use Sounds-Write for the teaching of early reading. The books we use show fidelity to the programme these are Dandelion readers and Sounds-Write reading books. We then use the Accelerated Reader Programme to teach reading, vocabulary and comprehension development once the pupils have acquired enough reading skills to be independently accessing texts. Pupils in EYFS begin learning initial sounds and then this is built upon in Year 1. Our aim is that all of our pupils will be able to access Accelerated Reader by the end of Year 2. Where a pupil has been identified as not on track, intervention is put in place through reading support to enable them to catch up and achieve in line with their peers. Pupils that do not pass the phonics screening test in Year 1 are also supported through an intervention programme in Year 2.

Inclusion

At Townlands, all children will be taught phonics daily and through assessment for learning, time will be spent going over misconceptions with any of the groups listed below in order to move the learning forward. These groups, include:

- more-able pupils
- pupils with low prior attainment
- pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds
- pupils with SEND
- pupils with English as an additional language (EAL)

At Townlands we adopt an inclusive attitude.

Phonics across the Curriculum - Children are encouraged to use their phonic skills across all curriculum subjects. We have a strong emphasis on the application of phonic knowledge at the point of reading and writing in all subjects.

Training requirements - Sounds Write is a training programme. All EYFS, Y1 and Y2 teachers attend a four-day course based on the method. The course informs teachers about aspects of delivering the programme. It also allows teachers the opportunity to practise the lessons under the guidance of well-qualified trainers and return to the classrooms ready to begin teaching the method with little further preparation. Each teacher that has completed the training is given a Sounds-Write manual to use when planning.

Phonics Planning - teachers plan in accordance with the Sounds-Write programme but still maintaining revisit- review- teach- apply- assess. Planning ensures each phonics lessons shows evidence of new learning not just consolidation.

Teaching - phonics is taught daily to all children in EYFS, Y1 and Y2 for thirty minutes. Interventions are taught outside of this time.

Assessment and Reporting - Assessment for learning will take place throughout each lesson. At the end of unit children will be assessed on their progress and supportive intervention groups put in place to close the attainment gap. The teacher will pass on the pupil assessment information to the next teacher for the following academic year.

Learning Environment –each classroom from EYFS to Year Two will have a working phonics wall which shows the sounds taught and current sounds being taught. Knowledge organisers also support children with their daily reading and writing.

National Phonic Screening: All children in Year One will be screened using the National Assessment materials in Term 6, end of June. The children in Year One who do not pass the screening will be retested when they are in Year Two. This data will be submitted to the local Authority, and parents will be informed of their child’s score along with the national pass mark.

The Role of the Phonics Coordinator

- Purchase, organise and maintain teaching resources
- Offer advice to colleagues to support the children who need extra intervention
- Manage a delegated phonics budget and keep spending within it
- Being informed about current developments in the subject
- Provide a strategic lead and direction for the subject in the school
- Advise the Head Teacher of any action required (eg resources, standards etc)
- Monitor the standards of children’s phonics and the quality of teaching across the school
- Monitor data submitted to the coordinator

Governor Monitoring

- Keep Governors informed about the progress of phonics across the school, sharing the annual development plan.
- Meet with the Governor responsible for phonics to answer any questions about provision and standards in the subject.

Links with other policies

- English Policy
- Assessment, Feedback and Marking Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- Teaching and Learning Policy