



Teaching Phonics at Hunsbury Park Primary School



INTENT

At Hunsbury Park Primary School, we strive to teach children to read quickly and effectively by following the Phonics programme 'Sounds-Write'. This programme has been acknowledged by the Department for Education as meeting all criteria for an effective phonics teaching programme. We are passionate about all of our staff members being rigorously trained in this programme to ensure consistency in our teaching. In practice, the children learn the 44 common sounds in the English language and are taught how to blend these sounds to decode (read) words. Following this programme enables us to teach reading, spelling and writing to children from when they very first begin at Hunsbury Park in Reception. It is then continued as a daily staple in the children's timetable throughout Year 1 and is fine-tuned with more of a spelling focus in the rest of the year groups.

At Hunsbury Park Primary School, we are extremely dedicated and committed to prioritising Phonics lessons in order to teach children the skills of reading and writing. They are fundamental life skills which ultimately unlock the rest of the curriculum and give children a sense of independence and freedom.

IMPLEMENTATION

The direct teaching of Phonics

Early Reading Skills

In EYFS, Year 1 and Year 2, the children have a Phonics lesson every day. These last for approximately 30 minutes and are taught using a whole-class approach. During these lessons, the children have the opportunity to recap previous learning to embed it, learn new phonemes and graphemes, build words, read words and apply their learning in their writing. The lessons are structured, consistent, well-paced and interactive to allow children to have more opportunities to 'do' than just to 'listen'.

During phonics sessions you would expect to see:

- direct, focused phonics being taught every day in EYFS and KS1
- children reading from books with the sounds they know, while they are learning to read
- teachers and teaching assistants providing extra practice through the week for children who are making the slowest progress
- children reading age-appropriate books
- teachers instilling a love of literature

Sounds-Write

Sounds-Write is effective in teaching pupils to read, spell and write because it starts from what all children know from a very early age – the sounds of their own language. Then, using a very systematic approach, it teaches them how these sounds are coded within our writing system. Children begin their Sounds-Write journey as soon as they begin in Reception. This is because we are committed to unlocking the world of reading as soon as we can. Children will take home a phonetically decodable book, including sounds they have previously been taught.

Across EYFS and KS1, children have a daily phonics lesson following the Sounds-Write programme. The structure and simplicity of Sounds-Write lessons make it a programme accessible to all learners and helps them to make excellent progress with their reading and spelling. The lessons are carefully structured and consistently applied across the Foundation Stage and Key Stage One.

The children are taught to decode and encode through explicit teaching and practice of these skills and concepts:

Skills

- blending
- segmenting
- phonic manipulation

Concepts

- letters are symbols that represent sounds
- sounds can be spelled using 1, 2, 3 or 4 letters
- the same sound can be spelled in more than one way (rain, break, gate, stay)
- many spellings can represent more than one sound (head, seat, break)

Sounds-Write provides opportunities for practising these skills and concepts on an everyday basis until pupils achieve the automaticity required for fluent reading and spelling.

Phonics Screening Check

In the Summer Term of Year 1, children are required to take part in a Phonics Screening Check for the government. It involves them reading 40 words to their teacher from a given booklet. The words are a mixture of real words and 'nonsense' (made-up) words. The pass mark changes each year depending on national results, however usually sits at around 32/40. The children are well prepped for this screening check in class by being given lots of opportunity and practise to decode both real and nonsense words. If children do not pass in Year 1, they will retake the check in Year 2.

When children are ready and they are developing a secure grip of phonics (usually by Year 2) they will be given two books – a phonetically decodable one and a colour banded book. This helps with their transition into KS2 where they continue up the colour banded scheme. This also starts to help their comprehension as the stories that they begin to read are often a little more challenging.

Years 3-6

The Sounds-write phonics and spelling techniques are still followed throughout Hunsbury Park Primary School. However, as the children grow older, the programme content changes slightly. They will continue to learn more about spelling rules and patterns, as well as grammar, and have the opportunities to apply their learning in their writing.

Interventions

The Sounds-Write Phonics programme lends itself well to teaching children in pairs or very small groups. We understand that not all children learn the same way or indeed at the same pace, therefore we are very pro-active about our Phonics intervention programmes. Children who may need some extra teaching or practise to pick up their reading and writing skills will have the opportunity to work with their class teacher or teaching assistant to recap and apply their learning.

IMPACT

By the time children leave Hunsbury Park Primary School to go onto secondary school, they have a secure understanding of phonics and the sounds in the English language. They know that letters are symbols that represent sounds and that sounds can be written using 1, 2, 3 or 4 letters. Through phonics teaching, they understand that sounds can be spelt in more than one way and many spellings can represent more than one sound. From this knowledge, they are able to use their knowledge of these sounds to decode and encode words to read and spell. From their secure phonics knowledge, they develop into competent and confident readers, using their knowledge to read fluently.

