



**Exploring together
Succeeding together**

Phonics Policy

Approved date	September 2024
Review date	September 2025

Contents

Intent

At Hill Avenue Academy, we are dedicated to achieving excellence in the teaching of Phonics. Our aim is to educate all children to the highest levels of academic and personal achievement, fostering confident, happy, and compassionate members of society. We strive to develop each child into a resilient reader, capable of independently reading with fluency and instilling a lifelong love of reading.

Reading is the most important skill children will learn during their early schooling, with profound implications for their confidence and future success. The independent review of early reading by Jim Rose emphasised that high-quality phonics should be the primary method for teaching children to read and spell. It also highlighted the importance of nurturing children's speaking and listening skills from an early age, ensuring that beginner readers are well-prepared for phonic work by the age of five, all within a broad and rich language curriculum.

Phonics is one of many essential skills needed to become proficient readers and writers. We strive to deliver high-quality phonics instruction to provide our children with the best possible start in their reading journey. Mastering phonics forms the foundation of the knowledge and skills necessary for reading. To comprehend texts, children must learn to recognise and decode the words on the page. Effective phonics teaching builds their confidence in word recognition and decoding, enabling them to become resilient readers. This not only allows children to read for pleasure but also equips them with the skills needed to develop higher-order reading comprehension. Our systematic approach to teaching phonics utilises a variety of resources, including multi-sensory tools, to engage all learners in this essential skill set, ultimately contributing to their happiness and success in life.

Our Curriculum Design

Our school follows the systematic approach laid out by Floppy's Phonics Sounds and Letters programme adapted to meet both the requirements of the new National Curriculum, and the needs of our pupils.

At Hill Avenue Academy we understand that our children are entitled to a Phonics curriculum which enables them to:

- gain a progressively deeper understanding of the phonetic structure of the English language.
- apply their phonic knowledge and skills to decode unfamiliar words fluently and accurately.
- read rapidly to apply what they have learned across the whole curriculum.
- create fluent readers, confident speakers, and willing writers.
- develop a life-long love of reading.

Implementation

In alignment with the school's policy and commitment to excellence in Phonics, each Reception and KS1 class will hold a dedicated phonics lesson daily and incorporate phonics instruction into other curriculum areas on a regular basis. The weekly structure of phonics lessons at Hill Avenue ensures comprehensive practice in blending and segmenting phonemes and graphemes, with each lesson thoughtfully designed and tailored to meet the diverse needs of all learners.

Our Approaches to Phonics

At Hill Avenue Academy, we believe that Phonics teaching should be:

- Systematic
- Discrete
- Practical
- Engaging
- Multi-sensory
- Differentiated

Teaching and Learning

At Hill Avenue Academy, children are provided with a range of learning opportunities to develop and enhance their phonics skills across Nursery, Reception, and Key Stage 1. Phonics instruction is also extended into Key Stage 2, when necessary, to support children who need further development in phonetic knowledge and skills.

Daily, discrete Phonics lessons are held across Reception and Key Stage 1, following the structured cycle of 'Assess, Teach, Practise, Apply.' This approach helps children steadily consolidate their phonics knowledge and skills, enabling them to apply these in various contexts. Links between phonetic knowledge and reading and writing are made wherever possible, creating a comprehensive learning experience. Lessons are fast paced, incorporating independent learning opportunities which have been created to be purposeful, develop oracy skills, and reduce children's cognitive load. These activities are carefully selected to foster development in aural discrimination, phonemic awareness, blending and segmenting, as well as grapheme-phoneme correspondence.

Teachers have access to a variety of resources that are suited to each child's learning level, including practical tools such as alphabetic code posters, sound friezes, grapheme tiles, and phonics strips. These are used in every lesson to reinforce learning, with additional resources available to maintain children's interest. Age-appropriate and phase-relevant displays in Reception, Key Stage 1 classrooms, and intervention rooms further support phonics teaching, aiding in the application of skills in reading and writing.

Non-negotiables for teaching and learning of Phonics in KS1

At Hill Avenue we follow the systematic approach laid out in Floppy's Phonics Sounds and Letters, which we have adapted to meet the requirements of the new National Curriculum. Staff complete weekly plans for phonics which ensure progression and effective, high-quality teaching.

In every discrete phonics lesson:

- In each class there will be a focus phoneme for the week for the whole class to be working on.
- All lessons start with a clear learning objective which is linked to the phase of letters and sounds that the year group are working on.
- The learning objective will be called 'WE ARE LEARNING TODAY...'
- The teacher will specify if the phoneme is a 'reading' focus (blending) or a 'writing' focus (segmenting). This will be covered throughout the week so the children can investigate and explore both aspects in and out of context.
- New phonemes will be taught using the correct articulation and terminology and all children will use this terminology in their learning. E.g, phonemes, digraphs, trigraphs, split digraph.
- At the start of every lesson phoneme flashcards are used as a quick warm up to refresh and rehearse previous sounds. These will be chosen based on teacher assessments to target phonemes and graphemes that are gaps within children's learning.
- Lessons follow the structure outlined below through the teaching of skills and sub-skills.
 - **REVISIT & REVIEW:** Revise previously taught sounds and graphemes using flashcards, frieze, and Say the Sounds Posters
 - **TEACH:** Introduce new sound and grapheme using flashcards, frieze, and the Interactive Resources.
 - **PRACTISE:** Pupils practise new and revised sounds and graphemes with Sounds & Letters Books and Activity Sheets
 - **APPLY:** Pupils extend their core skills with words and sentences using Cumulative Texts and Grapheme Tiles
 - **PRACTISE READING:** Pupils read Floppy's Phonics fiction and non-fiction books as independently as possible.
- Feedback will be given throughout the lesson to individuals to move learning forwards and drive progress. Children will be given extensions to learning opportunities for children to apply phonemes in context.

- Adults will impact learning throughout the whole phonics lesson by using questions and reinforcement of key strategies taught with individuals.
- Adults will model and demonstrate new learning with groups/individual children.
- Outcomes to learning will be demonstrated in a variety of ways depending on the strategy/learning opportunity. E,g, multi-sensory resources will support learning in a practical way where appropriate but there will also be opportunities to rehearse and explore writing of key phonemes and words.

The Alphabetic Code

All readers should be taught four skills:

- grapheme-phoneme correspondences in a clearly defined, progressive sequence.
- to synthesise (blend) phonemes in order all through a word to read it.
- to segment words into their phonemes for spelling.
- that blending and segmenting are reversible processes.

English represents the sounds of the language and uses an alphabet to do this. The English language generally has 44 sounds, though this number can vary depending on regional accents.

The alphabetic code refers to the way in which the 26 letters of the alphabet represent those 44 sounds in the English language. In the alphabetic code in English:

- a single phoneme can be represented in different ways, using one, two, three or four letters. For example, the sound /aw/ can be spelt as 'or', 'aw', 'au', 'ore', 'augh' and 'ough'.
- one grapheme can represent different sounds. For example, the diagraph 'ow' sounds different in 'crowd' and 'low'.

In line with the Floppy's Phonics programme, children are taught sounds based on how useful they are rather than alphabetic order, so that children can quickly learn to read and spell words. There are some words which we refer to as 'common exception words' - such as 'the', 'like', 'some', 'once' – which do not follow the usual phonics rules. At Hill Avenue, children are given the opportunities to explore why they are unable to blend and segment, to further develop their metacognition in reading and writing.

A common sequence begins by teaching children how to represent each of the following six sounds by a letter:

Sound	Letter
/s/	s
/a/	a
/t/	t
/i/	i
/p/	p
/n/	n

If these sounds are learnt securely and the children are *also* taught the skill of blending sounds together to read whole words, they can then read (and spell, by segmenting) simple vowel-consonant (VC) words such as 'it', 'in', 'is' and 'at' and consonant-vowel-consonant (CVC) words such as 'sat', 'pin', 'nip', 'net', 'tip'.

The Skills of Blending (reading) and Segmenting (spelling)

Blending and segmenting are reversible processes meaning that if you can blend sounds to read a word, you should be able to segment words to spell. When segmenting, you must be able to match a phoneme (sound) with a grapheme (one, or more, letters).

Blending is a skill which needs to be explicitly taught to children. Often children may be able to identify the phoneme that matches a grapheme in isolation (using a flashcard), but this does not mean that they have the skills to blend multiple phonemes together for reading. At Hill Avenue, children are given the opportunities to explore this skill in a low stakes environment and are provided with further opportunities within a variety of contexts.

Segmenting is the skill of being able to listen to the whole word and identifying the phonemes that they can hear, then choosing an appropriate grapheme to represent this sound. Children are provided daily practise of this skill within their Phonics lessons to develop this skill. Children will use this skill in various contexts throughout the day at Hill Avenue.

Correct Articulation

Correct articulation is vital in aiding children to learn the skill of blending. At Hill Avenue, all staff ensure that sounds modelled are clear, precise, and as accurate as possible, as well as assessing children's pronunciations of each sound. Staff ensure that there are no additional sounds added, for example, the sound /m/ needs to make the sound /mmm/ and not /muh/. This is crucial to develop children's blending skills, as the addition of unnecessary sounds creates difficulty when blending sounds together for reading.

Common Exception Words

At Hill Avenue Academy, we have adapted the language we use with the children, referring to common exception words as "tricky words". This helps children to remember that they are words which are harder to read because we can't blend and segment them like other words.

Children need to learn how to read 'tricky words' by sight. Staff teach children tricky words throughout the week and will spend time on a Friday review lesson helping children to practise their speedy recall of tricky words. This is also a skill that will be practised throughout the week.

At Hill Avenue, children are taught that these tricky words have 'tricky parts' which is why we are unable to blend and segment the sounds, and that this is often due to having not learnt the grapheme-phoneme correspondence yet. For example, in Reception, children will be taught that 'me' is tricky due to the fact they have not yet learnt that the 'e' can make the /ee/ sound yet, and therefore that is the tricky part of the word. In Year 1, children will learn that 'some' is a tricky word because they have not yet learnt that 'o-e' can make the /u/ sound.

Multi-sensory Approaches

At Hill Avenue Academy, we strongly believe that learning opportunities which feature in high-quality Phonics teaching should be multi-sensory. Within our Phonics lessons, we will use simultaneous visual, auditory, and kinaesthetic activities which may include physical movements to copy letters, shapes and sound, and the manipulation of magnetic or other solid letters to build words. Mnemonics, such as a picture of a sun or an apple used for 's' and 'a', are used daily in Phonics lessons to help children memorise grapheme-phoneme correspondence.

Assessment

At Hill Avenue Academy, all staff understand the importance of accurate assessment as an integral part of teaching and learning. We strive to make our assessment purposeful, allowing us to identify children's next steps, as well as allowing us to match the correct books and learning opportunities for to pupils' needs promoting an environment where children are given the opportunities to achieve.

It is the responsibility of the class teacher to conduct, track, and analyse pupil assessments. All teachers are provided with assessment materials, and assessment trackers, which will at a minimum be updated every 6 weeks. For pupils who have been identified as our most vulnerable readers, their assessment trackers will be updated every 3 weeks.

At the end of Year 1, children participate in the Phonics Screening Check (PSC) which assesses their knowledge of grapheme-phoneme correspondence and their skills in blending. This information is used by the school to identify the level of support children require moving forward and is also sent off to the Local Authority. For children who do not meet the end of year expectations during this assessment are identified for further support moving into Year 2 before completing the Phonics Screening Check again at the end of Year 2.

Children who are not able to meet the end of key stage expectations in reading, will be identified to receive targeted support in Key Stage 2. At the point, staff will conduct a reading diagnostic to ensure that the support and intervention provided to children directly supports their gap in reading skills (this could be phoneme-grapheme correspondence, identifying initial, medial, or end sounds, blending skills).

Interventions

Children who require extra support to develop their phonetic knowledge and reading skills within EYFS, Key Stage 1, and Key Stage 2 will be identified and targeted in a timely manner. There are a range of intervention strategies which are matched and used appropriately based on each child's individual needs.

Feedback

Children are provided with constructive and timely feedback in lessons. Teachers provide parents with feedback on their child's progress and achievement at parent's evening and through the end of year report. Assessment information is also passed onto the next teacher as part of transition between year groups and phases.

Organisation of Phonics

The Phonics lead is responsible for Phonics throughout the school. This includes:

- ensuring continuity and progression from year group to year group.
- providing all members of staff with guidelines and a scheme of work (Floppy's Phonics) to show how aims are achieved and how all aspects of Phonics is taught.
- providing training to staff.
- assisting with the requisition and maintenance of resources required for the teaching of Phonics.
- monitoring the quality of teaching and learning in Phonics.

Class teachers are responsible for:

- developing and updating personal phonetic knowledge and skills.
- planning and teaching effective Phonics lessons follow the scheme and outlined guidance, liaising with the Phonics leader when necessary.
- keeping appropriate, on-going records, and passing these on to new teachers during transition periods at the end of the year.
- providing high-quality feedback to pupils and parents of progress, achievement, and attainment.

Inclusion

At Hill Avenue, we ensure that all pupils are given the opportunity to achieve. We do this by ensuring that all learning opportunities are adapted to meet individual needs of those who require the removal of barriers to learning.

Impact

Our curriculum design will lead to excellent progress for all pupils, regardless of their starting points, over time. Planned learning will build on prior knowledge and understanding and will support children in producing outcomes of the highest quality.

End of EYFS

By the end of EYFS children should:

- say a sound for each letter in the alphabet and identify and read at least 10 diagraphs.
- read and understand simple sentences.
- use phonetic knowledge to regular words and read them aloud accurately, and some uncommon words (tricky words).

- use phonetic knowledge to write words in a way which matches how the sounds are said.
- write some irregular words.

End of Year 1

By the end of Year 1 children should be able to

- apply phonetic knowledge and skill as the primary approach to reading unfamiliar words that are not completely decodable.
- read many frequently encountered words automatically.
- read phonetically decodable three-syllable words.
- read a range of age-appropriate texts fluently.
- demonstrate understanding of age-appropriate texts.
- read decodable words that end -s, -es, -ing, -ed, -er, -est.
- say the correct sound to grapheme for all the 40+ phonemes up to Level 5.

End of Year 2

By the end of Year 2, children should be able to:

- read accurately most words of two or more syllables.
- read most words containing common suffixes.
- read and spell most common exception words for Year 2.
- read words accurately and fluently without overt sounding out and blending.
- sound out most unfamiliar words accurately, without hesitation.
- segment spoken words into phonemes and represent that by graphemes.

We will ensure that the curriculum is regularly monitored and reviewed. Senior leaders, middle leaders, subject leaders, and our children will review Phonics. The learning and outcomes will be monitored, and feedback will be given around what is going well and what are the ways to grow.

The quality of education will be evaluated to ensure that it enables children to achieve the highest standards and supports them in being confident, resilient, self-motivated independent learners with the skills to be a lifelong reader.

This policy also needs to be in line with other school policies and therefore should be read in conjunction with the following:

Teaching and Learning Policy

Marking and Feedback Policy

English Policy

Curriculum Policy

Assessment Policy

SEND Policy

Equal Opportunities Policy

Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by staff and Trust Directors/CEO.