

Phonics Curriculum Statement



Intent

At Abbey Village Primary School, we are passionate about ensuring all children become confident and enthusiastic readers and writers. We believe that 'Phonics First' provides the foundations of learning to read and this makes fluent reading and writing easier.

"Synthetic phonics offers the vast majority of young children the best and most direct route to becoming skilled readers and writers." Sir Jim Rose, Rose Review of Reading 2006

Synthetic phonics is simply the ability to change a letter (grapheme) or letter group into sounds (phoneme) that are then blended together into a word. In other words, synthesising (put together/build up) sounds and blend together to make a word.

A Phoneme: You hear.

This is the smallest unit of sound in a word and the sound that a letter or group of letters make.

A grapheme: You see.

The written representation of a phoneme.

Children need to practise recognising the grapheme and saying the phoneme that it represents.

Our structure of the teaching of phonics is derived from the Supersonic Phonic Friends program which includes teaching synthetic phonics, sight vocabulary, decoding and encoding words as well as spelling and accurate letter formation. It outlines six phonic 'phases' or basics as they are known within the scheme, each with new phonemes to be learnt and increasing with difficulty as children progress through the phases. We strongly believe that teaching children to read and write independently is one of the core purposes of primary school. These fundamental skills not only hold the keys to the rest of the curriculum but have a huge impact on each child's future.

Using the Supersonic Phonic Friends program we teach children to:

- Read easily, fluently and with good understanding.
- Develop the habit of reading widely and often, for both pleasure and information.
- Write clearly, accurately, and coherently, adapting their language and style in and for a range of contexts, purposes, and audiences.

Implementation

At Abbey Village, we believe that reading and writing are essential life skills, and we are dedicated to enabling our children to become enthused, engaged, and successful lifelong reader and writers. To support this, we implement the following:

- Daily Phonics sessions, whereby the children learn new phonemes, improve their ability to segment and blend sounds, and their ability to apply this knowledge into their reading and writing.
- Each session has a clear structure that gives an opportunity for children to revisit their previous experience, be taught new skills, practise together and apply what they have learned.
- Whole Class Reading sessions whereby the children are re-exposed to high-quality texts that they can demonstrate their understanding and thinking behind these, which in turn, inspires the children's own writing ability.
- We have a wide range of reading books, phonetically decodable which meet the needs of individual children.
- Phonetically decodable guided reading books are used in daily guided reading sessions.
- Phonetically decodable books are also sent home, where we expect parents/ guardians to read with their child daily and comment on their child's reading behaviours.

In practice, children learn the 44 common sounds in the English language and are taught how to blend these sounds to decode (read) words. As children enter in nursery, they are taught Firm Foundations-Basics 1 . During their Reception year (or if ready in nursery) , they are introduced to Basics Two phonics. Children will continue to embed the skills that are taught in Firm Foundations-Basics 1 of Supersonic Phonic Friends. Children will have experienced a wealth of listening activities, including songs, stories, and rhymes. They will be able to distinguish between speech sounds and many will be able to blend and segment words orally. Children are introduced to 23 new phonemes. During basics 2, children will learn to recognise, form and use these sounds in simple consonant-vowel-consonant (CVC) words to begin to read and write simple words and captions. Once they have conquered this skill, they start reading stories and texts that have words made up of the sounds they know. This means that they can embed and apply their phonic knowledge and start to build their reading fluency. Once secure, the children move on to the next phase whereby they will learn new sounds, improve their reading fluency, and develop a greater writing ability. Throughout this process there is a focus on comprehension, reading with expression and reading for enjoyment.

Throughout Early Years and Key Stage One, children are taught phonics daily in small and focussed groups to target their specific needs, alongside children of the same ability. Children are regularly assessed in their groups, with daily professional dialogue between the teacher and learning support assistant. This ensures that planning meets the needs of all children and that they are confident before moving onto a new phonics phase. Through this effective regular assessment, we ensure that pupils read books that are closely matched to their increasing knowledge of phonics and their ability to read 'tricky words'. They experience early reading success and gain confidence as well as consolidating their increasing phonic knowledge.

Impact

At Abbey Village, children learn to read fluently and effectively. They are confident children who can recommend books to their peers, have a thirst for reading a range of genres, participate in discussions about books, and appreciate the joy and wonder of reading. This is a lifelong skill which will make them secondary ready, and which they will take further into their adult lives. We believe that reading is the key to all learning, and we embed this within our whole curriculum.

The English subject leader is:



Miss Rachel Hopkins
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