



Ghyllside Primary School Phonics Policy

September 2026

We strive to ensure that all children become successful and fluent readers by the end of Key Stage 1. We believe this is achievable through a combination of strong, high quality, discrete phonics teaching combined with a literature-rich approach that promotes a 'reading for pleasure' culture. We aim for all of the children at Ghyllside to leave school at the end of Key Stage 2 with a genuine passion for reading and to have obtained all of the skills they need to tackle any book of their choosing.

Intent - Our Aims

- To establish consistent practice, progression and continuity in the teaching and learning of phonics throughout the school with a focus on quality first teaching.
- To ensure that systematic synthetic phonics is the first approach pupils use to help with their reading and spelling.
- To have robust assessment procedures to check progress and identify pupils in need of intervention.
- For pupils to apply their phonic knowledge in their reading and writing across the whole curriculum.
- For pupils to develop a love of reading and enjoy reading for pleasure, confidently across a range of genres.

Our Objectives:

- For our children to learn to read and write all 44 graphemes in the English language.
- To encourage the use of segmenting and blending so that decoding skills provide a solid foundation for reading, writing and spelling.
- To ensure children have specific strategies to identify and decode common exception words (tricky words).
- To ensure that the teaching of phonics is lively, interactive and investigative.
- To encourage children to apply their phonic skills in all curriculum areas using the correct phonological terms (see appendix)

What is Phonics?

- Phonics is the knowledge of how alphabetic sounds work and how these sounds are combined to correspond to the spoken word.
- It includes the skills of blending for reading and segmentation for spelling.
 - Blending is the skill of building words by merging phonemes together, this is used when reading words.
 - Segmentation is breaking down a word into its component phonemes, this is used when spelling words.
- A phoneme is the smallest unit of sound in a word. It is generally accepted that there are 44 different phonemes in the English language. In phonics the children are taught each of these phonemes and the alternative graphemes (different ways of writing) these phonemes.
- A grapheme is the written symbol of a phoneme; some phonemes are written with two letters – these are called digraphs. Some phonemes are written with three letters – these are called trigraphs.
- Split digraphs are two letters that make one sound, but the letters are not adjacent in a word (they are split by another letter).

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Phonics in the Early Years:

Nursery:

In Nursery, the children are at different levels of development, so those who need additional support, are targeted during free play. Intervention sessions are also delivered in small groups and 1:1. Phonic sessions take a range of forms, including whole group rhyme time, listening games using environmental sounds and instruments, whiteboard activities, oral blending and alliteration, lots of adult modelling and reading and listening to stories. As well as discrete sessions, phonics is modelled and supported throughout all activities during the day.

Reception:

In Reception, the children will be taught using the programme followed in Year One and Year Two. Children are assessed during the autumn term as a baseline and these assessments are revisited throughout the school year, half termly. Children attend the phonics sessions as two carpet groups.

Phonics sessions are taught discretely for at least 30 minutes a day (this will be built up to 30 minutes as children's concentration develops from transition to Reception; **supporting activities are placed in the environment to reinforce the skills learnt.** Lessons take many forms and are designed to be interesting and exciting for the children. These may take the form interactive whiteboard activities, phonic games, reading key words and writing words on individual whiteboards. **Children who require further support will have an opportunity to 'catch up' during continuous provision where adults will be working in an enhanced area targeting those children who have not met the objective taught in the daily discrete session.**

During the children's literacy sessions, phonics skills are revisited as well as sentence structure and independent writing.

Phonics in Key Stage 1:

Year 1:

In Year 1 children continue to learn synthetic phonics using the systematic approach. For our early readers this encompasses a phonics session which works from Phase 3 and works progressively through the different digraphs and trigraphs, we simultaneously teach skills needed for phase 4 when children are ready before starting phase five. Key skills are taught during May to ensure children are phonically aware of obstacles they may encounter when screened. This has proved to be imperative.

Phonic sessions are taught daily and follow a consistent teaching structure across all year groups.

Ghyllside Primary School - Phonics Lesson Structure	
4 part structure	Overview of content
Revisit and Review	- Review recently learned grapheme-phoneme correspondences - Review recently learned 'tricky' or high frequency words - Review the skills of segmenting and blending including oral blending if required
Teach	- Teach new 'tricky' or high frequency words (if Monday) - Teach new grapheme-phoneme correspondences - Use objects/pictures for oral blending with new GPC - Support children with letter formation of new grapheme - Hide and Find / Win It (recognise new GPC amongst known)
Teach	Practise
- Explicitly model how to blend for reading (actions) - Explicitly model how to segment for spelling (actions)	- Children practise blending for reading (Word level or caption level) - Children practise segmenting for spelling. Teacher says whole word, children segment and blend before spelling. (Phoneme frames, magnetic letters whiteboards for word building)
Apply	- Apply newly learned skills in reading and writing (sentence level) - Provide opportunities to apply skills in the learning environment, both indoors and outdoors - Decodable books

During these sessions the children will be taught the phonemes in the specific order, according to Letters and Sounds (used for reference not for teaching aid) and there is daily frequent repetition of previous sounds learnt. These sessions include phonics activities such as break-it-down, say it fast and stretch and read as well as opportunities for the children to write new letters, words and sentences to reinforce their learning. Phonics is differentiated so that all of the children can access the learning, no matter their ability level. The children are assessed regularly throughout the year on their phonological understanding (half termly using the Online Phonics Tracker) and comprehension skills (weekly using the guided reading content domains as formative assessment), this allows teachers to adapt sessions to support the needs of their specific groups.

Year 2:

In year 2, the children continue with phonics. Upon entering year 2, most children have a strong understanding of most phonemes taught, so the programme focuses on revision and application. Lessons follow the same format as Year 1; alongside discrete teaching- the children are given opportunities to write words and sentences to apply the taught sounds and to begin to make comparisons between phonemes that sound the same, but are spelt differently, e.g. wait and wate.

As the children move on to Phase Six the lessons will also include alternative spelling, focusing on word families, spelling patterns and understanding how to select the correct sounds. During the Autumn Term, children will bridge over into the Literacy Leaf 'Spelling Seed', this covers Phase Six spelling patterns.

Key Stage 2:

Pupils will engage in daily 20-minute sessions, these will be led by an experienced adult and provides an opportunity for those pupils to have a high level of phonic intervention. These children will follow the Magic Belt scheme. This has proved to be most beneficial, with children making accerlated progress.

These pupils include the bottom 20% of the class, although some of these pupils may have passed the phonics screening in Year Two, it is paramount that they are given time to consolidate and master the spelling patterns taught in Year Two.

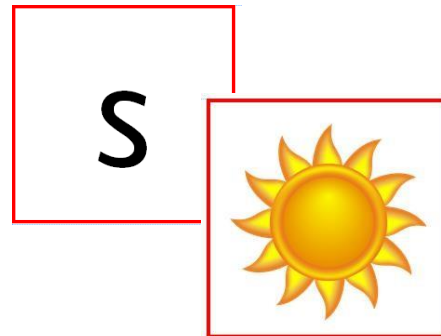
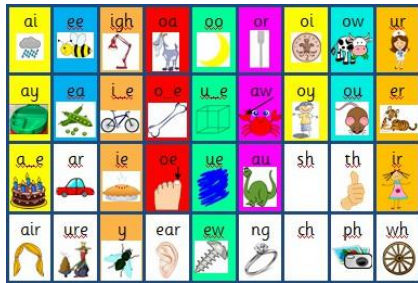
Those children who are still working at the basic phonics level will continue to access independent reading books from the phonics scheme.

Equality and SEND

All of our pupils will have equal access to phonics lessons and resource available. Throughout the school, phonics is a priority for all of our children. All efforts are made to support children with their learning, focusing on specific gaps in learning. Pupils with special needs will be identified and work within their individual level. If needed, they will have an individual action plan and work with support under the direction of the class teacher and SENCO. A range of techniques are used to support these 1:1 or small group sessions, including flash cards, games, stories and online resources.

Classroom environment

In the EYFS and KS1 teachers will develop phonics displays within their classroom which focus on the phonemes and key words they have been focusing on in their phonics sessions. There will be regular opportunities for pupils to engage with these phonics displays and activities in order for them to reinforce their learning from the daily session and for 'over learning' to happen. All EYFS and KS1 classrooms will have a display of the digraphs and tricky words (images below) as appropriate to the year group and ability of the children. Each class will have a set of phoneme flashcards (see below) as appropriate for the year group and ability of the children – these resources are consistent between all year groups.



In Reception and Year 1, phonics based activities will be placed in the continuous provision environment - this will differ from Reception to Year One. Year One have electronic devices and the Interactive Whiteboard where games will be used to consolidate learning.

Tapestry Learning Journal will also be used to share games and good practice with parents at home. Phonics packs are sent home in Year One.



Impact - Assessment

Online Phonics Tracker

Children's progress in developing and applying their phonics knowledge is carefully assessed and monitored using an ongoing Online Phonics Tracker which moves on with the children year on year. Teachers use daily phonics sessions to monitor children's progress and assess children through their writing and reading. The English and Phase leaders will collect in data from these tracker sheets each term to identify the progress children are making throughout the school. It will also allow SLT to identify gaps in learning within classes and year groups and any trends across Key Stages enabling these areas to be addressed.

Year 1 Phonics Screening Check

In the summer term, all children in year 1 will undertake the National Phonics Screening Check. This is an assessment carried out in school during which the children will be assessed on their ability to segment and blend a range of 40 real and 'alien' words. Alien words are a selection of phonetically decodable nonsense words. The words in this assessment will gauge the understanding of the children's understanding of the phonemes learned and give the school the knowledge of where the gaps are. If the children are not secure in recognising, segmenting and blending these words and therefore do not pass the assessment, they will be offered further support as they enter Year 2 and will be able to repeat the assessment in the summer of year 2. This assessment also allows us to put in specific and personal support for those children who require additional assistance. If a child does not meet the expected standard in Year 2 then phonics teaching and learning will be continued into Key Stage 2. At this point, the child will also be monitored by the SENCo to assess for additional needs.

Appendix 1:

Phonics Vocabulary

Word	Definition
Phoneme	The smallest single identifiable sound e.g. the letters 'sh' represent just one sound, but 'sp' represents two /s/ and /p/
Grapheme	A way of writing down a phoneme. It can be made up from one, two, three or four letters. e.g. g, sh, igh, ough
GPC	Grapheme Phoneme Correspondence means being able to match a phoneme to a grapheme and vice versa.
Consonant	A sound represented by any letter of the English alphabet except a, e, i, o, u.
Vowel	A sound represented by a, e, i, o, u.
Digraph	A grapheme containing two letters that makes just one sound (phoneme) e.g. sh, ch, th, ph
Vowel Digraph	Two vowels which together make one sound e.g. ai, oi, oo
Split Digraph	Two letters split making one sound e.g. a-e in make or i-e in site
Trigraph	A grapheme containing three letters that makes just one sound (phoneme) e.g. igh, air, ear
Consonant Blend	Sounds in syllable represented by two or more letters that are blended together without losing their own identities e.g. bl, gr, br, tw

Oral Blending	This involves hearing phonemes and being able to merge them together to make a word. Children need to develop this skill before they will be able to blend written words.
Blending	This involves looking at a written word, looking at each grapheme and using knowledge of GPCs to work out which phoneme each grapheme represents and then merging these phonemes together to make a word. This is the basis of reading e.g. s-n-a-p blended together reads snap
Oral Segmenting	Hearing a whole word and then splitting it up into the phonemes that make it. Children need to develop this skill before they will be able to segment words to spell them.
Segmenting	Hearing a whole word and then splitting it up into the phonemes that make it. Using knowledge of GPCs to work out which graphemes represent those phonemes and then writing those graphemes down in the right order. This is the basis of spelling. e.g. cat has three phonemes /c/ /a/ /t/
Code Chart	The chart with all the possible ways of making one sound.
Sound Lines	The line that goes under each sound. e.g. c a t has three sound lines sh i p also has 3 sound lines.
Mnemonic	A device for memorising and recalling something.