Phonics Overview

Intent

Why do we teach Phonics?

Reading is an essential life skill, therefore at Downsview we aim to ensure that every child is confident with reading fluency and comprehension in order to successfully access their next year group/ key stage and beyond. We develop a passion for reading to ensure a lifelong habit.

At Downsview we teach systematic synthetic phonics (SSP) based on the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised programme, which was accredited by DfE in July 2021 and meets the core criteria for effective teaching of early reading, as set out in the Department of Education's 'The reading framework: teaching the foundations of literacy.' Little Wandle enables us to have high expectations for children's learning in phonics, which is essential for children to get off to a fast start with reading from Reception. In Reception and Year 1, we provide daily engaging phonics lessons and we plan 'keep up' sessions for any children who need to consolidate their learning.
In phonics, children learn that the 26 letters of the alphabet represent sounds and that letters in combination can represent different sounds. For example, we teach the sounds for 'c' and 'h' and that a different sound is made by the letters together in a digraph 'ch': a digraph is two letters representing one sound. There are 44 sounds in the English language and over 140 combinations of letters that represent those sounds in words. The children learn to recognise all of the different sounds and combinations that they might see when they are reading or writing.

In Nursery, our children follow Foundations for Phonics, which enables them to start to listen to the sounds in spoken words. In Reception, children start to learn to link spoken sounds to letters, or graphemes, in phase 2, which is initially single letter sounds. From Reception, children learn sounds in a very specific sequence that allows our children to build on their previous phonic knowledge and master specific phonic strategies as they move through school. As a result, we aim for all of our children to be able to tackle any unfamiliar words that they might encounter in reading or writing. Alongside these phonic lessons, we teach children how to apply their phonic skills in whole class shared reading and in practice reading sessions with small groups of children. In English we use the 'Talk for Writing' approach which has a strong focus on the development of language skills, because we know that speaking and listening are crucial skills for reading and writing in all subjects.

Implementation

- In Nursery, children follow the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised 'Foundations for Phonics' guidance. The focus is on daily oral blending and language development through high quality stories and rhymes.

- In Reception and Y1, children follow the progression within the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised programme. Phonics is taught daily and there is a review session on a Friday.
- Phonics starts in Reception in week 2, to ensure the children make a strong start.
- By the end of Reception, children will have been taught up to the end of phase 4. Reception lessons start at 10 minutes, with daily additional oral blending – increasing, as and when appropriate, to up to approximately 30 minutes.
- By the end of year 1, children will have been taught up to the end of phase 5. Each session is up to 30 minutes long.
- In Y2 and Y3, phonics lessons are taught daily to children where appropriate – following the model of Little Wandle but plugging specific gaps identified through assessment.
- In Year 2 some children will review Phase 5 Phonics lessons, if required and some children will move onto Fluency reading
- From Y2 to Y6 there are planned phonic 'catch-up' sessions following a set model to address specific reading/writing gaps. These are short, sharp sessions lasting 10-15 minutes in length and are planned to take place at least three times a week.
- In Reception and Year 1 the learning environments and weekly challenges are set to provide children with opportunities to both practise and apply their phonic knowledge.

Application of phonics to reading

To ensure pupils can apply their phonics to reading, the SSP provides children with three 15-minute reading sessions, with a focus on decoding, prosody and comprehension. In addition to this, pupils are exposed to high quality texts across the curriculum to support opportunities for the application of their phonic knowledge.

Documents / links:

Pronunciation guides and video links:

Parent and carers guide to pronouncing phonemes - YouTube

Phase 2 sounds taught in Reception Autumn 1 - YouTube

Phase 2 sounds taught in Reception Autumn 2 - YouTube

Phase 3 sounds taught in Reception Spring 1 - YouTube

Year 1 phonics workshop PowerPoint:

Year 1 Phonics presentation for parents

Reading practise sessions

- Children in Reception begin to apply their phonics knowledge to reading by using fully decodable reading books in small group reading practice sessions as soon as they can blend sounds together to read words.

- The practice reading sessions start with a focus on children using their phonic skills and knowledge to decode words but also involves reading with fluency and understanding.
- In Reception and Year 1 we use sets of Big Cat books that are matched to (the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised programme) our phonics programme. There are up to 6 children in a group and each group will have a weekly reading practice session. Some children will have additional one-one reading.
- When children have met the end of Y1 phonics standard and they can read phase 5 books fluently they will move onto our sets of readers to build fluency and read more widely for pleasure and enjoyment.
- Those children having 'Catch up' sessions in Key Stage Two also participate in practise reading sessions using 'high interest, lower reading age' phonic based books.
- Our Nursery children have small group reading sessions using picture books. They are encouraged to describe and discuss what is happening in the pictures and to answer simple questions about these.

Phonics assessment

- In Reception and Year 1, at the end of each week there is a review session, which recaps the learning. There are also whole review weeks (pre-planned and bespoke review weeks to address gaps identified by the class teachers' ongoing formative assessment).
- Teachers use their daily assessment to target children who may need additional practise with the daily learning on the same day, as far as possible. If children are identified as being in danger of falling behind or having gaps in their phonic knowledge, 'keep up' sessions are put in place our progression (the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised programme), so that there is fidelity in the programme.
- In Reception and Year 1, the children are assessed at the end of every half term using our agreed assessment format (the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised assessments).
- Any children who are new to the school, will undertake an assessment to establish their starting points.
- The children in Year 1 do the statutory Phonics Screening Check (PSC) in the Summer term, which involves reading a set of words to assess how well they can decode.
- Children who do not meet the standard of the PSC in Y1 will have additional teaching and take this again in Y2.
- Children who need to consolidate their phonics skills beyond Y2 will need 'catch up' sessions which will be assessed to establish any gaps so that the lessons can be tailored to what is needed.

Fluency Reading

We want all children to have the secure phonic knowledge needed to be able to read. But being a fluent reader is so much more. We need to make teaching reading our priority so that every child can unlock all aspects of reading. Fluency Reading is for children who have completed and have strong Phonics knowledge in all phases and are secure at reading the final Phase 5 level of books. We want children to become readers who can bring the text alive in their minds and voices. We teach prosody in every Fluency reading lesson, building on the familiar practice from the Little Wandle core programme reading practice sessions. We know teaching prosody helps children to understand the text at a deeper level and connect to language – it makes the meaning of the words come alive for them as readers. The supportive teaching notes for

each lesson help you to teach prosody with a clear focus, so you and the children gain a repertoire of prosody practice. Each Fluency lesson includes repeated reading. We have chosen the activities we believe have the biggest impact and are easiest to implement in a group. They are:

- echo reading
- rehearsed reading
- Emotion reading
- marking up texts for reading with prosody

Reading for pleasure and enjoyment

Alongside phonics teaching, at Downsview we prioritise reading for pleasure and enjoyment because the research shows that both frequent reading and reading for pleasure and enjoyment lead to higher achievement at school. Each Early Years and Key Stage One classroom has a book corner containing a wide selection of engaging fiction and non-fiction texts and the children have access to these during the free-flow sessions. At these times we find that the children read to each other, re-telling the stories by looking at the pictures of story books and re-enactments in our role play areas. To encourage children to read for pleasure we share stories with the children throughout the day and they are encouraged to take books home to share with their families.

Supporting your child with their Phonics and Early Reading

- Reading at home helps children to build their reading stamina, develop their comprehension and expand their 'vocabulary bank'. Depending on which year group children are in, they will bring home decodable books to practise their phonics skills, or, when phonic skills are fluent, books that are arranged in a gradient of challenge reflecting their developing reading stamina, level of understanding and age interest.
- The phonics based books that come home from school should be read fluently, about 95% word perfect, so that the focus can be on what the book is about and enjoying the reading.
- Our Collins Big Cat e-library subscription gives you access to the books we use in our practise reading sessions.
- Phonics activities that reinforce what has been taught in school.
- Reading to your child is also extremely important and the children will be encouraged to also bring home a 'reading for pleasure' book. These can be changed on an ongoing basis.
- Parents play an important role in supporting children with their reading, just by hearing them read, reading to them and talking to them about the book.

Documents / links:

Early reading guide for parents document - Early Reading at Home Guide
How we teach blending - How we teach blending - YouTube
How we teach tricky words - How we teach tricky words - YouTube
What are alien words? - Quick guide to Alien words - YouTube

Additional resources and support

Documents / links:

Capital letter formation guide - Capital letter formation

lower case letter formation guide -

Lowercase letter formation and pronunciation guide Part 1

Lowercase letter formation and pronunciation guide Part 2

Useful website links - Phonics play and Mr Thorne's phonics

PhonicsPlay

Mr T's Phonics - YouTube

Impact- Our expectations

Phonics and Early Reading Expectation

		Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
Nursery		Phonological Awareness and Nursery Rhymes	Phonological Awareness and Nursery Rhymes	Phonological Awareness and Nursery Rhymes	Phonological Awareness and Nursery Rhymes	Phonological Awareness and Nursery Rhymes	Phonological Awareness and Nursery Rhymes Begin to introduce Phase 2
Reception		Phase 2	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 3	Phase 4	Phase 4
Year 1		Recap Phase 2 to 4 and introduce Phase 5	Phase 5	Phase 5	Phase 5	Phase 5	Phase 5
Year 2		Phase 5 Phonics reviewed for those who need it Fluency Reading	Phase 5 Phonics reviewed for those who need it Fluency Reading	Phase 5 Phonics reviewed for those who need it Fluency Reading	Phase 5 Phonics reviewed for those who need it Fluency Reading	Phase 5 Phonics reviewed for those who need it Fluency Reading	Phase 5 Phonics reviewed for those who need it Fluency Reading

Impact

To ensure fidelity to the program and consistency throughout the school, leaders ensure that:

- Staff receive regular training
- Half termly assessments are monitored place appropriate intervention planned
- Parents are provided with information throughout the year about how to support their child
- Learning walks provide opportunities for both formal and informal feedback
- We regularly invest in new literature for reading for pleasure