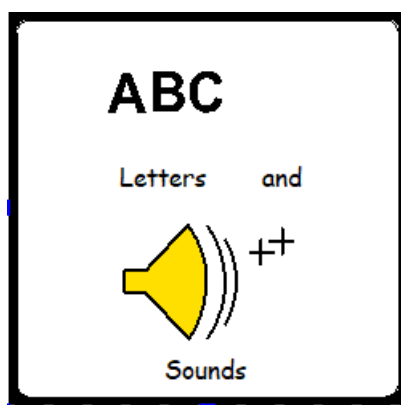


Phonics Policy



Community Special School



November 2020

To be reviewed September 2022

Rationale:

At Alfreton Park we are passionate that our pupils should have an equal opportunity to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding of phonics and we see this as a key component of our holistic approach to developing communication skills. However, we also strongly believe that equal opportunity does not necessarily mean the same. The SEN Code of Practice (2014) emphasises the requirement for teachers to identify and provide *appropriate* interventions for pupils with SEND. We feel that where a child has not grasped the letter or sound that the focus needs to be on a different area of communication. Phonics should be taught whilst developing other skills; e.g. reading, speaking and listening. It is important to go at a pace that has meaning to them as individuals.

What is phonics?

Phonics is a method for teaching reading and writing of the English language by developing learners' ability to hear, identify, and manipulate phonemes in order to teach the correspondence between these sounds and the spelling patterns that represent them. Put simply, it is about teaching *letters* (graphemes) and *sounds* (phonemes).

How is phonics taught?

The teaching of letters and sounds forms one part of our overall approach to communication. It may be taught through 'Communication Time' in some classes, this may consist of a number of elements: phonics (letters and sounds), reading, signing, speaking/listening and as previously stated should be supported by a range of communication strategies as appropriate to the specific needs of the individual(s).

Ruth Miskin, the creator of 'Read Write Inc.' programmes work because we get children's brain '**COGS**' working: Everything **CONNECTS**: children connect sounds with mnemonic pictures; words with their meanings; and stories with the sounds they know. They connect their own experiences to the stories they read and learn to lift the words off the page.

Children learn **ONE** thing at a time and practise it until it becomes second nature. Interactive practice keeps children focused, and their capacity to learn develops exponentially. They learn at their **GOLDILOCKS** spot (not too easy, not too hard) with others at a similar challenge level. No time is wasted. Children remember what they learn by **SAYING** it out loud to a partner. If they can't explain it, the teacher repeats it until they can. What's more, our teachers are trained so they have capacity to show love for what they do. The more they love teaching, the more the children love learning.'

What are our expectations?

The following principles are our minimum expectations:

- Phonics should be addressed and shared when appropriate throughout the school day, including during 'Communication Time'.
- Staff should adopt a hybrid and age appropriate approach to teaching Read Write Inc. Phonics.
- Phonics should be taught throughout the week, but not necessarily as a discrete session.
- Read Write Inc. should be reinforced by Makaton signs only (i.e. not Jolly Phonics signs).
- Teaching should be differentiated to meet the specific developmental needs of pupils.
- Read Write Inc. should be taught through a multi-sensory approach and in a way that engages pupils.

How will these expectations be monitored?

The implementation of the policy will be monitored through learning walks, staff meetings, teaching and learning audits and lesson observations.

Reviewed November 2020 Charlotte Young