The Brickfields Trust

Phonics Policy

Lawford Mead Primary & Nursery School

2025

The Brickfields Multi Academy Trust is a company registered in England and Wales.
Company Number: 10538130

Lawford Mead Primary & Nursery School Phonics Policy

Relationship to other policies:

- Curriculum policies
- EYFS Policy
- SEND and Inclusion policies
- English as an Additional Language policy
- Equality Scheme
- Homework policy

Introduction

At Lawford Mead Primary and Nursery School, we believe in teaching high quality phonics as the prime approach to ensure all children become fluent readers and writers.

Aims

- To provide a consistent approach to the teaching of phonics in EYFS and KS1
- Provide equal opportunities for all pupils to achieve success in phonics.
- Ensure all children have access to high quality phonics teaching which is tailored to meet their individual needs.
- Ensure children progress through the scheme enabling them to effectively apply their skills to reading and writing.
- To work in partnership with parents.

Objectives

- All staff have the knowledge, understanding and skills to teach high quality phonic sessions.
- Phonic sessions are taught systematically ensuring progression.
- High quality planning leads to good outcomes for all children.
- Assessment and tracking are used to effectively inform planning.
- Phonic skills are applied across the curriculum.
- Parents have an understanding of the school's approach to teaching phonics to effectively support their child's learning at home.

The Curriculum

At Lawford Mead Primary and Nursery School, we use Essential Letters and Sounds (ELS), a Systematic Synthetic Phonics (**SSP**) programme, validated by the Department for Education. The school began implementing this programme in September 2022.

Essential Letters and Sounds

Essential Letters and Sounds (ELS) is our chosen Phonics programme. The aim of ELS is 'Getting all children to read well, quickly'. It teaches children to read by identifying the phonemes (the smallest unit of sound) and graphemes (the written version of the sound) within words and using these to read words.

Children begin learning Phonics at the very beginning of Reception and it is explicitly taught every day during a dedicated slot on the timetable. Children are given the knowledge and the skills to then apply this independently.

Throughout the day, children will use their growing Phonics knowledge to support them in other areas of the curriculum and will have many opportunities to practise their reading. This includes reading 1:1 with a member of staff, with a partner during paired reading and as a class.

Children continue daily Phonics lessons in Year 1 and further through the school to ensure all children become confident, fluent readers.

We follow the ELS progression and sequence. This allows our children to practise their existing phonic knowledge whilst building their understanding of the 'code' of our language GPCs (Grapheme Phoneme Correspondence). As a result, our children can tackle any unfamiliar words that they might discover.

Children experience the joy of books and language whilst rapidly acquiring the skills they need to become fluent independent readers and writers. ELS teaches relevant, useful and ambitious vocabulary to support each child's journey to becoming fluent and independent readers.

We begin by teaching the single letter sounds before moving to diagraphs (two letters spelling one sound, e.g. 'sh'), trigraphs (three letters spelling one sound, e.g. 'igh') and quadgraphs (four letters spelling one sound, e.g. 'eigh').

We teach children to:
• Decode (read) by identifying each sound within a word and blending them together to read fluently
• Encode (write) by segmenting each sound to write words accurately.

The structure of ELS lessons allows children to know what is coming next, what they need to do, and how to achieve success. This makes it easier for children to learn the GPCs we are teaching (the alphabetic code) and how to apply this when reading.

ELS is designed on the principle that children should 'keep up' rather than 'catch up'. Since interventions are delivered within the lesson by the teacher, any child who is struggling with the new knowledge can be immediately targeted with appropriate support. Where further support is required, 1:1 interventions are used where needed. These interventions are short, specific and effective.
Children will only read books that are entirely decodable, this means that they *should* be able to read these books as they already know the code contained

within the book. We only use pure sounds when decoding words (no 'uh' after the sound).

We want children to practise reading their book 4 times across the week working on these skills:

Decode – sounding out and blending to read the word.

Fluency – reading words with less obvious decoding.

Expression – using intonation and expression to bring the text to life!

We must use pure sounds when we are pronouncing the sounds and supporting children in reading words. If we mispronounce these sounds, we will make reading harder for our children.

Find more information and support for parents/carers at:
https://home.oxfordowl.co.uk/reading/reading-schemes-oxford-levels/essential-letters-and-sounds/
https://www.lawfordmead.essex.sch.uk/parents/phonics

ELS Overview – Phase 1 to Phase 5

Phase 1*	Phase 2	Phase 3**
Nursery/Pre-School Seven aspects: • Environmental sounds • Instrumental sounds • Body percussion • Rhythm and rhyme • Alliteration • Voice sounds • Oral blending	*Reception/Primary 1 Autumn 1* • Oral blending • Sounding out and blending with 23 new grapheme-phoneme correspondences (GPCs) • 12 new harder to read and spell (HRS) words	*Reception/Primary 1 Autumn 2, Spring 1 and Spring 2* • Oral blending • Sounding out and blending with 29 new GPCs • 32 new HRS words • Revision of Phase 2
Phase 4**	**Phase 5 including alternatives and lesser-known GPCs**	**Beyond Phase 5**
Reception/Primary 1 Summer 1 • Oral blending • No new GPCs • No new HRS words • Word structures – cvcc, ccvc, ccvcc, cccvc, cccvcc • Suffixes • Revision of Phase 2 and Phase 3	*Reception/Primary 1 Summer 2* • Introduction to Phase 5 for reading • 20 new GPCs • 16 new HRS words *Year 1/Primary 2 Autumn 1 and 2* • Revision of previously taught Phase 5 GPCs • 2 new GPCs • 9 new HRS words *Year 1/Primary 2 Spring 1 and 2* • Alternative spellings for previously taught sounds • 49 new GPCs • 4 new HRS words • Oral blending • Revision of Phase 2, Phase 3 and Phase 4	*Year 1/Primary 2 Summer, Year 2/Primary 3 and Key Stage 2* • With ELS, phonics teaching does not stop at the end of Year 1, but continues as children move through the school, with links being made between their GPC knowledge and spelling • Revision of all previously taught GPCs for reading and spelling • Wider reading, spelling and writing curriculum

**Phase 1 of Letters and Sounds (2007) can be used in Nursery/Pre-School settings before starting ELS in Reception and can still be used throughout the school day in Reception. However, direct phonics teaching – the teaching of sounds, graphemes, word reading and vocabulary – must start from the very beginning of Reception.*

***Phase 3 of ELS covers more than just the Phase 3 graphemes – we introduce some challenge from Phase 4 (in the form of adjacent consonants) alongside the Phase 3 teaching to extend children's sounding out and blending skills.*

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Phonics across the curriculum

Children are encouraged to apply their phonic skills across all curriculum subjects. All teachers and support staff model the correct articulation of the phonemes and use linked actions to prompt use of phonemes. Children are given opportunities to articulate individual phonemes and use actions when necessary. We have a strong emphasis on the application of phonic knowledge at the point of learning. Children are encouraged to access support resources independently.

Planning and Assessment

The school follows the ELS guidance for planning and assessment.

National Phonic Screening and Reporting

All children in Year 1 will be screened using the National assessment materials in the summer term. If the children in Year 1 do not meet the requirements of the screening, it will be repeated in Year 2. This data is submitted to the local authority and reported to parents at the end of the academic year.

The Role of the Phonics Lead/s

- To monitor the quality of teaching and learning of phonics across the school.
- To plan strategically to improve standards in phonics.
- To lead in the implementation of new developments/strategies.
- To ensure staff have the opportunity for CPD to develop their skills.
- To ensure resources, including the use of support staff, are deployed effectively in phonic sessions.

Equal Opportunities

The teaching of phonics will be in accordance with the present policy for equal opportunities. We aim to provide equal access to phonics for those children with special educational needs and for whom English is an additional language. We also acknowledge the need to ensure more able children are appropriately challenged.

Professional Development

We believe that continuing professional development for all staff features highly in the school improvement plans to aid the development of children. All school staff receive regular CPD opportunities including regular updates in best practice. All aspects of phonics are monitored by the Phonics Lead/s on a regular basis as part of the cycle of the leadership team. Performance management targets are also set within the agreed guidelines.

Monitoring and Review

Designated members of staff:

- Phonics Lead teacher/s
- EYFS and KS1 Phase Leads
- Head of School

This policy will be formally reviewed by the Local Governing Committee on an annual basis or earlier if new guidance becomes available.