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| **Phonics at Heathcoat Primary School** |

**Intent**

At Heathcoat Primary School, we strive to teach children to read accurately and quickly, using the Fast Phonics and Spell It programmes; a systematic approach to teaching synthetic phonics based on the grapheme-phoneme correspondences (letter sounds) outlined in Phases two to six of the Letters and Sounds programme. As part of the programmes, children are taught how to use their developing knowledge of letter sounds to accurately decode the printed word, as well learning to read an increasing number of common exception words on sight. The programmes place an emphasis on using letter sounds to encode words, progressing from making phonetically plausible attempts to making more accurate grapheme choices to increase spelling accuracy. We believe that reading and writing are fundamental life skills that underpin the entire curriculum and impact on children’s self-esteem as well as their success in all aspects of the curriculum. We are, therefore, passionate about teaching children to read and write independently and as quickly as possible. Using the Fast Phonics and Spell It programmes, we teach children to:

* Read accurately, fluently and with good understanding.
* Develop the habit of reading widely and often, both for pleasure and information.
* Write accurately and coherently in a range of contexts.

**Implementation**

To support our children to read and write successfully, and with enthusiasm, we implement the following:

* Daily phonics sessions, where children learn new phonemes (sounds) and the letters that make those sounds (graphemes). Children increase the accuracy and speed with which they segment and blend with these sounds so that they can decode and encode with confidence.
* Guided Reading sessions, where children are grouped and exposed to appropriately levelled texts so that they can apply their phonics skills and knowledge with increasing confidence and competence, as well as developing their understanding of the text. As part of developing their comprehension skills, children are taught to clarify word meaning, make predictions and simple inferences, and summarise the key events or information in the text.
* Children have a reading book that is appropriate for their reading ability, working through the school’s Phonics Bug reading scheme before beginning Accelerated Reader in Key Stage Two.
* Children are expected to read regularly at home and comments are recorded in their reading record. Some children, depending on their need, will also be heard by school-based adults, including teaching assistants and reading volunteers. On levels Pink to Green, children read each book three times to develop their confidence and fluency; twice on levels Orange to Gold, and once on White level and above.
* Children in every year group are read to by their teacher every day, using the Pie Corbett reading spine as a starting point. Teachers and children supplement the reading spine with additional texts of interest, including non-fiction texts linked to previous or current topics. During the daily shared read, teachers strive to engender word curiosity and word consciousness by clarifying the meaning of vocabulary, using etymology and morphology where appropriate. Newly-acquired vocabulary is displayed on the class vocabulary wall.

In practice:

* Children learn the letter sounds and common exception words outlined in the English National Curriculum (2014).
* Starting in Nursery, children use Phase One of the Letters and Sounds programme to develop their sound discrimination, listening to sounds in their immediate environment and sounds created by themselves. Children also develop their phonemic awareness (aural aspects of language) by listening for the sounds in words while sound talking (segmenting and blending) them. Children in Nursery develop their phonological awareness (oral aspects of language) through opportunities to talk, listening to stories and hearing high quality spoken language. Developing good phonological awareness and phonemic awareness sets the foundations for phonics learning later in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
* In Reception, children begin the Fast Phonics programme, which introduces children to an increasing repertoire of sounds (phonemes) and the letters (graphemes) that make them. Children will use these sounds to decode (read) and encode (write) simple consonant-vowel-consonant (CVC) words and captions. As they acquire more sounds, the children learn to read and write more complex words, such as consonant-consonant-vowel-consonant (CCVC) and consonant-vowel-consonant-consonant words (CVCC). The children will be taught single graphemes, digraphs and trigraphs as outlined in Phases 2 and 3 of Letters and Sounds.
* Children are taught in their class by their class teacher with appropriate support provided by the teaching assistant. In addition to targeted questioning, the reading and written activities are differentiated. Therefore, all children have access to the curriculum while being appropriately challenged and supported.
* Teachers and teaching assistants engage in ongoing, formative assessment as well as half-termly summative assessments to identify gaps in the children’s knowledge and skills so that they can be supported to keep up with the curriculum. Children identified as struggling to keep up access a phoneme flash card intervention or a common exception word intervention. Some children also access individual speech programmes to support them with the articulation of phonemes that increases the clarity of their speech and the accuracy of their decoding and encoding using the phonemes taught.
* In Reception, children begin the reading scheme and progress through the coloured reading bands as their phonics knowledge increases and their skills develop. While children are taught to decode unfamiliar words using their phonics knowledge, they are encouraged to read familiar words on sight so as to increase their fluency and pace. There is also a focus on comprehension, reading with expression and reading for enjoyment. Children are benchmarked regularly using running records to assess their reading ability so that their reading books offer enough challenge. Children take their books home each day and return them the following day. Teachers and teaching assistants hear the children read their books on a one-to-one basis once a week, with target reading being heard at least twice a week.
* In Years One and Two children learn a greater range of common exception words and alternative graphemes, equivalent to Phase 5 of Letters and Sounds, to represent the phonemes they have learnt in the Early Years. In Key Stage One, there is a greater emphasis on spelling, whereby children are taught to make more appropriate grapheme choices using their increasing knowledge of spelling patterns.
* The Spell It programme adopts a formulaic approach, using a small range of activities, such as phoneme spotters, to read and spell words containing the grapheme-phoneme correspondences outlined in the National Curriculum. The increased focus on spelling patterns develops the children’s sense of which graphemes look right in words, which supports their proofreading and editing skills in Key Stage Two. The spelling emphasis is reiterated in English and topic lessons, whereby children are taught to become independent spellers through the use of phonics resources, such as sound mats and learning walls. Children are also given opportunities to encode words correctly by respond to marking that includes incorrect spellings.
* Reading in Key Stage One is initially taught in phonics lessons as children practise decoding using the focus graphemes. The reading books issued to children are closely matched to their phonics knowledge and reading ability, and children progress through the coloured book bands as they gain in confidence and competence both in their reading and their comprehension. Children take their books home each night and they are changed when they have completed one, two or three reads, depending on the coloured band.
* Children access weekly guided reading session based on the Babcock model; pre-read, first and second reads with a teacher and teaching assistant, and then a post-reading task. The sets of books used for the guided reading sessions are closely matched to the children’s reading ability and children are grouped by their reading ability. Reading is further supported by one-to-one reading with a school-based adult, who listen to children read their colour banded reading book. Before progressing to the next coloured band, children do a running record to assess their readiness for the next band. As in the Early Years, children in Key Stage One enjoy a daily class read, read by their class teacher, which is also linked closely to vocabulary acquisition and language development.
* Children in Year One, and those re-taking the Phonics Screening Check in Year Two, complete a mock Phonics Screening Check in February and April, the results of which determine the targeted support that the children receive to help them keep up with their phonics curriculum.
* In Year One, the children are streamed based on their attainment in reading in the Early Years, which those achieving a Good Level of Development beginning the Spell It pathway. For children who have struggled to learn and consolidate Phases 2, 3 and 4 during the Fast Phonics programme, they spend the autumn term revisiting Phases 2, 3 and 4 at a pace more appropriate to their learning needs. Once the children are more secure with these foundations in phonics, they begin learning the alternative graphemes outlined in Phase 5 of Letters and Sounds, with more of a focus on reading.

In 2017, 2018 and 2019, just over 80% of children passed the Phonics Screening Check at the end of Year One, which is in line with the national average. Children who do not pass the Phonics Screening Check make good progress based on their starting points and re-take the test at the end of Year Two.

**Impact**

Children will:

* Be enthusiastic and competent readers by the time they finish Key Stage One.
* Have read a range of genres and enjoy talking about the books that they have read and heard.
* Make appropriate grapheme choices when writing words to increase the accuracy of their spelling, including using prefixes and suffixes correctly.