

Approaches to reading at Yenton Primary School

At Yenton primary School our children undertake systematic learning in phonics using a synthetic approach throughout Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. Phonics is viewed as the key strategy that provides the route into early reading and writing rather than a subject in its own right.

In Foundation Stage sounds are introduced using Jolly Phonics and then children are moved to a broader approach using Phonics Play planning to teach Letters and Sounds which then forms the basis for the teaching of phonics in Years 1 and 2.

Phonics are taught through short and highly interactive sessions every day. The focus for each day is then reinforced and applied across the curriculum throughout the week. In Years 1 and 2 vertical grouping allows for a narrow focus on a specific phonics phase based on attainment and progress rather than age.

Regular assessment and tracking of individual progress allows children to be moved between groups to match to ongoing needs.

The Year 1 phonics test in 2012 provided data that led to some changes to the teaching of phonics in our school, eg the introduction of 'nonsense words', the introduction of formal phonics teaching into Term 1 in Foundation Stage.

We plan for children to complete Phase 5 by the end of Year 1 and Phase 6 by the end of Year 2. However we recognise that some children experience difficulties and make slower progress than expected and that some children will still be working in the lower phases by the end of Years 1 and 2.

All staff involved in the teaching of phonics groups have been appropriately trained in order to provide a consistency of approach throughout the school.

In KS2 a small number of children who have not completed Phase 6 continue to have a regular phonics teaching input through intervention groups and we note that these children will invariably also be experiencing delays in reading and writing.

For the majority of children who have completed Phase 6 by the time they reach Year 3 phonics is one of a wider range of strategies used by children to become effective readers and writers. The school has made, and will continue to make, regular use of the matched funding opportunities to develop and improve resources to promote the successful teaching of phonics including the use of interactive phonics websites.

There is now a substantial stock of reading books used at KS1 that are explicitly linked to the initial phases of phonics. There are also further stocks of books that are not explicitly phonics band based that have been cross referenced to ensure that they provide appropriate material for the teaching of reading once children understand the basic phonic code. We believe it is essential that children are exposed to a variety of texts and their associated challenges.

The key reading schemes used in school to provide phonically decodable texts for the earlier phases of phonics are currently are Oxford Reading Tree, Songbirds and in the future we will be introducing Bug Club; but we are constantly looking to expand and improve our resources and encourage our children to read at home.