

# Priors Hall – a learning community

## Phonics and Early-Reading Policy

“The more you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you'll go.”

Theodor Seuss Geisel



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Approved: 1st September 2020

Review: 1st July 2021

### **Introduction**

Priors Hall – a learning community, has a clear, consistent, whole school approach to the teaching of

phonics and early reading. We follow the Letters and Sounds programme for phonics and strive to provide a language rich environment for children so that they are immersed in literature and vocabulary. We want children to love reading and be curious of print.

We believe that high quality teaching of phonics is the key to developing independent readers and during the first years of school, phonics teaching is given the highest priority. We want 'every child to be a reader' and we implement a very rigorous and sequential approach to developing speaking and listening and teaching reading, writing and spelling through systematic phonics.

Letters and Sounds teaches children aural discrimination, phonemic awareness and rhyme awareness. It encourages good spelling, through repetition and consolidation so that spelling becomes automatic. We encourage children to segment word to spell and blend words to read.

### **Aims**

- To present high quality systematic phonic work as the prime approach to decode print.
- To enable children to start learning phonic knowledge and skills using Letters and Sounds by the age of five, with the expectation that children will become fluent readers by the end of Key Stage One.
- To teach daily, discrete sessions progressing from simple to more complex phonic knowledge and skills which cover the major grapheme/phoneme correspondences.
- To use a multi-sensory approach to teaching phonics
- To ensure children apply their phonic knowledge and skills as their first approach to reading and spelling, even if a word is not completely phonically regular
- To teach children high frequency words that do not conform to grapheme/phoneme correspondence rules
- We will ensure that as children move through the early stages of reading, they are given opportunities to practise by reading texts which are entirely decodable for them, so that they experience success and can rely on phonemic strategies.

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- To encourage children to apply their phonic knowledge in all areas of the curriculum.

### **Phonics teaching and learning at Priors Hall – a learning community**

Our teaching, at all levels, should include:

- Teacher exposition
- Whole class, group and individual work
- Tricky word vocabulary and strategies to remember how to read, and spell these irregular words.

### **Teachers of Phonics at Priors Hall – a learning community should:**

- Model good practice in use of phonics strategies.
- Ensure that classrooms are well stocked with attractive and appropriate resources for the teaching of Letters and Sounds.
- Keep up to date with record keeping and assessment.
- Ensure teaching is kept up to date and relevant to match the needs of groups and individual children they teach.
- Plan phonics lessons which are lively and interactive

### **We teach phonics as follows:**

**Nursery:** Children access phase one of Letters and Sounds through continuous provision, and during group time. Children will be encouraged to listen carefully to one another and to sounds in the environment. Children will have independent access to a range of books and adults will read with and to children regularly. As children begin to get closer to the transition to school, adults will encourage children to listen for sounds in words and to recognise the initial sound(s) of their name.

**Reception:** We teach Letters and Sounds daily for 20 minutes from the child's full time start date. Initially, we teach Phonics as whole class. Before October half term, all children will be assessed on their attainment of phase 2 sounds. Following the assessment, we separate the children into differentiated groups, to ensure children are reaching their full potential and appropriate support is given. Our aim is that children will complete phase 2, 3 and 4 in Reception, ready to begin Phase 5 in Year One.

Children also have access to books that are fully decodable, linking to the sounds they have learned. This is a further assessment for teachers to gauge how well children can apply the Phonics they have been taught in class. Children will read these books in school and will take an Oxford Reading Tree book home to allow children to build vocabulary and to be encouraged to use picture and context clues to decode words alongside their phonic knowledge.

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**Year One:** We teach Letters and Sounds daily for 25 minutes from the child's start date. We reassess children's skills in Year 1 and then separate children into groups accordingly. This allows children to progress and get the necessary support that they need. Our aim is for all children to have accessed all of Phase 5 by the end of Year 1. Children will continue to read fully decodable books which link to the sounds they have learnt. They will also continue to take a reading book home from the Oxford Reading Tree scheme.

### **Year Two:**

In Year 2, children begin to follow the Read, Write Inc spelling programme. Read Write Inc. Spelling is a 15-minute-a-day programme for Years 2 to 6. Using a proven approach underpinned by phonics. Although the teaching of phoneme-grapheme correspondence underpins this programme, it also develops children's knowledge of word families, how suffixes impact upon root words, and provides mnemonics to remember the trickiest spellings. The teaching revolves around instruction (with the help of online alien characters), partner and group practice, and competitive group challenges that help children commit new words to memory.

Children who do not pass the phonics screening test in Year 1 are required to repeat the test when they are in Year 2. They continue to receive daily phonics sessions that can be specifically tailored to an individual's needs to help children catch up.

### **Key Stage 2:**

If children are not fluent readers by Year 3, phonics sessions will continue in an intervention group led by the class teacher. Across Key Stage 2, further interventions will be run for children if it is appropriate.

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### **Phonics across the Curriculum:**

Children are encouraged to use their phonic skills across all curriculum subjects. All teachers and teaching assistants model the correct articulation of the phonemes and children are given opportunities to articulate individual phonemes. We have a strong emphasis on the application of phonic knowledge at the point of learning. Planning ensures each phonics session shows evidence of new learning not just consolidation.

### **Phonics Planning:**

Whole class teaching of phonics is planned in accordance with the school's Phonics planning format. This format includes the revisit/ review- teach- apply- assessment sections recommended by the Letters and Sounds programme. Reception and Year 1 classes are split into differentiated groups for daily phonics sessions – each teacher plans for their own group and any teaching assistants who lead phonics groups will adapt plans appropriately.

### **Differentiation**

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We aim to encourage all children to reach their full potential through the provision of varied opportunities to access phonics. We recognise that our phonics planning must allow children to gain a progressively deeper understanding of the phonetic structure of the English language as they move through the school to ensure all children are provided with the key tools needed to become a fluent reader.

### **Assessment and Reporting:**

Opportunities for assessment will be identified in planning. At the end of each phase in Letters and Sounds children will be assessed on their progress and put into groups accordingly. Children are assessed termly. The class teacher will decide which phase the child should start to be assessed at and if they achieve a high result on the assessment grids they will try the next phase up; and vice versa if they do not achieve well.

### **National Phonic Screening:**

All children in Year 1 will be screened using the National Assessment materials in Term 6, at the beginning of June. If the children in Year 1 fail the screening they will be retested when they are in Year 2. This data will be submitted to the local Authority and to parents with the end of year report.

### **Staff Development and Training**

We are fully committed to ensuring all our Teachers and Teaching Assistants have access to high quality, up to date training to ensure that provision is of a high quality. Teachers and Teaching Assistants will have training every September to ensure that their skills are refreshed.

### **Partnership with Parents:**

Co-operation and support from parents is paramount if a child is to become a successful and competent reader. At Priors Hall, we are fully committed to strong partnership between home and school. It is our policy to send reading books home regularly, we also have access to Oxford University Press's fully decodable phonics e-learning books and parents will be provided with access to this. We encourage parents and carers to contribute to their child's reading development, welcoming comments in individual reading diaries. We will also offer parents and family members regular opportunities to engage in workshops to enable them to gain a better understanding of how we teach phonics at Priors Hall.

### **Safeguarding Statement**

Safeguarding is everybody's business. Priors Hall – A Learning Community has an unwavering commitment to safeguarding to ensure that all our children and young people are safe and feel safe; that children, parents / carers and staff are able to talk about any safeguarding concerns and feel assured that they will be listened to; and that all staff and volunteers are aware of and implement safeguarding procedures and guidance, including what to do if they suspect a child or young person may be experiencing, or be at risk of

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harm. In essence, we instil a culture of vigilance. All concerns should be given to our school Designated Safeguarding Leads, Ben Lynch, Tess McQuade, Jenna Smith or Alex Crawford.

- In any case where an adult is concerned that a child is, or may be, at risk of significant harm they must report this immediately to the DSL or to a member of the Safeguarding Team who will make a referral directly to Northamptonshire Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).
- If a child or other person is at immediate risk of harm, the first response should always be to call the police on 999. This Policy applies to all adults, including volunteers, working in or on behalf of Priors Hall – A Learning Community.

Due for Review: July 2021