



Dean Bank Primary and Nursery School

believe, achieve and soar with pride

Sounds Write at Dean Bank Primary School

Intent

At Dean Bank Primary School, we follow the systematic synthetic phonics programme, Sounds-Write. This programme aims to improve the lives of children by helping them become proficient readers and writers. At the end of KS1 our goal is for all children to become fluent readers so that by KS2 children can competently read for pleasure and purpose.

In Reception, children are taught the Initial Code. At the start of the programme, they are only introduced to simple, one sound/one spelling, one-syllable, CVC words. During the spring term they will be taught how to read and spell words with adjacent consonants, before introducing the most common consonant digraphs in the summer term. From Year 1 onwards, children are taught the Extended Code. All the remaining common vowel and consonant sound to spelling correspondences are taught until all the common spellings for the forty-four sounds in English have been covered. In parallel with this, pupils are taught how to read and spell polysyllabic words, progressing from two-syllable to five- and six-syllable words. Throughout this, students are trained to be proficient in the skills needed to read and spell effectively, namely, segmenting, blending and phoneme manipulation, and are also taught explicitly the conceptual knowledge that is essential to make sense of the English alphabetic code: letters are symbols (spellings) that represent sounds, a sound may be spelled by 1, 2, 3 or 4 letters, the same sound can be spelled in more than one way, many spellings can represent more than one sound.

Planning

The long-term plans for phonics can be found on the school website. These have been created in line with the guidance provided by Sounds-Write regarding the recommended coverage for each unit. Long-term plans outline how each unit is covered within the three-part structure. The phonics planning guidance provides support for staff on how each Sounds-Write Lesson can be used within this structure.

Polysyllabic words are taught at least three times a week in Key Stage 1. Initially teachers will teach Lessons 11 and 12 in which the teacher is responsible for splitting the words into syllables. Towards the end of Year 2, they will teach Lessons 13 and 14 in which responsibility for splitting the words transfers to the pupil. All lessons within the week are focused on the same unit. The units are mapped to allow spaced retrieval.

Teaching

All children in Reception and KS1 are taught a daily phonics session. In Reception this will be a 10-minute session at the beginning of the year but will build up to an hour a day by the end of the year. Children working below age related expectations within KS2 may also access phonics teaching.

Every phonics lesson will follow a three-part structure – review, recognise and retrieve. This approach not only reinforces previous learning but also aids in the retention of new phonemes and graphemes. Our expectations for dictation have been systematically mapped to guarantee consistent progression across each term and year group.

Children are introduced to common exception words from the start of the programme, with children being able to decode the first 32 of the 100 words by the end of the Initial Code. When children encounter common exception words either through reading or within dictation, teachers should introduce them as outlined in the section 'Reading and writing in text' in the 'Introduction to the Initial Code' in the manual.

Interventions

Children who are identified as not making the expected progress and are at risk of falling behind are identified as early as possible. In Reception, this is within the first two weeks of starting the phonics programme. Where relevant, these children will take part in interventions. These could be a keep up or catch-up intervention based on the need. These interventions take place outside of, and in addition to, the whole class phonics session, and are delivered by trained practitioners. They follow the same three-part structure with a focus on consolidating knowledge.

Decodable Readers

Children will be given a 'Dandelion' or 'Sounds-Write' decodable reading book once they are able to recognise letters and are able to blend the sounds together to read words. Decodable readers only contain the phonetic code that the children have been exposed to in lessons. This ensures that they can read most of the words by applying their phonic knowledge, developing fluency.

Decodable readers will be given to the children throughout their time in EYFS, year 1 and for most of year 2 until the child has been exposed to most of the phonetic code. They will have read these books 1:1 with an adult in school before taking them home. Within Reception and KS1 we aim to read a minimum of 3 times per week in school or daily when they require more practice.

When listening to a child read, adults will follow the 1:1 reading guide. This has been developed to allow for retrieval of the code knowledge, increase exposure to common exception words and ensure error correction is consistent. These reading guides have been adapted for parents and shared during parent workshops.

Assessment

Formative assessment is essential to effective teaching and learning and is used to inform planning to meet the needs of the students. There are opportunities for lots of interaction with students - enabling formative assessment to be ongoing in every lesson. Weekly spelling quizzes on previously taught units offer the opportunity for spaced practice, which is particularly helpful in getting information into long-term memory.

Within EYFS, children's code knowledge is assessed half termly to ensure gaps are identified and addressed quickly. The Phonics Screening Check (PSC) is taken by children in England towards the end of Year 1 (and again in Year 2 for those students who did not pass the PSC first time). In line with guidance provided by Sounds Write, we have altered the unit sequence so that some of the Extended Code sound-spelling correspondences that will be part of the PSC but come later in the Sounds-Write sequence can be taught earlier in the year. Throughout the year we also provide opportunities for the children to complete previous PSC papers to prepare them for the assessment.

When a child in Key Stage 1 or above begins to fall behind or starts our school with gaps in their code knowledge or skills, they might sit a Sounds Write diagnostic test. These assessments give a good level of information about the proficiency with which students can perform the skills, and the extent of their code knowledge. Following this, a child may receive catch-up interventions where appropriate to address these gaps. Guidance on administering the tests can be found in the Sounds Write manual.

Staff Development

All staff who teach phonics have been trained to deliver the Sounds-Write programme. For those who have received training but not taught phonics in over a year, will be encouraged to access the Sounds-Write Revisited course.

Central to our approach is regular informal observations. These inform coaching sessions, deliberate practice and/or staff meetings in which we revisit specific aspects of Sounds-Write to ensure fidelity to the scheme. We also develop a culture of shared practice which includes frequent peer observation.