



Peak School
Phonics Policy

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At Peak School we believe that early literacy provision should provide pupils with the underpinning knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes required for them to successfully process to access phonic teaching and learning

We are committed to providing a comprehensive and structured approach to phonics instruction, recognizing the importance of strong phonics skills in enabling our pupils to become confident readers and writers. In pursuit of this goal, we have chosen to incorporate the Jolly Phonics program into our phonics instruction. This policy outlines our approach to phonics instruction, with a focus on the principles and methods of pre phonics and of Jolly Phonics.

Aims:

Our phonics policy aims to:

- Ensure pre-phonics activities lay the foundation for phonics instruction by helping children develop the auditory, oral language, and cognitive skills necessary for decoding and encoding words.
- Develop strong foundational phonics skills in all pupils', enabling them to decode words accurately and fluently.
- Foster a love of reading and writing by equipping pupils with the skills necessary to access a wide range of texts.
- Ensure that phonics instruction is systematic, structured, and multisensory.
- Provide a consistent and cohesive approach to phonics instruction throughout the school.
- Monitor and assess the progress of each pupil to tailor instruction to their individual needs.

Pre- Phonics Rationale

Pupils benefit from a literacy rich environment which offers opportunities for expressive and receptive communication, building attention and engagement through developmentally appropriate learning which is purposeful and meaningful. (Neaum 2017)

All classes ensure they are communication friendly and enhance the early literacy and literacy development of all pupils. In our class environments and routines, pupils are exposed to print in meaningful ways including: labelling in the classroom, coat

pegs, register, snack time and daily timetables. Each classroom has a reading area which encourages engagement with stories and books from the earliest stage.

Neaum (2017) outlines the knowledge and skills required to create a framework for the essential learning that comes before phonics which includes:

- Spoken language: the basis of becoming literate
- Physical activity that supports sensory awareness and integration
- Meta-linguistic awareness
- An understanding of the functions and forms of print
- The ability to symbolise
- Phonological awareness

Speaking and Listening (Communication)

The ability to communicate and listen underpins all learning. All pupils need the opportunity to learn language, to hear, use and practice it in a variety of forms and situations. Key features of interaction and communication that best support pupils learning in language rich environment include:

Playfulness- where the adult is lively and enthusiastic in their interactions and both are enjoying the interaction.

Commentary- where the adult talks about the activity or experience as it is happening and pupils hear the language that is used to mediate their learning experience. This can be seen in Attention Autism (Davies 2013).

Teachable moments- where the adult seizes an opportune moment to move the pupil's learning forward, these can be used to specifically teach vocabulary or the articulation of sounds.

Scaffolding or extending talk- where using interactions that encourage engagement in communication offer opportunities for the pupils to hear and respond allowing them to engage in the interaction. This may take the form of Intensive Interaction (Hewett 2021)

Physical Foundations of Literacy

Physical development is integral to learning. Ensuring activities stimulate and engage pupils' senses help them build on what they know and can do. This provides the opportunities for pedagogical interactions to enable them to explore, investigate, observe, imitate, respond and apply their learning. Neaum (2017) states that the development of balance, proprioception, cross laterality and sensory awareness and integration are literacy, therefore this is reflected in our provision for early literacy to enable progression towards more formal learning. Classes are supported by an Occupational Therapist to ensure that pupils are supported to develop sensory awareness and sensory integration specific to class and individual need.

Metalinguistic Development

To develop the ability to think and talk about language all pupils start with developing their functional use of language and communication, leading to metalinguistic awareness. This is the next step of development and leads pupils to understand that language consists of words which carry meaning. The development of pupils' metalinguistic awareness is supported through interaction, storybooks and language play.

Interaction- modelling social interactions, blending and segmenting words, pointing out print and symbols in the environment.

Story books- sharing, reading and talking about stories, using sensory stories, repetitive stories.

Language play- rhymes, alliteration, onomatopoeic language, riddles.

Print Awareness

Pupils become aware that print carries meaning as they see it in every day settings. All symbols used in school have the written word underneath the symbols and where possible all pictures are also accompanied by the written word.

Reading books to pupils contributes to their awareness of print and enriches the learning experiences of pupils. They also experience print in their environment such as packaging, labels, books, magazines and packaging. Print in the digital environment also adds to their literacy learning through recognition of symbols/ icons for apps and programs.

Symbolising and Representation

In anticipation of becoming literate children learn how to recognise symbolic representation. Pupils develop an awareness of first order symbolism through symbolic systems including signing (Makaton) and symbols (Widgit) which builds their understanding of visual representation. This lays the foundations for second order symbolism specific to phonics.

Phonological Awareness

Phonological awareness paves the way into formal phonic teaching and learning. Phonemic awareness relates only to sounds and is a precursor to phonics. Phonological awareness follows a sequential development pattern outlined by Smith (2017).



Smith (2017)

The acquisition of phonemic awareness will support progression of skills required for later phonic learning.

Peak School have devised and adapted Phase 1 phonics to ensure that these areas are incorporated and are appropriate for meeting the needs of our pupils.

Jolly Phonics at Peak

Implementation:

1. Jolly Phonics

We have chosen to adopt the Jolly Phonics program as our primary phonics instructional approach. Jolly Phonics is a research-based, multi-sensory program that teaches phonics through songs, actions, and activities. This program includes the following key elements:

- Letter Sounds: Pupils learn the 42 letter sounds of the English language through fun actions and memorable songs.
- Blending and Segmenting: Pupils practice blending sounds to read words and segmenting words into sounds for spelling.
- Tricky Words: Tricky words, also known as high-frequency words, are taught as sight words to improve fluency.
- Decodable Reading Books: We use decodable reading books that align with the Jolly Phonics program, allowing pupils to apply their phonics skills in reading.

2. Phonics Instructional Sequence

Phonics instruction follows a systematic and progressive sequence, introducing new phonemes and graphemes in a logical order. Our phonics instruction is structured to

ensure that students build upon their prior knowledge as they progress through the program.

3. Daily Phonics Sessions

Phonics instruction is an integral part of our daily curriculum. Each class incorporates dedicated phonics sessions to provide regular and consistent practice. These sessions are interactive, engaging, and tailored to the specific needs of the pupils.

4. Assessment and Tracking

We regularly assess pupils' phonics skills to monitor their progress. Assessment tools may include phonics assessments, observations, and reading fluency checks. This data helps us identify pupils who may need additional support and allows us to adjust our instruction accordingly.

5. Adaptive Strategies

We recognize that pupils have varying levels of phonics proficiency. Teachers differentiate instruction to provide targeted support for struggling learners and challenge more advanced pupils. Small group activities and one-on-one interventions are employed when necessary.

6. Home School Partnerships

We encourage parents and guardians to support phonics development at home by reading with their child, practicing phonics sounds, and reinforcing sight word recognition.

7. Phonics in Context:

While phonics is a fundamental skill, we also emphasize the importance of applying phonics skills in real reading and writing contexts. Our curriculum integrates phonics

8. CPD

Our teachers receive ongoing training in Jolly Phonics and phonics instruction to ensure they are equipped with the latest research-based strategies and techniques.

Conclusion

At Peak School, we are committed to providing our pupils with a solid foundation in phonics through the Pre Phonics and the Jolly Phonics program. We believe that strong phonics skills are essential for literacy development and will empower our pupils to become confident and proficient readers and writers. Through systematic instruction, assessment, and a strong home-school partnership, we aim to achieve our goal of nurturing lifelong learners who excel in literacy.

References

Davies (2013) Available at: <https://ginadavies.co.uk/>

Hewett (2021) Available at: <https://www.intensiveinteraction.org/>

Neaum, S (2017) What Comes Before Phonics London, Sage Publications.

Smith (2017) Phonological Awareness, some accessible Evidence based resources Available at: <https://geressmith.wordpress.com/2017/02/06/helping-students-learn/>

Websites

Makaton

https://www.widgit.com/about-symbols/intro_to_symbols/icons_pictures.htm

Widgit

https://makaton.org/TMC/About_Makaton/What_is_Makaton.aspx

Jolly Phonics

<https://www.jollylearning.co.uk/>