



The Royal School Phonics and Early Reading Pathway

Overview

At The Royal School we are committed to providing great reading provision and developing pupils' proficiency in, and love of, reading. We ensure that all children have the skills, knowledge and understanding to become confident and enthusiastic readers and writers. We believe that high-quality phonics teaching improves literacy levels and gives all children a solid base on which to build and develop their reading habits so that they read widely and often for reading and information.

Through daily, systematic and consistent high-quality phonics teaching, children learn to blend and segment words for reading and spelling. To allow our children to develop a strong phonic awareness and effective blending, decoding and comprehension skills, we have chosen to use a DfE Validated synthetic phonics programme (SSP) called FFT Success for All Phonics from FFT. The programme supports our intentions to teach children to read and write independently so that they are able to access a broad and exciting curriculum and flourish as learners throughout their time at our school.

We maintain fidelity in the implementation of our phonics teaching by using FFT Success for All Phonics which allows the children to learn phonics through a highly structured programme of daily lessons across EYFS/KS1, using a variety of fun activities in multi-sensory and systematic ways.

Each session gives an opportunity for children to revisit their previous experience, be taught new skills, practice together and apply what they have learned and celebrate their achievements. It follows the teaching principles of:

- Revisit and Review
- Teach and Model
- Practise and Apply
- Celebrate Achievement and Assess

Time is incorporated to allow for consolidation so that children can secure their skills, knowledge and understanding.

The programme is underpinned by a set of seven core principles designed to support all teachers and children.

Core principles:

- Systematic Progression
- Regular Assessment
- Early Intervention
- Multisensory Approach
- Co-operative Learning
- Application of Skills
- Reduced Workload and Collegiate Approach

Reading materials have been designed to support rapid and sustained progress and are well-matched to the scope and sequence of the programme.

Lessons are planned so that children build on their skills sequentially and systematically and can be adapted and modified to meet the needs of the children accordingly.

Training and support is offered through FFT Success for All Phonics and FFT and our school supports staff through this training offer, as well as monitoring and training through the local authority and support from the Phonics Lead and Assistant Head (Curriculum). All staff are given the skills, knowledge and understanding to deliver high- quality phonics lessons and to achieve strong and sustained pupil outcomes in phonics and early reading and writing.

Scheme Specific Information

At The Royal School we implement FFT Success for All Phonics which provides 68 fully decodable reading books (Shared Readers), daily phonics and reading lesson plans, assessment tools, picture cards, mnemonics for letter formation and all other teaching resources needed to support the effective teaching of phonics from EYFS to the end of Year 1. The programme is designed for daily use from the beginning of Reception, enabling children to make a smooth transition from Reception to Key Stage 1. The daily lesson plans cover all the main Grapheme–Phoneme Correspondences (GPCs) and Common Exception Words (CEWs) to provide children with the phonic knowledge and skills required for success in the Year 1 Phonics Screening Check.

We also use FFT Success for All Phonics to teach children who are new to English or are learning phonics for the first time and we implement the phonics programme alongside FFT's Reading Assessment Programme (RAP) which we use as an effective diagnostic tool.

The programmes are fully aligned to the revised Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum and National Curriculum programmes of study for reading in Key Stage 1.

Our aim is for children to become fluent, confident readers by the end of Key Stage 1.

The programme is underpinned by a set of **seven core principles** designed to support all teachers and children.

Core Principles

1. Systematic Progression

- Introducing phonics and its application to early reading in a carefully sequenced and progressive way: moving from developing phonological awareness through rhyme to introducing Grapheme–Phoneme Correspondences (GPCs) in order, through a six-phased progression.
- Practising the skills of blending and segmenting as new GPCs are introduced and reinforcing them throughout the programme.
- Developing an increasing bank of accessible words, including Common Exception Words (CEWs).
- Building confident readers through the consistent, systematic and daily teaching of the FFT Success for All Phonics programme with accompanying Shared Readers.

2. Regular Assessment

- Providing frequent and comprehensive formative and summative assessment opportunities to inform teaching and ensure that children's progress is closely monitored.
- Providing an opportunity for the early identification of children who may be at risk of falling behind.
- Using the Reading Assessment Programme (RAP) as a diagnostic tool and to support formative and summative assessments.

3. Early Intervention

- Ensuring that the lowest attaining 20% of children also make progress and reach age-related expectations is fundamental to our mission to secure FFT Success for All children.
- Providing dedicated time for review and consolidation of skills to ensure children needing extra support do not fall behind.

4. Multisensory Approach

- Providing pacy and active lessons that balance short inputs of direct teaching with immediate whole-class response and engagement.
- Providing multisensory lessons that engage all children in a variety of activities designed to support learning in fun and memorable ways.
- Linking pictures and mnemonics to support the learning of each GPC and helping children to recall and remember.

5. Co-operative Learning

- Underpinning daily lessons with Co-operative Learning techniques in which learning skills are developed by teachers explicitly modelling behaviour for learning.
- Using positive feedback to help children to understand when they meet expectations and for motivation.
- Encouraging children to work together in supportive peer partnerships.

6. Application of Skills

- Providing texts which are carefully aligned to progression in phonics skills, so that children are motivated to apply their new learning in a meaningful way.
- Developing a separate, but linked, approach to the teaching of reading comprehension during reading lessons and English.

Daily Phonics Lessons in Reception and Year 1

Over the course of 3 terms, children will cover the first 50 sounds in the developmental progression. The planning is divided into weeks or 'Steps' of the programme, with each Step covering a select number of GPCs. FFT's Success for All's Scope and Sequence document sets this out. During Term 1, children will learn 3 or 4 new GPCs per week, with the final day of the week being reserved for review and consolidation. Starting in Term 2, children begin to learn vowel digraphs at a pace of 1 per week. During Term 3, children continue to learn vowel digraphs along with common alternative spellings.

The year concludes with 3 weeks of review to consolidate all Reception level content in preparation for Year 1. To support both teachers and children, the phonics lessons follow a consistent daily structure with clear timing goals for each activity. This consistent approach enables lessons to be taught with pace as everybody understands the routine and what is expected. Each lesson lasts 25 minutes and follows the same basic sequence each day:

- Review of Previously Taught GPCs (10 minutes)
- Teach, Practise and Apply New GPC (15 minutes)

Consolidation

Time for consolidation is built into phonics lessons so that children can revisit prior learning and consolidate their skills, knowledge and understanding. It is also a time to carry out summative assessments and to act on the analysis and information gathered.

Keep-Up and Catch-Up Guidance

Children are provided with opportunities to keep up with the pace of learning in lessons, through additional sessions and within wider implementation across the curriculum in EYFS and Year 1. Targeted teaching and resources are used to support pupils at all levels to master the skills required for the next step in learning.

Children who need to catch up more significantly will be provided with the support they need to make progress from their starting points and to master skills incrementally to achieve success. They will do this in a range of ways supported by the resources and tools provided within the programmes, by expert teaching and other SEND support strategies such as echo reading.

For further information, consult the FFT Teaching Manuals and progression documents.

Wider Reading and Home Reading Guidance

FFT Shared Reader books will be sent home at the end of each week via a hyperlink on our online platform.

As a school we have also collated books together, matching the Steps within the FFT Success for All Phonics programme. Children will bring home a book matched to their current phonic ability so that they can use their phonic knowledge to tackle decodable words. Some of the first books a child will bring home are wordless books. These are used to encourage children to talk about the pictures and stories and to create their own sentences about what they see and what is happening in the pictures.

Children may also bring a book for you to read to them. These are books that you regularly see on children's bookshelves and in the library. They are stories that excite children and instil a love of reading.

Prioritising reading for pleasure

At The Royal School we prioritise reading for pleasure by promoting reading and striving for mastery within the teaching and learning we offer. We have chosen FFT Success for All programmes because they set reading expectations high. The language in the Shared Readers is rich, varied and motivating.

- We encourage active reading across the school by:
 - Reading to the children every day.
 - Offering a rich and diverse range of texts to children, opening their eyes to the world and different cultures.
 - Providing book areas in classrooms for children to select and have access to quality texts that are age and stage appropriate.
 - Having sessions for each class in the school library, where children can borrow a book to take home and read.
- Giving every child a home reading record. The parent/carer records comments to share with the adults in school and vice versa to ensure communication between home and school has a positive impact on learning. As the children progress through the school, they are encouraged to write their own comments and keep a list of the books/authors that they have read.

- Celebrating reading through events, visits, visitors and in celebration time.

Parental Partnerships

At The Royal School we support parents to work in partnership with us so that they can support their child with phonics and early reading in the best ways possible. We provide information to help them understand our teaching methods and the programmes we use. Parents can access key information via the website <https://fft.org.uk/phonics/> and the Parent Portal - <https://parents.fft.org.uk/> and of course, we will answer parent questions about the programme, please direct questions to your child's teacher.

Assessment

Making accurate assessments of individual pupils against key learning outcomes is essential for a mastery approach so that learning can be built incrementally in progressive and systematic steps as soon as they need to.

Assessment is used to monitor progress and to identify any child needing additional support. The assessment expectation across the programme is for daily, formative monitoring and feedback to be carried out and for this to be supported and validated by using the Reading Assessment Programme (RAP).

RAP provides an effective diagnostic assessment tool which identifies a child's strengths and areas of development and is used to inform the next steps in teaching and learning. Progress is demonstrated using the summative assessments as they provide an accurate and systematic picture and include elements such as an assessment of fluency.

The day-to-day assessments a teacher makes to inform practice are part of everyday classroom practice. In phonics and early reading, they allow the teacher to identify children needing keep-up support. In the review part of each lesson, gaps can be identified and addressed and time can be allocated within consolidation days and weeks to address areas in which children are not as secure.

Frequent formative assessment opportunities are built into FFT Success for All Phonics in the form of Consolidation Weeks. These weeks are a vital part of the success of the programme as children will not always master a GPC the first time it is taught. Formative assessment is also based on daily classroom work and observation, capturing children's responses to questions and their oral and written contributions, where these indicate their knowledge or use of a particular GPC. Similarly, children's interactions with books and other texts will give teachers a good indication of how well they are able to apply their phonics knowledge and skills to reading.

Summative Assessments and the Reading Assessment Programme (RAP)

We use FFT's Reading Assessment Programme (RAP) to highlight strengths and identify areas of weakness in children's key reading skills. This information informs planning and helps to pinpoint the reading skills that need development, whether through catch-up intervention or whole-class teaching. This enables us to 'plug those gaps' and secure children's reading skills as they move through their primary school journey.

There are 29 assessments within FFT's Reading Assessment Programme (RAP) all matched to the scope and sequence of the phonics and Shared Reader lesson content. Staff here at The Royal School receive regular training and updates to ensure that the assessment information has a positive impact on outcomes for all our children.

Statutory assessment

We prepare children well to take the DfE Phonics Screening Check. This screening check confirms whether the child has met the appropriate phonics standard in Year 1 and can be used diagnostically to identify areas that need further attention going forward. Children who do not meet the required standard will continue their phonics lessons so that they are ready to retake the screening at the end of Year 2. We provide children with high-quality teaching and learning as well as access to past checks that are all held within the Reading Assessment Programme (RAP).

Impact

We monitor impact through the assessment data we obtain and through monitoring of practice. Analysis of data informs practice and supports ongoing developments in early reading so that all children master the skills, knowledge and understanding required to be confident and fluent readers.

Lesson observations, shared pedagogical dialogue, shared best practice and an ongoing commitment to achieve the very best for all our pupils make for impactful practice.

We set expectations high and measure the impact against these expectations. Our findings are built into action planning and are part of our continual cycle of improvement.

For further information on reading fluency and reading at the Royal, please consult the Reading Pathway.