



## Phonics at Unity Academy



### Intent

At Unity, our aim is for every child to become a fluent reader. We want children to become fluent readers in order for them to reach age related expectations or make accelerated progress from their starting point. As well as this, we want children to develop a love for reading and read for pleasure on a regular basis.

Being able to read is the most important skill children will learn during their early schooling and has far-reaching implications for lifelong confidence and well-being. We aim to teach high quality phonics to ensure the children have the best start possible in reading and writing. Children read from books with the sounds that they know, while they are learning to read. We have a strong focus on language development for our children because we know that speaking and listening are crucial skills for reading and writing in all subjects.

### Implementation

#### Pace and order of teaching

In Reception, Bug Club Phonics teaches a new grapheme and related phoneme in every Phoneme Session. This fast pace, backed up by daily revision of past teaching, has proved the most effective and successful method of phonic training. This means that the basic 40+ phonemes are acquired quickly, and early reading skills develop rapidly. Decodable readers are introduced after just 10 days' teaching at the end of Unit 2. This enables children to apply the taught strategies and enjoy contextualised reading early on. The order of grapheme introduction ensures that children are able to start reading and spelling a wide range of words at the earliest possible stage.



#### Lesson structure

##### **Bug Club Phonics | lesson structure**

#### Revisit and review

The alphabet song will start each lesson.

Before starting new content, flashcard retrieval with the tricky words or GPCs / GPCs (with the words from previous day).

#### Introduce

Learning intentions and outcomes for the day are discussed at the start of the lesson.

## **Teach**

Every Phoneme and Language Session is composed of teaching elements (e.g. Sounds, Reading, Spelling etc.) which are easily navigated to structure the new phonic teaching. The teaching of grapheme–phoneme correspondences and high-frequency (common) words is covered. Videos are available along with rhymes for GPCs. Hand signals will be used for My Turn, Your Turn. Along with the use of hand signals to indicate sound buttons to sound and blend words. Use asset bank to highlight where the GPC for the day is.

## **Practise**

Practise opportunities are available in the following areas:

- Magnet letters
- Writing words in books
- Counting out number of phonemes
- 'Follow-up' parts of lessons
- unit-linked pupil games
- unit-linked photocopy masters

## **Apply**

Language Sessions provide opportunities to apply developing phonic skills to reading, spelling, and writing captions and sentences. This application also covers irregular (not fully decodable) common words. In addition, linked decodable readers allow regular application of children's phonics skills.

## **Assess learning**

Assessment guidance materials provided within this Bug Club and on the website enable ongoing formative assessment during daily lessons and summative assessment at regular periods throughout the programme. The frequency of assessment opportunities means children's needs can be identified the moment they become apparent, ensuring that no child gets left behind.

Assessment is embedded throughout our teaching.

- Pupils on short-term placements are assessed on entry and again on exit or at the end of the unit - whichever comes first -to ensure learning is appropriately pitched and progress is monitored.
- Pupils who are permanently placed at Unity are assessed half-termly, with data recorded and analysed to inform planning and ensure progress.

## **Introduction of letter names**

The names of letters can be taught first, via the Alphabet song and magnetic letters. Since the programme was first launched, children have not had any difficulties learning both letter names and sounds early on. One of the benefits of this is that any child who

misses a session will know the names of the letters they have missed. In many cases the letter names give a good guide to the letter sounds.

### **High frequency (common) words and irregular words**

High frequency decodable common words are included for reading and spelling throughout Bug Club Phonics. These are listed in the chart under 'Decodable words' and are always taught by sounding and blending. There is also a list of 'Not fully decodable (irregular) words'. These words are subsumed under the heading 'Irregular' in the Language Sessions (see BCP). Many of these words have spellings that have irregular pronunciations; these words are always deemed 'tricky', e.g. 'one'. However, some of the words in the list have regular pronunciations and become fully decodable later on as the phonics teaching progresses; for example, 'like' becomes completely decodable when split digraphs are taught. Language Sessions occur at the end of each unit. These sessions combine the teaching of irregular words with using words in the context of captions and sentences. The acquisition of skills for reading single words is only part of the reading process. To read with fluency and comprehension, children need to apply and develop the skills taught during the systematic synthetic phonics teaching element of the programme. The Language Sessions serve to consolidate the teaching of reading and spelling in the Phoneme Sessions, and promote early comprehension skills. Comprehension is not an end product. It is a process which occurs during active interaction between the reader and the text. In the Bug Club Phonics Language Sessions, a progressive programme of text-related directed activities has been assembled to enable children to progress from single-word reading to reading intelligently to grasp meaning from the text. While there are no new grapheme–phoneme correspondences in Phase 4, it is important that children learn to read and spell words containing adjacent consonants and read more decodable words and words that are not fully decodable (irregular words). For this reason there are three (rather than one) Language Sessions in Unit 12 (Phase 4).

### **Introduction of graded readers**

Bug Club Phonics is supported by decodable readers which match the order of phoneme introduction. When the children have completed the first two units of Bug Club Phonics, they will have acquired a sufficient number of grapheme–phoneme correspondences to start reading their own books. This should be a motivating and enjoyable experience for them. There are books to match each unit of the teaching programme and these help children to practise and consolidate their learning at each stage. Before, during and after the introduction of the Bug Club Phonics readers, children should be exposed constantly to a rich and varied diet of book experiences to ensure their enthusiasm for reading is nurtured, their comprehension skills are being developed, and their speaking and listening skills are extended.

### **Allocation of books**

Teaching staff must ensure that children are listened to regularly to ensure they are taking home well-matched books. It is not just about the sounds that they know, but their ability to decode, recognise HFW/ tricky words and show language comprehension when

reading. Once a child moves up a whole coloured book band, teachers will give pupils the next books matched to the knowledge they have learnt. We used a variety of printed books and ones that can be allocated via Bug Club online.

### **Impact**

Through high-quality, systematic phonics teaching, our aim is for all children to become fluent, confident readers who can segment and blend effectively. Using Bug Club Phonics, children quickly acquire key phonemes and apply them in decodable texts, supporting early reading success.

By the end of our curriculum, pupils will have moved from learning to read to reading to learn, with strong comprehension and a love of literature. Assessment is ongoing and includes the Year 1 Phonics Screening Check and reading assessments. However, the true impact goes beyond data -children develop personal reading preferences and see books as a gateway to imagination, knowledge, and lifelong learning.