Euler Academy

Phonics and Early Reading Policy

1	Summary	Phonics and Early Reading Policy			
2	Responsible person	Laura Harkin			
3	Accountable SLT member	Laura Harkin			
4	Applies to	☒All staff ☐Support staff ☐Teaching staff			
5	Who has overseen development of this policy	Laura Harkin			
6	Who has been consulted and recommended policy for approval	Zoe Rucroft			
7	Approved by and date	Zoe Rucroft			
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10	Related documents (if applicable)				
11	Disseminated to	☐Trustees/governors ☐All staff ☒Support staff ☒Teaching staff			
12	Date of implementation (when shared)	February 2022			
13	Consulted with recognised trade unions	☐Y ☒N			

Contents

1. Introduction

<u>Phonics and Early Reading Policy – Euler Academy</u>

Purpose
The purpose of this policy is to describe our practice in teaching phonics and early reading and the principles upon which this is based.

2. Scope of the policy

Intent
At Euler Academy, we teach phonics through the DFE validated, systematic synthetics phonics programme Bug Club. Part of the Bug Club family, Bug Club Phonics is one of the DfE's approved phonics teaching programmes and aims to help all children in our school learn to read in a fun and accessible way. Following its own proven progression, the whole school programme matches the National Curriculum. It uses well known characters from children's television; interactive games and rewards to keep the children motivated. Phonics is a way of teaching reading which focuses on learning **phonemes** (sounds) associated with particular **graphemes** (letters). It provides children with the ability to decode words by **blending** and **segmenting**. The skill of decoding is an important element in early reading.

The teaching, learning and assessment of phonics and early reading will be consistent across the setting to ensure best practice and allow for smooth transitions both into the school, between year groups and classes and on transition out of Euler Academy to their next setting. We will follow the Bug Club Phonics programme for all children in KS1 and those pupils in KS2 who have been identified as needing additional support with phonics. Showing fidelity to the Bug Club scheme the way we deliver the phonics sessions can be adapted to suit the individual needs of the pupils.

In systematic synthetic phonics the graphemes and corresponding phonemes are taught just before the introduction of words that contain these letters. To read these words, children are taught to pronounce the individual phonemes (sounds) associated with the graphemes (letters) they see, and then to blend them together (synthesise) to form the word. (In this programme, we use slashes / / to denote phonemes and inverted commas ' ' to denote graphemes.)

The process is as follows:
• Children see a word, e.g. cat; it is not pronounced for them.
• They break it down into its individual letters (graphemes)
and pronounce the corresponding sounds (phonemes) for
each letter in turn: /c/ /a/ /t/
• Then they blend the separate phonemes together to form
the word.

This process is known as **blending**.

Systematic synthetic phonics teaches letter sounds very rapidly, explicitly showing children how to build up words with letters from the start, and always includes blending with printed words. Systematic synthetic phonics does not normally teach spelling, but Bug Club Phonics does teach spelling by reversing the reading process described above, i.e.
• Children hear a word, e.g. "cat" and say it.
• They say the first phoneme: /c/.
• They write the corresponding grapheme: 'c'.
• They say the word again and say the next phoneme: /a/.
• They write the corresponding grapheme: 'a', and so on.
This process is known as **segmenting** and is followed by the children reading the word they have produced by sounding and blending.

In our approach, both segmenting and blending for reading and segmenting for spelling are fully scaffolded. We model for the children how to sound and blend words for reading, but in each lesson children must attempt to sound and blend words for themselves to find out how they are pronounced. We also model for the children how to segment for spelling and continue to scaffold the children through the process with each word they spell. This ensures that they identify each phoneme and choose the appropriate grapheme in turn, until the word is spelt.

Systematic synthetic phonics differs from analytic phonics in that in analytic phonics children are shown word families. For example, they may be introduced to the letter sound 'c', and then be shown a list of words all starting with the same letter sound, e.g. 'cat, cake, cut, cup'. Sounding and blending starts when all the letters of the alphabet have been taught in the beginning, middle and final positions of words, whereas in systematic synthetic phonics this process starts after the first few letter sounds have been taught.

3. Implementation of the policy

Implementation
Bug Club Phonics teaches a new grapheme and related phoneme, or alternative spellings to previously-taught phonemes, 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 (Units 1–12), and then the alternative spellings of these phonemes (Units 13–30), are acquired quickly, and early reading skills develop rapidly. We follow the 4 part lesson sequence as described in the **teaching sequence** section below.

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 start reading and spelling a wide range of words at the earliest possible stage.

Introduction of graphemes and phonemes
In Bug Club Phonics children are taught graphemes and phonemes at the same time. The research study showed that children progressed quickly if they learnt about phonemes in the context of letters and print right from the start of the phonics teaching.

Blending and segmenting
In Bug Club Phonics blending for reading and segmenting for spelling are given equal prominence, but we move on with their reading ability, not holding back due to spelling, and it is taught to be reversible, though blending is always taught first in a session.

Introduction of letter names
The names of letters are taught first, via the Alphabet song and magnetic letters, through discrete teaching and consolidated through deliberate practise. 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. Other benefits include assisting with the language of instruction and oral spelling.

Multi-sensory learning
Bringing a multi-sensory element to the teaching of phonics is widely recognised to be hugely beneficial to its effectiveness. Bug Club Phonics recommends the use of magnetic letters and boards to consolidate children's blending and segmenting abilities. Mini-magnetic boards can be used during and after the whole-class teaching sessions. The interactive whiteboard acts as an electronic magnetic letter board for teacher demonstration.

Bug Club word cards are used, following the sequence of bug club, during the revisit part of the lessons. This enables children to quickly read and recall the GPC and words containing GPC, that they have previously learned. Adults can quickly make formative assessments effectively to impact future learning.

Additionally, teaching the formation of the letters at the same time as the sounds helps to consolidate the letters in memory.

Less common grapheme–phoneme correspondences
Based on experience of the hundreds of children who have been through the programme over the last 20 or so years, Bug Club Phonics takes the view that children are best served by learning the basic 40+ grapheme–phoneme correspondences, including the common vowel **digraphs** and **trigraphs**, first. The less frequent pronunciations, particularly for vowels, are taught when the children are secure in the basic principles. Very minor variations in pronunciation are not taught separately, and this has been found to pose no relevant difficulties for the children.

High-frequency (common) words and irregular words
High-frequency decodable common words are included for reading and spelling throughout Bug Club Phonics and are always taught by sounding and blending.

'Not fully decodable (irregular) words' we refer to as '**tricky words'**. Many of these words have spellings that have irregular pronunciations; these words are always deemed 'tricky', e.g. 'one'. However, some of the words 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. Children are encouraged to use their phonic knowledge to help them decode these words as far as possible.

Language Sessions
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.

Guided independent work
Although Bug Club Phonics is delivered through teacher-modelling and rehearsal with the whole class, there are also resources for guided independent work.

Introduction of graded readers
Bug Club Phonics is supported by decodable readers which match the order of phoneme introduction. When the children have completed Unit 2 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. These will help children to practise and consolidate their learning at each stage.

Children will only read a book once they have learned all of the GPCs that the book contains. This will ensure that the child can read with fluency and prosody and unknown words and GPC will not be a barrier. Regular assessments will ensure that children have a well-matched book.

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.

Speaking and listening skills

For children who are not yet ready for Phase 2 and formal phonics teaching, we follow the Bug Club phase 1, which develops children's listening, speaking and oral blending skills ready to access Phase 2.

The Bug Club Phonics strategy of teacher-modelling and rehearsal for teaching reading and spelling provides opportunities for pupils to be both spectators and participants. As spectators, they listen to words and structures; as participants, they try them out. While sharing pupil magnetic boards, working in pairs or small groups, pupils respond to each other, learning to adjust the language to suit the situation and the response of partners. Using graded readers, the teacher can encourage pupils to express opinions and explore, develop and sustain ideas through talk and discussion.

Teaching sequence

Introduce	Learning intentions and outcomes for the day are discussed at the start of the lesson.
Revisit and Review	Every Phoneme Session begins with Revision to review previous learning. The Revision is not just of the previous day's target grapheme–phoneme correspondence, but also of blending for reading and segmenting for spelling of the relevant words. The Revision is sometimes a review of previous learning which links with the planned teaching for that day. We do not use the electronic revision but to speed up the pace and revisit throughout the day we use flashcards.
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.
Practise	Practise opportunities are available in the following areas: • 'Follow-up' parts of the lessons • unit-linked pupil games • unit-linked photocopy masters • 'free-teaching' within the Magnetic Board.
Apply	Language Sessions provide opportunities to apply developing phonic skills to the reading, spelling and writing of captions and sentences. This application also covers irregular (not fully decodable) common words. In addition, phonic skills can be applied when using the linked decodable readers, starting as early as Unit 2 of Bug Club Phonics.

See Appendix A for phonics lesson examples

1. Impact

Teachers will assess learning throughout the lesson through teacher observations. Formative assessment will be used in lessons to ensure that children are keeping up and retaining the content. Adults hear children read books linked to the previous weeks phonics teaching and ensure children can accurately decode and read with 95% accuracy.

Throughout the day we include activities to consolidate Phase 1 skills.

We include a second Revisit and Review session daily, to support children to retain what has been taught that morning.

Reading is a valuable, lifelong skill that intersects all areas of the curriculum. We develop our pupils through independent and shared reading as well as cross-curricular sessions which empower them to find pleasure in reading.

At Euler we ensure pupils read individually, in small groups and as a whole class. A variety of different genres, both fiction and non-fiction, are chosen at an appropriate level of ability for each child. As well as being able to read the text, children are encouraged to discuss the book, expressing their individual opinions of the content. More able readers will be asked to compare the themes and speculate on the tone of different texts.

Pupils are given reading books at their reading level, either the previous weeks Bug Club unit or their current book band. Home reading books are given at their reading level both in hard copies and available online through our Bug Club subscription, with some at the level below to develop fluency or because they have chosen that book as they enjoy it.

We assess pupils progress in phonics using the Bug Club assessment sequence.

We track pupils progress in phonics using our Bug Club summative assessments in our phonics journals, and early reading using our reading journals, our small steps trackers and the class reading book band trackers. Once a child has completed phase 5, and is reading orange books or higher we will assess using Bug Club fluency assessment and track using PM Benchmarking.

2. Roles and responsibilities
SLT promote the strategic direction for teaching phonics and early reading.
SLT holds all to account so that teaching and learning in phonics and early reading is dynamic, challenging and enriching.
Phonics leaders are fully conversant with National Curriculum updates and requirements for teaching phonics and early reading.

Phonics leaders challenge teachers so that progress in early reading is planned, resourced, assessed.
Governors will sustain professional dialogues about phonics and early reading with subject leaders and SLT.

3. Monitoring and evaluation
The coordination of the phonics SSP and early reading for Euler Academy is the responsibility of Laura Harkin, who will:
- Support colleagues in their teaching by keeping informed about current developments in phonics and early reading and by providing a strategic lead and direction for this subject;
- Complete reading journal scrutinies, phonics lesson observations, listening to pupils read and moderate teacher assessments in accordance with the moderating timetable to ensure that best practice is maintain consistently across the setting;
- Provide an annual written report to the Governors in which she will evaluate the key strengths and development areas for phonics and early reading and provide next steps for developing the subject.
- Audit staff subject knowledge and skills for phonics and early reading to coordinate CPD for the setting.

Appendix A

Session structures

Phoneme Session

Teaching element	Description
Alphabet song	Sing the Alphabet song
Revision	
Letters and Sounds	Quick-fire practice of previously taught grapheme–phoneme correspondences
Reading	Children practise reading words composed of previously taught grapheme–phoneme correspondences
Writing and Spelling	Children practise spelling and letter formation using previously taught graphemes and words
Lesson	
Introduction	Discuss learning intentions and outcomes for the day
Sounds	Children are introduced to new grapheme with corresponding phoneme, highlighting its position in words from the asset bank
Reading	Children blend phonemes for reading words
Spelling	Children segment words for spelling
Writing	Children form letters to cement letter–sound correspondences
Follow-up	Children are introduced to guided independent work, consolidating any teaching from lesson
Plenary	Discuss learning outcomes
Alphabet song	Sing the Alphabet song

Language Session

Teaching element	Description
Alphabet song	Sing the Alphabet song
Introduction	Discuss learning intentions and outcomes for the day
Irregular/high-frequency words	
Reading	Children read irregular/high-frequency word(s)
Spelling	Children spell irregular/high-frequency word(s)
Lesson	
Reading	Children read captions and sentences
Spelling/Writing	Children write captions and sentences
Follow-up	Basic comprehension and introduction of guided independent work
Plenary	Discuss learning outcomes
Alphabet song	Sing the Alphabet song

Appendix 2

Progression structure

Phase	Unit	Focus	Not fully decodable words (irregular words)
2	1	s, a, t, p	
	2	i, n, m, d	
	3	g, o, c, k	to
	4	ck, e, u, r	the, no, go
	5	h, b, f, ff l, ll, ss	I, into, her
3	6	j, v, w, x	me, be
	7	y, z, zz, qu	he, my, by, she
	8	ch, sh, th, ng	they
	9	ai, ee, igh, oa oo (long), oo (short)	we, are
	10	ar, or, ur, ow, oi	you
	11	ear, air, ure, er	all, was, give, live
4	12	Adjacent consonants (cvcc, ccvc, ccvcc, cccvc, cccvcc)	said, have, like, so, do, some, come, were, there, little, one, when, out, what
5	13	wh, ph,	oh, their, people
	14	ay, a-e, eigh/ey/ei (long a)	Mr, Mrs, Ms
	15	ea, e-e, ie/ey/y (long e)	looked, called, asked
	16	ie, i-e, y, i (long i)	water, where
	17	ow, o-e, o/oe (long o)	who, again
	18	ew, ue, u-e (long o), u/oul (short oo)	thought, through
	19	aw, au, al	work, laughed, because
	20	ir, er, ear	Thursday, Saturday, thirteen, thirty
	21	ou, oy	different, any, many
	22	ere/eer, are/ear	eyes, friends
	23	c, k, ck, ch	two, once
	24	c(e)/c(i)/c(y), sc/ st(i) se	great, clothes
	25	g(e)/g(i)/g(y), dge	it's, I'm, I'll, I've
	26	le, mb, kn/gn, wr	don't, can't, didn't
	27	tch, sh, ea, zh, (w)a, o	first, second, third
6	28	suffix morphemes ing, ed	clearing, gleaming, rained, mailed
	29	plural morphemes s, es	men, mice, feet, teeth, sheep
	30	prefix morphemes re, un prefix+root+suffix	vowel, consonant, prefix, suffix, syllable

Appendix C

Terminology

grapheme	It is the way we write a phoneme.
phoneme	This is the smallest unit of sound in a word.
GPC	This is grapheme phoneme correspondence. This means pupils are taught all the sounds and the way to write them down.
blending	Where children are taught to say the sounds that make up a word and are able to merge the sounds together until they can hear what the word is. It is vital in reading.
segmenting	Children are able to say a word and then break it up into the phonemes that make it up. Vital in spelling and writing.
digraph	Graphemes with two letters.
trigraph	Graphemes with three letters.
split digraph	This is a digraph that is split by a consonant. Usually a long vowel sound, e.g. 'a-e' (cake).
c-v-c words	A three phoneme word with a vowel consonant vowel e.g. cat.
tricky word	These are words that cannot be sounded out easily e.g.me.
consonant cluster	Consonants grouped together either at the start of the end of a word e.g. str.