

How we teach phonics

At Chorlton Park we use the synthetic phonics approach to teach children the letters (graphemes) and sounds (phonemes) they need to learn how to read and write. We have adapted the Letters and Sounds document (2007) to tailor progression and pedagogy for our learners.

Our vision is for all children to become fluent, resilient readers with a love of books and authors. In addition to phonics teaching, which constitutes the building blocks of early reading, we therefore also offer children a varied reading experience based on high quality texts, which include stories, information books and poems. We ensure that children have opportunities to read independently, with their peers, with adults and also to have stories read to them. Throughout school, we teach children a range of strategies to tackle new sounds, new words and new concepts.

Nursery

- How often do you teach phonics?

Phonics is taught daily for 10 minutes.

- What progression/sequence do you use?

We follow the Letters and Sounds document and focus our teaching on Phase 1. In the autumn term we focus mainly on aspects 1 to 3, then move on to aspects 4 to 6. In the summer term, we work on aspect 7. Throughout the year children will have opportunities to practise all aspects in our continuous provision and outdoor environment, in guided groups as well as independently.

- How do you track and assess phonics?

Each child has a tracking sheet for Phase 1 which we use at the end of every term to assess progress and identify children who are not making adequate progress. At the end of the year, this information is passed on to the children's Reception school.

- How do children apply their phonics skills in writing?

When they are ready, children are encouraged to identify initial sounds in words and label them on their pictures. This may be in the areas of continuous provision or during guided writing activities. They are also encouraged to write CVC (eg. cat, man, pop) words by segmenting the sounds they can hear.

- How do children apply their phonics skills in reading?

Children learn to blend sounds together orally towards the end of their year in Nursery. If they can recognise some sounds, they may be encouraged to clap out the sounds they can see in a word and blend to read. They may also use clues from the initial sounds in words to read print in the environment such as friends' names or labels on boxes of toys.

Reception

- How often do you teach phonics?

Phonics is taught daily for 20 minutes.

- What progression/sequence do you use?

We follow the Letters and Sounds progression. We start by revisiting Phase 1 during the transition weeks and then teach Phase 2 to Phase 4. By the end of Reception we expect most children to be secure in Phase 4 sounds so they are ready for transition into Year 1.

- How do you track and assess phonics?

Wherever possible, we use data from the children's nursery setting to assess their starting point. Children who attend Chorlton Park Nursery come up with their Phase 1 assessment sheet. Every child in Reception has a phonics assessment grid which tracks their progress in learning sounds and moving through the phases. We assess the children's progress every half term. We use formative assessment to identify children who are at risk of falling behind and adapt planning accordingly.

- How do children apply their phonics skills in writing?

The children's understanding of Phase 2, 3 and 4 phonics allows them to sound talk decodable words into phonetically plausible words. Their knowledge and memory of common exception words (also called 'tricky words' or 'high frequency words') allows them to write words where their phonemes can not help. The children have opportunities to write with an adult once a week in a guided session then throughout the challenges set in the enhanced provision and the continuous provision both indoors and outdoors. There is always at least one writing challenge set per week with the expectation that children participate.

- How do children apply their phonics skills in reading?

The children use a combination of the school's reading strategies, starting with 'Mouse the Mouth', 'Sharp Eye Owl', 'Tommy Tracker' and 'Slide the Snake'. These strategies go hand in hand with our methods of teaching phonics. The children begin applying their Phase 2 sounds using our carefully matched Dandelion reading scheme, this then progresses through the teaching of sounds across the phases along with the progression of reading bands. In addition, each child takes home an additional reading book from one of our other schemes. All children read with an adult at least once a week. Target readers get an extra reading session per week. Then from Spring 1 each child receives a group guided read session with the teacher. There are plenty of opportunities for reading within the enhanced and continuous provision. There is at least one weekly challenge set with a phonics objective.

Year 1

- How often do you teach phonics?

Phonics is taught every day. This includes one session focused on Year 1 common exception words.

- What progression/sequence do you use?

We follow the Letters and Sounds progression. We start by revisiting Phase 3 and then teach Phase 4 to Phase 5.

- How do you track and assess phonics?

We use information from Reception in the autumn term and then use formative assessment and phonics assessment sheets to track the progress of children through Phrases 4 and 5. In addition, we use practice Phonics Screenings to monitor the progress of children towards end of year outcomes.

- How do children apply their phonics skills in writing?

This is done daily in most subjects. The children are asked to use their phonics to read modelled writes and help spell words during modelled writes. Phonics is picked up in marking and feedback. In lessons, children have sound mats to support their writing. Children are also given daily opportunities in the continuous provision to practise applying the sounds taught.

- How do children apply their phonics skills in reading?

During group and individual reading sessions, adults focus on developing children's ability to blend and segment the sounds they have learnt. They also encourage children to read common exception words. Children are also taught a range of strategies in addition to phonics to read words and understand texts.

Year 2

In Year 2 we use the autumn term to revise Phase 5 of Letters and Sounds to ensure most children are secure in that phase and can apply it effectively in their reading and writing. We then move on to teaching spelling using *No Nonsense Spelling*, which builds on the children's phonics knowledge.