

Phonics

At The Magdalen School we follow 'Essential Letters and Sounds' DFE approved scheme to teach phonics. ELS was created to ensure every child can read well, quickly.

Our Intent for our Phonics curriculum:

At The Magdalen School, we are committed to ensuring that all children in our care become confident and enthusiastic readers and writers. We aim to ensure that every child, regardless of their background, ability or needs succeeds and achieves well. We believe that phonics provides the foundation of learning to make the development into fluent reading and writing easier. Phonics is the process that ensures children have the skills to break words into a sound system, building letter and word recognition. Children learn to segment words to help support their spelling ability and to blend sounds together to read words. Once phonics is learnt and children can read fluently, and at speed, they can then focus on developing their other reading skills such as comprehension and acquiring knowledge. Fluent reading skills allow access to the whole curriculum.

The aims of our Phonics approach are to:

- Ensure all pupils make speedy progress in phonics and reading, through a high-quality systematic and synthetic phonics programme and that it is followed with rigour and fidelity
- Ensure the pace of the phonics programme is maintained so that children become fluent, independent readers by the end of Year 1
- Ensure children's reading books show a cumulative progression in phonics knowledge that match the grapheme-phoneme correspondences they know and plenty of opportunities are given to practise in order to support decoding skills.

Our Implementation for our Phonics curriculum:

At The Magdalen School, we follow a validated systematic synthetic phonics programme; Essential Letters and Sounds (ELS). ELS is a method of learning which is based around letter sounds and phonics, blending them together to read and write words and using these learnt sounds in their reading and writing. Our reading strategy outlines in more detail exactly how we implement the phonics scheme in our school.

Using this structured programme, children will learn to read effortlessly so that they can then develop their comprehension skills. The sound and letter correspondence will also help our children build as their spelling skills allowing them to focus on grammar and compositional ideas in writing. Children will learn phonics as soon as they enter school in our Reception class. Daily phonic lessons become part of their everyday routine. Lessons are carefully structured in a repetitive way, to introduce new sounds. Children will hear the sounds, say them, see them, read the sounds in words, write the words and build new vocabulary. Modelling is a hugely important part of their learning process and all the teaching staff have been trained using ELS materials.

Sounds have been divided up into small groups. Children will meet a small group of sounds each week. Some revision and practise weeks are built into the programme to consolidate. Children will practise the distinct sounds and will then practise blending the sounds together to make real and made-up words.

The children will learn mnemonics and rhymes to help remember the letters and how to write them.

Once the single letter forms have been learnt, children will then move onto sounds created by two or more letters. Children will be continuously assessed throughout each week and half term. The scheme is a '**keep up**' rather than '**catch up**' scheme.

To help the children practise their sounds, each child will receive a reading book which matches their phonic stage. These reading books will ensure children get chance to practise the sounds they are learning, allowing them to develop speed and confidence.

At the end of Year 1, all children are tested with the phonic screening test published by the Department for Education. These tests use real words and made up words to test each child's phonological knowledge and skills. The expectation is that all children should be able to pass this test which means they know all of their phonic sounds. If a child in Year 1 does not reach the required level then additional support will be put in place in order for the child to make accelerated progress with their reading. They will be retested when they are in Year 2. This data will be submitted to the Local Authority.

The impact of our Phonics Curriculum:

Our curriculum equips children with the skills to become skilled readers and writers. We intend to encourage all pupils to read widely across both fiction and non-fiction to develop their knowledge of themselves and the world in which they live, to establish an appreciation and love of reading, to gain knowledge across the curriculum and develop their comprehension skills. It is our intention to ensure that, by the end of their primary education, all pupils are able to read fluently, and with confidence, in any subject in their forthcoming secondary education. We hope that by sharing the joy of reading with our children that they will gain a love of reading that will stay with them for the rest of their lives.