Flax Bourton Church of England Primary School

**“Aiming High, Respecting Others, Having Fun”**

This policy should be taken as part of the overall strategy of the school and implemented within the context of our vision, aims and values as a Church of England School.

**Phonics Policy**

**September 2021**

**Rationale**

The processes by which children comprehend spoken language are the same as those by which they comprehend the words on the page: the difference being that the first relies upon hearing the words and the second upon seeing the words in written form. To comprehend written texts, children must first learn to recognise (decode) the words on the page.

High-quality phonic teaching secures the crucial skills of word recognition that, once mastered, enable children to read fluently and automatically, thus freeing them to concentrate on the meaning of the text.

Children at Flax Bourton Primary will secure automatic decoding skills, and progress from ‘learning to read’ to ‘reading to learn’ for purpose and pleasure. The ultimate goal of learning to read is comprehension.

**Aims:**

* To ensure that high-quality phonic work is not a ‘strategy’ so much as a body of knowledge, skills and understanding that has to be learned.
* To teach grapheme-phoneme correspondences in a clearly defined, incremental sequence.
* To encourage children to apply the highly important skill of blending (synthesising) phonemes in the order in which they occur, all through a word, to read it.
* To teach children to apply the skills of segmenting words into their constituent phonemes to spell.
* For children to know that blending and segmenting are reversible processes.

To achieve this, teachers and teaching assistants are clear about which activities are designed to teach children to acquire word recognition skills, and which will help children develop high-level comprehension skills.

**Teaching Approaches and Strategies**

Flax Bourton Primary School has adopted a ‘phonics first and fast’ approach throughout the school and across the curriculum, whereby children are encouraged and expected to apply their phonic knowledge as their primary strategy for reading, writing and spelling in all subject areas. Teaching staff appreciate the importance of a ‘phonics first’ approach and understand the need for consistency and continuity across the Key Stages, when expecting children to blend, segment and spell. It is believed that this approach is crucial in helping children to fulfil their potential as competent and confident readers and writers.

At Flax Bourton Primary School, we use Letters and Sounds as the basis for the planning of our high quality, systematic phonics programme. Phonics at Flax Bourton Primary is taught through discrete, daily lessons every week throughout the Foundation Stage and Year One. In Year 2, lessons move from a phonic focus at the beginning of the year towards a focus on spelling patterns. In Key Stage Two, phonics support will be provided for those who have not reached the expected standard at the end of Year Two.

Reading books are very closely matched to a child's current phonics phase so that each child can achieve success in their reading (see Reading Policy).

**The Learning Environment**

In Foundation and Key Stage One, teachers ensure the classroom environment has an age-appropriate display of all Grapheme-Phoneme Correspondences in Phase 2 and Phase 3 and Phase 5 Grapheme-Phoneme Correspondences. Common exception words will also be displayed and referred to. The signage in classrooms is simple and consistent.

**Assessment and Monitoring**

The attainment and progress of children in phonics are assessed regularly across the year, both discretely at the end of each phase. At the end of Year 1, children participate in the phonics screening check which assesses their knowledge of grapheme-phoneme correspondence and their skills in blending. Those children who do not attain the threshold in the phonics screening check are highlighted for further intervention and targeted support, before completing the screening check again at the end of Year 2. For children who do not succeed a second time, provision is made for them to receive intervention and targeted support in Key Stage 2.

**The Role of Parents and Carers**

At parents’ meetings, teachers emphasise the importance of phonics as the foundation of reading. Parents are expected to support the children’s learning in school through suggested activities to be carried out at home weekly. At the start of each year, a phonics workshop is run specifically for Foundation Stage and Year 1 parents.

Ratified: LGB

Review date: Sept 2023