

Phonics at Elmsleigh



Intent

At Elmsleigh, we teach phonics using a linguistic phonics programme called Sounds-Write. Sounds Write is a very highly structured, multi-sensory, incremental, and code-oriented, instructional approach to teaching children to read and spell. The Sounds-Write programme is implemented in the classroom and provides very fast and effective teaching for children at all levels.

The Sounds Write programme is successful in teaching children to read and spell because it starts with what all children know from a very young age - the sounds of our spoken language. Then, using a very systematic approach, it teaches them how these sounds are coded within our writing system.

Implementation

Children at Elmsleigh will be sure to tell you how much they enjoy their Sounds Write lessons. Its structure and simplicity make it a programme accessible to all learners and helps them to make excellent progress with their reading and spelling.

Sounds Write promotes the use of multi-sensory engagement with the materials appropriate to the level and abilities of the children being taught. Visual, auditory, and kinaesthetic activities are at all times combined simultaneously to promote learning. In addition to being multisensory, the Sounds-Write programme has pace and utilises an array of stimulating lessons and resources. It also enables teachers to differentiate the challenges placed before the learner in order to meet their individual needs.

The four key concepts children are taught are:

1. letters are symbols that represent sounds
2. sounds can be spelled using 1, 2, 3 or 4 letters
3. the same sound can be spelled in different ways
4. the same spelling can represent different sounds

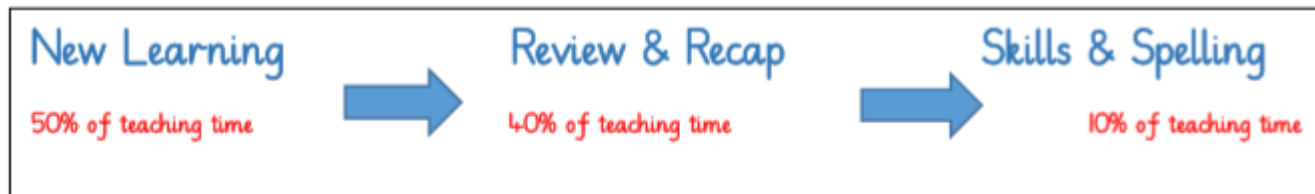
The three key skills children need to master are:

1. blending
2. segmenting
3. phoneme manipulation

Children in our Foundation Stage begin with the Initial Code where they practice all 3 key skills whilst learning the 1:1 sound-spelling correspondences and securing their understanding of key concept 1. This builds up confidence and phonic knowledge in a truly reversible system, enabling them to decode and encode a wide range of words and sentences. At first, children learn to read and write simple one syllable words with a CVC structure. Complexity of word structure systematically builds up so that children apply their code knowledge to monosyllabic words with up to 6 sounds.

Once the Initial Code has been mastered, children continue to practice all 3 key skills whilst learning Extended Code which explores key concepts 2, 3 and 4. Learning of the Extended Code is a lifelong process - we all continue to develop our understanding of this code whenever we encounter new words. Whilst learning the Extended Code, children read and write monosyllabic and polysyllabic words at an age-appropriate level.

Lesson Structure



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- In Early Years children have a 20 minute Sound Write session every day.
- In KS1, children have a 30 minute Sounds Write lesson every day.

Word walls and follow up activities are sent home each week for children to practise reading and writing at home.

All of our teachers received a 5-week training session (during covid lockdown) in order to deliver the Sounds-Write phonics programme. Sounds-Write takes children through systematic, incremental steps to teach children the 44 sounds in the English language and their multiple spellings.

Impact

The impact of the Sounds-Write teaching approach enables our children to be confident readers and writers by the end of their time with us. From very low starting points our children now make good progress in their phonics and by the end of Years 1 and 2 are decoding and reading at standard nationally and our very youngest children in Nursery are already orally blending and segmenting words for reading and spelling. The lessons are carefully structured and consistently applied across the school with excellent training and materials to support the teachers. The children love their Sound-Write lessons which is why we continuously see great progress.

SEND and Disadvantaged pupils

The benefit of Sounds Write is that it is also designed to be used as an effective 1:1 intervention. Children at Elmsleigh with additional needs are very fortunate to have access to extra phonics sessions either with fully trained teachers or teaching assistants, to allow them to catch up with the rest of their peers. All children who may need extra intervention or support are provided with high quality phonics teaching at all times.