



### Meet the Subject Leads



Hayley Craven



Sophie Marshall

Since September 2022 Phonics at Oswald Road has seen a huge overhaul in it's teaching delivery and learning techniques.

It was at the start of the academic year that we introduced ELS (Essential Letters and Sounds), a government approved and validated phonics scheme.

Historically, Phonics was something that happened in Early Years and Key Stage 1 but we understood there was still a need for it in Key Stage 2, with children who may need extra support with their learning, for International New Arrivals and especially after the pandemic in which many children may have missed out on their learning. So it was important to us that phonics became everyone's responsibility so we pledged to make a huge investment in training, resources and time to ensure the best program for our children.

The whole of the teaching staff received in person training from the ELS team. The staff worked swiftly and tirelessly to follow and implement the new scheme and it wasn't long before it was up and running successfully across the whole school where it was needed.

Like anything else, when introducing something new, it can be overwhelming, there can be teething problems and many questions to answer in order to get it just right for our school, so as the Phonics Lead, Hayley Craven set up a rolling program of coaching and mentoring, in order to ensure all staff are confident and effective at delivering phonics, whilst keeping fidelity to the scheme, and this continues to this day. It was especially useful for the beginning of the new academic year in 2023 when we welcomed new staff to the Oswald Road team.

One of our biggest investments was in a new range of take home reading books. It is essential for children learning to read that the books they receive, precisely match their phonic knowledge and give them the opportunity to practise and consolidate previously taught sounds and the newest sounds they have learnt. This was again a huge undertaking, but was successfully put in place. Hopefully parents of children accessing phonics will have seen and shared the lovely new books with their children.

Hayley Craven also liaised with another local Chorlton school to share our progress with implementing the scheme. Several members of staff came from this school to observe Hayley and discuss how she had implemented the scheme successfully in order to assist them in their set up.

During a deep dive with our Quality Assurance Partner, he noted that the Phonics teaching and learning the school was strong and consistent and this was echoed in our most recent OFSTED inspection.

## Curriculum Highlights

During the OFSTED visit earlier this academic year, Phonics and Early Reading was chosen for a 'Deep Dive'. Inspectors confirmed that the standards across school in the teaching of Phonics and Early Reading was strong. Here are some of the highlights:

- Well-established
- Prioritised, highly visible
- Choice of books – on all levels – shows careful consideration
- Quality texts match the school context
- Reading areas are conducive to a quality reading environment across school and are vocab rich
- Carefully mapped books – genres, time periods, range of backgrounds
- Reads link to other subject areas – e.g. links to science and cross-curricular vocab
- Really clear climate for reading for pleasure
- Children are immersed in book-rich environments from Nursery upwards
- Chance to express feelings and thoughts about books in reading journals
- Reading is celebrated and parents are linked in well
- There are set times for reading for pleasure and sharing reading
- High quality talk around reading, with teaching staff being the 'best voice in the room'
- VIPERS is effectively planned
- Chance for children to access a range of authors, visits libraries, have visits with authors, Zoom links, parental links and reading challenges
- There is a secure rationale for choice of systematic phonics scheme
- Suits the need of our EAL children well
- Pupils progress securely
- Lessons show implementation matching intent, with clear fidelity to the scheme (including resources used)
- Teaching staff are experts in phonics and leaders show a commitment to ensuring this is the case across school, supporting as needed
- Phonics lead is clear that all teaching staff should be experts in phonics
- Routines are clearly in place
- Clear modelling – leading to children being increasingly secure in their retention
- Masses of opportunities for practice (Me, then you)
- Work book use keeps the fidelity to the scheme but is also key practice (including of letter formation).
- Teaching staff are noted correcting in the moment consistently
- All teaching staff are well-trained, including TAs, Key Stage 2 teachers and teaching staff new to school
- New teaching staff are able to access online learning modules
- Leaders have invested a great deal into implementation – time, dedication and financially
- Books match precisely – both ELS and book band books. This is noted as robust
- Meticulous mapping of non-ELS books (book bands)

- Nursery's 'light touch' introduction to phase 2 matches need and prepares children for their next steps
- Reception baseline and starting points are appropriate and the immediate start of phonics is a strength
- Short burst intervention stops children having lesser access to the wider curriculum and therefore don't interrupt learning in the foundation subjects
- Intervention groups are monitored securely and need is identified well by precise assessment
- Bottom 20% are clearly identified. The Headteacher gave names of children who were lowest within the bottom 20% and these children showed secure GPC and had strategies they could use and skills they could apply. Although not there yet (due to current ability), they showed themselves ready for the next steps of starting to build to fluidity in their reading with expression.
- Carousel of training is in place and is continuing. This is a mentoring / coaching model and has been proved to be effective to this point
- Assessment is exceptionally well-mapped to curriculum content laid out by the programme – both for use in class (in the moment correction etc) and via use of the online assessment programme
- This allows staff to pinpoint intervention

## Subject Developments

It was only in February that ELS produced phonics guidance for Phase 1 for our youngest children in Nursery. Sophie Marshall and Vicky Morris (EYFS Phase Lead) took the lead on implementing this immediately, and only 2 months on, this is already well established and has now allowed consistent phonics teaching and learning right from the very start of our children's educational careers.

This year we have continued to strive to provide as many at home reading books as possible for our children who are accessing phonics. So there is now a range of books available for children outside of Early Years and Year 1 available to take home to support their phonics learning and supplement the online Oxford Owls books that are available to all children.

Of course, coaching and mentoring will continue into the next academic year, so should there be any new members of the team or anyone new to teaching phonics, they will receive training to get them quickly up to speed to ensure the strength in phonics teaching at Oswald Road continues.



## Subject Celebrations

As a school we have consistently achieved phonics screener results above National Average for several years, including after the pandemic.

### Parental feedback:

“I have a background in speech and language therapy and working with pupils with literacy difficulties, so it was lovely to hear people talking about schwa and really impressive to see all the careful work that has gone in to the approach that has been selected by the school.”

“I have a child in Year 6 and Year 1 and I have been very impressed with the implementation of this new scheme. I can see the positive improvements and impact the consistency and high expectations have had on my Year 1 child when I compare them to my Year 6 child.”





## Pupil voice

“I love the robot arms. It’s really fun to read the words.”

“The flashcards have sounds and pictures. They help me remember the sounds.”

“When we write a sentence in Phonics, I look at the board and see the sounds and try different sounds in my sentences.  
‘A pair in the lair’ is one of the rhymes.”

“My favourite part is when you join the letters together to make a word. When we know all the word we can make a sentence.”

“I look at the big board of sounds and I write the sounds in the word, one by one, and if it doesn’t look right, I try again until it looks right.”

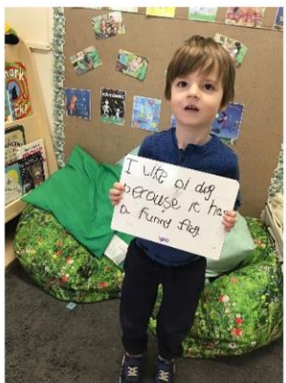
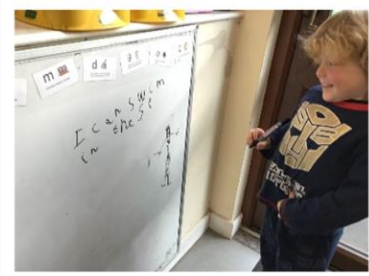

“I love English and Phonics.”

“Mrs Craven says my Phonics is getting better.”



## Subject Enhancements

Within our daily provision, starting from EYFS (Early Years Foundation Stage), children are encouraged to apply their phonics skills across many areas of learning. Children may choose within their Reception day to sit and read books in the book area or to write captions or stories in different areas of the classroom. Across school we aspire to instil a love of literacy and it's fantastic to see so many of our children applying what they learn in phonics throughout their day.

		
Writing about our favourite books on World Book Day	Children independently choose to use and apply their learning to express thoughts and feelings	Children in Reception are given the opportunity to become fluent readers as they develop their phonics skills.

### Parents and Carers as co-educators

We love to see the amazing progress that children make in their phonics right from when they first join us in Nursery and we are ever thankful for the input from so many parents in helping children by reading regularly with children. We hold phonics workshops at the start of the academic year and the ongoing involvement from parents and carers has a huge impact on children consolidating the phonics they learn in school as well as developing their love of literacy. Reception parents were invited to join in our Egg Hunt at Easter; finding letters to spell out a mystery word. It was great to see so many faces and have so many children completing their adventure!

