

## Early Reading Statement

Mayflower Primary School English is taught daily with work appropriately differentiated to match all abilities. We aim to nurture in the children a love of literature and language and the confidence to continue reading and writing throughout their lives.

### **With parental support, we want our children to:**

- speak clearly and confidently in any situation
- listen actively and respond appropriately, developing knowledge and opinion.
- read fluently for both pleasure and information, using the sounds taught to them
- write clearly and with confidence in any given genre using the sounds that they know
- use spelling rules, phonics and grammar accurately
- be able to read their work back

### **What is phonics?**

There has been a big shift in the past few years in how we teach reading in school. Since August 2022 Mayflower uses ALS and Bug Club as its spine for phonics and early reading. This is having a huge impact and helping many children learn to read by applying sounds they have been taught. Phonics is recommended as the first strategy that children should be taught in helping them learn to read. Phonics runs alongside other teaching methods to help children develop vital reading skills and give them a real love of reading – hopefully for life.

### **Phoneme? Grapheme?**

Words are made up from small units of sound (phonemes) and phonics teaches children to listen carefully and identify the phonemes that make up each word. This helps them learn to read and spell words.

In phonics lessons we follow the ALS scheme with fidelity. Children are taught three main things:

#### 1 GPCs (grapheme phoneme correspondences)

GPCs simply means that children are taught all the phonemes in the English language and ways of writing them down.

#### 2 Blending

Children are taught to blend sounds together by merging the individual sounds together until they can hear what the word is. This is a vital reading skill.

#### 3 Segmenting

Segmenting is the opposite of blending! Children are able to say a word and then break it up into the phonemes that make it up. This is a vital spelling skill.

## **Why is phonics so tricky?**

The English language is very complicated! England has been invaded so many times throughout its history and each set of invaders brought new words and new sounds with them. As a result, English only has around 44 phonemes but there are around 120 graphemes or ways of writing down those 44 phonemes. Plus, we only have 26 letters in the alphabet so some graphemes are made up from more than one letter.

ch th oo ay (these are digraphs – graphemes with two letters)

There are other graphemes that are trigraphs (made up of 3 letters) and a very few made from 4 letters.

Some graphemes can represent more than one phoneme, ie, ch can make different sounds, chip, school, chef

Learning to read is like cracking a code so teaching phonics is a way of teaching children to crack the code. As reading is the key to learning it is important that we teach phonics clearly and systematically learning easy bits first then progressing to trickier bits!

At Mayflower Primary School reading and phonics are taught in accordance with the National Curriculum using the progression from ALS as our guide. We are passionate about teaching children to read. Reading enriches children's vocabulary, their writing and their spelling. They have access to the wider curriculum and their self-esteem is enhanced because they realise they are succeeding. We offer demonstration lessons on phonics to all our parents in Reception class, and again in Year 1 through family learning sessions.

A key element to our phonics teaching is that practice across the school is consistent. All staff in Early Years and Key Stage 1 school have received phonic training (2022) and have a shared understanding of how to teach children to read and write. We use strategies of participation, praise, pace, purpose and passion. These key teaching strategies ensure that every child has the opportunity to be successful. All children participate fully in the whole lesson. There is no chance for children to lose concentration. A lively pace keeps all the children fully engaged and teachers know the purpose of every activity and how it leads to the next. Each child's reading journey begins in EYFS where phonics is introduced. As children progress through school and their phonetic awareness develops, reading books from Bug Club in the first instance, until they are a fluent reader and progress to our KS2 texts from a number of different schemes.