

Phonics teaching at Thomas Jones School

At Thomas Jones we utilise the Jolly Phonics scheme, to ensure children quickly and securely build up their reading skills. Jolly Phonics is a fun and child centred approach to teaching literacy through synthetic phonics. With actions for each of the 42 letter sounds, the multi-sensory method is very motivating for children. Phonics begins in the Nursery and is taught throughout the EYFS and KS1 as whole class teaching sessions.

Our home reader scheme ensures that children are sent home weekly with fully decodable books to revisit and consolidate sounds that they have previously been taught. We use both books published by Pearson Bug Club and Big Cat Collins to promote the love of reading and to expose children to a variety of genres (plays, fiction, non-fiction etc.) We also ensure decodable books are available in class book corners from Nursery to Year 6.

In EYFS and KS1, parents and carers are invited into school to attend phonics coffee mornings, which focus on teaching the sounds, demonstrating this to parents and showing them how to assist with segmenting and blending at home.

EYFS

In **Nursery** throughout the year, Jolly Phonics is introduced through Communication and Language sessions. This forms a basis for early literacy skills. The importance of speaking, listening, mark making, and learning new vocabulary is emphasised. Children also develop their skill with instrumental sounds, rhythm, and rhyme through child-initiated and adult-led activities.

Phonics is taught through daily phonics sessions covering all 7 key skills (such as instrumental sounds, body percussion, etc.), one each week, once all the new children are settled. Activities are followed up independently at choosing time (such as making sound makers) and through adult-led activities where appropriate.

If children arrive into the EYFS with a good base knowledge of linking sounds to letters already, they are extended through differentiated activities and encouraged to make 'books' using their personal interests as a motivator, such as a 'transport book'. Sounds and how these link to letters are discussed, and children are encouraged to begin to read and write using their existing knowledge, such as sounding out 'C-A-T' to label a picture.

In **Reception**, children are taught all 7 Jolly Phonics sound groups daily. From the start, they are introduced to letter formation alongside developing skills in linking sounds to letters, segmenting for writing, and blending for reading. These skills are reinforced through weekly 1:1 reading sessions, adult-led and child-initiated learning activities, as well as home learning when appropriate. High-Frequency Words (HFW) and Common Exception Words (CEW) are taught and planned for throughout the year. At this stage, a coffee morning is held for parents to introduce them to the sounds, expectations for the children, and how phonics is taught.

In the Summer term, children continue to consolidate their phonics knowledge and blending skills while focusing more on grammar. They are encouraged to build simple sentences and captions, applying their phonics and writing skills in meaningful contexts. Letter formation continues to be reinforced, and HFW and CEW are integrated into reading and writing activities.

Year One

In Year 1, children begin by consolidating all 42 taught sounds across the 7 Jolly Phonics sound groups. They continue to develop their skills in segmenting and blending, applying these for meaningful reading and writing tasks as they settle into a more formal teaching structure. These skills are essential for progress across other subjects in the National Curriculum.

In the Autumn I term, consolidation of previously taught sounds remains a focus, with particular emphasis on applying segmenting and blending for real purposes.

In the Autumn II term, children are introduced to alternative sounds using the Jolly Phonics “Alternative Sounds Trees.” This stage ensures that children learn what is needed to successfully approach the Year One Phonics Screening Check while not overwhelming them with information before they are ready. Children are encouraged to read and write with these alternatives, understanding that they may not always apply them correctly at first. Specific spelling “rules” for placement within words are taught, including consonant digraphs, but mastery is not yet expected.

In the Summer II term, alternative sounds and previously taught phonics skills are consolidated in preparation for Year 2. All National Curriculum spelling rules are planned for and reinforced throughout the year, ensuring children are confident with both sound-letter correspondences and early spelling patterns.

Year Two

In the Autumn I term, children revisit alternative sounds introduced in Year 1, consolidating previously taught sounds and exploring new spelling alternatives, such as pronunciations like ‘eigh’/‘ey’ joining the existing ‘ay’ family.

In Autumn II term, children progress to structured spelling plans that incorporate phonics alternative sound rules. They have increased opportunities to identify patterns and “rules” within words, allowing them to deepen their understanding of spelling and apply this knowledge across reading and writing. Daily spelling investigations support this, helping children make connections between phonics, spelling alternatives, and grammar, for example recognizing when the /s/ sound is spelt as ‘c’ before e, i, and y.

From **Year Three** onwards, phonics is tailored to individual children who still require support with this key skill. This support is provided by trained and experienced members of staff, who work with children in small groups or pairs to consolidate and reinforce essential phonics skills and help them apply these to their reading and writing. Children are identified for this intervention by their class teacher, and progress is reviewed termly.

	Autumn I	Autumn II	Spring I	Spring II	Summer I	Summer II
Nursery			Body Percussion Instrumental Sounds Rhythm and Rhyme	Alliteration Environmental Sounds Oral Blending		
Reception	Group 1 -3 sounds		Group 4 – 6 sounds		Group 7 + Vowel digraph review	
Year 1	Groups 1-5	Groups 6-7 Alternative sounds 'ai', 'ee'	Alternative sounds: 'ie' 'oa' 'ue' 'er' 'or' 'oi' 'ou'		Consonant Digraphs Trigraphs	NC Spelling Objectives
Year 2	Alternative Sound Review	Spelling Investigations (NC Objectives 2014)				

Assessment

Phonics assessments are planned and carried out termly to monitor children's progress in relation to the sounds and grapheme-phoneme correspondences that have been taught. These assessments ensure that children are on track and well prepared for the Year 1 Phonics Screening Check. Assessment outcomes are used to identify gaps in learning, enabling targeted intervention and informed planning. They also provide valuable information for communicating progress with parents and carers. Any sounds or graphemes that children are not yet secure with are shared with families so that they can be practised at home, supporting consistent learning between school and home.