

# GEMS Winchester School, Fujairah

## Phonics Policy



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## GEMS WSF Phonics Policy

### **Intent**

At GEMS Winchester School Fujairah (WSF), we prioritise a High Performance Learning approach as we believe it is essential that all children become confident, successful, fluent readers. To do so, we aim for all children to develop automaticity in word reading; promote and develop language comprehension and ensure that throughout their school career at WSF they experience a variety of high-quality texts leading to a strong reading culture. We aim to support students to practice HPL VAAs of practice, perseverance and resilience through a successful reading and phonics programme.

We believe in the importance of teaching children systematic synthetic phonics as a firm foundation for reading. Identifying the phonetics of letters and thus being able to read most words 'at a glance', supports children's understanding of language and develops their skills to the level of automaticity. As the majority of our students have English as an additional language, we aim to ensure teaching strategies for phonics that consider English as an additional language, are implemented to provide the best opportunities for student success.

We intend for all pupils to achieve to their full potential and will ensure this happens by:

- Following a systematic synthetic programme with fidelity (Rocket Phonics)
- Ensuring that all children participate in high-quality phonics sessions
- Assessing and Tracking children regularly to ensure that no child falls behind and that students are confident readers
- Providing additional support for children working towards expectation
- Ensuring all staff are experts in the teaching of reading
- Appointing designated phonics leads
- Developing strong relationships between home and school to ensure support for home learning. Embedding the value of collaboration will ensure better student performance.
- Providing fully decodable readers that are carefully matched to the child's developing phonics knowledge as well as access to resource rich libraries
- Provide access to phonics resources to support EAL students at all levels and age groups.
- Promoting a love of reading
- Ensuring children apply their phonic knowledge in reading and writing across the full curriculum thereby ensuring that the HPL ACP of linking is embedded.

### **Implementation**

#### **Approach**

We use the Jolly Phonics scheme and elements of Rocket Phonics in PreK to ensure that our youngest learners are introduced to phonics in a practical meaningful way through play and songs.

We use the Rocket Phonics scheme from KG1 to teach phonics, which has a rich variety of reading texts and

visual resources to support the children developing automaticity in their journey to becoming fluent readers and writers.

### Organisation:

- Phonics is taught daily for 30-40 minutes. This is usually the first lesson of the day.
- From PreK to KG2 class teachers are responsible for the core phonics lesson, with teaching assistants also trained in Rocket Phonics to support.
- In Grade 1 and Grade 2 phonics is streamed due to the variety of fluency levels of English at WSF. Baseline assessments inform the levels of the students based on Rocket phonics. Students are grouped according to the levels. Teachers are assigned a specific group and focus on developing students from their base level, personalising the tasks set to ensure student needs are constantly met. Phonics groups are fluid and students move groups as and when is needed.
- Rocket Phonics plans are accessible online for all teaching staff. Teachers print plans that are suitable for the level of their teaching group and personalize them through annotations. Modifications to support EAL students are made where necessary.
- Key Rocket phonics resources have been printed and laminated for lessons.
- When staff are absent, the Rocket Phonics plans are easily accessible as teachers print plans and personalize them. Online Rocket phonics resources are also accessible.
- Collaborative and rotation station strategies are implemented to promote progress
- Staff focus on developing agility through designing tasks that support the HPL value of enquiring ensures opportunities for students to direct their own learning and perform optimally.

### Expectations / Targets

More than 90% of the students at WSF have English as an additional language thus our expectations and targets are aligned with this.

PreK focus on distinguishing sounds and blending and segmenting skills.

The Rocket Phonics programme is begun in KG1

Our expectations are as follows:

	End of year expectations by British Curriculum Standards	End of year expectations at WSF 2022 / 2023	End of year expectations at WSF 2023 / 2024
<b>KG1</b>	Level 6	Level 4	Level 6
<b>KG2</b>	Level 12	Level 6	Level 8
<b>Grade 1</b>	Consolidation	Level 8	Level 10
<b>Grade 2</b>	Spelling rules	Level 10	Level 12

### Progression and Teaching sequence

There is a clear sequence of progression through the Rocket Phonics scheme (see the overview of the scheme for more detail).

The teaching sequence of phonics lessons within a week varies depending on the age and level of the students. The progression of the phonics aims to develop confident and resilient students who apply phonics with automaticity. The following approach outlines the standard progression of phonics lessons over the week:

- Introducing a new sound focuses on listening with the teacher modelling the sound and blending, followed by a session on segmenting. Giving equal time to these skills is important to enhance speed and accuracy.
- Reading tasks focusing on reading and comprehending words with the relevant sound follows to ensure consistent practice.

- Writing skills are developed as a final stage in the week where tasks are designed to include words with the sounds that have been taught. Including these tasks allows the children to develop writing skills and encourages independence. Enquiry based learning embracing critical thinking are planned for to develop HPL characteristics in students.
- There is a revision session at the end of the week where spelling words are introduced. Spelling lists are differentiated in Grades. Common Exception words are included through the programme. ACPs of precision, connection and meta-cognition are embedded to ensure spelling is implemented successfully in all learning activities.

## **Vocabulary**

- Teaching vocabulary is a focus area to support language development of EAL students.
- Rocket Phonics does not actively teach pseudo words, as the point of phonics is to build fluency in real words. Pseudo words are explained briefly at the start of assessments as they form part of assessments
- Rocket Phonics provides 'Big Books' to be used in phonics alongside the learning of the letters, which allows children to hear their sounds in a rich story setting. This is an opportunity for developing and discussing new vocabulary as part of the daily phonics learning. Developing vocabulary promotes confidence.
- Reading Practice books and well as decodable readers further enhance the implementation of phonics skills as well as developing vocabulary thereby supporting speed and accuracy.
- Terminology is consistently used with children across the school: phonemes, graphemes, sounds, letters, sounding out, blending, pseudo words, common exception words (tricky words)

## **Environment and resources**

- Matching the programme is important: we use resources and books which are aligned to and produced by the Rocket Phonics scheme. This ensures consistency across the school and the availability of the scheme's resources online means they are accessible to all staff.
- Learning environments and lessons are further enriched by additional resources that compliment the Rocket Phonics scheme. The learning environment aims to support the ACP of strategy-planning in students as they engage with their environment linking to their learning and enhancing their performance.
- EAL resources are made available to support learning.
- Phonics areas and resources are readily available in continuous play areas and enrichment corners to ensure students have constant access to resources developing phonics thereby ensuring that linking is embedded
- Rocket Phonics Pupil Booklets are used during lessons to compliment the oral teaching of phonics
- Rocket Phonics readers are organised by colour and level. They are used in phonics lessons and guided reading groups in school. Currently we are using readers from other schemes for home learning as students have access to Active Learn. Students who are struggling to meet expectations are provided with readers they can take home to practice. Students are provided with support and opportunities to develop speed and accuracy.

## **Assessment and Tracking**

- Baseline assessments are conducted within the first 6 weeks of a new year.
- At the end of each term, the children will be assessed against the sounds they have learnt using the Rocket Phonics scheme.
- Assessment results are saved in Excel documents
- Phonics levels are recorded on online systems and passed on from year to year.

- We monitor through a range of methods and implement an assessment for learning approach to ensure that ongoing assessment informs planning. To build a more complete picture of the practice taking place in the school, we also have learning walks, featuring pupil voice, and opportunities to collaborate. Collaborative strategies promote progress.
- Teachers can access and use the scheme for any older students from Grade 3 which have been identified as needing support in phonics. Phonics resources provided by Rocket Phonics are used to bridge gaps at the point where older students have gaps in their learning.

### **Home learning**

- Open communication with home is important and this is achieved through the Home Learning programme that promotes performance through collaboration. We have a phonics meeting power point explaining the phonics programme and how it works.
- Parents are kept in touch with how their child is doing with regular conversations over Class Dojo, feedback on Home Learning tasks as well as meetings and opportunities to discuss their learning, including termly Parent-Teacher conferences.
- Our collaborative Home Learning programme supports the progression of phonics by providing the following: selected reading books allocated to students electronically for daily reading; word lists sent home for reading practice and weekly spelling lists based on phonics levels.

### **Continuous Professional Development**

We aim to ensure pupil outcomes for phonics in each Grade at least match or are better than previous years. We believe that this is achieved through high-quality teaching, effective planning for next steps, additional support where needed and appropriate interventions. By embedding High Performance learning ACPs and VAAs we believe that student performance is enhanced.

To ensure that all practitioners are experts in the teaching of phonics, we ensure that regular training takes place. Where staff need more support, we encourage a culture of collaboration through sharing good practice and invite teachers to watch their peers teach and access support from the phonics leaders when needed.