

Why make changes?

Yr 1 Phonics results (%pass):
2016 (82%);
2017 (74.5%).
61% current Year 1 children met their ELGs for reading. School has invested in Sounds~Write training for everyone teaching Phonics but the existing Phonics Progression plan was a mixture of schemes.

What should we do?

Background research

'The diligent, concentrated and systematic teaching of phonics is central to the success of all the schools that achieve high reading standards in Key Stage 1. This requires high-quality and expert teaching that follows a carefully planned and tightly structured approach to teaching phonic knowledge and skills.' (Reading by 6, Ofsted, 2010)

Government advice is to follow one Phonics scheme only and Sounds~Write is a recommended scheme.

Sounds~Write is a highly structured, multi-sensory, incremental and code-oriented, instructional approach to teaching children to read and spell. It is a recommended scheme for dyslexic children.

Oct '17, I asked if year 1 could change to a fully Sounds~Write based approach. SLT very keen.

Year 1 changed to the Sounds~Write method.

First steps

Conversations with Reception Staff revealed that they were not following the existing Phonics progression plan and were using approaches from a variety of sources. They were also not using Sounds~Write until the spring term. Discussed Reception changing to Sounds~Write.

Reflections

Overall, I feel the project went well because I had a clear vision of what needed to change and why. Working with my HT and DH helped me learn about the barriers to change and strategies for overcoming them.

Barriers: getting some staff to accept the need for change, trying to lead a project and teach full time.

Next steps: ensure Reception start teaching with the new Phonics progression plan from Autumn term. Higher achieving children in Reception to learn at a faster pace. Increase the collaboration between Year 1 and Reception.

Raising standards in reading by improving our teaching of Phonics in Early Years and Year 1.

Aims:
EY and Yr1 to teach Phonics using the Sounds~Write Scheme. 65% children to pass the Yr1 2018 Phonics screen. Children to have completed the initial code part of Sounds~Write by the end of FS. Higher achieving children in FS to have started the extended code.

Jan '18, formal meeting with DH and Reception staff about changing the teaching of Phonics and why it was needed. It was agreed to change our Phonics progression and assessment sheet. Reception to get Sounds~Write trained support staff to teach groups so that they could differentiate more.

Jan '18, created a new Phonics Progression plan and assessment sheet and shared with relevant staff.

June '18, positive feedback from support staff and teachers who had used the new Phonics progression and assessment sheet.

Review of progress towards outcomes

Feb '18, learning walks, conversations and planning scrutiny revealed that Reception teachers were only teaching Sounds~Write lessons 3 days a week and some lessons were not moving on children's learning. Sounds~Write lessons were not being taught correctly as children were not being given enough opportunities to write. Not all staff were assessing using the new assessment sheet.

Year 1 had fully implemented the new Phonics progression plan and new assessment sheet. Children at risk of failing the Year 1 Phonics Screen were identified and given extra teaching in differentiated groups.

Results

2018 Year 1 Phonics Screen, 71% Year 1 children read >32/40 words correctly. Swapping to Sounds~Write, keeping careful track of children's progress and targeting intervention accordingly helped us to exceed our target.

Reception did not fully implement our recommended changes and the children will not finish the Initial code this year. The new Phonics policy has now been implemented and we expect to see the children making more progress next year. We will also ensure that higher achieving children are moved onto the extended code next year.

Steps taken to address lack of change in Reception

Feb '18, held meeting with DH and Reception staff - all agreed to follow the new Phonics progression and use Sounds~Write style lessons; agreed to set up collaborative working groups between Year 1 and Reception.

Mar/Apr '18, learning walks still showed problems with implementation in Reception.

Apr '18, created a Phonics Policy with clear guidance on how Phonics lessons are to be planned, taught and assessed. Shared with governors.

June '18, shared Phonics policy in a staff meeting with the clear expectation that all staff teaching phonics will adhere to it.