



## **Durham Trinity School & Sports College**

### **Phonics Policy.**

(Supporting reading through to writing)

#### **Context**

Durham Trinity School and Sports College is a 2-19 generic special school catering for a wide range of learning difficulties including MLD, SLD, Communication Disorders including autism, PMLD including multi-sensory impairment and visual impairment.

#### **Aims/Rationale**

Durham Trinity School and Sports College offers a curriculum that is designed to enable pupils, no matter what their special needs to learn in a way which will maximise their potential. All pupils learn through different approaches and at different rates and their achievements vary. The key to success is in providing fun, interactive and challenging learning opportunities appropriate to the needs of the pupil. This policy includes the different phonic practices and approaches taking place across the school to meet the diverse needs. The processes by which children comprehend spoken language are the same as those by which they comprehend the words on the page; the difference being that the first relies upon listening skills and hearing the word and the second upon picture recognition to seeing the words in written form. In order to comprehend written texts children must first learn to recognise, that is decode, the words on the page.

There are skills required before they are able to decode and read fluently. High-quality phonic teaching will secure these crucial skills of word recognition that, once mastered, enable children to read fluently and automatically thus freeing them to concentrate on the meaning of the text.

Some children at Durham Trinity School and Sports College will secure automatic decoding skills and progress from 'learning to read' to 'reading to learn' for purpose and pleasure. The ultimate goal of learning to read is comprehension. To achieve this, practitioners and teachers are clear about which activities are designed to teach

children to acquire word recognition skills, and which will help children develop high level comprehension skills supporting them to achieve across the whole curriculum.

## **Equal Opportunities**

All pupils have a right to access a broad and balanced curriculum designed and adapted to meet their individual needs. There should be no barriers to learning.

### **Principles of high-quality phonic work at Durham Trinity School and Sports College**

Beginner readers should be taught:

- how to listen and recognise environmental, instrumental sounds and picture recognition before moving onto grapheme–phoneme correspondences
- to apply the highly important skill of blending (synthesising) phonemes in the order in which they occur, all through a word to read it
- to apply the skills of segmenting words into their constituent phonemes to spell
- that blending and segmenting are reversible processes

High-quality phonic work will be most effective when:

- it is part of a broad and rich curriculum that engages children in a range of activities and experiences to develop their speaking and listening skills and phonological awareness
- it is multi-sensory, encompassing simultaneous visual, auditory and kinaesthetic activities to enliven core learning
- it is systematic, that is to say, it follows a carefully planned programme with reinforcing and building on previous learning to secure children's progress
- it is taught discretely where appropriate
- there are opportunities to reinforce and apply acquired phonic knowledge and skills across the curriculum
- children's progress in developing and applying their phonic knowledge is carefully assessed, monitored, tracked and evaluated

## **Letter and Sounds**

Letters and Sounds (outlined in 'Letters and Sounds: Principles and Practice of High Quality Phonics') is designed to help practitioners and teachers to teach children how the alphabet works for reading and spelling. Systematic, high quality phonics teaching

is essential and is needed for children to achieve the goal of reading. Letters and Sounds is designed as a programme of phonics work aimed at securing fluent word recognition skills for reading. No children will be pressured to move on before they are equipped to do so.

### Curriculum Pathways:

At Durham Trinity School and Sports College there are 3 pathways determined by pupil destination. Pre-formal, Semi-formal and Formal Pathways (Appendix 1). Guidance below provides an overview of how Durham Trinity promotes phonics and literacy across the different pathways.

#### **Pre-formal Pathway**

Pupils working on this pathway are working towards or at Letters and Sounds Phase 1; attending to sounds, engaging in environmental, instrumental, vocal sounds, locating and discriminating sounds, developing vocalisation (speaking) and listening skills whilst using memory.

*Reading experiences include:* Sensory/tactile book boxes/story sacks, sound stories with the use of props/objects/symbols and signs.

#### **Semi-formal Pathway**

The majority of pupils are working on this pathway are working at Letters and Sounds Phase 1 and towards Phase 2. This includes the information in the Pre-formal Pathway whilst identifying letters and their individual sounds, for those that it is appropriate and recognising words as a symbol. Staff understand the SEND of the children therefore adapt the phonics approach:

- Pupils with SLD have a number of memory difficulties (ref: Imray & Coley 2017 – Appendix 2) therefore limited ability to recall letters and their sounds.
- Where pupils are accessing the Semi-Formal pathway due to their social and emotional needs, elements of a more formal approach to phonics will be incorporated.
- At Durham Trinity, if a pupil is in Year 7 and above and is not working beyond Phase 2 then we feel that their capability to progress further is extremely limited. Instead we will teach them a more aspirational approach to use their phonetic knowledge and skills and apply to functional activities.

Another challenge for pupils with SEND and memory recall difficulties is that they may be able to recognise and sight read but do they comprehend what they have read? Therefore the phonics approach needs to be adapted for these pupils.

*Reading activities/experiences include:* Pleasure for Reading through the use of class reading area with a variety of books/magazines. Call and response story activities from Equals My Communication. Books without words.

## **Formal Pathway**

Pupils working on this pathway are working at Letters and Sounds Phase 2 to 6; This can include:

- Consolidating and applying phonics knowledge and skills across curriculum subjects.
- Targeted phonics work within English lessons.

Reading activities/experiences include: Accelerated Reader, Reading for Pleasure, focused book work within a lesson based on a theme or genre.

## Classroom Environment

Where appropriate, teachers will develop the classroom environment to have an age appropriate display or learning area concentrating on books, sounds, pictures, objects and key words.

From previous Speech and Language Training staff are aware of the 3 tier word banks (Appendix 3) and apply this accordingly to the appropriate pathway.

## Assessment, Recording and Reporting

A continuous system of assessment and recording is essential in order to monitor and plan for progress. This procedure enables us to aid reporting for English targets (where appropriate), Learning Intentions, Education Health Care Plans and to formulate aims, provisions and experiences to be offered by all teachers who are teaching the child.

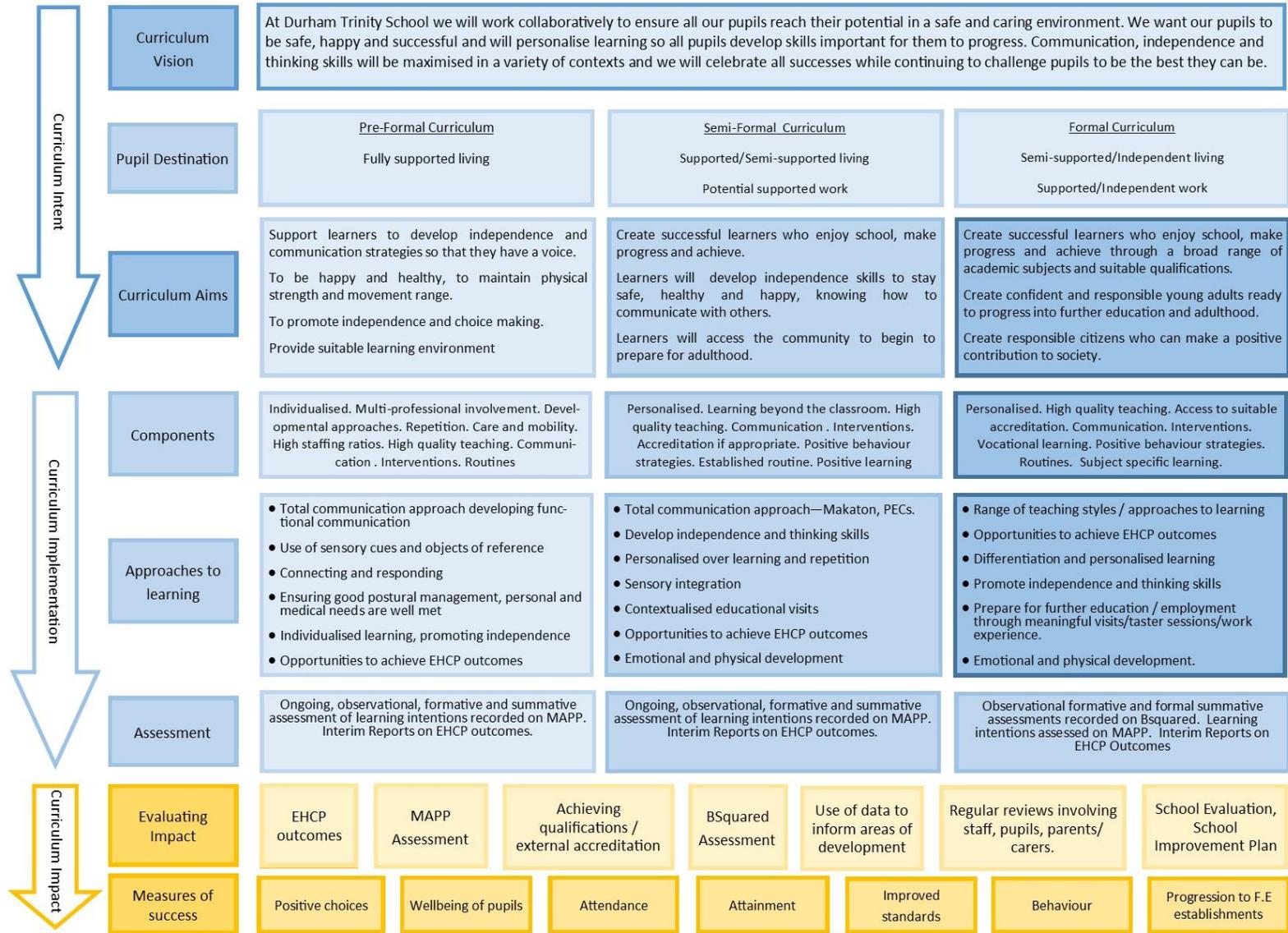
Procedures are in place, which enable colleagues to provide evidence for reporting on progress to parents and others. At Durham Trinity School and Sports College class teachers and English teachers will monitor the progress of all pupils, sharing the level at which the child is working at to other teachers who will teach them for other curriculum subjects.

B-squared data and other phonics assessments (where appropriate) will be collected termly by the Key Stage lead and pupil progress will also be monitored by the English Coordinators and class teachers.

## **APPENDICES**

1. Durham Trinity Curriculum Pathways
2. Severe Learning Difficulties (ref: Imray & Colley 2017)
3. Tiers of Vocabulary

# DTS&SC Phonics Policy



## APPENDIX 2 – Severe Learning Difficulties

- Consistently and over time working between P4 ish and at or below Level 1 ish of the National Curriculum
- Difficulties with communication
- Difficulties with concentration and attention
- Difficulties with abstract concepts
- Difficulties with short and long term memory
- Difficulties with sequential memory
- Limited working memory
- Poor general knowledge
- Difficulties with problem solving
- Difficulties with generalising understanding.

Imray and Colley (2017)

## APPENDIX 3 – TIERS OF VOCABULARY

