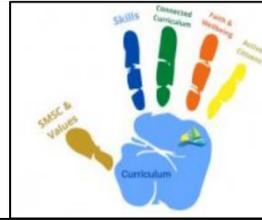




Why Phonics?



Skills

A message from Miss Lynch and Mrs Haisman-Baker, Phonics lead:

Phonics at Darlinghurst is vital at building the foundations for early reading and writing. We are proud of our tailor-made curriculum and structure which enables children to make good progress from the Early Years onwards.

Design and Purpose

At Darlinghurst, we aim to enable children to access and read a range of primary and secondary materials in foundation subjects, and develop the ability to learn independently, both skills and knowledge. Phonics provides the foundation for these early reading skills which will prepare them for later in life. We wish to provide intentional experiences for children related to reading which develops a 'love of reading' as well as preparing them as lifelong learners. Children will be able to develop key skills which they will be able to apply to everyday life, helping them to contribute to the wider world. All phonics lessons will develop fluency, use of vocabulary and blending and segmenting skills. Effective phonics lessons will also develop writing skills enabling the children to be confident and successful. The key concepts of decoding and blending will be taught in phonics lessons, then practised and mastered in other areas of the curriculum, particularly Writing.

Our tailor-made phonics programme focuses on a layered lesson approach whereby sounds are taught, followed by spelling and blending for reading strategies. Following on from the phonics lesson, a reading lesson is taught which follows a three-day cycle focusing on decoding skills and comprehension through a series of fiction and non-fiction texts at the level which the child is working at. Phonics books are banded according to 'special friends' and they are introduced in order according to the relevant curriculum guidance documents. Both phonics and reading lessons teach the relevant skills from the National Curriculum – developing year on year with the expectation of texts to read

Difference

Our children learn to be successful learners by receiving short, regular phonics sessions which enable them to develop the skills needed to read fluently at the pace and level they need. They gain the knowledge of all five phases of sounds and how to decode words in different ways, building upon their speedy reading skills. Our children are equipped to be confident readers and writers through the early reading strategies we teach them. Questioning sessions (day 3 in the phonics reading cycle) allow children to use a range of skills to show understanding of the text – context, characters, vocabulary choices, summarising and questioning author's motives.

We develop children's love of reading by initially hooking them into the varied texts we used, whether it is through objects, games or pictures and this helps develop a 'love of reading' so that they are keen to learn more and what will happen next. Deeper Days such as World Book Day enable children and adults to share their love of reading and demonstrate how important reading is in shaping who we are and building our imagination.

'Achieving Excellence Together'

Phonics Reflections

Autumn

In the Autumn term, the children have enjoyed learning to read some of the new phonics books that were purchased last academic year. All of our children have enjoyed our daily phonics and reading lessons. This has now been split into two distinct sessions for our children who are still following the phonics program. This has allowed for the focussed teaching of the skill of reading through phonics and then, during the reading lesson, fluency and comprehension are explicitly taught.

Spring

In the Spring Term, parents had the opportunity to attend two phonics workshops. One was led by Miss Wise and focussed on Early Reading within EYFS. The other was led by Mrs Haisman-Baker and explored how reading and phonics is developed in the rest of the academy. We had an exciting delivery of new phonics books, which will begin being used in the Summer Term. Every phonics group has had a focus of speedy reading and it's really impressive to hear the rapid reading as we walk around the academy.

Summer

In the Summer Term, Year 1 took part in their phonics screening test. They were helped to prepare by staff from across the academy and we are very proud of every one of them for showing determination and confidence. The warmer weather has given our children the opportunity to take their reading outside. It has been wonderful to see so many children choosing to read for pleasure during break and lunchtimes especially since the reading village has opened in the Key Stage 1 playground and they can relax on a beanbag or cushion with a good book. There has been such a sense of belonging with children helping each other to access unfamiliar texts using their phonics knowledge. This is such an essential part of building reading stamina, fluency and speed.

Useful websites

www.phonicsplay.co.uk

www.activelearnprimary.co.uk

www.oxfordowl.co.uk

Phonics Gallery

