**Background information**

**Many years ago, Marwood School was asked by DEPS (Devon Education Psychology Service), to pilot a phonic teaching method aimed at helping key stage 2 children, who were struggling with reading, to make better progress. We implemented the system and found the impact to be extremely positive, in terms of the progress that the children made. As a result of this, we adopted this approach for foundation children through to year 2. The approach didn’t cover the teaching of initial phonemes and so we devised our own method of teaching this area of phonics. When the new National Curriculum was implemented in September 2013 we made the conscious decision, as a school, to remain with the approach that had had such an impact on our children’s ability to grasp phonics and adapted it’s content to ensure coverage of the new curriculum statutory requirements (Appendix A - 1 and 2). Very recently, the school has begun to implement ‘Decision Spelling’ from year 2 to year 6 and so, again, we have adjusted our system of phonic teaching in foundation and year 1, to ensure continuity in our approach to phonics and spelling implementation across the school. At present year 2 are in the process of transitioning from the DEPS approach to phonics over to ‘Decision Spelling’.**

**The DEPS approach to teaching phonics**

**General rules about carrying out the DEPS approach with children :**

1. **DEPS is to take place twice a day for every child in foundation stage and year 1.**
2. **When 90% of the children in the teaching group are fluent with the phoneme, the adult should move onto the next phoneme in the sequence.**
3. **The correct phonetic terminology (Appendix C) should be used throughout the DEPS session.**
4. **If a child ‘makes a mistake’ with either a verbal or written phoneme, the adult should address this by correcting them in a positive way, during the session. This will help to clarify any misconceptions for all the children.**
5. **At the beginning of each session, seat the children on the carpet in front of the adult with their whiteboards, whiteboard pens and rubbers on the floor in front of them. Ensure that they are focused on the adult and ready to listen and respond. Then introduce the phoneme to be worked on during that session. (Each different phoneme has a pack of example words to use to support the adult during the session.)**

**The DEPS session:**

**2 minutes – adult to segment a word as they say it aloud (without the children seeing the word), children to blend the word as they say it aloud, in response. Continue with the rest of the word pack.**

**(Using the fingers on their right hand and placing them, for the children to see, on their left palm; the adult will display the number of letters in the grapheme that represent the phoneme they are making, as they say it.)**

**2 minutes – adult to say the whole word aloud and children to respond by segmenting the word as they say it aloud.**

**(Adult to create a sweeping arc across themselves with their hand to represent a whole word.)**

**2 minutes – using the word pack for the phoneme, the adult reads a word first in segmented form and then as a complete word aloud and the children respond by doing the same. The adult points to the symbols below the word to help the children distinguish between the different phonemes in the word. E.g. c h a t s h i n e**

**\_\_ . . \_\_ .**

**(These symbols represent: pea . sausage \_\_\_\_ and spaghetti which are the symbols used**

**in ‘Decision Spelling’ to represent single letter phonemes, digraph/ trigraph/ quadgraph and split digraph respectively.)**

**4 minutes –** **adult to ask the children to put their whiteboards onto their laps for a good writing position and then to say aloud a word from the phoneme list for the children to repeat back aloud and then attempt to write.**

**2 minutes – adult to write an ‘alien word’ (the unreal words in the phonic screening check are marked by aliens and so we chose to use the term ‘alien’ to represent unreal words) on their whiteboard using only phonemes that the children have already been taught. They then ask the children to fold their arms if they have worked out the word and chose a variety of children throughout any one session to attempt to read the word using their previous knowledge.**

**4 minutes (year 1) 2 minutes (foundation stage) –**

**Year 1 - Appendix B words (first 100 high frequency words) – adult to ask the children to put their whiteboards onto their laps for a good writing position and then to say aloud a word from Appendix B for the children to repeat back aloud and then attempt to write.(The children will refer to these words as the high frequency words and the adult must clarify what that means to them.)**

**Foundation children – adult read a sight word card from Appendix B aloud and the children repeat back aloud.**

**Teaching and learning initial phonemes**

**Initial phonemes are introduced using a different approach.**

**During the first daily session of DEPS, the foundation children will be shown a letter and it will be explained that that is the letter they will try to learn. The children will be told its name and phoneme. They will then be asked to think of things that begin with that phoneme and the adult will scribe those suggestions on the IWB for all children to see. The ‘Jolly Phonic’ action for that phoneme will also be introduced as a scaffold for those children who are kinaesthetic learners.**

**During the second daily DEPS session, the children will be reminded of the letter from the first session and then the adult will explain that they are going to learn how to write that letter and will role model its formation. The children will then have an opportunity to practise their letter formation on their own whiteboards with support from the adult.**

**Phonic assessment**

**All the children in foundation stage and year 1 should be assessed on their progress in learning phonemes, once every half term. This should be done by asking them to read ‘alien’ words which contain the phonemes they have been taught that half term, to see if their learning and therefore knowledge of these is secure. Their achievements should then be recorded on a chart (Appendix D 1,2,3,4,5,6,7) to inform staff of their progress and of any intervention required.**

   

    

