At Birklands Primary School, we strive to teach children to read and write effectively and quickly. The ability to efficiently decode is essential and therefore our aim is to teach core skills of segmenting and blending through the systematic teaching of phonics. We want children to understand the relationship between sounds and letters and know that the letters on the page represent the sounds in spoken words. Our aim is for children to make sustained progress in learning to read fluently and write with confidence in an enjoyable way. These fundamental skills not only hold the key to the rest of the curriculum but also have a huge impact on children’s self-esteem and future life chances.

The impact of this is that through the teaching and learning of Phonics we:

• Show high levels of achievement and exhibit very positive attitudes towards phonics.

• Acquire a secure knowledge of phonics and make sustained progress in learning to read words rapidly.

• Participate in the learning of phonics knowledge, skills and understanding in a systematic and enjoyable way

• Develop a love of reading

The teaching of phonics follows the ***‘Rocket Phonics’*** programme and begins in Reception and continues into Key Stage 1. Children then progress onto the Sounds and syllables Spelling program.

The ***‘Rocket Phonics’*** programme ensures pupils keep up rather than catch up: the steady pace and progression deeply embeds knowledge and skills from the start. Essential literacy skills are developed, whilst igniting a love of reading and consolidating decoding skills by immersing pupils in illustrated stories and a rich variety of fully-decodable fiction and non-fiction.

Rocket Phonics is aligned with the progression of the original Letters and Sounds document (2007). The programme follows the same teaching order of grapheme-phoneme correspondences (GPCs) but with a steadier pace of two GPCs per week rather than four. The programme follows the cycle outlined below:

1. Review and revisit previously taught sounds.
2. Teach new letter-sound correspondences within the context of stories.
3. Practise reading and writing skills.
4. Apply knowledge and skills through fully-decodable target practice books.
5. Apply and consolidate using additional Rocket Phonics books.

Using the **‘*Rocket Phonics’*** programme pupils will:

• Develop speaking and listening skills

• Learn the grapheme-phoneme correspondences (GPCs) in a clear sequence.

• Learn to decode words by identifying the graphemes and blending the phonemes using sound Talk (eg. c-a-t)

• Learn to spell words by segmenting them into phonemes

• Make phonetically plausible attempts to spell words correctly

• Write simple sentences with confidence.

• Select the correct GPC for words that contain sounds that have more than one GPC (eg. ay, ai, a-e)

• Read tricky words and common exception words quickly and correctly.

• Spell tricky words and common exception words accurately.

Phonics begins as soon as pupils start Nursery. The central importance is to develop speaking and listening skills and provide a broad and rich language experience. The more words children know and understand, the better equipped they are to succeed in their phonic journey. In the last term of Nursery, pupils are taught to say the phonemes of letters with the help of mnemonics. They then use this knowledge to blend sounds into words.

During the Autumn Term Reception phonics is taught daily during whole class 20- minute phonics lessons. This will progress to longer sessions throughout the year so that by the end of Reception Children will be accessing at least 45 minutes a day of Phonics.

Within KS1 phonics is taught daily during whole class 25- minute phonics lessons twice a day and reinforced during whole class reading.

Our reading books are closely matched to the pupil’s phonic knowledge and support our pupils in reading words and common exception words quickly and fluently.

By using a systematic synthetic phonics scheme, pupils learn to read unfamiliar printed words by decoding then blending, and speedily recognise familiar printed words by sight. This gives our pupils plenty of practice and ensures they quickly learn the relationship between phonemes and graphemes. Children initially learn one way to read the sounds and blend these sounds into words. They then learn to read the same sounds with alternative graphemes.

Teachers follow a teaching sequence where previous learning of sounds and words is reviewed and revisited. New sounds are then introduced, modelled and practised. Pupils are given time to apply what they have learnt through reading real and alien words and writing words/sentences. Self-marking takes place to correct errors and encourage spelling accuracy. Learning is assessed throughout the lesson to quickly identify children who need further practice. Active practice and re-teaching of sounds happens frequently to ensure they are embedded and confidently used independently.

Phonics in our school is progressive and planned to meet the needs of all pupils. Assessments are carried out regularly to identify gaps in learning, ensure pupils are keeping up and ensure they are being challenged. We measure the impact of our curriculum through the following methods:

• Phonics assessment sheets

• Previous phonics screening tests

• Phonics screening results at the end of Year 1

• Analysis of independent writing

• End of Key Stage assessments

• Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar test