



Together we love to learn and learn to love

# St. Mary's CE Infant School

## Phonics Policy

St. Mary's Infant school is committed to inspiring every individual. We embed the Christian value of love across school life because we believe that a person who feels loved, secure and happy can flourish.

We encourage everyone to achieve their potential, develop their talents, celebrate their uniqueness, and rejoice in their relationships with others.

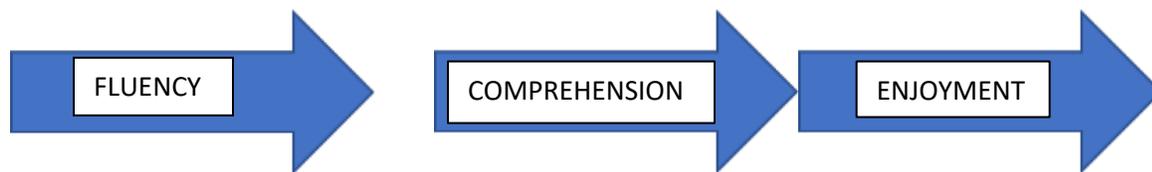
*'Do everything in love'*  
*1 Corinthians 16:14*

**Reviewed: May 2022**

## INTENT:

At St Mary's, it is our whole school ethos which puts reading – and particularly reading for pleasure – at the heart of what we do. To be a 'reader' is central to a child's understanding of the school curriculum and is of vital importance in life. Fluent readers can access a full range of life experiences and can enjoy an amazing breadth of genres and writers. *It is our moral obligation and passion to ensure that ALL children can access all areas of the curriculum and pursue topics which interest them.*

**At St Mary's, we are committed to the delivery of excellence in the teaching of Phonics. We aim to develop each child so that they are able to read with fluency as well as develop a love of reading that will stay with our children all their lives.**



Being able to read is the most important skill children will learn during their early schooling and has far-reaching implications for lifelong confidence and well-being. The independent review of early reading conducted by Jim Rose confirmed that 'high quality phonic work' should be the prime means for teaching children how to read and spell words. The review also highlighted the importance of developing from the earliest stages children's speaking and listening skills, ensuring that beginner readers are ready to get off to a good start in phonic work by the age of five. He suggests such work should be set within a broad and rich language curriculum which is at the forefront of the planning at St Mary's.

**The use of phonics is one of the many skills needed to be able to be a reader and writer. We teach high quality phonics to ensure the children have the best start possible in reading and writing.** The learning of phonics is the beginning of children's body of knowledge, skills and understanding that are an essential part of learning to read. In order to read and understand texts children must learn to recognise/decode the words on the page. Good quality phonics teaching allows the child to be secure in the skills of word recognition and decoding which allows children to read fluently. This will result in children being able to read for pleasure and will allow them to move onto developing higher order reading for meaning skills. These phonic skills need to be taught systematically and involve a variety of multi-sensory resources for all learners.

## **The children at St Mary's are entitled to a Phonics curriculum which enables them to:**

- gain a progressively deeper understanding of the phonetic structure of the English language.
- apply their phonic knowledge and skills to decode and segment unfamiliar words fluently and accurately.
- read rapidly to apply what they have learned across the whole curriculum.
- create fluent readers, confident speakers and willing writers.
- develop a life-long love of reading.

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

**St Mary's follows the systematic approach laid out in the validated *Bug Club Phonics Programme*.** In line with the School's Policy and commitment to excellence in Phonics, each class in **EYFS and Year One** will teach phonics as a discrete lesson every day and will include phonics as part of teaching and learning throughout other curriculum areas on a daily basis.

In **EYFS**, phonics is taught as a whole class in Terms One and Two; the children are split into 2 - 3 groups for the rest of the year. In **Year One**, phonics is taught as a whole class or children are split into differentiated groups, after a teaching input, depending on the needs of the pupils. The structure of each lesson at St Mary's and the journey of Phonics across the week enables all aspects of the blending and segmenting of phonemes/graphemes.

**In Year Two**, phase five phonics is reinforced throughout the year and new spelling patterns are learnt. See English Appendix 1: Spelling Page 49:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/425601/PRIMARY\\_national\\_curriculum.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/425601/PRIMARY_national_curriculum.pdf)

Interventions take place for those children who have been identified as not 'keeping up' and who need to retake the Phonics Screening Check at the end of Year 2.

**Keeping Up:** Children who need extra support to develop their phonic knowledge across the EYFS and Key Stage 1 are identified and targeted for intervention. In EYFS, these children should be identified during the first three weeks of the first term and teachers should continue to assess throughout the first term.

## APPROACHES TO PHONICS

At St Mary's, we believe that phonics teaching should be: **Systematic, discrete, interactive, practical, engaging, multi-sensory and differentiated.**

Discrete lessons follow the cycle of '**Assess, Teach, Practise, Apply**' to ensure that children are consolidating phonic knowledge and skills over time and that they are able to apply them in context.

## PATHWAY OF PROGRESSION

### RECEPTION

Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
Phase 2	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 3/4	Phase 4	Start Phase 5

### YEAR ONE

Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
Continue Phase 5	Continue Phase 5	Continue Phase 5	Continue Phase 5	Phonics Screening Test Priority	More Complex Phase 5

### What a Phonics Lesson at St Mary's Infant School Looks Like

#### Introduction

Alphabet song to be used as and when throughout the week but not necessarily as part of the introduction of the phonics lesson.

#### Revisit

The revisit part of the lesson may include quick fire practice of flashcards of previously taught grapheme-phoneme correspondences and reading words that contain known GPCs as well as irregular words and air writing for recall of known GPCs.

## **Teach and Practise Reading**

**Introduce new learning:** The sound that is being taught today will be introduced through a Bug Club video. The teacher will say the phoneme, ensuring it is pure, and ask the children to repeat it after them.

**Visual Search:** Words are brought up for children to spot and highlight the grapheme. Words are not being read or pronounced. (Asset Bank)

**Reading:** The teacher will display the words on the screen and model the blending, support with blending and then children to independently blend.

## **Writing (Formation)**

Teacher to model the formation of the GPC on the whiteboard. The children will then write this in their handwriting books.

## **Spelling**

Teacher to model segmenting and spelling the words on the whiteboard by counting the sounds on their fingers from left to right and then modeling spelling the word on the board and reading it back through to blend. To blend words, teachers move their right pointer finger, or a pen, over their left hand after counting on their fingers. The children should be writing some of the words.

## **Dictation (Follow-up)**

Teacher to click 'Say' to hear the sentence and to repeat the sentence to the children and say it together. The teacher will then dictate the sentence slowly and deliberately for the children to write it. If a sentence is unsuitable for the cohort, the teacher can decide on the sentence. Pupils will be given opportunities to edit and improve their work.

## **Adaptations in EYFS**

Small group work using the letter formation sheets from Bug Club Phonics

Phonics delivered in 3 groups

Group 1: Learn one new sound a day

Group 2: Learn one new sound over two days

Group 3: Learn one new sound a week

## **Age Related Expectations for the end of the school year:**

By the end of EYFS children should:

- read and understand simple sentences.
- use phonic knowledge to decode common words and read them aloud accurately.
- confidently read by sight the Phase 2, 3 and 4 irregular common words
- use phonic knowledge to write words in a way which matches how the sounds are said.
- write some irregular common words.

By the end of **Year 1** children should:

- apply phonic knowledge and skill as the prime approach to reading unfamiliar words that are not completely decodable;
- read many frequently-encountered words at a glance;
- read phonically decodable three-syllable words;
- read a range of age-appropriate texts fluently;
- demonstrate understanding of age-appropriate texts.
- read decodable words that end –s, –es, -ing, -ed, -er, -est
- say the correct sound to grapheme for all the 40+ phonemes up to Phase 5.

By the end of **Year 2** children should:

- read accurately most words of two or more syllables.
- read most words containing common suffixes.
- read and spell most common exception words for year 2.
- read words accurately and fluently without overt sounding and blending.
- sound out most unfamiliar words accurately, without hesitation.
- segment spoken words into phonemes and represent these by graphemes.

## **PLANNING**

The school follows the systematic approach laid out in the Bug Club Phonics Programme, which ensures progression and effective, high quality teaching.

### **St Mary's Non-negotiables for teaching and learning of Phonics in KS1**

- In each class there will be a focus phoneme/s for the week for the whole class to be working on.
- All lessons start with a clear learning objective which is linked to the phase of letters and sounds that the year group is working on.
- The learning objective will specify if the phoneme is a 'reading' focus (blending) or a writing focus (segmenting) or is both segmenting and blending. This will be covered throughout the week so the children can investigate and explore both aspects in and out of context.
- New phonemes will be taught using the correct articulation and terminology and all children will use this terminology in their learning. E.g., phonemes, digraphs, trigraphs, split-digraph.
- In EYFS, writing books for phonics will be introduced when the children are ready; in Year One, all children will have a phonics book to record their phonics learning.
- In EYFS and Year One, phonics support sheets will be used to embed the learning in the classroom and/or will be sent home weekly. Online activities from Bug Club Phonics will be used to reinforce learning at home. Fully decodable books will be allocated to individual children to match the phonic phase which they are on (online books will be assigned to support this).
- All children will read to an adult in school weekly.

### Teaching Segmenting and Blending:

- Say the word
- Show fingers to show each sound
- Say the word again, moving their right pointer finger, or a pen, over their left hand after counting on their fingers.

### KEEPING UP

Interventions are both reactive from phonics lessons and set up as continued provisions which are assessed both summative and formative. Interventions include:

- Precision teaching
- Segmenting and blending practice
- Colourful semantics
- Lowest phonics groups taught by teacher individually throughout the day as well as their group phonics lesson with TA

**The lowest 20% of children read with an adult at least three times a week.**

### ASSESSMENT

Assessment is regarded as an integral part of teaching and learning and is a continuous process. We strive to make our assessment purposeful, allowing us to match the correct level of work to the needs of the pupils, thus benefiting the pupils and ensuring progress. It is the class teacher's responsibility to keep track of the progress made by all children in their class, regardless of their phonic ability. Each individual child has their own **Bug Club Phonics tracker**, which is updated three times a year and continues to be updated as the child moves through school. This includes tracking the progression of reading irregular/tricky words for each child.

We continually assess our pupils and record their progress. Information for assessment is gathered in various ways: **formative and summative assessment**. Summative assessment takes place each term; formative assessment is an active and ongoing assessment which informs future planning for individuals. Teachers use this assessment information to plan further work and set new targets.

At the end of Year One, children participate in the **Phonics Screening Check** which assesses their knowledge of grapheme-phoneme correspondence and their skills in blending. Those children who do not succeed in the PSC are highlighted for further intervention and targeted support before completing the PSC again at the end of year 2. Year 3 staff at The Batt, are made aware of the children who do not succeed a second time so that they can put in place appropriate interventions.

**Feedback:** Children are provided with constructive and timely feedback in lessons. Teachers provide parents with feedback on their child's progress and achievement at parent's evening and through the end of year report. Assessment information is also passed onto the next teacher as part of transition between year groups and phases.

## **ORGANISATION OF PHONICS**

**The Assistant Head is responsible for Phonics throughout the school. This includes:**

- Ensuring continuity and progression from year group to year group
- Providing all members of staff with training, guidelines and non-negotiables to show how aims are achieved and how the variety of all aspects of phonics is to be taught
- Advising and supporting colleagues in the implementation and assessment of phonics
- Assisting with the requisition and maintenance of resources required for the teaching of phonics.
- Monitoring the quality of teaching and learning in phonics, making sure a consistent approach of resources, lesson structure and terminology is being used

**The class teacher is responsible for:**

- Ensuring progress in the acquisition of phonic knowledge and skills with due regard to the National Curriculum for English and the non-negotiables
- Developing and updating skills, knowledge and understanding of phonics
- Identifying needs in phonics and adapting planning to suit all children.
- Identifying children who need additional support and planning for those children
- Keeping appropriate on-going records
- Planning effectively for phonics, liaising with phonics leader when necessary
- Providing fully decodable reading books for individual children including online books to support home-learning links.
- Informing pupils and parents of their progress, achievement and attainment

## **REVIEW**

The governors review this policy annually. The governors may, however, review the policy earlier than this, if the government introduces new regulations, or if the governing body receives recommendations on how the policy might be improved.

**Updated May 2022**

## Appendix

### The alphabetic code

All readers should be taught four skills:

- grapheme–phoneme correspondences (that is, the alphabetic code) in a clearly defined, incremental sequence;
- to synthesise (blend) phonemes (sounds) in order all through a word to read it;
- to segment words into their constituent phonemes for spelling;
- that blending and segmenting are reversible processes;
- English represents the sounds of the language and uses an alphabet to do this. It is generally accepted that English has 44 sounds (although this number varies slightly, depending on regional accents).

The way the 26 letters of the alphabet are used in English (singly or in combination) to represent the 44 sounds is referred to as the alphabetic code. In the alphabetic code

- a single phoneme can be represented (spelt) in different ways, using one, two, three or four letters. For example, the sound /aw/ can be represented as 'or', 'saw', 'haul', 'lore', 'fraught' and 'sought';
- one grapheme (that is, a letter or combination of letters) can represent different sounds. For example, the digraph (two letters) 'ow' sounds different in 'crowd' and in 'low'; the four letters combined in 'ough' are pronounced 6 differently in 'through', 'rough' and 'bough'; the letter 'c' represents a /s/ sound at the beginning of 'circus' and a /k/ sound in the middle, and so on.

The lack of a one-to-one correspondence between a sound and a letter in English is frequently used as an argument against using phonics in teaching reading (and spelling). Therefore it is important to up-skill all the children and provide them with opportunities to practise the reading and spelling of these words. The sounds are not taught in alphabetical order, but in order of usefulness, so that children can start to read and spell simple words as swiftly as possible. There are also phonetically irregular words, which we refer to as 'common exception words' such as 'the', 'some' or 'once' that are taught throughout the different phrases.

A very common sequence begins by teaching children how to represent each of the following six sounds by a letter (as below):

Sound	Letter
/s/	s
/a/	a
/t/	t
/i/	i
/p/	p
/n/	n

If these sounds are learnt securely and the children are also taught the skill of blending sounds together to read whole words, they can then read (and spell, by segmenting) simple vowel-consonant (VC) words such as 'it', 'in', 'is' and 'at' and consonant-vowel-consonant (CVC) words such as 'sat', 'pin', 'nip', 'net', 'tip'.

### **The skills of blending and segmenting**

Blending and segmenting are 'reversible processes': that is, if you can blend the sounds together to read a word, you should also be able to identify and break down (segment) the individual sounds in a word you hear to spell it. To spell the word, you need to represent each sound you hear by a letter – or more than one letter.

The skill of blending sounds together needs to be taught directly using the Bug Club Phonics Programme. Children may be able to say the sound a letter 'makes' when shown the letter (for instance, on a flashcard), but this does not necessarily mean that they can blend individual sounds together to make a whole word. (Letters do not actually 'make' sounds: they are just a way of representing that sound in writing.) In segmenting to spell a word, the teacher or the child is listening to a whole word, identifying the individual sounds (not letters) that make up the word choosing a letter or more than one letter to represent each individual sound.

### **Correct articulation**

Correct articulation is vital in helping children to learn to blend sounds together. We make sure that the sound produced (each individual phoneme) is as precise and accurate as possible and that no additional sounds are added. For instance, the sound /m/ that starts 'mother' or is embedded in 'impress' needs to sound /mmmm/ and not /muh/. The easier the sound, the easier it is for a child to blend together (synthesise) the individual sounds to read a word because there are no unnecessary sounds getting in the way.

## **Common exception words**

Children will be taught to read words that are not completely phonically regular and we refer to them as 'irregular words'. Children need to be taught to read these words on sight, so that they do not have to spend time puzzling them out. Teachers help children to practise their speedy recall of tricky words. In terms of spelling, children need to remember the tricky parts of a word, that is, the letters that do not match the usual grapheme-phoneme correspondences they have learnt. For example, the word 'said' is not phonically regular in that the sound /e/ in the middle of the word is normally written 'e' as in 'bed' (or sometimes 'ea' as in 'bread', 'dread' or 'read' – past tense) and not 'ai' as in 'paid'. However, the sounds at the beginning and end of 'said' are represented with 's' and 'd', just as one might expect; it is only the middle of the word that is tricky.