

St. Mary's Catholic Primary School



Policy for Early Reading Phonics

1 - Introduction

This policy is a statement of the aims, principles and strategies for the teaching and learning of Phonics. It reflects our values and philosophy in relating to teaching and learning.

This policy was written by the phonics leader in consultation with staff. It sets out a framework which both teaching and support staff can follow, and gives guidance on planning, delivery and assessment. This policy is intended for all teaching and support staff, governors, parents/carers and inspectors.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the school's reading policy.

2 - Intent

Every child deserves success right from the start. We know that the sooner children learn to read, the greater their success at school. This is why we put reading at the heart of what we do.

We use a programme called *Read Write Inc.* Phonics to teach our children to read. Some children complete the programme in Year 1 and others in Year 2. Year 3 and 4 children who need extra support follow this programme too.

As a school, we teach synthetic phonics as the initial, and most important, approach to the teaching of reading. Our pupils learn to read and write effectively using the Read Write Inc (RWI) Phonics Programme. RWI is a systematic programme for the teaching of phonics and reading.

As a school, we want to teach children to:

- Decode texts effortlessly so they can build skills to be used to comprehend what they read.
- To use their phonic knowledge to spell effortlessly so they can concentrate on the writing they are creating.
- To enable children to be enthusiastic readers and lifelong readers.
- Read common exception words on sight.
- Read aloud with fluency and expression.

3 - Implementation

The RWI programme is delivered to:

- Pupils in EYFS to Year 2 who are learning to read and write.
- Any pupils in Years 2, 3 and 4 who need to catch up rapidly.
- Struggling readers in Years 5 and 6 who need extra support.

Pupils are taught to work effectively with a partner to explain and consolidate what they are learning. This provides the teacher with opportunities to assess learning and to pick up on difficulties, such as pupils' poor articulation, or problems with blending or alphabetic code knowledge.

We group pupils homogeneously, according to their progress in reading rather than their writing. This is because it is known that pupils' progress in writing will lag behind progress in reading, especially for those whose motor skills are less well developed.

In Reception, we emphasise the alphabetic code. The pupils rapidly learn sounds and the letter or groups of letters they need to represent them. Simple mnemonics help them to grasp this quickly. This is especially useful for pupils at risk of making slower progress. This learning is consolidated daily. Pupils have frequent practice in reading high frequency words with irregular spellings (common exception words).

We make sure that pupils read books that are closely matched to their increasing knowledge of phonics and the common exception words. This is so that, early on, they experience success and gain confidence that they are readers. Re-reading and discussing these books with the teacher supports their increasingly fluent decoding.

Alongside this, teachers regularly read a wide range of stories, poetry and non-fiction to pupils.

Embedding the alphabetic code early on means that pupils quickly learn to write simple words and sentences. We encourage them to compose each sentence aloud until they are confident to write independently. We make sure they write every day. Pupils write at the level of their spelling knowledge. The quality of the vocabulary they use in their writing reflects the language they have heard in the books the teacher has read to them; they have also discussed what the words mean.

The RWI scheme advocates that lessons should be delivered using the 5 Ps:

- Pace - good pace is essential to the lesson
- Praise/Positive Teaching - children learn more effectively in a positive climate
- Purpose - every part of the lesson has a specific purpose
- Participation - a strong feature of RWI lessons is partner work (based on research which states that we learn 70% of what we talk about with our partner)
- Passion - this is a very prescriptive programme. It is the energy, enthusiasm and passion that group leaders put into the lesson that bring the teaching and learning to life!

4 - Impact

After two years of implementation, it is expected that:

- Reception children will be able to read Green Storybooks by the end of the summer term.
- Year 1 children will be able to read Blue Storybooks by the end of the summer term.
- Year 2 children will have completed the Phonics programme by the end of the spring term.

We have high expectations for our children to meet the expected standard in the Phonic Screening Check, and help all children to be accurate and fluent readers by the time they enter Key Stage 2.

5 - How do we ensure children can read every book?

The first thing we do is to give children books we *know* they can read - without any guessing. (We read lots of other stories *to* them, but do not expect them to read these for themselves until they start to read the Grey Storybooks.)

Before they read the story, they sound out the names of characters and new words, practise reading any of the 'tricky Red' words, and we tell them a thought-provoking introduction to get them excited about the story.

Then, over five days, children read the story five times: to focus on reading the words carefully; to help them read the story fluently; and we talk about the story together for example, how characters might be

feeling and why. By the time children read the story at home, they will be able to read it confidently with expression.

6 - How do we assess and track children's progress?

For children to make the best possible progress, they will read Storybooks closely matched to their reading level, every day.

This means we group children by their word reading and fluency - not by their progress in comprehension or writing, or by their age.

Every half-term, we assess all children in YR to Y4 who have not yet met end of Key Stage 1 National Curriculum expectations for reading.

The Reading Leader carries out the assessments to ensure that children are placed in the correct group.

6 - How are slower progress readers supported?

We identify those children who are at risk of falling behind their peers immediately.

We make sure children 'keep up not catch up' from Reception.

The slowest progress readers in both KS1 and KS2 receive daily one-to-one tutoring for 10 minutes, in addition to their group session in the morning. Children practise reading sounds speedily, learn to blend sounds into words and read a Storybook that is matched to the sounds they know and the quantity they can read.

7 - How is the programme led to ensure expectations are achieved?

The Reading Leader's role is vital to ensure that the teaching of reading is of the highest quality and all children make rapid progress. They organise one-to-one tutoring for children who need extra support.

All staff have been thoroughly trained to teach reading. They attend a two-day Phonics training course and receive termly coaching from one of Ruth Miskin's training consultants to ensure that children are making

the best possible progress. They also have access to all the training on the Ruth Miskin Training School portal.

7 - How can parents help at home?

The children take home two books every few days: a *Read Write Inc.* 'phonics' Storybook for children to read to parents, and a picture book for parents to read to them.

We also send home interactive, animated lessons from our Virtual Classroom so you and your child can join in with lessons at home. The online teachers help children to practice the sounds and words they have learnt in school.

Read Write Inc. 'phonics' Storybooks

Children will have already read the 'phonics' storybook two or three times in the reading lessons so they should be able to read it confidently. We encourage parents not to say 'this is too easy'! There is guidance in the storybooks to guide parents too.

Children also take home a Book Bag Book which matches the book they have read in school.

8 - What is the role of the Phonics Leader?

- Oversees the assessment of all Reception & KS1 & KS2 (still requiring phonics interventions) and designates pupils to the correct groups.
- Tracks children's progress and analyses data.
- Assigns leaders to groups - 'drops in' on RWI groups to give advice and to informally check that pupils are in the correct groups through learning walks.
- Where necessary models lessons.
- Attends up-date meetings when they occur and reports back to the RWI group leaders.
- Speaks with the head teacher regarding groupings, teaching spaces and other pertinent matters.
- Organise intervention groups for children not making progress .
- Organise and deliver training for reading leaders.

9 - Assessment and Recording

Children are assessed throughout every lesson. Every time partner work is used the teacher assesses the progress of the children.

The teacher assesses how children: - read the grapheme chart - read the green and red word lists - decode the ditty/story - comprehend the story.

When the children are assessed, target children who haven't made as much progress will be identified and an additional intervention will be set up. Parent workshops may also be provided for children who are not on track.

10 - Resources

Resources are listed in the RWI handbook and include simple and complex speed sounds charts, small and large phonic flash cards, magnetic letters, fiction and non-fiction graded reading books, green and red word flash cards, phonics wall friezes, Fred the Frog toys, Phonics handbook, speed sounds lesson plans book, ditty book, computer software. All storybooks and book bag books are kept in the store cupboard and should be returned here once finished with. All reading leaders have their own phonics box with flashcards, word cards, multisyllabic words and alien words. Staff should inform the RWI manager if they require any additional resources.