



# Phonics and Spelling

This policy outlines the teaching, organisation, management and teaching of phonics and spelling at St. Margaret Mary Catholic Primary School.

### What is Phonics?

If children are to develop as competent readers and writers, it is vitally important that they have secure understanding of the letter sounds and spelling system of the English language. Phonic skills need to be developed in a systematic way, based on a progressive stage by stage approach.

Phonics is:

- The knowledge of how the alphabetic sounds work and how these sounds are combined to correspond to the spoken word.
- Phonemes that are sounds, which are made by blending letters to correspond to the spoken word.
- Graphemes, which are the written equivalent of phonemes.

### Effective phonic teaching and learning

Teachers work towards the school aims by:

- Presenting children with high quality, systematic phonic work as defined by the Rose report.
- Enabling children to start developing their phonic knowledge and skills on entry to nursery with the expectation that they will become fluent readers, having secured word building and recognition skills, by the end of Key Stage 1.
- Ensuring that children apply phonic knowledge to reading and spelling, even though all words do not conform to regular phonic patterns.
- Ensuring that children are taught high frequency words that do not conform to regular phonic patterns.

- Ensuring children attempt to spell words for themselves, within the range of their phonic knowledge, by building an individual repertoire and the confidence and strategies to attempt the unfamiliar.
- Helping children to apply the skill of blending phonemes in order to read words.
- Helping children to segment words into their constituent phonemes in order to spell words.
- Showing children that blending and segmenting words are reversible processes.
- Showing children that phonemes should be blended from left to right through the complete word, in order for it to be read.
- Ensuring children know the sounds made by each letter of the alphabet, both upper and lower case. They need to know the letter names are not the same as the letter sounds.
- Ensuring children practice decoding a mix of real and pseudo words.
- Ensuring children know and use the correct terminology when making reference to letters and their sounds.
- Preparing Year 1 children for the phonics screening check. Children who do not achieve the appropriate standard receive additional support in preparation for them retaking the phonics screening check the following year.

Effective learning of phonics takes place when:

- Phonics teaching is part of a broad and rich curriculum that engages children in a range of activities and experiences to develop their speaking and listening skills and phonological awareness.
- It is multisensory, encompassing simultaneous, visual, auditory and kinaesthetic activities that are tightly focused on the learning goal.
- It is time-limited, such that the great majority of the children are confident readers by the end of key stage 1.
- It is systematic, following a carefully planned programme, reinforcing and building on previous learning and consolidation to secure good progress.
- It is taught as part of a planned literacy lesson both discreetly and daily to ensure pace and progression.

- Children's progress in developing and applying their phonic knowledge is carefully assessed, tracked and monitored.

**Phonics should be  
FAST, FUN and SYSTEMATIC**

## Phonic Programmes

Letters and Sounds (outlined in 'Letters and Sounds: Principles and practice of High Quality phonics, Primary National Strategies, 2007)

'Letters and Sounds' programme is designed to help teachers teach children how the alphabet works for reading and spelling. Systematic high quality teaching is essential for children to achieve the goal of reading. Letters and Sounds is designed as a time limited programme of phonics work aimed at securing fluent recognition skills for reading by the end of Key stage 1.

The letters and Sounds phases are deliberately porous so that no children are held back or unduly pressured to move on before they are equipped to do so. Therefore, children are taught whole class as well as in differentiated phased phonics groups.

At St. Margaret Mary Catholic Primary School we have implemented the programme whereby the six structured phases are followed, starting with children in the Foundation stage through to Year 3.

In Key Stage 1 and 2, for four thirty minute sessions each week (Monday-Thursday), we 'phase' phonics and spelling teaching to provide differentiated learning opportunities. The six phases merge into Support for Spelling teaching groups. Maximum use is made of all available staff so that the groups are small and children can be taught and closely monitored. This provides a 'stop the learning bus for catch up' opportunity for those children who need 'gaps' filled. Those children in Year 3 who are presenting a specific difficulty with spelling are taught in a small group for these sessions. Support for spelling strategies are taught explicitly within their groups.

Children in Foundation stage and Key Stage 1 do phonics and / or spelling every day. On the day where there is no phased phonics, children in Years 1 and 2 are taught their age related spelling rules within the classroom setting. In Foundation Stage, the more able Nursery children join with Reception children and groups are differentiated. This happens each day.

The programme supports children in Foundation stage working towards achieving the objectives of the Early Learning Goals for Language and Literacy and the transition

of this into Key Stage 1. It is delivered through a variety of strategies and published support materials such as the Jolly Phonics programme and Floppy's Phonics.

Oxford Reading Tree's Project X is used as a catch up programme for children in Key Stage 1 who have not succeeded in securing phase six phonics in Year 2.

Children are assessed informally throughout the school year ensuring fluidity between phased phonics groups.

Effective phonics teaching takes place when teaching is systematic and well organised.

**Phase 1:** This phase reflects the development stages for communication, language and literacy in the Early Years Foundation Stage. It paves the way for a programme of systematic phonic work to begin. This starts when the grapheme-phoneme (letter & sound) correspondences are introduced at phase two. Nursery work to provide constant and enhanced activities in the environment for children to access during independent learning. The activities have learning outcomes specifically planned from the Letters and Sounds document.

### **Reception**

Phase 2 and Phase 3: Children in Reception have daily, discrete phonics input by teachers and other classroom practitioners. The sessions last between fifteen and twenty minutes. Like Nursery, Reception has activities in the environment for children to access during independent learning. The activities have learning outcomes specifically planned from the Letters and Sounds document. Jolly phonics songs and actions are used to further enhance children's learning. Children are taught whole class as well in differentiated phased phonics groups

### **Year 1**

Phase 3 and Phase 4 - 5 (throughout Year 1): Children have discrete, daily phonics or spelling lessons for thirty minutes. The Year 1 classroom has a working wall which

outlines sounds learnt in the taught sessions. This helps to consolidate phonics learning across the curriculum. Activities have learning outcomes specifically planned from the letters and sounds document. Children are taught whole class as well in differentiated phased phonics groups. Children in Year 1 sit the Year 1 phonic screening test during the summer term. Children who are working below are included in appropriate groups to 'fill the gaps' of their learning.

## **Year 2**

Phase 5 and 6 (throughout Year 2): Children have discrete, daily phonics lessons for thirty minutes. The Year 2 classroom has a working wall which supports children in applying their knowledge, from the taught lessons, across the curriculum. Activities have learning outcomes specifically planned from the letters and sounds document. Children are taught whole class as well in differentiated phased phonics groups. Children in Year 2 who have not achieved the standard required in the Year 1 phonic screening test are targeted and provided with support. Project X is targeted support for them. Children who are working below are included in appropriate groups to 'fill the gaps' of their learning. We are constantly searching for current, appropriate materials to support and reinforce our teaching to improve standards.

## **Key Stage 2**

Children in Years 3, 4 and 5 who are assessed at working within phase 1-5 and below the level of whole class teaching have access to Project X as 'catch up'.

Key Stage 2 phonics and spellings can be supported through the use of Phonics and the Support for Spelling materials, Years 2 through to 6.

### **Delivery of Support for Spelling is through:**

- 6 strand objectives
- A programme that is aligned to Letters and Sounds phase 6
- A programme that assumes pupils are secure at phase 6

- Yearly objectives aligned to the new curriculum of 2014
- A programme that has a clearly structured teaching sequence and a bank of approaches that is suggested for each part of the sequence.

We also use THRASS and the English phonics chart. English has 44 sounds, of which 24 are consonants and 20 are vowels. English has 120 key spellings, of which 60 are consonant key spellings and 60 are vowel key spellings. We use the RAP and teach the children the grapheme choices for sounds.

Since the introduction of the new curriculum, we teach to the new age related curriculum expectations but also continue to use Support for Spelling by matching the previous objectives. We have used a document sourced from Lancashire Grid for Learning to support us in doing this.

### **Reading**

The phonics programme is comparable with Oxford Reading Tree, Floppy's Phonics: Sounds and Letters teaching resources and books used in the Foundation stage, through to Key Stage 1.

Effective phonics teaching takes place when teachers work effectively with children who have additional educational needs.

- Teachers aim to give every child the opportunity to experience success in learning.
- Teachers actively audit the learning environment to remove any potential barriers to learning
- Teaching approaches are planned to make phonic lessons and the learning environment more conducive for children with specific learning difficulties through whole class practices and planning for individual children.
- Teachers include all children in daily phonic lessons and all children benefit from participating, watching and listening to other children demonstrating and explaining their ideas.

### **Assessment**

Children are assessed regularly and teaching is adapted as knowledge and skills are acquired. Individual, informal assessment is completed through each term by each class from and including Reception and Year 3. Assessment is drawn from two main sources; observation during discreet phonics teaching and application of phonic knowledge when reading and writing throughout the rest of the curriculum. Progress is recorded at the end of each term, on a class tracker.

### **Classroom Environment**

In Foundation stage and Key Stage 1 the classroom environments have age appropriate displays concentrating on both sounds, tricky and key words.

## SPELLING

We believe that the ability to spell enables our pupils to become more effective writers. When spelling becomes automatic, more thought and creativity can be put into the exact content of what is written. Pupils can channel their time and energy into the skills of composition, sentence structure and precise word choice. Learning to spell is a process of learning and then applying patterns to new words.

### Aims

- We aim to:
- Give pupils the tools that are necessary for spelling accurately;
- Enable all pupils to develop their own strategies for spelling confidently;
- Target accurate spelling of high and medium frequency words for all pupils and revisit them regularly as they progress through the school;
- Teach the age related curriculum objectives across each year group from the appendix of the new curriculum of 2014;
- Encourage children to identify reasons for misspellings in their own work;
- Teach them how to use a simple dictionary, a range of word banks and their knowledge of word families;
- Find multi-sensory methods such as spelling in the air with eyes closed.

We encourage:

- Use of the method LOOK – COVER – WRITE –CHECK.
- Use of a yellow highlighter to focus on letter strings in the words.
- Use of mnemonics
- Searching for little words in big words
- Use of Spellwell
- Knowledge and practice of spelling rules
- Differentiated spelling lists for class spelling tests.

### Spelling Assessment

- Children will be tested on SWST at the end of each year.

- Spelling of high frequency spellings words will be assessed at the end of each school year and passed up to the next class teacher in transition beginning from Year One;
- SAT and optional SAT spelling tests will continue to be sat by children at the end of each KS2 school year.

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