



## **POLICY FOR PHONICS**

At St John's School we use the teachings of the Church of England to embed the following core Christian values.

These are:

Friendship

Forgiveness

Trust

and Compassion

These values will underpin the following Policy.

This Policy is reviewed annually by the Headteacher and the Phonics Lead

Date Agreed	March 2023
Review Date	March 2024
Signed by Headteacher	<i>AJ Smith</i>
Signed by Phonics Lead	<i>J Barnes</i>

## **St John's Church of England Phonics Policy**

At St John's Church of England Primary School we are committed to the delivery of excellence in the teaching of Phonics. We love reading and we strive to ensure all children become successful, fluent readers by the end of Key Stage 1 and that they develop a love of reading that will stay with them throughout 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 use of phonics is one of the many skills needed to be able to be a reader and writer. We aim to 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 and 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.

### **What is Phonics?**

- Phonics is the knowledge of how alphabetic sounds work and how these sounds are combined to correspond to the spoken word.
- It includes the skills of blending for reading and segmentation for spelling. Blending is the skill of building words by merging phonemes together, this is used when reading words. Segmentation is breaking down a word into its component phonemes, this is used when spelling words.
- A phoneme is the smallest unit of sound in a word. It is generally accepted that there are 44 different phonemes in the English language. In phonics the children are taught each of these phonemes and the alternative graphemes (different ways of writing) these phonemes.
- A grapheme is the written symbol of a phoneme; some phonemes are written with two letters – these are called digraphs. Some phonemes are written with three letters – these are called trigraphs.
- Split digraphs are two letters that make one sound, but the letters are not adjacent in a word (they are split by another letter).
- Common exception words (or tricky words) are words which children are unable to read using their phonic knowledge. These are taught as a whole word.

## **Our Aims**

Through our phonics teaching we aim to:

- To establish consistent practice, progression and continuity in the teaching and learning of phonics throughout the school, with a focus on quality first teaching.
- To ensure that phonics teaching is systematic, discrete, lively, interactive, investigative and multi-sensory.
- To ensure phonics teaching is differentiated to match all children's levels of development.
- To have robust assessment procedures to check progress and identify pupils in need of intervention.
- To ensure that systematic synthetic phonics is the first approach pupils use to help with their reading and spelling.
- For pupils to learn to read and write all 44 graphemes in the English language.
- To ensure pupils have specific strategies to identify and decode common exception words (tricky words).
- To encourage the use of segmenting and blending so that decoding skills provide a solid foundation for reading, writing and spelling.
- For pupils to apply their phonic knowledge in their reading and writing across the whole curriculum.
- For pupils to develop a love of reading and enjoy reading for pleasure, confidently across a range of genres.

## **Teaching and Learning**

At St John's we are currently implementing the Twinkl Phonics Programme, which will be fully implemented by May 2022. Staff use weekly plans and teaching resources from Twinkl Phonics programme, which ensures a comprehensive and systematic approach to phonics across EYFS and Key Stage One. Our children are provided with a variety of opportunities to develop and extend their phonics skills across Reception and Key Stage 1. These opportunities are also continued into Key Stage 2, where necessary, to support those children who do not yet have the phonic knowledge needed to access texts at an age appropriate level and help them to gain a progressively deeper understanding of the phonetic structure of the English language.

Discrete phonics lessons take place daily across Reception and Key Stage 1. They 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. Consequently, wherever possible, links between phonics knowledge and understanding are made to learning in both Reading and Writing and across the wider curriculum. These lessons proceed at pace and incorporate a wide range of practical and interactive learning opportunities to engage the children. These learning opportunities are carefully chosen to ensure that children develop their

skills in aural discrimination and phonemic and rhyme awareness, blending and segmenting as well as grapheme-phoneme correspondence. All teachers have a range of resources from Twinkl Phonics to use, which are appropriate for the level at which the children are working. They include practical resources such as the sound mats, GPC flashcards and tricky word flashcards.

### **Progression in Phonics**

The progression of the teaching of phonics, using the Twinkl Phonics Programme, from Year R to 2, is detailed in the table below.

Twinkl Phonics Level	Number of Teaching Weeks	Recommended Year Group (UK schools)	Age of Children
Level 1	36	nursery/preschool	3-4
Level 2	7	reception	4-5
Level 3	12	reception	4-5
Level 4	5	reception	4-5
Level 5	30	year 1	5-6
Level 6	30	year 2	6-7

### **Expectations for the end of each Level**

#### **Level 2**

At the end of Level 2, children should be able to;

- give the phoneme when shown any Level 2 grapheme
- find any Level two grapheme, from a display, when given the phoneme orally blend and segment CVC words;  
blend and segment in order to read and spell (using magnetic letters) VC words, such as if, am, on, up and nonsense words, such as ip, ug and ock
- read the five tricky words - the, to, I, no, go.

### **Level 3**

At the end of Level 3, children should be able to;

- Give the phoneme when shown all or most Level 2 and Level 3 graphemes and all or most Level 2 and Level 3 graphemes, from a display, when given the phoneme;  
Blend and read CVC words (single-syllable words consisting of Level two and Level three graphemes);
- Segment and make a phonetically plausible attempt at spelling CVC words (single-syllable words consisting of Level 2 and Level 3 graphemes);  
Read the tricky words - he, she, we, me, be, was, my, you, her, they, all, are
- Write each letter correctly when following a model.

### **Level 4**

At the end of level 4, children should be able to;

- Give the phoneme when shown any Level 2 and Level 3 grapheme
- Find any Level 2 and Level 3 grapheme, from a display, when given the phoneme
- Be able to blend and read words containing adjacent consonants
- Be able to segment and spell words containing adjacent consonants
- Be able to read the tricky words - some, one, said, come, do, so, were, when, have, there, out, like, little, what
- Be able to spell the tricky words - he, she, we, me, be, was, my, you, her, they, all, are
- Write each letter, usually correctly.

### **Level 5**

At the end of level 5, children should be able to;

- Give the phoneme when shown any grapheme that has been taught
- For any given phoneme, write the common graphemes
- Apply phonics knowledge and skills as the prime approach to reading and spelling unfamiliar words that are not completely decodable
  - Read and spell phonically decodable two-syllable and three-syllable words
  - Read automatically all the words in the list of 100 high-frequency words
  - Accurately spell most of the words in the list of 100 high-frequency words
  - Form each letter correctly;
  - Use alternative ways of pronouncing and representing the long vowel phonemes.

## **Level 6**

At the end of level 6, children should be able to;

- read accurately most words of two or more syllables;
- read most words containing common suffixes;
- read most common exception words;
- read most words accurately, in age appropriate books, without overt sounding and blending, and sufficiently fluently to allow them to focus on their understanding rather than on decoding individual words
- sound out most unfamiliar words accurately, without undue hesitation
- segment spoken words into phonemes and represent these by graphemes, spelling many of these words correctly and making phonically-plausible attempts at others
- spell most common exception words correctly.

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

By the end of EYFS children should:

- Say a sound for each letter in the alphabet and at least 10 digraphs.
- Read words consistent with their phonic knowledge by sound-blending.
- Read aloud simple sentences and books that are consistent with their phonic knowledge, including some common exception words.
- Write recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed.
- Spell words by identifying sounds in them and representing the sounds with a letter or letters.
- Write simple phrases and sentences that can be read by others.

By the end of Year 1 children should:

- Apply phonic knowledge and skills as the route to decode words.
- Respond readily with the correct sound to graphemes (letters or groups of letters) for all 40+ phonemes, including, where applicable, alternative sounds for graphemes.
- Read accurately by blending sounds in unfamiliar words containing GPCs that have been taught. Read common exception words, noting unusual correspondences between spelling and sound and where these occur in the word.
- Read words containing taught GPCs and -s, -es, -ing, -ed, -er and -est endings. Read other words of more than one syllable that contain taught GPCs.
- Read words with contractions [for example, I'm, I'll, we'll], and understand that the apostrophe represents the omitted letter(s).
- Read aloud accurately books that are consistent with their developing phonic knowledge and that do not require them to use other strategies to work out words.
- Re-read these books to build up their fluency and confidence in word reading. Write words containing each of the 40+ phonemes already taught.

- Spell common exception words.
- Spell the days of the week.
- Name the letters of the alphabet
- Name the letters of the alphabet in order.
- Use letter names to distinguish between alternative spellings of the same sound.
- Add prefixes and suffixes using the spelling rule for adding -s or -es as the plural marker for nouns and the third person singular marker for verbs, the prefix un-;
- -ing, -ed, -er and -est where no change is needed in the spelling of root words, e.g. helping, helped, helper, eating, quicker, quickest.
- Apply simple spelling rules and guidance, as listed in English Appendix 1.
- Write from memory simple sentences dictated by the teacher that include words using the GPCs and common exception words taught so far.

By the end of Year 2 children should:

- Continue to apply phonic knowledge and skills as the route to decode words until automatic decoding has become embedded and reading is fluent.
- Read accurately by blending the sounds in words that contain the graphemes taught so far, especially recognising alternative sounds for graphemes.
- Read accurately words of two or more syllables that contain the same graphemes as above.
- Read words containing common suffixes.
- Read further common exception words, noting unusual correspondences between spelling and sound and where these occur in the word.
- Read most words quickly and accurately, without overt sounding and blending, when they have been frequently encountered.
- Read aloud books closely matched to their improving phonic knowledge, sounding out unfamiliar words accurately, automatically and without undue hesitation.
- Re-read these books to build up their fluency and confidence in word reading. Spell by segmenting spoken words into phonemes and representing these by graphemes, spelling many correctly.
- Spelling learning new ways of spelling phonemes for which one or more spellings are already known, and learn some words with each spelling, including a few common homophones.
- Spell common exception words.
- Spell more words with contracted forms.
- Spelling using the possessive apostrophe (singular), for example, the girl's book. Distinguish between homophones and near-homophones.
- Add suffixes to spell longer words, including -ment, -ness, -ful, -less, -ly.
- Apply spelling rules and guidance, as listed in English Appendix 1.
- Write from memory simple sentences dictated by the teacher that include words using the GPCs, common exception words and punctuation taught so far.

### **Classroom environment**

In the EYFS and KS1 teachers develop phonics displays within their classroom which focus on the phonemes and key words they have been concentrating on in their phonics sessions, using display resources from the Twinkl Phonics programme. There will be regular opportunities for pupils to engage with these phonics displays and activities in order for them to reinforce their learning from the daily session. In Reception and Year 1, phonics based activities will be placed in the continuous provision for the children to access during Child Initiated time. Children will access these both independently and with adult support.

### **Assessment**

Children's progress in developing and applying their phonics knowledge is carefully assessed and monitored using the Twinkl Phonics assessment packs. These assessments are recorded on ongoing tracking documents, which move up with the children year on year. Teachers use daily phonics sessions, guided reading sessions and writing to formatively assess children's progress in phonics throughout the year. Twinkl phonics assessments are used at the end of every term to indicate which level children are working within. Phonics checks are also given to KS2 pupils identified as needing more support with their reading to ensure any gaps in phonics knowledge that develop after they have moved away from needing discrete phonics teaching and picked up and addressed swiftly. The Phonics, English and Phase leaders track phonics levels to identify the progress children are making throughout the school and ensure any gaps in knowledge are swiftly addressed.

### **Early Reading**

When children are confidently blending CVC words their reading is moved onto our school reading scheme, Twinkl Rhino Readers. Twinkl Rhino Readers books match the progression of GPC's taught in the Twinkl Phonics Programme. Books are carefully matched to the children's phonics levels. This ensures books only use letters and tricky words children are already confident in recognising and reading. Children in Year R to 2 all have access to these books and progress is tracked across all three years, ensuring a smooth transition when children move up the school. We also use Ransom Reading Stars decodable books to send home with the children. These also follow the same progression of graphemes taught in the Twinkl Phonics Programme. Once children have become confident in Level Six phonics they are moved onto coloured leveled reading books using the PM Reading Assessment Kit. This accurately assesses the level at which the children need to be moved onto and ensures children are given books with the correct level of challenge.

### **Year 1 Phonics Screening Check**

In the summer term, all children in year 1 will undertake the National Phonics Screening Check. This is an assessment carried out in school during which the children



will be assessed on their ability to segment and blend a range of 40 real and 'alien' words. Alien words are a selection of phonetically decodable nonsense words. The words in this assessment will gauge the understanding of the children's understanding of the phonemes learned and give the school the knowledge of where the gaps are. If the children are not secure in recognising, segmenting and blending these words and therefore do not pass the assessment, they will be offered further support as they enter Year 2 and will be able to repeat the assessment in the summer of year 2. This assessment also allows us to put in specific and personal support for those children who require additional assistance. If a child does not meet the expected standard in Year 2 then phonics teaching and learning will be continued into Key Stage 2.

### **Equality and SEND**

All of our pupils will have equal access to phonics lessons and resources available. Throughout the school, phonics is a priority for all of our children. All efforts are made to support children with their learning, focusing on specific gaps in learning. Pupils needing extra support in phonics will be identified and work within their individual level. If needed, they will have an individual action plan and work with support under the direction of the class teacher and SENCO. A range of techniques are used to support these 1:1 or small group sessions, including flash cards, games, stories and online resources.

## Appendix 1: Phonics Vocabulary

Word	Definition
Phoneme	The smallest single identifiable sound e.g. the letters 'sh' represent just one sound, but 'sp' represents two /s/ and /p/
Grapheme	A way of writing down a phoneme. It can be made up from one, two, three or four letters. e.g. g, sh, igh, ough
GPC	Grapheme Phoneme Correspondence means being able to match a phoneme to a grapheme and vice versa.
Consonant	A sound represented by any letter of the English alphabet except a, e, i, o, u.
Vowel	A sound represented by a, e, i, o, u.
Digraph	A grapheme containing two letters that makes just one sound (phoneme) e.g. sh, ch, th, ph
Vowel Digraph	Two vowels which together makes one sound e.g. ai, oi, oo
Split Digraph	Two letters split making one sound e.g. a-e in make or i-e in site
Trigraph	A grapheme containing three letters that makes just one sound (phoneme) e.g. igh, air, ear
Consonant Blend	Sounds in syllable represented by two or more letters that are blended together without losing their own identities e.g. bl, gr, br, tw
Oral Blending	This involves hearing phonemes and being able to merge them together to make a word. Children need to develop this skill before they will be able to blend written words.
Blending	This involves looking at a written word, looking at each grapheme and using knowledge of GPCs to work out which phoneme each grapheme represents and then merging these phonemes together to make a word. This is the basis of reading e.g. s-n-a-p blended together reads snap
Oral Segmenting	Hearing a whole word and then splitting it up into the phonemes that make it. Children need to develop this skill before they will be able to segment words to spell them.
Segmenting	Hearing a whole word and then splitting it up into the phonemes that make it. Using knowledge of GPCs to work out which graphemes represent those phonemes and then writing those graphemes down in the right order. This is the basis of spelling. e.g. cat has three phonemes /c/ /a/ /t/
Sound Buttons	The dot that goes under each sound. Digraphs and trigraphs are underlined rather than dotted.

	e.g. c a t has three buttons. sh i p also has 3 sound buttons, but the button under sh is a line.
Mnemonic	A device for memorising and recalling something.

**Appendix 2: 44 phonemes taught in Phonics**

Our language is made up of 44 phonemes:  
24 consonant phonemes and 20 vowel phonemes

Every time we open our mouths to speak we use these phonemes. Phonemes are the smallest unit of sound we can hear or speak in each word. Children are taught both how to read and write them.

24 consonant phonemes	20 vowel phonemes
/b/ as in ball	/a/ cat
/c /k/ caterpillar	/e/ hen, bread /i/ pig
/d/ dinosaur	/o/ dog
/f/ flower	/u/ bug
/g/ girl	/ay/ play, make, train /ee/ see, be, tea
/h/ horse	/igh/ high, kite, tie, try /ow/ blow, goat, smoke
/j/ jump	/oo/ book
/l/ leg	/or/ fork, saw, ball, door /ar/ shark, grass
/m/mouse	/ir/ girl, turn, her
/n/ net	/oo/ food, blue, true
/p/ parrot	/oi/ boy, boil
/r/rabbit	/air/ hair, bear, care
/s/ snake	/ire/ fire
/t/ tower	/ear/ hear
/v/ vulture	
/w/wh/ worm	
/x/ fox	
/y/ yo-yo	
/z/ zip	
/ng/ sing	
/sh/ shoe	
/ch/ chew	
/qu/ queen	
/th/ thumb	

