



St Mary's C of E Primary Academy

Policy Name	Phonics		
Date	September 2022	Review Date	
Responsibility	Autumn Noble- Fleary	Resources	Essential Letters and Sounds

Introduction

This document will explain the way Phonics is taught at St Mary's C of E Primary School. It will explain the Phonics curriculum intent, implementation and impact as well as provide a rationale for the curriculum and its progression across year groups.

Intent:

At St Mary's, through our Phonics curriculum, we aim to create an enthusiasm and love for reading in the children; giving them the confidence and skills to read a diverse range of books. Through high quality lessons, we aim for the children to develop the skills needed to decode new words through blending; spell new words through segmenting; and learn un-decodable high frequency words by sight. We intend the curriculum to enable pupils to use these skills to decode any new words that they encounter.

Our phonics curriculum ensures every child can read well, quickly. We intentionally expose pupils to a wide range of ambitious vocabulary to support their wider understanding of language, support oracy and provide an opportunity for incidental conversations that build on the curriculum. Texts that pupils encounter are purposefully sourced from a range of cultures. We intend that pupils see themselves and the wider world reflected in the texts

that they are exposed to in phonics. All of which provides the children with the opportunity to accumulate knowledge, behaviours and skills that they can draw upon and which demonstrates their cultural awareness, knowledge and competence; it is one of the key ingredients a pupil will draw upon to be successful in society, their career and the world of work so that they are caring, curious and ambitious citizens. Cultural capital gives power. It helps children achieve goals, become successful, and rise up the social ladder without necessarily having wealth or financial capital. Cultural capital is having assets that give children the desire to aspire and achieve social mobility whatever their starting point.

This is particularly evident in EYFS as children conduct sound hunts around the school/local environment.

It is imperative that all pupils feel successful in their reading: fully decodable books are carefully selected to ensure that pupils are able to read, with fluency, developing confidence in themselves as readers. This approach is essential in creating an early love of reading. Our curriculum intends the children to leave St Mary's with the life skill to read accurately and fluently, promoting lifelong learning and building self-esteem for an overall improved quality of life.

Implementation:

At St Mary's, we use *Essential Letters and Sounds* to teach our children the skills of blending and segmenting. The *ELS Phonics* programme begins formally in Reception, though Nursery pupils use *ELS* strategies and resources to learn oral blending and some GPC correspondence skills.

In *ELS. Phonics* lessons, children learn to read accurately and fluently. Phonics lessons are taught daily for 20 - 30 minutes, introducing four new sounds a week. Throughout the programme, children learn the English alphabetic code: The 150+ graphemes that represent the 44 speech sounds. These lessons are fast-paced and follow a consistent structure (Review, Teach, Practise, Apply,

Review), allowing the children to participate confidently and remain engaged. Simple and enjoyable mnemonics help all children to grasp the letter-sound correspondences quickly, especially those who are at risk of making slower progress or those who are new to learning English. The learning is taught and consolidated with a 'review' lesson each week to consolidate new learning. High frequency words that are not phonetically regular are taught as "harder to read and spell words" (HRS) and are planned into lessons and practised frequently.

ELS phonics lessons are delivered by trained teachers to the whole class and the program supports pupils to *keep up, not catch up*. This approach ensures that all children benefit from the full curriculum. If children require further support to achieve the outcomes of the lesson and keep up with the pace of the programme, ELS has three interventions that are to be delivered on a one-to-one basis by trained staff: oral blending, GPC recognition and blending for reading.

Pupils will receive weekly home reading books. These books are entirely decodable, based on the sounds and graphemes that have been taught and to ensure that every child is able to decode independently and re-read the books until they achieve fluency. This should then result in children experiencing a feeling of success in each read, thus developing positive feelings about reading. Children begin using decodable readers from the first days of teaching. Parents are supported to make active contributions to their child's phonics learning and reading journey and are encouraged to further enrich their child's exposure to a range of texts by reading both to and with them regularly.

As pupils move from KS1 to KS2, they are able to use their phonics strategies for further reading and spelling support. The wider school reading curriculum compliments our phonics teaching.

Impact:

At St Mary's, we evaluate the impact of the Phonics curriculum on pupils' learning through the assessment of their blending and segmenting skills. These are assessed by their class teacher during their daily sessions through formative assessment strategies. Class teachers also assess the children at the end of each half term using the *ELS. Phonics* assessments. Ongoing daily teacher assessment and half-termly assessment points ensure that any pupils requiring further support are able to access this. The impact of the Phonics curriculum is also assessed through the Phonics Screening Check. Those children in Year One who do not meet the requirements of the check are given intervention support throughout Year Two and beyond if necessary. The impact of the Phonics curriculum can be observed when reading with children as they use the strategies taught by the scheme with confidence. The Phonics subject leader and the members of the SLT monitor the impact of the teaching of the curriculum. This is evaluated through but not limited to lesson observations/learning walks, pupil voice and careful and continuous analysis of the assessment data. Our assessment systems allow the impact to be evaluated so we can ensure the curriculum has a positive impact on all of the children.

Rationale

At St Mary's, through the *Essential Letters and Sounds* phonics scheme, we aim for all children to read well, quickly. Children are taught the skill of blending alongside learning new phonemes and they practise this skill daily, adding increasingly difficult words as the school year progresses. Whole class teaching gives all pupils access to the same curriculum and fosters a 'keep up not catch up' approach. Fully decodable reading books are sent home that are matched to the child's phonics learning in class, containing only sounds that the child has

already learnt in school, allowing the children to further practise their blending skills at home with a strong feeling of success and confidence.

The aim at St Mary's is for the Phonics curriculum to be redundant by the time children reach Key Stage 2, however we know that every child is different and progresses at different rates. Those children who are still finding the skills of blending and segmenting difficult will receive *ELS* Phonics intervention support from a trained member of staff. The ambitious vocabulary and diverse range of texts used within the *ELS* scheme are age appropriate throughout the primary school phase.