

ST MICHAEL'S CE (VA) JUNIOR SCHOOL

Phonics Policy



Date: March 2022

Ratified by Governing Body:

Review: Every two years

Record of Policy Review:

Name of Policy: Phonics Policy

March 2022
Review Date
March 2024

By God's love, we all flourish together.

At St. Michael's, by God's love and through our Christian values of Love, Faith, Respect and Courage, we celebrate uniqueness and nurture curiosity, enabling each child to flourish on their own rich learning journey; whilst contributing to the wider community.

Overview:

Literacy is a fundamental life skill and the teaching of English skills allows our pupils to develop their ability to communicate effectively – to listen, speak, read and write for a wide range of purposes and audiences.

Our reading curriculum fulfils the requirements of the National Curriculum and is fully inclusive to every child; it ensures the progressive development of knowledge and key reading skills, promotes reading across all curriculum areas and aims to inspire a lifelong love of reading.

We want our children to be able to decode new words outside of their spoken vocabulary and be fluent, independent and enthusiastic readers. Pupils at St Michael's will be gifted with a rich diet of wide and varied high quality reading material and will be taught to read aloud and silently effectively, to interrogate texts, to visualise what they read and to have a real opinion about what they've read that they can increasingly justify as they move through Key Stage 2. Through reading, we aim for our children to be language rich and eager to learn and use new vocabulary in the correct context, both verbally and in their writing. Every lesson builds on knowledge, skills and understanding from previous lessons and prior learning in earlier year groups.

At St Michael's, we recognise that high quality systematic teaching of phonics is the key to developing independent readers. Systematic synthetic phonics has proven effectiveness and our pupils are taught to use phonics as the route to reading and writing by developing learners' phonemic awareness. Our aim is to systematically teach learners, who still cannot decode words, the relationship between these sounds and the written spelling patterns, or graphemes, which represent them. Phonics comprises the skills of 'decoding' to blend sounds to read words, along with 'encoding' which is using the sounds to spell words. Our aim is to ensure children fully grasp the knowledge and skills of blending to read and segment to spell.

Aims:

- **To systematically teach learners, who still cannot decode words, the relationship between these sounds and the written spelling patterns, or graphemes, which represent them.**
- **To teach learners the skills of 'decoding' to blend sounds to read words, along with 'encoding' which is using the sounds to spell words.**
- **Our aim is to ensure children fully grasp the knowledge and skills of blending to read and segment to spell.**
- **To quickly identify children who need catch-up phonics upon entry to Year 3 and, where necessary, in other year groups.**

- **To teach synthetic phonics through very small, carefully-targeted and personalised intervention groups.**

Planning:

Upon entry to Year 3, staff receive phonics screening data from feeder schools. Following handover data from previous staff in years 4, 5 and 6, teachers then respond to the phonics needs of the children in that given cohort. Children who need catch-up phonics support are identified via:

- Information from official Phonics Screening
- End of year assessment
- YARC reading age assessment
- Spelling age assessment
- Assessment of high-frequency words reading and spelling
- Handover information from previous teachers
- One Plan documentation
- Teacher formative assessment

In the main, planning follows the RWI Scheme of Work.

Staff may also use other phonics interventions for short bursts of time to plug gaps in phonemic awareness that they have identified in their classes.

Where children have been identified as not being able to learn to read using a systematic synthetic phonics approach, staff will adopt a more analytic approach which will involve the analysis of individual words, taking clues from the recognition of the whole word, the initial sound and the context. A number of different resources will be pooled for this, providing a tailor-made approach which fully meets the needs of different learners.

Teaching and Learning:

For those children who have been identified as working significantly below national expectations and who require additional intervention in order to make expected progress, phonics intervention groups are run daily, with some children working as part of a small group and others receiving individual one-to-one support. All staff teaching phonics have been trained to deliver RWI. Communal language is used across the school – see Appendix 1 below.

Our teaching in intervention groups includes:

- Grapheme/phoneme (letter/sound) correspondences (the alphabetic principle) in a clearly defined, incremental sequence
- A defined initial group of consonants and vowels, enabling children to read and spell many simple CVC words
- Blending (synthesising) phonemes in order to read words
- Segmentation of words into their constituent phonemes to spell
- Understanding that blending and segmenting are reversible processes
- Multi-sensory activities – which promote interest and engagement but still firmly focused on the phonics objective/s
- Non-examples/pseudo words

Each session follows this structure, as per the RWI Handbook:

1. Hear and say the sound
2. Read the sound
3. Read words with the sound in them
4. Spell the words

RWI has five underlying principles. They are:

1. **Pace**
2. **Praise – a lot**
3. **Purpose**
4. **Participation**
5. **Passion**

Assessment and Recording:

A more-detailed phonic/word knowledge assessment from the RWI '**Fresh Start**' handbook is completed with children as a baseline for the intervention. Depending on the score obtained in this, a starting point for the sessions is then identified. Once the children are scoring 275/300, the intervention is stopped. Children following the intervention will be assessed termly.

Resources:

For RWI sessions, the following resources are used:

- Simple and complex speed sounds cards
- Grapheme posters
- Phonic flash cards (with rhymes)
- Red and green word flashcards
- RWI Handbook
- Fresh Start Handbook

These resources are classroom based. The masters are kept in 4M's classroom.

In some classes, 'Toe by Toe' phonic intervention is used. An individual workbook is followed for each of the children on this programme and an interleaved approach is adopted, meaning that sounds have to be recognised and read correctly three times in a row before the child moves on.

Parents and Carers:

Discussions are conducted between parents and teaching staff at Parents' Evenings during the Autumn term and in One Planning meetings – starting points, next steps and ideas for how to support at home are shared.

Our website has suggested links for resources and websites that can help with phonics along with videos of the pronunciation of 'pure' sounds. This link is displayed on our website to help parents to say the sounds correctly:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TkXcabDUg7Q>

Phonics homework may be provided if agreed with parents and carers.

Appendix 1:

Communal Language:

- Phoneme
- Grapheme
- My turn, your turn
- Talk to your partner
- Sound out
- Sound buttons
- Special friends – digraph/trigraph
- Split digraph