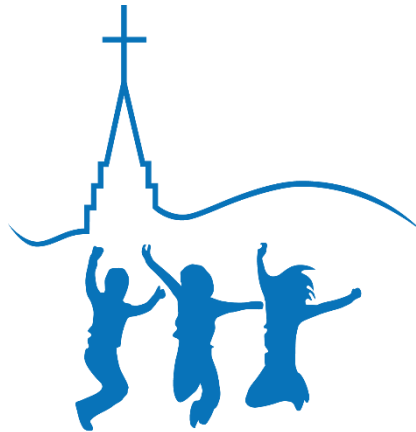


Phonics and Early Reading Policy



St. Michael's CE (VA) Junior School

By God's love, we all flourish together.

God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them. (1 John 4:16)

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.

Ratified by the Curriculum committee	May 2025
Review	May 2027

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. In addition to this, Year 3 staff will formally assess all children in the year group using the Read Write Inc. entry level assessment. Following this, teachers then respond to the phonics needs of the children in that given cohort. Children in each year group who need catch-up phonics support are identified via:

- Read Write Inc. entry level assessment (Year 3 pupils)
- Read Write Inc. assessments 1,2 and 3 data
- End of year assessment
- Assessment of high-frequency words reading and spelling
- Handover information from previous teachers
- One Plan documentation
- Teacher formative assessment

We identify the lowest 20% of readers in every year group using the above information and these children follow the RWI Scheme of Work. Children enter this scheme of work at the exact level of phonological awareness as the above assessments show that they are at.

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 three times a week, 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 by teachers who have had official training in the effective use of the scheme. Communal language is used across the school – see Appendix 1 below.

Our teaching in intervention groups for Years 3 and 4 includes:

- The use of a three days a week timetable – 25-30 minutes per session
- A daily speed sounds element followed by a book reading element
- A sequence of teaching for which each element is set and needs to be adhered to for fidelity to the programme – this way the children will make the most accelerated progress.
- 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
- The reading book teaching sequence looks as follows:

Summary Teaching Sequence for reading element of lessons – taught over three days

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3
1. Read Speed Sounds that feature in story book – MTYT 2. Read story green words - 'Special friends? Fred Talk read the word.' Meaning should then be explained simply using an action, a change of voice or an explanation. Repeat the reading of the word. 3. Read speedy green words – can be done using cards or online tool. 4. Read red word cards – MTYT 5. Partner Practice (PP) - speed sounds/story green words and red words. Speed sounds and red words - Teacher models with a child first. Partner 1 points and Partner 2 reads. Story green words – Fred Talk read the word and partner repeats this back. 6. Read the Story Intro – teacher to read in engaging way looking at the text, not the children. Use Read Aloud strategies. 7. First read of story – children to work in pairs and take it in turns to read pages. They track the words using a jolly-stick. 8. Read aloud – teacher reads the whole story; the children close their books.	1. Read speedy green words can be done using cards or online tool. 2. Read red word cards - MTYT 3. Partner Practice – speedy green and red words – in back of book. 4. Second read of story – teacher to model using Fred In Your Head before setting the children off to read alternate pages in pairs as on Day 1. 5. Fred Fingers – spelling story green words. Teacher says word and ch repeats it. Ch are then asked to hide their fingers as they count the sounds in the word, they then reveal their fingers. 'Pinch the sounds' as they say them (without repeating the whole word). Then, they write the word down and underline any special friends. 6. Final challenge – spell red words. Teacher reads the word, then the word within a sentence then says: 'Write the word.....'	1. Read speedy green and red words – from back of book 2. Partner Practice – speedy green and red words. 3. Think About Story – Teacher reads the story – children do not have their books open. TOL, MTYT, TTYP, Freeze frames. 4. Third read of story – pairs read alternate pages of the whole story again. 5. Questions to talk about – Fastest Finger and Have a Think questions in book. From Yellowbooks onwards: 6. Partner Practice - Questions to read over and answer – in pairs, children take turns to read a question (from a list in the book) and find the answers in the text. Then, they swap roles.

Our teaching in intervention groups for Years 5 and 6 includes:

- The use of resources from 'Fresh Start' which is the RWI intervention for Years 5 and 6 children.
- Children are generally taught in small groups twice a week in small groups following careful assessment of their level of phonological awareness
- Pupils are taught to read sounds, words and the matched decodable modules.
- Children are taught to read the first set of sounds, and then how to blend the sounds together to read words. They then read simple texts containing the sounds they know, alongside learning more sounds, ready for the next set of modules.
- The modules contain decodable texts and activities for the children to complete linked to what they've read.

RWI has five underlying principles. They are:

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

Where children have been identified as not being able to learn to read using a systematic synthetic phonics approach, staff will occasionally 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.

Assessment and Recording:

A more-detailed phonic/word knowledge entry level assessment from the RWI 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 for those children who need it. Children following the intervention will be assessed on a half-termly basis. Groupings are fluid to fit the reading needs of the children at all times.

Resources:

For RWI sessions, the following resources are used:

- Simple and complex speed sounds cards
- Grapheme posters
- Phonic flash cards (with rhymes)
- Red, Story Green and Speedy Green word flashcards
- RWI reading books which are matched at the correct level of phonological awareness for each child (fiction and non-fiction)
- Comprehension group work booklets
- Fresh Start module work booklets
- RWI Handbook
- Comprehension Handbook
- Fresh Start Handbook

These resources are classroom based. The masters are kept in the intervention room in the Year 4 classroom in carefully organised drawers.

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>

Children are expected to read the book that they take home with them on a Thursday – this is the one that they have been rehearsing all week in school. The focus should be on reading this fluently to parents or 'Lucky Listeners' at home. This is then returned to their group leader on the following Monday.

Additional phonics homework may be provided if agreed with parents and carers.

Appendix 1:

Communal Language:

- **phoneme** – sound that you hear
- **grapheme** – written representation of the sound
- **digraph** – one sound, two letters
- **split digraph** – one sound, two letters, separated by a consonant
- **trigraph** – one sound, three letters
- **blending** – process of fluently joining together individual sounds to make words
- **segmenting** – process of identifying and separating the sounds that make up a word
- **pure sounds/ schwar** - the pronunciation of each letter sound made clearly and distinctly without adding additional sounds to the end
- **Red words** – tricky words that cannot be read using phonics
- **Green words** – words that can be read using phonics knowledge
- **Story book words** – unfamiliar words used in specific story book
- **Speedy words** – words read without sounding out (Fred Talk)
- **bouncy sounds** - sounds are said with a short sharp gap in between, e.g. d-d-d as in d-d-d dinosaur
- **stretchy sounds** - sounds are said in one continuous sound, e.g. mmmmmmmmm as in mountain
- **Talk to your partner** – TTYP
- **My turn, your turn** – MTYT
- **Fred Talk, read the word** – sounding out the word before blending it
- **Fred Fingers** - using fingers to identify how many sounds can be heard in the word
- **Special friends** - digraphs, split digraphs and trigraphs
- **Pinch the sounds!** Using the sounds identified using your fingers to spell the word
- **Fred in your head!** - sounding out in your head
- **Fastest finger (FF)** - pointing to an answer in the reading book text
- **Have a think (HaT)** - prompting children to provide an explanation for a reading comprehension answer
- **Tick or fix** – prompting children to edit what they have written if necessary