Why do we teach Sounds ~ Write at St Aloysius?

At St Aloysius, our mission is to improve the life chances of children by ensuring that they become proficient readers and writers. We believe that teachers' knowledge is key to achieving our mission, so we have invested in top quality, evidence-informed phonics training to ensure that our staff teach ***reading*** and ***spelling*** effectively.

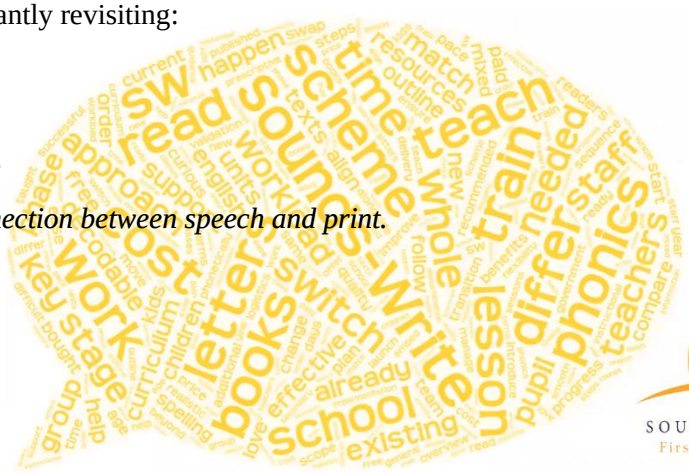
Sounds -Write draws on well-established theories of learning and teaching, and focuses ***first and foremost*** on developing teacher knowledge; we know that this is the single greatest factor in improving student outcomes. The programme is based on extensive research and practice; drawing heavily on cognitive science - in particular on what we know about the limits on working memory and the amount of exposure our pupils require to commit the information that we're teaching into their long-term memory.

We have chosen Sounds-Write because it is a programme structured primarily around the sounds of speech. We know that the children in our school acquire language naturally – it doesn't need teaching. Writing systems were designed to ***represent*** speech. We understand the importance of following a phonics programme that recognises that our writing system is secondary knowledge and we need to teach it explicitly. Reading and writing are taught in parallel in every phonics lesson. Sounds -Write starts with the language that children acquire naturally – the ***sounds*** of their language; it teaches how to read and write them. The programme is ***sound led*** rather than code or spelling led. It works from ***speech to print***.

Guiding principles:

- Sounds-Write teaches the essential skills required to become confident readers and spellers: ***blending, segmenting, phoneme manipulation.*** *These skills are taught explicitly and are practised in the context of reading and spelling real words in every single lesson from the very beginning.*
- The conceptual knowledge teaches children how our alphabet code works (all 175 representations/spellings of the 44 sounds of English in the context of real words).
- Teachers are consistent in the language they use from the very beginning, we teach that letters or combinations of letters spell/represents sounds. ***They do not say or make sounds***. The same consistent approach is applied from EYFS to Y6. Whether a Reception child is being taught '**mat**' or a Y6 child is being taught '**chlorophyll**', the language used will be the same; staff will use the same strategies/ language to explain error corrections when students make mistakes.

How is the programme implemented?

- Whole class teaching with scaffolds caters for all students within the lesson, rather than grouping by ability. No child is left behind. Diagnostic assessment tools are used so that teachers can identify children who need intervention. Analysing and interpreting assessments enables teachers to plan effective interventions.
- Scripted lessons allow for consistent practice across school. All adults use the same clear language. Scripts cover reading and writing in every lesson and allow for practise. Scripts reduce cognitive load for students, they become so secure with activities, cognitive attention is on what they're learning and not second guessing how new games or activities might work.
- Cumulative (everything builds on what has been taught previously).
- Multi - sensory - the children are constantly revisiting:
    - Saying the sounds
    - Seeing the spellings of sounds
    - Hearing the sounds
    - Writing the spellings of sounds

All senses are interacting to enhance that connection between speech and print.