



## Phonics

### Mission Statement:

*The community of St Charles School believes that Jesus is at the heart of everything we do. We are committed to giving every child, every opportunity to achieve their potential in mind and body in a happy, safe and caring environment.*

### **Intent**

At St Charles we believe there is no greater skill that we can teach a child than how to read fluently and for enjoyment, thus opening a world of endless learning possibilities and academic success.

Early reading is underpinned by good quality phonics teaching. Phonics is the process that is used to help children break down words into sounds, as well as building letter and word recognition. We believe that phonics provides the foundations of learning to make the development into fluent reading and writing easier.

### **Implementation**

At St Charles we follow a consistent approach to daily phonics lessons for all pupils in Reception and KS1, which are structured to develop and enhance their skills in becoming fluent and confident readers.

Intervention is planned for those Year 2 pupils who did not achieve the phonics screening check in Year 1 and for those pupils who require additional support in all year groups.

At St Charles we follow the systematic phonics programme **Sounds-Write**. This programme sets out the foundations for teaching phonic skills for children to become fluent readers by age seven.

Sounds Write is a Sensory-Motor approach to teaching reading and spelling. It requires:

- Visual discrimination of letter shapes
- Auditory discrimination of the sounds in speech (we always say the sound as we write it)
- Integration of auditory and visual skills (Sounds match to spellings, spellings match to sounds).

The Sounds-Write approach ensures that:

- Children develop key concepts about the way English is written.
- Children practise the skills essential for reading and spelling accurately.
- Children learn the sounds and the spellings of English.

### **Concepts**

Through the sounds-Write programme children will understand that;

#### *Concept 1*

#### Letters represent sounds

Letters do not 'make' sounds they represent them and, teachers and teaching assistants, are careful when teaching children to read, using appropriate phrases to reinforce this e.g. 'what sound do you say for this?' (Pointing to letter or letters) not 'what sound does this letter make?'

### *Concept 2*

A sound can be spelled with 1,2,3 or 4 letters.

The English language contains single letter spellings. For example, in the word 'cat' c-a-t. These are relatively simple to read and spell. However, many sounds are spelled with two or more letters e.g. oa in boat, ou in out and igh in high. These present more of a problem for a non-skilled reader and will need to be pointed out by the teacher and practised by the child. It is important to understand that letters don't make sounds, they represent or spell them.

### *Concept 3*

In English the same sound is often written with different spellings (same sound, different spellings).

In English, every sound that we say can be represented by at least 2 different spellings. In many cases the number of different spellings of the same sound is much larger; maybe 8 or 9. The sound 's' for example is written in different ways in these words: sat, city, voice, mess, house, listen, scent.

There are 44 speech sounds and around 175 different ways to spell those sounds, using a combination of the 26 alphabetic letters. New readers must learn that there are more ways than one to represent the same sound so that they learn to look very carefully in order to spell well.

### *Concept 4*

In English, the same spelling can spell different sounds

For example, <o> spells the sound /o/ in dog, /oe/ in go and /oo/ in do. Readers need to be able to swap sounds (phoneme manipulation) to read the word accurately if another possible sound for that spelling has been tried first.

### **Skills**

#### 1. Blending

Because words are composed of sounds, in order to read we need to be able to blend sounds together and at the end 'hear' a meaningful word. Daily practise in the Sounds-Write lessons will develop good blending.

#### 2. Segmenting

Because the English written language is a sound > spelling code it is important that children are taught to segment the sounds in words so they can read and spell with ease. Through segmenting children have the opportunity to notice the ways in which the individual sounds are spelled.

#### 3. Phoneme Manipulation

Skilled readers are able to add, change or omit sounds in words and understand how this manipulation of sounds makes new words. This skill of phoneme manipulation is essential so that a new reader can swap sounds around to deal with same spelling-different sound.

### **Code Knowledge**

For skilled fluent reading it is vital that children have a thorough knowledge of the spelling code of the 44 sounds of English. The code is taught through multi-sensory activities and lessons where the children are building whole words sound by sound, reading words and writing words.

Initially we work with words where the spellings are 1:1 (sound: letter). Later we move to 2 letter spellings and we teach the spelling alternatives for the sounds. In each school year, we extend the number of sounds taught and also the number of spellings covered.

Children need to be taught explicitly and extensively how the sounds of English are written. This teaching and learning should be repeatedly revised and reinforced during daily reading and spelling activities. The code should not be allowed to remain a mystery to pupils.

The Sounds-Write programme is based on extensive research which has isolated and examined the processes involved in learning to read and spell. Each component of the programme is carefully designed so that the developing reader/writer can be guided by explicit instruction at every critical point.

**Impact**

Through whole class instruction, extension activities, small group practice all children in our school will be equipped with the necessary concepts, skills and knowledge to become independent in reading, writing and spelling. Our aim is for children to become fluent readers by the end of Key Stage One. This way, children can focus on developing their fluency and comprehension as they move through the school.

Children's progress and attainment in phonics is measured by end of phase assessments and by the Phonics Screening Check at the end of Year 1.