

*"Love one another as Jesus loved us" (John 13 v 34-35)*



St. John's C of E (VA) School, Cliviger

**'Learn, Pray, Care & Play'**

Our church school through its Christian values and caring community  
seeks  
to inspire each individual to achieve and grow.

### **Teaching of Phonics and Reading Policy**

At St John's C of E Primary School, children are at the centre of everything we do. We aim to give our children the best possible opportunities and learning experiences, enabling them to reach their full potential.

**We believe that everyone has the capacity to become great if they have the courage to challenge themselves. By nurturing creativity, enjoyment & ambition; this policy supports our responsibility to make this happen.**

At St John's C of E Primary School, we believe that Reading is the key to learning and to improving life chances.

The OFSTED publication 'Getting them reading early' (updated 2014) sums up the teaching of Phonics and Reading:

***"The government's White Paper, The importance of teaching, in November 2010 stated its case for phonics. It said that it would:  
'ensure that all children have the chance to follow an enriching curriculum by getting them reading early. That means supporting the teaching of systematic synthetic phonics and introducing a simple reading check at age six to guarantee that children have mastered the basic skills of early reading and also ensure we can identify those with learning difficulties' (para. 4.6).***

***This intention is now reflected in the new Teachers' Standards, published by the DfE in July 2011 for implementation in September 2012. Under the heading 'Developing good subject and curriculum knowledge' is the requirement for teachers who teach early reading to demonstrate 'a clear understanding of***

## *"Love one another as Jesus loved us" (John 13 v 34-35)*

*systematic synthetic phonics'.*

*The final report acknowledged:*

*'...it is an obvious truth that the goal of reading is comprehension and that skilled reading involves understanding as well as decoding text. In short, learning to read progresses to reading, effortlessly, to learn. The teaching of beginner readers requires an understanding of the processes that underpin this progression' (p.35).*

*The review showed that skilled reading requires two processes:*

*\_ PHONICS: that the reader recognises and understands the words on the page (that is, word recognition processes or decoding)*

*\_ COMPREHENSION: the development of language comprehension (that is, written texts as well as spoken language are understood and interpreted).*

*These are both necessary, but neither is enough on its own. Teaching reading needs to give attention to both dimensions: word recognition and comprehension (understanding spoken and written language.)"*

The following pages summarise how we put this into action at St John's C of E Primary School:

### **Phonics:**

Our teaching of Synthetic Phonics is based on **Red Rose Phonics** using both teachers and teaching assistants. This is a systematic approach and in KS1 we have a daily 20-25 minute Phonics session. This ensures that phonics is taught regularly, discretely, explicitly and in an agreed and rational sequence. **Synthetic Phonics** has nothing to do with the word 'artificial'; the reference is to the process of blending (synthesising) the individual sounds in a word together, working from left to right, to read them. Synthetic phonics work can begin simply with oral blending, that is, the children listen to sounds and then blend them. They also learn to say sounds, in order, that are represented by individual letters and pronounce these together to say a word (e.g. the sounds /c/, then /a/ and then /t/, blended together to say /cat/). Synthetic phonics also teaches children to break down (segment) a word they hear into its individual sounds, starting from the first sound and working systematically through the word. For each sound they hear, they choose the letter (or combination of letters, such as 'ch' or 'ai' or 'th') to represent that sound in order to spell the word. Blending and segmenting are, in the words of the Rose Review, 'reversible processes': that is, if you can blend the sounds together to read a word, you should also be able to identify and break down (segment) the individual sounds in a word you hear to spell it. To spell the word, you need to represent each sound you hear by a letter – or more than one letter.

### **Tricky Words**

Children are also taught to read and spell words that are not completely phonically regular, often called 'tricky' words in phonic schemes. Children are taught to read these tricky words on sight, so that they do not have to spend time puzzling them out. We regularly help children to practise their speedy recall of tricky words, often with something as simple as flashcards and within guided reading sessions.

## *"Love one another as Jesus loved us" (John 13 v 34-35)*

### **A Multi-Sensory Approach**

We use a range of activities to support the teaching of phonics, including:

- hand actions/movements to reinforce the sound being learnt or consolidated
- letter cards: to move around on the floor or to put in order, left to right etc.
- whiteboards for writing
- boards with plastic/magnetic letters.
- Interactive games to ensure participation by all children.
- Letter patterns

We aim to ensure that the children are physically engaged as active learners.

We support the teaching of phonics with a range of resources based on this approach, and we ask parents to support this learning at home too.

### **Reading**

Phonics is only part of the road to reading. We also aim to encourage:

- independence and choice of reading material / books.
- knowledge of books and individual authors
- understanding: literal and inferential comprehension
- support from school and home
- enjoyment
- higher-order reading skills, such as inference, appreciation of an author's style,
- awareness of themes, similarity and differences between texts
- awareness of own progress and development as a reader
- high expectations and a culture where reading is encouraged.

We use various reading schemes including the Oxford Reading Scheme and Big Cat Phonics, supplemented with a variety of other books, levelled accordingly. These include Project X, Songbird Phonics and Treetops. This enables children to enjoy a broad range of books and styles. Children are actively encouraged to develop a 'love of reading' through selecting books which appeal directly to them. These books go home with the children and pupils from all year groups are encouraged to read on a nightly basis in accordance with government guidelines. There are also regular celebrations of books through themed days and events and opportunities to read with Rae – a reading dog to inspire reluctant readers. Staff are also increasingly aware of the need and able to direct children to certain books and author's through their growing knowledge of the books in school. Pupils are also guided towards books which relate directly to topics being studied or which are to be looked at in the course of the year. In the early stages of reading, children are also given key words to read and practice at home. In addition to this, children are encouraged to choose books from our school/class library. Parents are also encouraged to write about their child's progress in their home diaries/reading records. In school, children read all the time. We have shared reading sessions (where we all look at a text), guided reading sessions (where children are prompted and questioned about their reading) and quiet reading (where children simply read for the pleasure of it). In

*"Love one another as Jesus loved us" (John 13 v 34-35)*

In addition pupils are exposed to a wide range of vocabulary and given regular opportunities to apply it in context, both in their English lessons but also in the wider curriculum.

Staff complete regular CPD such as Phonics and Reading training, delivered both in house and externally in order to ensure that school is up to date with considered best practice.

**Record Keeping and Assessments**

Children's progress through 'Red Rose Phonics' is closely monitored through the use of individual tracking grids, enabling work to be appropriately set. The literacy subject leader and phonics lead use their subject leader time to regularly monitor the bottom 20% to ensure interventions and reading books are suitably matched.

In addition, teachers and teaching assistants maintain a reading record in class, which enables them to record the progress of children's reading. This tracking is continued into Key Stage 2 to ensure that appropriate teaching and intervention can take place for those pupils who still need phonics sessions and to track progress of reading and ensure that it is adequate and that reading books match pupils' phonics and reading abilities throughout school.