

St Mary's Catholic Primary School and Nursery, Chorley



Phonics policy

Mission Statement:

St Mary's is a welcoming school who: learn together; live out Catholic values; celebrate all achievements and believe all is possible in Christ's hands.

Introduction

This policy outlines the teaching and learning of phonics and early reading skills at our school. We use the Read, Write Inc. programme to get children off to a confident start with their early reading. Evidence suggests that fidelity to a well-structured and systematic phonics scheme is the most effective way of teaching children to decode. RWI also supports children's ability to read high frequency, common exception words as well as teaching the skills required for effective comprehension of a text including vocabulary knowledge, reading fluency and inference and deduction skills. We use part of the 'Get Writing' section of RWI which helps support the application of phonics to spelling, as well as thinking about simple punctuation and grammar skills.

Aims (Intent)

By using RWI, we aim to teach children to decode texts effortlessly so that they can put all their energy into understanding what they read. We want every child to enjoy and take pleasure in reading exciting books matched to their reading ability. Phonics also supports children to spell readily so that they can write fluently, accurately and with confidence. Through Read, Write Inc. phonics children will:

- learn the 44 common sounds (phonemes) and the corresponding letter/letter groups using simple picture prompts (speed sounds)
- learn to read words using 'Fred Talk' (sounding words out), then as they progress with 'Fred in your head' (just read the word)
- read stories featuring words they have already learned
- show that they comprehend the stories by answering questions
- learn to write the letters/letter groups (graphemes) which represent 70+ sounds
- learn to spell words by segmenting sounds
- write simple and complex sentences.

Organisation (Implementation)

The RWI scheme advocates that phonics lessons should be delivered using five underlying principles - the 5 Ps:

- **Pace** - good pace is essential to the lesson
- **Praise/Positive teaching** - children learn more effectively in a positive climate
- **Purpose** - every part of the lesson has a specific purpose
- **Participation** - a strong feature of RWI lessons is partner work, which states that 70% of learning comes from partner talk
- **Passion** - as a staff we are passionate about our teaching and the benefits of RWI. We love teaching the sessions and our enthusiasm rubs off onto the children. We know it has an impact!

It is the energy and enthusiasm that group leaders put into each lesson that brings the teaching and learning of phonics to life. Children who are at an early stage of reading (either due to their age, developmental level or if they are new to spoken English), will take part in a daily, 25 minute RWI phonics group lesson. Children continue to access RWI lessons until assessment shows that they are confidently using 70+ sounds to decode and read both real and 'nonsense' words of multiple syllables speedily, reading one word per second.

Grouping:

Phonics in Nursery focusses on pre-reading skills. These are split into speaking and listening skills, being able to distinguish the sounds they hear, patterns of speech and the sounds they hear within speech. Children are taught 'seven aspects of phase 1 phonics' within the prime area of 'communication' and language' and the specific area of Literacy in the Early Years curriculum. Each aspect builds on the previous aspect taught:

- environmental sounds
- instrumental sounds
- body percussion
- rhythm and rhyme
- alliteration
- voice sounds
- oral blending and segmenting

'The development of children's spoken language underpins all areas of learning and development.' (Development Matters 2020)

We aim to start to introduce RWI Set 1 Speed Sounds round about the Summer term of Nursery. This is when the pre-school children are usually ready to develop their

phonics knowledge. Single letter sounds are repeated orally and letter formation will also start to be practised. Children are taught to orally blend using 'Fred Talk' games and progress to segmenting simple cvc words when we know the children are ready. The children will continue their RWI journey in Reception in the Autumn term.

Pupils work within ability groups across Reception, Years 1, 2 and if necessary, in Y3, until the children become fluent readers. Ability groups are organised using on-going assessments that are carried out every half term by the early-reading/phonics leader. The phonics lead will then group the children appropriately, in small ability groups.

Intervention will take place daily for children who need additional speed sounds lessons to close sound gaps and practise becoming speedier in the reading of real and nonsense words.

During the summer term in Y1, all children take the Phonics screening check which is a national initiative that checks their phonics abilities. The test is designed to see if pupils have learnt phonic decoding and blending skills to an appropriate standard.

Parental Involvement:

Parents meetings are held during the Autumn term to introduce parents of EYFS children to RWI, and the way in which we teach the children to read. Parents are also given appropriate materials and website links to support their children with phonics at home. Weekly RWI homework is provided via our school communication platforms - Tapestry (EYFS) and Seesaw (Y1 upwards).

Reading books are sent home that match the child's reading ability, usually starting in Reception, when the children reach Group 1C.

We suggest that a book is read three times, concentrating on

- 1) word reading
- 2) fluency
- 3) comprehension

Monitoring

Roles and responsibilities:

The reading leader will

- assess all pupils every half term
- designate pupils to the correct groups
- assign leaders to groups
- 'drop in' on groups to give advice and to informally check that pupils are working at the correct level
- attend RWI training/ development days and support days

- report to the Head teacher regarding pupil progress
- undertake regular training sessions with staff
- ensure that the correct resources are accessible to all staff
- report to the governors about the quality of the implementation of RWI and the impact on standards

Impact:

Assessment:

Children are assessed throughout every lesson by the individual phonics group leader, by checking how able the children are at

- reading the grapheme chart
- reading the green and red word lists
- decoding the ditty or story
- comprehending the story

Formal assessment is carried out by the early-reading leader using the new RWI phonic assessments each half term. Children are able to move from one group to another depending on their progress. Sometimes children may stay in the same group and repeat their speed sound lessons, until they are able to read with increasing fluency.

Where necessary, intervention will be introduced to support some pupils.

Review: The reading leader will review the policy annually. Policy produced November 2022