

'So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you.'
Matthew 7:12

Phonics Policy



"A high-quality education in English will teach pupils to speak and write fluently so that they can communicate their ideas and emotions to others and through their reading and listening, others can communicate with them."

National Curriculum for English 2014

Intent

Phonics is a key skill that supports the development of early reading skills. At St Mark's CE Primary School, we combine quality phonics teaching and the promotion of reading for pleasure to provide our pupils with the skills they need to have a successful start to their lives as readers.

Our Phonics Curriculum Aims

Using the DFE validated scheme Essential Letters and Sounds (ELS), we intend our pupils to be able to:

- Recognise, say and write all phonemes within each phase of Essential Letters and Sounds
- Use their phonic knowledge to blend and segment phonetically decodable words
- Use their phonic knowledge to attempt to read and write more complex words
- Read Harder to Read and Write words
- Write clearly, accurately and coherently, using their phonic knowledge
- Apply their phonetic knowledge and skills to decode unfamiliar words fluently and accurately
- Read rapidly to apply what they have learnt across the whole curriculum
- Create fluent readers, confident speakers and willing writers
- Develop a life-long love of reading

Implementation

In order to implement our intent, we have:

- A DFE validated scheme of work that teaches specific, relevant and ambitious vocabulary (Essential Letters and Sounds)
- A cohesive and consistent approach to teaching phonics, where daily sessions follow the same structure no matter who is teaching them
- Ensured that staff are equipped with the necessary professional development to deliver our curriculum
- Daily Phonics sessions in Early Years, Key Stage 1 and for some KS2 children. Ensuring the children learn the 44 phonemes of the English language
- A progressive scheme of work where the teaching of phonics begins in Reception and progresses with the children at a sustained pace

- Children improve their ability to segment and blend sounds, and their ability to apply this knowledge into their reading and writing
- A rigorous assessment system that informs teaching
- Use appropriate ELS interventions to ensure children keep up rather than catch up
- Regular reading opportunities and story times for all children in school
- Decodable reading books linked to the sounds children have been learning which are changed weekly
- All pupils can also access online decodable reading books linked to the sounds they are learning
- A Phonics Screening Check for Year 1 in the summer term and for those in Year 2 who need to resit
- A subject leader who monitors teaching and learning to improve standards and outcomes
- A link governor who liaises with the subject leader in order to monitor and improve standards
- A curriculum that meets the needs of all pupils (including SEND)

The principles of the ELS program we use at St Mark's are based upon:

- The delivery of whole-class, high-quality first teaching with well-structured daily lesson plans
- The use of consistent terminology by teachers, children and parents
- The use of consistent resources that support effective teaching
- Repetition and reinforcement of learning
- Regular and manageable assessment to ensure that all children 'keep up' rather than 'catch up'
- The 'E' model

The 'E' model

The 'E' model underpins all teaching and learning in ELS.

'E' model components	Description
Embed	The theory and pedagogy behind ELS
Enact	How to deliver ELS lessons in your school
Enable	How to ensure all children 'keep up' rather than 'catch up'
Execute	How to lead ELS in your school
Evaluate	How to assess children's progress
Evolve	Optional bespoke training

Teaching and Learning

The children are provided with a variety of opportunities to develop and extend their phonics skills in and across Nursery, Reception and Key Stage 1. It will also be continued into Key Stage 2, where necessary to support those children who do not yet have the phonic knowledge and skills they need.

Discrete phonics lessons take place daily across Reception and Key Stage 1. These learning opportunities are carefully chosen to ensure that children develop their skills in aural discrimination and phonemic and rhyme awareness, blending and segmenting as well as grapheme-phoneme correspondence.

In addition to the discrete phonics lessons, the teaching of phonics, wherever possible, links between phonics knowledge and understanding are made to learning in both reading and writing across all the curriculum areas

Impact







Through implementing the above:

- Pupils will be confident in their phonetic knowledge
- Pupils can read well quickly
- Pupils will be able to blend and segment words confidently
- Pupils will pass the Phonics Screening Check
- A culture where a secure knowledge of phonic sounds enables reading for pleasure as part of our reading curriculum.

Key features of the Teaching of Phonics:

Key teaching features	
Me, then you	The teacher says something, and then the children repeat it exactly.
Provide opportunities	Practice and repetition are key. There is no 'down time' in the lesson – a consistent fast pace is maintained. Children have many opportunities to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hear the sound or word • Say the sound or word • See the sound or word • Read the word • Write the word • Use new vocabulary.
Provide modelling	Every single aspect of the lesson is modelled for children. As teacher, your main purpose is not to test the children but to teach them.
Active teaching and learning	ELS lessons are active – children are engaged at all times, whether joining in with a 'drum roll' to introduce the new sound, using 'robot arms' or 'tracking the teacher' as you move around the room.

All children being taught phonics will be familiar with the Key Teaching Features:

Key teaching features	
Spelling sequence	<p>Encourage children to follow the sequence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Say the word  • Stretch the word  • Segment the word  • Blend the word  • Count the sounds within the word  • Say the whole word  <p>This sequence can be used for any word where the children have been taught the GPCs within the word.</p>

Weekly Lesson Structures Teaching new phonemes and graphemes (phase 2, 3 and 5):

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Review Teach new sound Practise Use the Apply sound-specific sheet Review	Review Teach new sound Practise Use the Apply sound-specific sheet Review	Review Teach new sound Practise Use the Apply sound-specific extract sheet Review	Review Teach new sound Practise Use the Apply sound-specific extract sheet Review	Review newly taught sounds for the week, previously taught graphemes, and harder to read and spell (HRS) words Practise – reading and writing words Apply – reading decodable books and writing phrases and sentences

Weekly lesson structure for review weeks and phase 4 learning where no new graphemes are taught:

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Review	Review	Review	Review	Review
Teach and practise	Teach and practise	Teach and practise	Teach and practise	Teach and practise
Apply	Apply	Apply	Apply	Apply

Please read the Essential Letters and Sounds Handbook for more detailed information on the teaching of Phonics.

Organisation

The Phonics Leader is responsible for Phonics through the school. This includes:

- Ensuring continuity and progression from year group to year group
- Providing all members of staff with guidelines and a scheme of work (ELS) to show how aims are achieved and how the variety of all aspects of phonics is to be taught
- Advising on in-service training to staff where appropriate.
- Advising and supporting colleagues in the implementation and assessment of phonics throughout the school
- Assisting with the requisition and maintenance of resources required for the teaching of phonics, within the confines of the school budget
- Monitoring the quality of teaching and learning in phonics across the school

The class teacher is responsible for:

- Ensuring progressing in the acquisition of phonic knowledge and skills with due regard to the National Curriculum for English
- Developing and updating skills, knowledge and understanding of phonics
- Identifying needs in phonics and take advantage of training opportunities
- Keeping appropriate on-going records
- Following the ELS program successfully, liaising with phonics leader when necessary
- Informing pupils and parents of their progress, achievements and attainment

Inclusion All children have equal access to the curriculum as expressed in our Equal Opportunities Policy. We will ensure that phonics is accessible to pupils by:

- Setting suitable learning objectives and differentiated success criteria.
- Responding to the variety of learning styles
- Overcoming potential barriers of individuals and groups

This is monitored by analysing pupil performance throughout the school to ensure that there is no disparity between groups.

Reviewed January 2026