



"With God, All Things Are Possible"

## **The Teaching of Phonics and Early Reading**

### **Introduction**

At St Joseph's Catholic Academy we strive to ensure that all children become successful, fluent readers by the end of Key Stage One and believe that this is achievable through a combination of strong, high quality, discrete phonics teaching combined with a whole language approach that promotes a 'reading for pleasure' culture.

*'Reading is fundamental to education. Proficiency in reading, writing and spoken language is vital for pupils' success.'* (The Reading Framework 2023)

This policy is aimed at reinforcing a consistent, high quality approach to the teaching of phonics and Early Reading across the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS,) Key Stage One and on into Key Stage Two for children who still need this further support.

### **Aims**

- To teach children aural discrimination, phonemic awareness and rhyme to aid reading, writing and spelling development.
- To encourage the use of segmenting and blending so that decoding skills provide a sound foundation for reading, writing and spelling.
- To ensure the teaching of phonics is lively, interactive and investigative.
- To enable children to use phonic awareness across the curriculum.
- To ensure that children know the 44 phonemes within the English language.
- To teach children to recognise the graphemes within words and associate them with the appropriate phoneme when reading.
- To provide children with strategies to identify and decode common exception words in reading ('tricky words') and apply these to their writing.
- To support children in fostering a love of reading

### **Objectives**

- To provide consistent, high quality phonics teaching that ensures all children have a strong foundation upon which to tackle the complex processes of reading and writing.

- To ensure that the teaching of synthetic phonics is systematic and progressive throughout the Foundation Stage, Key Stage One and Key Stage Two for those children needing interventions to support phonetic knowledge and understanding.
- To ensure that children have sound phonetic knowledge, understanding and skills so that they can decode words confidently and engage with higher order reading and writing skills.
- To ensure that children have the opportunity to read a range of books that are closely matched to their phonetic ability.
- To ensure that children have access to a range of 'real' books to promote a 'reading for pleasure' culture.

### **Curriculum, Teaching and Learning Guidance**

At St Joseph's Catholic Academy, we use 'Bug Club phonics' across the EYFS and Key Stage One.

Phonics is taught daily and teachers use summative and formative assessments to inform them of the progress children are making and enabling them to adapt provision if necessary to ensure the needs of individual pupils are met. Children who have not met the Learning Objective of the daily phonics lesson take part in a 'catch up' phonics session, the same day. This ensures that no child is left behind.

All Year One children take the Phonics Screening Check - a statutory assessment required by the Department for Education. Those who do not meet the pass mark will be given support and intervention programmes in Year Two, to provide them with sufficient knowledge and understanding to re-take the Phonics Screening Check and obtain a pass mark. Those children who do not obtain the required level set by the Phonics Screening Check will receive phonics teaching in the first term of Year 3, which will be further supported throughout the year and across Key Stage Two with a phonics and/or spelling intervention programme.

Phonics lessons are planned using the 'Bug club' teaching guide, which ensures that phonics is taught with consistency across all phases, in all year groups. At St Joseph's we follow the progression of sounds outlined in the 'Bug Club' teaching guide. We also have a school progression map in place which specifies where and when each phase will be taught.

## Lesson Structure

Each Phonics lesson is planned and taught using the teaching sequence outlined in 'Bug Club'.

<b>Recommended teaching sequence</b>	<b><i>Bug Club Phonics</i> lesson structure</b>
Introduce ▼	Learning intentions and outcomes for the day are discussed at the start of the lesson.
Revisit and review ▼	Every Phoneme Session begins with Revision to review previous learning (with the exception of Unit 1). In Reception (P1) the Revision is not just of the previous day's target grapheme-phoneme correspondence, but also of blending for reading and segmenting for spelling of the relevant words. In Key Stage 1 (P2&3) the Revision is sometimes a review of previous learning which links with the planned teaching for that day.
Teach ▼	Every Phoneme and Language Session is composed of teaching elements (e.g. Sounds, Reading, Spelling etc.) which are easily navigated to structure the new phonic teaching. The teaching of grapheme-phoneme correspondences and high-frequency (common) words is covered.
Practise ▼	Practise opportunities are available in the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 'Follow-up' parts of the lessons</li><li>• unit-linked pupil games</li><li>• unit-linked photocopy masters</li><li>• 'free-teaching' within the Magnetic Board.</li></ul>
Apply ▼	Language Sessions provide opportunities to apply developing phonic skills to the reading, spelling and writing of captions and sentences. This application also covers irregular (not fully decodable) common words. In addition, the linked decodable readers allow regular application of children's phonic skills, from as early as Unit 2 of <i>Bug Club Phonics</i> .
Assess learning ▼	Assessment guidance and materials provided within this guide and on the website enable ongoing formative assessment during the daily lessons and summative assessment at regular periods throughout the programme. The frequency of assessment opportunities means children's needs can be identified the moment they become apparent, ensuring that no child gets left behind. The catch-up guidance and resources allow children to stay within the main teaching sessions whilst getting the extra help they need, in the right format, to be able to keep up with their peers. The assessment resources can be used to prepare children for the Phonics Screening Check in Year 1.

## Organisation and Progression in Skills

Children in Nursery should be taught Phase 1 though a differentiated approach within the setting on a daily basis. The phase 1 units set out by 'Bug Club' have been included in the school's teaching sequence across each term. The Early Years staff then expand the 'Bug Club' units to help them to plan and enhance phonics sessions and Continuous Provision.

Children will be taught Phase 2 and 3 during the Reception year and will be taught phase 5 during Year 1. In Year 2 children will move on to the Year 2 spelling curriculum. Of which, further details can be found on the whole school progression map. Children who are not yet secure in Phase 5, will continue to take part in phonics sessions, as an intervention.

Children in Reception and Year 1 will be taught a discrete phonics session daily for a 20 minute period. Children will be taught phonics as a whole class, by a teacher. Children who have not secured the day's learning, along with those who are in danger of falling behind, will be targeted for daily catch up phonics.

In Reception and KS1 Phonics skills are embedded in writing and reading tasks and children are given many opportunities to apply their phonic knowledge in other subjects and areas of learning.

Children are introduced to the 'tricky words' in the order outlined in the 'Bug Club' Teachers Guide. Children are taught the tricky words alongside the corresponding phase and are expected to be able to read the tricky words for that phase.

At the end of Year 1 all children will complete the Year 1 phonics screen. Throughout the year children will have plenty of practice in recognising 'alien' pseudo words, in readiness for the Phonics Screening Check and to give them the confidence to read any word.

Children in Year 2 who did not pass their phonics screening test in Year 1 will continue to have daily phonics sessions. This will support them to pass the phonics screen at the end of year 2.

### **Classroom Environment**

In each class there is a phase-appropriate Phonics display, concentrating on both sounds and key words that the children are currently learning.

Phonics mats are available to support children's early writing across the curriculum. In Reception the displays reflect the letters and sounds that the children have been taught. Access to phonics activities and games will be made available in the provision.

### **Reading Skills**

Children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 take part in daily Reading Skills sessions. The focus of Reading skills in EYFS and KS1 is for children to develop automaticity and prosody, so as they become fluent readers with effective comprehension skills.

Reading Skills is taught over 5 days, with a carefully structured sequence. As they move through the sequence, the children read with more independence. On day 5, the children complete comprehension activities related to the text they have been studying.

(See Reading Skills sequence document for further details)

### **Reading scheme**

Along with the 'Bug club' phonics scheme the school has invested in the 'Bug club' reading scheme. Children's reading books are closely matched to the sounds they are currently learning and give children the opportunity to apply and consolidate their newly acquired phonic knowledge. This makes it easy for teachers, parents and children to choose a text that was matched to the child's growing phonic knowledge and that does not encourage a child to guess at words, if they included GPCs they had not yet been taught.

Children's reading books are changed on a Monday. With children taking home 1 book per week to ensure they progress through the reading scheme at a pace that matches their progression through the phonics phases.

In Reception and Year, 1 children read their books with a trained adult before they take them home. This ensures that the children are able to read with greater fluency and that the trained adult is able to address any misconceptions. Children in Year 2 that are still accessing the 'Bug Club' reading scheme will also read their books with a trained adult before taking the books home.

When a child completes a book band, the class teacher will listen to the child read before they are moved to the next book band to ensure children are fluent at that level.

### **Reading for pleasure**

Alongside, the school reading scheme children will have the opportunity to experience a range of 'real' books to encourage a 'love of reading'. Classes in EYFS and KS1 will have a designated reading area, which is stocked with books that reflect the children's reading levels and the wider curriculum. All children visit the school library each week and choose a book to share at home. Children enjoy 'Story Time' at the end of in class and will have the opportunity to select and take home a book, from the school library, each week. Across the school children take part in progressive 'Story Time' sessions\*, at the end of each day. All Year groups have a class author. Children encounter texts by their class author during English lessons, whole class reading and 'Story Time' sessions

\*See Story Time texts progression map

### **Parental Engagement**

Parental involvement is key in the acquisition of Phonics. Home learning activities provided to Nursery each week include many activities to develop phase one. Children in Reception, take home sound packs each week that are linked to previously taught GPCs.

Children in KS1 and KS2 receive weekly spellings to learn.

A Phonics Workshop for Reception and Year 1 parents is held in the autumn term.

### **Assessment**

In the EYFS and Year 1 we collect phonics data at the end of each term and this forms part of termly pupil progress meetings. Phonics data is recorded using a matrix that allows children who are risk of falling behind, to be easily identified. Interventions can then be quickly put into place, to close the gap. Teacher assessment is also used on a daily basis to identify children in need of same day intervention – 'Catch up phonics'.

This policy was amended in August 2024. The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of all staff.

Its use and effectiveness will be supported and monitored by the Phonics and Early Reading Leader, on behalf of the Principal and Governors.

Signed ..... (Phonics and Early Reading Leader)