

Phonics at St Mary's

Here at St Marys we systematically teach synthetic phonics. This is the most widely used approaches associated with teaching reading. It means that the phonemes (sounds) associated with particular graphemes (written letter/s) are pronounced in isolation and blended together (synthesised). For example, we teach the children to take part a word, such as cat, into its single sounds c-a-t and then blend them together to make cat.

We follow Phonics Bug which is broken down into 6 phases, these phases are taught in particular year groups. To ensure that all children are making good progress we assess them at the end of each phonic phase. The assessment is used to assess not only their knowledge of the sounds and tricky words from the phase but also their segmenting and blending skills. All teachers use the same assessment so that the process is consistent. The assessments is also used to identify gaps in learning and provide additional support (which may be whole class, small group or individual) where it is needed. The structure of a Phonics Bug lesson includes; revisit/review, teach, practise and then apply. Here at St Marys this looks like this;

- Review/Revisit – previous learnt sounds and tricky words.
Oral segmenting and blending
- Teach – New phoneme and grapheme. New tricky word/s.
- Practise – Segmenting and blending with the new sound, spelling words using the new sound. Practical games and activities such as, cross the river, sound/word hunt, hopping phonics, roll a sound etc.
- Apply – Reading/writing a caption or sentence using the words containing the new sound and some high frequency words and tricky words.

The apply part of the lesson will develop as the children go through the phases. For example, in Phase Two the children may read a caption which says 'The red rug'. In Phase Five for example the children may be asked to write the sentence 'Kay must pay for her new bike'

Phonics is taught daily in Reception and KSI. Children develop tools and skills within their phonic lessons to help them with their reading and writing. These tools and skills will help the children throughout their journey here at St Marys.

Teaching strategies

- Robot arms/chopping boards for orally segmenting and blending words.
- Sound fingers – counting the sounds in words.
- Stretching words out.
- Practical games and activities.
- Bug club, phonics play and espresso videos and games.
- Power points and notebook slides.
- Actions for the sounds.
- Phoneme frames & spotters.
- Consistency of teaching resources – sounds mats/flashcards.

Support in school

- Additional phonic sessions.
- Extra readers.
- Early morning work.
- Support for children who did not pass the phonics check in Year 1. Chance to retake the check in Year 2. Support for children in Year 3 and above who do not pass.
- Dancing bears/beat dyslexia.

Home/school

- Phonic workshops/videos.
- Phonic screening workshop/video.
- Reading books matched to phonic ability.
- Sound books, new weekly sounds and tricky words.
- Bug club online books and phonic games.
- Spelling test.

High Frequency words

- Decodable common words, that the children will come across in their reading and writing.
- Children should know 26 by the end of Phase Two
- 12 by the end of Phase Three
- 7 by the end of Phase Four
- 16 by the end of Phase Five

Phonics in Reception.

Phase 1(Phonological awareness), 2, 3 and 4

The teaching of phonological awareness starts before the children come to school as this phase is about developing the children's speaking and listening skills. Even though it starts before the children come to school, here at St Marys we spend 2 or 3 weeks on this and use a range of activities to develop the children's speaking and listening skills. It includes seven elements that the children need to be able to do in order to help them progress through their phonic journey. These seven elements are; environmental – listening to the sounds around them, instrumental – awareness of sounds made by various instruments, body percussion – awareness of sounds and rhythms their body makes, rhythm and rhyme – experiencing rhythm and rhyme in speech, alliteration – focus on initial sounds and matching words to the same sound, voice sounds – awareness of different vocal sounds and finally beginning to orally segment and blend words.

Phonological awareness is a vital phase so continues throughout Reception and KS1 phonic lessons.

We then move on to teaching Phase Two around week 4 of Reception. The purpose of this phase is to teach the first 19 sounds, which is mostly single letter sounds however there are some digraphs (2 letters that make

l sound, eg.ch). It is also about moving on from orally segmenting and blending to segmenting and blending with letters. By the end of the phase many children will be able to read some VC and CVC words, spell them out using magnetic letters and write them on paper or whiteboards.

Towards the end of the phase children should be able to read two syllable words and captions. Children also learn tricky words within this phase, these are words that the children cannot decode such as the, to, I. We teach Phase Two as whole class phonics but do split into groups and provide the children with the support they need.

Phase Two is taught throughout the Autumn term and there are 5 sets of sounds within the phase and we teach a set a week. This allows us lots of time for consolidating the sounds and developing the children's segmenting and blending skills.

We move on to teaching Phase Three in the Spring term where again we teach a set a week which allows us time for consolidation of the sounds and the segmenting and blending skills. It also gives us time to develop the children's writing development. Phase Three consists of a further 25 new graphemes, most of these are digraphs however there are some trigraphs that the children are taught (3 letters which make l sound). The children are also taught new tricky words within the phase such as, she, he, me. We also focus on teaching the children to read questions and sentences. Phase Three phonics is taught in groups where possible, this allows us to support all the children within the class.

Within the Summer term of Reception, we will consolidate all the sounds from Phase Two and Three. We will consolidate the children's segmenting and blending skills, reading and writing CVC words and playing games and activities that focus on phonological awareness elements too. The last few weeks of Reception we teach the children Phase Four phonics. This phase has no new sounds but consolidates the children's knowledge of graphemes in reading and spelling words containing adjacent consonants and polysyllabic words.

Phonics in Year 1

Phase 4 and 5

Phase Four is taught for the first couple of weeks for consolidation. Then moving on to the teaching of Phase Five which broadens the children's knowledge of phonemes and graphemes for use in reading and spelling. They will learn new graphemes for reading and alternative pronunciations for phonemes they already know. There are 18 new graphemes for reading and 13 alternative pronunciations. Children become quicker at recognising phonemes and blending them. When spelling words children will choose the appropriate graphemes to represent the phonemes and begin to build word specific knowledge of the spelling of words. For example, the children learn in Phase Three the 'ai' sound in rain, the children will then learn the 'ay' sound as in day in Phase Five. We would teach the children that you would find the 'ai' sound in the middle and the 'ay' sound at the end (mostly), we would then encourage the children to think about where they can hear the sound in the word and select the sound they think goes there.

Phase Five also has tricky words within it and the children will also consolidate reading polysyllabic words, reading questions and choosing the right answer for example, which of these are days of the week? Monday Tuesday September Friday. Children will also learn about homographs – learning that two words can look the

same but the correct pronunciation can be worked out in the context of the sentence. For example, wind the bobbin up, he read the book. By the end of Phase Five the children will be expected to more complex sentences showing their knowledge of the phonemes and the graphemes they have learnt.

Within the children's phonic lessons, they will segment and blend/decode real and alien words. These alien words are made up of the phonemes/graphemes that the children already know but just make up an alien word. For example, chak, wodder, floit. These alien words will appear in the Year 1 phonic check.

Children in Year 1 will take part in the phonics screening check, the check takes place in June and is done on a one-to-one basis with the children. It is usually the class teacher who does the phonic check with them.

The phonic screening check is assessing the children's ability to segment and blend/decode the words. During the check the children will read 40 decodable words, most of these are real words however some are alien words. The check is assessing all of the phoneme/grapheme knowledge the children have learnt from Phase Two to Five. The children will do lots of practising of reading and decoding real and alien words during their phonic lessons. The children can retake the phonic screening test in Year 2 if they do not pass it in Year 1.

Phonics in Year 2

Children should be able to read hundreds of words, doing this in three ways; reading the words automatically if they are very familiar, decoding them quickly and silently because their segmenting and blending is well established or decoding them out loud. Children's spelling should be phonemically accurate most of the time. During this phase children become fluent readers and more accurate spellers. Children within this phase should be reading for pleasure and learning and not learning to read. Children will develop strategies to help with their comprehension skills such as using prior knowledge, clarifying meaning, asking and answering questions about a text they have read creating mental imagery and summarising what has been read.

In Phase Six children need to acquire more word-specific knowledge. They still need to segment words into phonemes to spell them however they also learn that good spelling involves not only doing this and representing all the phonemes which could be plausible but also where necessary, choosing the right grapheme from several possibilities. Children will learn word specific spellings such as see/sea, goal, pole, bowl, zoo, clue, flew. It is important to spend time in this phase on common words that have rare or irregular spellings e.g. they, there, said. Children will also learn about suffixes which indicate tenses, the rules for adding ing, ed, er, est, ful, ly and y. They will learn plural spelling and using prefixes to change words.