

Phonics Policy

St Matthew's Catholic Primary School



Sian McDonald

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Review Date

Vision and Aims

At St Matthew's, we believe that learning to read is one of the most important foundations of a child's education. Through high-quality, systematic phonics teaching, we aim to give every child the knowledge, skills and confidence to become a fluent, independent and enthusiastic reader. Rooted in our Catholic mission, we want every child to feel valued and supported as a reader, developing a love of books, language and learning. We maintain high expectations for all pupils, including those with SEND, pupils learning English and those facing disadvantage, ensuring that every child receives the support they need to make progress and succeed.

Our aims are to:

- Provide a consistent, systematic and rigorous approach to the teaching of phonics from Reception through Key Stage 1 and, where appropriate, into Key Stage 2, using the Read Write Inc. and Fresh Start programmes.
- Ensure that all children develop secure knowledge of the alphabetic code and the skills of blending for reading and segmenting for spelling.
- Enable children to develop accuracy, fluency and confidence in reading and spelling.
- Ensure phonics teaching is inclusive and accessible to all pupils, with appropriate support and adaptations provided where needed.
- Identify children who require additional support promptly and provide targeted intervention to help them keep up with the programme.
- Use regular assessment to identify gaps in learning, monitor progress and inform teaching.
- Ensure staff have the training, knowledge and confidence to deliver high-quality phonics teaching consistently.
- Establish consistent routines, language and expectations across the school.
- Provide opportunities for children to apply their phonics knowledge through appropriately matched decodable texts.
- Develop strong partnerships with parents and carers to support phonics and reading at home.
- Monitor and evaluate the quality and impact of phonics teaching to ensure continuous improvement.

Progression in Phonics

Expectations of progress EYFS & KS1

EYFS

	Autumn Half Term	End of Autumn Term	Spring Half Term	End of Spring Term	Summer half Term	End of Year 1
Expected story book colour	1B	1C	Ditty	Red	Green	Green
How many sounds they should know	16-24	25-30	25-30	31-34	35-40	41-46

Year 1

	Autumn Half Term	End of Autumn Term	Spring Half Term	End of Spring Term	Summer half Term	End of Year 1
Expected story book colour	purple	pink	orange	yellow	yellow	blue
How many sounds they should know	47-51	52-57	58-63	64-68	69-75	All 75

Year 2

	Autumn Half Term	End of Autumn Term	Spring Half Term	End of Spring Term	Summer half Term	End of Year 2
Expected story book colour	blue	grey	Shared reading	Shared reading	Shared reading	Shared reading
How many sounds they should know	All 75	All 75	All 75	All 75	All 75	All 75

Intended Learning

By the end of primary school, our aim is for every pupil to be a confident, fluent and increasingly independent reader who can decode unfamiliar words accurately, read with appropriate fluency and expression, and apply their knowledge of phonics and spelling patterns when reading and writing. Pupils should have a secure understanding of the alphabetic code and be able to draw on this knowledge when encountering unfamiliar vocabulary. Where pupils have not yet secured these skills, they will continue to receive appropriate targeted support beyond the point at which whole-class phonics teaching has ended.

We maintain high expectations for all pupils, regardless of their starting point, background or individual circumstances. This includes pupils with SEND, pupils learning English as an additional language (EAL), disadvantaged pupils and those requiring additional support to keep up with the programme.

Our phonics curriculum follows the **Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework** in Reception and supports the **National Curriculum for England** in Key Stages 1 and 2. Read Write Inc. provides our systematic synthetic phonics programme, with Fresh Start used where appropriate for pupils requiring continued phonics support.

EYFS, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 Progression

The school's phonics progression document sets out the expected progression through Reception, Year 1 and Year 2, including expected sound knowledge and appropriately matched reading books.

In Reception, children develop their phonics knowledge progressively through the Read Write Inc. programme. They learn Set 1 sounds, develop oral blending and segmenting skills and begin to apply their knowledge to reading and spelling simple words.

In Year 1, children build systematically on their Reception knowledge, developing increasingly complex grapheme-phoneme correspondences and applying these when decoding unfamiliar words and spelling. Progress is monitored carefully in preparation for the statutory Phonics Screening Check.

In Year 2, children consolidate and extend their phonics knowledge, developing increasing accuracy and fluency in reading and spelling. Children who have not yet secured the expected phonics knowledge receive continued targeted support.

In Key Stage 2, pupils who require further phonics support receive targeted teaching and intervention using the principles and routines of Read Write Inc. or, where appropriate, Fresh Start. Teaching focuses on addressing specific gaps, developing accurate decoding and spelling, and increasing reading fluency.

Curriculum Design and Planning

Phonics at St Matthew's is planned using the **Read Write Inc. (RWI) Phonics programme** as our systematic synthetic phonics spine. The programme provides a carefully sequenced progression from Reception through Key Stage 1, with further targeted teaching in Key Stage 2 where required.

Teachers follow the agreed RWI progression and routines to ensure consistency and fidelity across the school. Teachers remain responsible for adapting the delivery of the programme to meet the needs of their pupils. Adaptations may include pace, repetition and practice, examples, modelling, oral rehearsal, grouping, resources and targeted intervention. Where assessment identifies gaps or misconceptions, teachers revisit prior learning and provide additional opportunities to practise and apply knowledge before introducing new content. Adaptations are made without compromising the systematic and cumulative nature of the programme.

Subject progression identifies the key grapheme-phoneme correspondences, blending and segmenting skills, vocabulary and reading behaviours that build progressively from Reception through Year 6.

- **Repetition, Retrieval and Practice** - Revisiting and practising previously taught phonics knowledge is an essential part of our curriculum. Children regularly retrieve and rehearse grapheme-phoneme correspondences, practise blending and segmenting, and apply their knowledge when reading and spelling. This repeated practice supports automaticity and fluency. For example, when a new grapheme-phoneme correspondence is introduced, previously taught sounds continue to be revisited through sound practice, word reading and spelling. Children practise blending words containing both new and previously taught sounds before progressing to more complex words. Where assessment identifies an insecure sound or skill, it is deliberately revisited through additional modelling, oral practice, reading and spelling.
- **Vocabulary** - Phonics vocabulary is introduced and used consistently across the school. Children become familiar with terminology such as phoneme, grapheme, digraph, trigraph, sound, blend, segment, decode, Fred Talk, read, write, word and special friends. Staff use agreed RWI terminology and model precise phonics language when discussing how children have read or spelt a word. Key vocabulary is revisited regularly so that children develop increasing confidence in using it.

Strong Foundations in Phonics

In Reception, children develop the foundations for phonics through purposeful play, high-quality adult interaction, rich language experiences and carefully planned daily phonics teaching. Children develop listening and attention, vocabulary, speaking and the ability to hear and distinguish sounds. Oral blending and segmenting are explicitly modelled and practised before children apply these skills to reading and spelling.

Adults model clear pronunciation and consistent phonics vocabulary, giving children regular opportunities to rehearse sounds and words through songs, rhymes, stories, games and partner talk. Alongside systematic RWI teaching, children experience high-quality books, stories and poems to develop vocabulary, comprehension, listening skills and a love of reading.

These foundations are built upon throughout Reception and Key Stage 1 as children progress from hearing and manipulating sounds to recognising graphemes, blending to read and segmenting to spell.

Teaching and Learning – The St Matthew’s Way

Phonics lessons follow the St Matthew’s Way: teachers revisit prior learning, introduce the learning focus and precise phonics vocabulary, explicitly model new sounds or skills, check understanding and provide guided and independent practice. The gradual **“I do, we do, you do”** approach supports children to move towards increasing independence and fluency.

Teachers follow agreed Read Write Inc. routines and use clear modelling, repetition, oral rehearsal and questioning to develop secure phonics knowledge. Children have frequent opportunities to respond together, practise with a partner and apply their learning when reading and spelling. Ongoing checks for understanding help teachers identify misconceptions, adjust the pace of teaching and provide additional practice.

Consistent routines and signals support children's attention and participation. Carefully chosen examples and regular practice help children make connections between sounds, graphemes and words.

Inclusion and Adaptation

The same ambitious phonics learning is made accessible through responsive teaching. Teachers adapt the level of support, pace and amount of practice without lowering expectations or compromising the systematic progression of the Read Write Inc. programme. Read Write Inc. provides approaches and adaptations to support pupils with SEND, including children who are non-verbal, enabling them to participate through appropriate communication, visual and physical responses.

Teachers may use additional modelling, oral rehearsal, repetition, visual prompts, actions, partner practice and one-to-one support. For pupils who are non-verbal or have difficulties with speech and language, appropriate RWI strategies and alternative ways of demonstrating understanding are used.

Pupils learning English as an additional language benefit from clear modelling, repetition, visual support and explicit teaching of phonics vocabulary and pronunciation. For pupils with SEND or

other additional needs, teachers work with the SENDCO and relevant staff to identify and remove barriers to learning.

Assessment and Responsive Teaching

Assessment is integral to phonics teaching at St Matthew's. Teachers use **continuous informal assessment** during lessons through observation, questioning, oral responses, blending, segmenting, reading and spelling activities to identify misconceptions, gaps and children who require further support.

Half-termly RWI assessments provide a formal measure of progress and identify gaps in sound knowledge and specific areas for reading development, including decoding, blending, word reading and fluency. Assessment information is used to inform planning, adjust pace and practice, determine teaching groups and provide targeted intervention where required.

At the end of **Year 1**, pupils complete the **statutory Phonics Screening Check**. Results are considered alongside ongoing school assessment to identify pupils requiring continued support in Year 2 and beyond. Assessment is purposeful and directly informs teaching and next steps.

Personal Development and Building the Kingdom

Phonics contributes to children's personal development by building confidence in communication, listening, speaking and expressing ideas. Through stories, poems, discussion and shared reading, children develop vocabulary, empathy and an understanding of different people, experiences and communities.

Children are encouraged to listen respectfully, take turns, support one another and persevere when learning new sounds and words. High-quality texts provide opportunities to explore values such as kindness, compassion, respect, fairness and service, supporting our Catholic mission and helping children to understand their role in **Building the Kingdom**.

Developing confident, fluent readers enables children to access the wider curriculum, engage with stories and information, and increasingly read independently for learning and pleasure.

Leadership, Monitoring and Review

Class teachers and LSAs plan, teach, adapt and assess phonics in line with the agreed Read Write Inc. programme. Class teachers communicate regularly with the Phonics/Reading Lead to discuss pupil progress, assessment, provision and concerns.

Allocated leadership time enables the Phonics/Reading Lead to undertake learning walks, review planning and assessment, monitor standards and provision, and provide team teaching, coaching and support. **Weekly phonics practice sessions** provide ongoing CPD, supporting consistency in RWI routines, pronunciation, modelling, assessment and approaches to supporting pupils with additional needs.

Monitoring focuses on the quality and consistency of phonics teaching, pupils' knowledge and progress, the effectiveness of adaptations and interventions, and the development of accurate decoding and reading fluency.

The curriculum lead and senior leaders ensure that phonics is implemented consistently and provide appropriate time and support for improvement. Governors hold leaders to account for the quality, effectiveness and accessibility of phonics provision.

Findings from monitoring and assessment inform action plans, staff development, intervention and curriculum planning. The Phonics/Reading Lead regularly reports to governors on strengths, areas for development, pupil progress and next steps.

Working with Families

Information about children's phonics groups and progress is shared with parents and carers, alongside practical guidance on how they can support phonics and reading at home. **QR codes** are shared weekly in EYFS and half-termly in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 to support practice of the sounds and skills being taught.

Phonics assessment information is shared with parents and carers each half term, enabling families to see their child's progress, understand their current phonics knowledge and identify next steps for learning. Teachers discuss individual progress and provide guidance where additional support is required.

In EYFS, **half-termly phonics workshops** help parents understand the foundations of phonics, the Read Write Inc. approach and practical ways to support their child's learning at home.

Parents and carers are directed to the **Ruth Miskin Training parent website**, which provides information, resources and training to support Read Write Inc. phonics at home.

The school's published information reflects the phonics curriculum and provision pupils experience in school.

Home Learning and Reading

Phonics homework is not formally set; however, regular practice at home is **strongly encouraged**. Parents and carers are encouraged to use the QR codes shared by school to practise the sounds and skills being taught, supporting children's confidence, retention and developing reading skills.

In EYFS and Key Stage 1, home reading books are carefully matched to the **phonics group and colour** children are working within, enabling them to practise decoding using sounds they have been taught. Regular reading helps children develop accuracy, fluency and confidence.

We believe that learning to read should go hand in hand with developing a **love of reading and strong oracy skills**. Families are encouraged to read and share stories together, talk about books, discuss characters and events, introduce new vocabulary and enjoy books for pleasure.

Related Guidance

This policy should be read alongside:

- **Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework**
- **National Curriculum in England – English Programmes of Study**
- **Read Write Inc. Phonics**
- **Fresh Start Phonics**

- **Department for Education – Reading Framework: Teaching the Foundations of Literacy**
- **Department for Education – Phonics Screening Check guidance**
- **St Matthew’s School Assessment Policy**
- **St Matthew’s SEND Policy**
- **St Matthew’s Reading Policy**
- **St Matthew’s English Policy**