

# Phonics curriculum

## Curriculum intent

### What is the intent of the Phonics curriculum?

- Phonics is taught in a highly structured programme of daily lessons across FS and KS1, starting the year as whole class teaching then progressing onto teaching in smaller groups, according to children's phonic awareness and development.
- We follow the DfE approved phonics scheme, 'Twinkl Phonics', which provides a systematic, synthetic approach to the teaching of phonics. This is supplemented by interventions such as ELS (Early Literacy Support) and BRS (Better Reading Stamina) for those children not reaching age related expectations in Year 1.
- Each phonics session gives an opportunity for children to revisit their previous experience, be taught new skills, practise together and apply what they have learned, **challenging the children to have high aspirations.**
- Children in Reception begin with level 1, which provides a range of listening activities through play, to develop their listening skills. Progress is tracked at the end of each term. As children move through Reception they continue to build upon the listening activities and are introduced to level 2, which marks the start of systematic phonic work.
- Grapheme-phoneme correspondence is introduced during level 2. The process of segmenting whole words and selecting letters to represent those phonemes is taught writing the letters to encode words.
- Level 3 completes the teaching of the alphabet and then moves on to cover sounds represented by more than one letter, learning one representation for each of the 44 phonemes. At this stage, just one grapheme (spelling) is given for each phoneme. When children become secure, they continue into level 4 where they start to read and spell words containing adjacent consonants. No new phonemes are introduced at this phase.
- It is expected that children will enter level 5 as they begin Year 1, broadening their knowledge of graphemes and phonemes for use in reading and spelling. They will learn new graphemes and alternative pronunciations for these and graphemes they already know, where relevant.
- It is expected that children entering Year 2 will start level 6, which develops a variety of spelling strategies including homophones (word specific spellings) e.g., see/ sea, spelling of words with prefixes and suffixes, doubling and dropping letters where necessary. In addition, the accurate spelling of words containing unusual grapheme-phoneme correspondences e.g., laughs, two.
- The spelling of high frequency and tricky words are taught continuously throughout each of the 6 phases.

## Curriculum Implementation

### How does the curriculum overview allow all children to achieve?

- Our aim is to make our SEND and Disadvantaged children to feel valued and included and to have high aspirations. Inclusion is embedded in our practice and teachers regularly review and reflect upon their own practice to ensure progress is made. Teaching is adapted and responds to the strengths and needs of all learners.
- Children's progress is continually reviewed to allow for individual needs to be met. **High aspirations are encouraged so each child fulfils their potential.**
- Children are formally assessed at the end of each term.
- The national phonics screening check is performed in June of Year 1. Prior to this, the Year 1 phonics workshop gives parents information about how they can support their children at home with phonics.
- The purpose of the screening check is to confirm that all children have learned phonic decoding to an age-appropriate standard.
- The children who did not meet the required standard for the check in Year 1 enter again in year 2 with additional support. As children enter KS2, provision is made for those children still requiring daily phonics.

### How is prior knowledge revisited?

- Pupils have regular reading sessions with an adult to ensure the pupils are regularly practising and applying their phonics knowledge. Reading books match their phonic ability.
- Every phonics lesson begins by revisiting previous learning.
- Level 4 focuses on revisiting all sounds learnt, so consolidation and assessment of secure knowledge ensures children are reaching age related goals. Interventions are then put in place for any child at risk of not achieving age related expectations.

### How is assessment used to identify and fill gaps?

- Assessment is used consistently and strategically to evaluate children's progress, knowledge and understanding. It is a valuable tool used by teachers to be able to identify individual strengths and areas for development to inform next steps in planning and teaching. Teacher, peer and self-assessment, oral and written feedback and formative and summative assessments inform next steps, interventions, amendments and provision to ensure children are supported and extended.
- Teachers use Phonics Tracker to support their assessments.

- Teachers regularly assess the pupil's phonics knowledge using the phonics assessment grids and Reading Early Learning Goal (in EYFS). These regular assessments inform planning and allow teachers to identify any gaps in learning, **ensuring high aspirations for every child**.
- Attainment in phonics will be measured by the Phonics Screening Test at the end of Year 1.
- In the EYFS the continuous provision matches the pupil's current knowledge and understanding whilst ensuring the children are suitably challenged.
- The children have reading books that match their current phonics level, which they are encouraged to read regularly at home. **Children are also encouraged to visit the library both at school and at home, to broaden their exposure to culture and the arts.**

#### How is cultural capital developed through the curriculum?

- Regardless of background, ability or additional needs, by the time children leave St Thomas More, they will:
  - a. have the skills to decode words in order to be able to read fluently with a secure understanding of what they have read.
  - b. have access to a home reading book matched to their phonic ability. Reception children will begin with fully decodable storybooks, progressing through different stages as they develop their skills and confidence.
  - c. be enthusiastic and motivated readers who are confident and will enjoy reading a wide variety of genres and text types, **having a broad exposure to culture and the arts.**

#### Curriculum Impact

##### What does impact look like?

- Through the teaching of systematic phonics, our children will become fluent readers by the end of Key Stage 1. Children focus on developing fluency and comprehension throughout the school.
- By the end of Reception, children are secure in level 3 of Twinkl Phonics and are beginning to work in level 4. Children will know the grapheme / phoneme recognition for all 44 level 2 and 3 graphemes and they can apply this knowledge to reading and writing words of more than three sound buttons.
- By the end of Year One, children will pass the Year One phonics screening. They will be secure in level 5 of letters and sounds and know the grapheme / phoneme recognition for level 2, 3 and 5 graphemes, including alternative graphemes. They will also apply this knowledge to reading and writing words.

- By the time children leave St Thomas More, they **are competent readers with high aspirations**, who can recommend books to their peers, have a thirst for reading a range of genres including poetry, and participate in discussions about books, including evaluating an author's use of language and the impact this can have on the reader.