

St Thomas More Catholic Primary School

Phonics Policy

Introduction

At St Thomas More Catholic Primary School, we are committed to the delivery of excellence in the teaching of Phonics. We aim to develop each child so that they are able to read with fluency as well as develop a love of reading that will stay with our children all their lives. Being able to read is the most important skill children will learn during their early schooling.

Overview

- Phonics sessions should be taught discretely every day and practitioners should ensure a high quality, systematic, synthetic approach at a brisk pace.
- Phonics teaching is carried out progressively. In Foundation and Key Stage One, children are taught through Twinkl Phonics, a government validated systematic synthetic phonics programme, which offers a coherently planned sequence of lessons that supports the effective teaching of phonics.
- The aim is that all children will begin to develop their phonic knowledge and decoding skills throughout Key Stage One in order to become fluent readers.
- A multi-sensory approach is favoured, which suits all visual, auditory and kinaesthetic learners. Sessions should include opportunities for active involvement and creative activities.
- Children should be taught that phonemes should be blended from left to right in order to read and that words can be segmented into their phonemes for spelling and that this is the reverse of blending. It is essential that this is demonstrated to children throughout the phonics session and reinforced whenever appropriate in other sessions, differentiated group activities and within continuous provision.
- Throughout the 6 phases, all children should be taught the grapheme/phoneme correspondences, high frequency words (including those that do not conform completely to grapheme/phoneme correspondence rules) and how to use their phonetic knowledge to read and write both regular and irregular words.
- Children's progress should be assessed through observations during phonics sessions and through reading and writing and through Salford reading tests.

Organisation

Phonics sessions are taught by class teachers in individual classes. Learning outcomes and support are differentiated, based on the needs of children working on different phonics phases. Teaching assistants support key children during the phonics session as well as conducting intensive interventions, if needed, in order to progress and develop understanding. Groups should be swapped around regularly to ensure that those needing extra support get a range of teacher and teaching assistant inputs.

Expectations

(Expectations are dependent on the ability of each individual year group. Groups should be assessed and the needs of individual children met through sessions and interventions)

In Reception, classes will be assessed on phonic knowledge upon entry and will begin phonics at phase 1 or 2. Throughout the year, the children will progress onto phases 3 and 4.

In Year One, classes will follow on from the work done in Reception and will cover phase 5 by the end of academic year.

In Year Two, classes will follow on from the work done in Year One and aim to recap alternative phonemes/spellings in phase 5 and complete phase 6 by the end of the year. Phonics work should be continued throughout Key Stage 2 through guided group work where appropriate.

Planning

Planning should be split into four sections (Revisit and Review, Teach, Practice, Apply) and include differentiated learning outcomes based on the needs of the children in the class.

Activities should be as interactive and creative as possible, in order to maintain children's interest and enable all children to be engaged.

Ideas for interactive session ideas can be taken from the Twinkl Phonics programme.

Consistent Strategies

Staff should model segmenting words using phoneme fingers and blend words by either blocking words together (short words i.e., cvc – phase 2 and 3) or stretching words out of the mouth (longer words – phase 4 onwards).

Phonics grids should be provided in writing areas to provide visual support when writing.

Staff must try to maintain the use of correct language during phonic sessions and encourage the children to do the same whilst also translating into child friendly understanding i.e., explaining that a phoneme is a sound.

- **Phoneme** – the individual sounds in a word e.g. C a t
- **Grapheme** – a written form of sounds in a word e.g. Ch i p (all individual graphemes)
- **Digraph** - two letters which together make one sound, e.g. sh, ch, ee, ph, oa.
- **Split digraph** - two letters, which work as a pair, split, to represent one sound, e.g. a-e as in cake, or i-e as in kite.
- **Segmentation** - hearing the individual phonemes within a word e.g. crash is c – r – a – sh.
- **Blending** - merging the individual phonemes together to pronounce a word e.g. 'th-i-n-k is think.
- **Phoneme-grapheme** correspondence – relationship between sound (phoneme) and written symbol (grapheme).

Assessment

Children should be assessed through observations during phonic sessions and evidence in reading and writing. Phonics Tracker assessments should be completed at minimum, twice a term. These assessments will inform teachers and the phonics lead on where children achievement and where children may need additional support. Children will be tested towards the end of Year One as part of the Phonics Screening Check, which will assess their phonetic decoding abilities. As part of the screening check, children will demonstrate

their knowledge of grapheme-phoneme correspondences (GPCs), simple word structures and complex word structures, including two syllable words. Children who have not reached this standard at the end of Year 1, will receive support from school to ensure they can improve their phonic decoding skills. Children will then have the opportunity to retake the screening check.

Targeting children who are not making progress

If children are not making the expected progress, there are a number of ways this can be addressed. Interventions may be put in place to develop phonic knowledge of a small group of children. This should be monitored by the class teacher and feedback from the adult leading the group should be shared to inform planning. Interventions can include focused work on phoneme/grapheme correspondences or developing reading using phonetically decodable books. Termly tracking meetings are used to highlight individuals/small groups who are not meeting the learning outcomes within differentiated sessions and next steps can be decided. Discussions with the SENCO to highlight any concerns with individuals/small groups that may need to be addressed and appropriate strategies will be put into place.

EAL/SEN Children

The needs of all children should be met within phonics sessions and this should be assessed and planned for at the beginning of each year through discussions with previous class teachers and the SENCO. Potential barriers to learning should be removed.

Specific teaching strategies can be implemented into whole class teaching or small guided group work during phonics sessions to meet the needs of individual children.

Teaching assistants are to support children during sessions and bilingual support can be given.

Phonics in Continuous Provision

Teachers will aim to develop a phonics-based area and/or interactive display in their classrooms (Early Years Foundation Stage). The area will include a focus on phonemes/graphemes and high frequency words from the phase being covered, as well as resources that will support and develop their learning in phonics. This will encourage children to develop their phonics skills and allow an opportunity for staff to work with children in order to meet their needs and address any misconceptions.

Review Date: January 2023

Next Review Date: January 2025