

# **St. Matthew's Church of England Primary School**

## **Phonics Policy**

At St Matthew's C of E Primary School we strive to ensure that all children become successful, fluent readers by the end of Key Stage One and believe 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 a skill that helps to develop vocabulary and improve understanding of words. In synthetic phonics lessons, children learn the relationship between letters and sounds. Teaching them to recognise the sounds each letter makes, and how to put them together, enables them to read. It also helps with spelling as they learn how to break up words into sounds, in order to spell them. This policy is aimed at reinforcing a consistent, high-quality approach to the teaching of phonics 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 establish a cohesive whole-school approach with progression and continuity in the teaching and learning of phonics throughout the school with a focus on quality first teaching.
- To ensure that systematic synthetic phonics (following the Twinkl Phonics programme) is the first approach pupils use to help with their reading and spelling.
- To ensure children learn to read and write all 44 graphemes in the English language.
- To ensure children have specific strategies to identify and decode common exception words (tricky words).
- To have robust assessment procedures to check progress and identify pupils in need of intervention.
- For pupils to apply their phonic knowledge in their reading and writing across the whole curriculum.
- For pupils to develop a love of reading and enjoy reading for pleasure confidently across a range of genres.

### **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 strong phonetic knowledge, understanding and skills so that they can decode words confidently and engage with higher-order reading and writing skills.

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

We use Twinkl Phonics as our systematic, synthetic phonics programme (SSP). It is high quality and robust in its purpose. With a clear, structured progression through the programme, it allows all of our pupils to meet or exceed the expected standard. The Twinkl Phonics approach combines rigorous progression with engaging learning materials. We believe that children learn best when they are enjoying their learning and that this comes from a mix of bright, fun and engaging lesson resources within a clear and systematic approach that builds on children's skills daily. The structure of every Twinkl Phonics lesson follows this familiar five-part structure to ensure that the four cornerstones of phonics are covered. During our phonics lessons, children will repeat the elements from the four cornerstones of phonics to ensure that they have rapid and automatic recall of grapheme-phoneme correspondences (GPCs) and tricky/common exception words; each day, they will experience blending and segmenting activities to allow regular practice of these core skills.

Each Phonics lesson should include the following sections:

- Revise – Overlearn the previous graphemes and words
- Teach – Introduce a new grapheme / words
- Practise – Develop GPCs (grapheme phoneme correspondences) /read and spell new words
- Apply – Use the new graphemes / words in games and activities to secure knowledge
- Assess – Monitor progress within each phase to inform planning.

Stories are used to provide a stimulus and context for teaching in our phonics lessons. The story content also integrates games to practise the skills taught. Our phonics lessons are also supported by weekly decodable mini books, which are part of our core provision, where children can apply the skills they have learnt in their phonics lessons. As part of our wider SSP provision, there are also follow-up activities that the children can complete independently, in pairs or in groups that relate to the day's learning. In addition, we use actions to help the children remember phonemes; this kinaesthetic, visual and auditory approach helps the children to retain the phonemes and supports children with SEND. Decodable reading books are also provided, matched to the children's phonic level; Rhino Readers, Oxford Reading Tree, Project X and Phonics Bug reading books.

We use both individual and guided reading to teach reading alongside phonics. We also use a mix of eBooks and physical books. In conjunction with the teaching of phonics, we also give our children phonics-based activities to take home at the appropriate level. These include parent information sheets, home learning booklets and reading bookmarks. This helps to consolidate what has been taught in school and encourages a cohesive whole-school approach.

Phonics is taught daily to all children in EYFS and key stage 1. Children have the opportunities to consolidate previous learning, learn new content, practise and apply what they have learnt. This consists of a mixture of carpet time and follow-up activities. In EYFS, phonics will also form part of their continuous provision for children to access following their discrete phonics lesson. In Years 1 and 2, phonics lessons will last 30 minutes daily. Some children may continue to need discrete phonics sessions in Key Stage 2. If this is the case, they will receive a daily 20-minute intervention session, delivered using the Twinkl Phonics interventions. Children will be regularly assessed to ensure they are receiving phonics teaching at the correct level.

### **Assessment**

In nursery, children will be assessed in line with the learning objectives/outcomes of each aspect. This is very much a personalised individual approach and should consider observations and assessments from children's independent play, involvement in group work and phonic lessons. It is important that all staff involved within a child's learning contribute to the child's learning journey/assessment to give a holistic and true reflection of the child's phonic ability.

The children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 are assessed on recognising the GPC, blending to read and segmenting to spell. This thorough assessment is carried out termly to ensure that children have the skills securely in place for reading and spelling. Teachers use the assessment to inform effective provision for all children, using this to plan and deliver whole class phonics lessons that engage and challenge all children within the lesson.

In the summer term, all children in Year 1 undertake the national Phonics Screening Check. This is an assessment carried out in school during which the children will be assessed on their ability to segment and blend a range of 40 real and 'alien' words. Alien words are a selection of phonetically decodable nonsense words. The words in this assessment gauge the children's understanding of the phonemes learnt and give the school the knowledge of where the gaps are. If the children are not secure in recognising, segmenting and blending these words and therefore do not pass the assessment, they will be offered further support as they enter Year 2 and will be able to repeat the assessment in the summer term of Year 2. This assessment also allows us to put in specific and personal support for those children who require additional assistance. If a child does not meet the expected standard in Year 2, then phonics intervention will be

continued into Key Stage 2. At this point, the child will also be monitored by the SENCo to assess for additional needs.

### **Parental Involvement**

Parental involvement is key in the acquisition of phonics and supports us in developing a cohesive whole-school approach. A phonics workshop for Reception parents is held in the Autumn Term. This is where we share information on techniques, such as saying pure sounds and blending. We also share support resources regularly, such as parent information sheets, as these can help ensure that parents and carers are using the same strategies at home as the children are learning in school. Phonically decodable reading books are also sent home for parents to support their child's phonics/reading. Our website also has useful links for parents to use at home.

**This policy is a working document which will be reviewed and evaluated periodically.**

**The named Phonics Leader is: Daniella Thompson**

**Presented to Achievement Committee:**

**Adopted by Full Governing Body:**

**Date of next review:**