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Phonics Policy

September 2021

Due to DfE changes in the validation process of effective systematic synthetic phonics programmes, the school are currently in a period of transition. The school are expected to take part in a phonic pilot starting in October 2021. Until this date the current policy stands.

Introduction

At St. Columba's Catholic 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.

High quality phonics is an important part of the word decoding skills required by children to develop higher level whole language and comprehension skills. This approach is in alignment with our belief that we first 'learn to read' and then 'read to learn'.

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 teach children aural discrimination, phonemic awareness and rhyme to aid reading, writing and spelling development.
- To encourage the use of segmenting and blending so that decoding skills provide a sound foundation for reading, writing and spelling.
- To ensure the teaching of phonics is lively, interactive and investigative.
- To enable children to use phonic awareness across the curriculum.
- To ensure that children know the 44 phonemes within the English language.
- To teach children to recognise the graphemes within words and associate them with the appropriate phoneme when reading.
- To provide children with strategies to identify and decode 'tricky words.'
- To assess, identify and intervene with those children falling behind.

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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, timely and progressive throughout the Foundation Stage, Key Stage One and lower Key Stage Two for those children needing interventions to support phonetic knowledge and understanding.
- To ensure that children have sound 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

At St. Columba's Catholic Primary School, we follow the Letters and Sounds document and use its principles and practice across the EYFS and Key Stage One - this is supported by teachers using song, as well as elements from Phonics Play to support the effective delivery of phonics lessons by catering for all children's needs. In Key Stage Two, interventions are based around Letters and Sounds and are supported through Direct Phonics and precision teaching, in order to meet each child's specific needs.

Teachers use daily assessment to inform effective provision for all children, using this to plan and deliver well differentiated lessons that engage and challenge all children within the lesson. Formal and timetabled assessments are used to inform the rate at which children progress through the phases and secure a sound understanding of phonics. Any children not making expected progress through the phases will be identified immediately and an intervention put in place.

All Year One children take the 'Phonics Screening Check' - a statutory assessment required by legislation. Those who do not meet the pass mark will be given support and intervention programmes in Year Two, to provide them with sufficient knowledge and understanding to re-take the 'Phonics Screening Check' and obtain a pass mark. Those children who do not obtain the required level set by the 'Phonics Screening Check' will receive phonics teaching in the first term of year three - which will be further supported throughout the year

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and across Key Stage Two with Direct Phonics and/or a spelling intervention programme.

Planning for phonics will be done separately from English each Phonics lesson will 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.

Children will follow the process and be aware of the 4 steps within a session. The assessment part will be carried out by the class teacher or TA delivering the session.

Organisation

Children in Nursery will be taught Phase 1 through a differentiated approach within the setting on a daily basis. As children enter Reception, Phase 1 will be taught as necessary and be evident in the environment. As soon as all children are in Reception full time, Phase 2 sounds will be introduced through a structured phonic session.

All staff will be given CPD on Letters and Sounds and the principles behind segmenting and blending. Children in Reception will be taught a discrete phonics session daily for a 25 minute period. This will consist of whole class and group work and interventions to support all learners.

Phonics skills are also embedded in writing and reading tasks in English sessions. Groups will be differentiated to ensure that all children are reaching their full potential within a challenging and supportive environment. The driving ethos should be for all children to complete Phase 4 by the end of Reception and have a sound understanding in order to start the KS1 National Curriculum (Appendix List 1) by the start of the Autumn Term in Year 1. Children are introduced to the "tricky words" and aim to read and write many of the high frequency words for Phases 2 to 4 before they enter Year 1. Children who have not reached the expected level by Year 1 will be placed in an intervention immediately and closely monitored.

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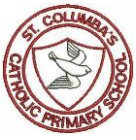
Children in Year 1 have access to high quality daily phonics sessions for twenty-five minutes. Groups will be differentiated to ensure all children reach their full potential; teachers work with groups on a rotational basis to ensure high quality provision for all children. The underlying aim of Year 1 should be to ensure all children have completed the Statutory phonic and spelling work from the Year 1 National Curriculum Appendix List. This will ensure that they are on track to continue with the Year 2 National Curriculum upon to the year group. They should have plenty of practise in recognising 'Alien' or pseudo words, in readiness for the Phonic Screening Check and to give them the confidence to read any word. Children should aim to read and write all the common exception words for Years 1 and 2. Children in Year 2 will have access to high quality daily phonics/spelling lessons for twenty-five minutes. Provision should be differentiated to ensure all children reach their full potential. Teachers work with all groups on a rotational basis to ensure all children have access to high quality phonics teaching. The underlying aim in Year 2 is to ensure that all children have successfully completed the Year 2 Statutory Curriculum while revisiting earlier phonics phases to reinforce previous learning and to also re-experience 'tricky words' that they have encountered before.

Children in Year 3 who have not reached a sufficiently proficient level in GPC awareness and application will be given access to a daily phonics/spelling session across the Autumn term. Children who by the end of the Autumn term have still not reached a sufficiently skilled level of phonetic awareness will have intervention programmes arranged to provide for this need. Children in Key Stage 2 who have not attained a sufficient skill level in GPC awareness and application will have provision in small intervention groups in regards to phonics and/or spelling across the key stage.

Classroom Environment

In each classroom and working area there will be a Phonics Phase/age appropriate display, concentrating on both sounds and key words. In Reception an interactive and transportable Phonic station is used. A number of recommended Phonic apps have been downloaded onto school I-pads to support our Phonic programme.

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Homework

Parental involvement is key in the acquisition of Phonics. Each child in Reception and Year 1 receives a phonic book for each Phase, which contains the sounds and the decodable, tricky and high frequency words to be learnt at home, alongside the daily Phonics lesson. Phonics homework sheets are also provided. Children in Year 2 and KS2 receive spellings to learn. A Phonic Workshop for Reception parents is held in the Autumn term and there are two Phonics Workshops for Year 1 and Year 2 parents during the year.

Assessment

In the EYFS and KS1 we assess pupil progress on our Phonics Assessment Sheet for each phase and plot the children on an analysis sheet. An Assessment Review Sheet is then completed identifying those who are struggling and those who are working above age related expectations. Next steps and planned interventions are completed on the Review Sheet as well as who will be carrying out the intervention them and when they will be carried out.

Towards the Phonic Screening Check, Year 1 pupils will be given practise papers to identify specific skills or any gaps in learning.

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