

# Phonics and Early Reading Policy



Policy developed by Mr Young (English leader): January 2022

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*Shona Taylor*

Chair of Governors

*M. Grogan*

Headteacher

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***'Never settle for less than your best'***

## PHONICS AND EARLY READING POLICY

### Our school motto

Never settle for less than your best.

### Our Vision

Following in the footsteps of Jesus, each member of our community will flourish as resilient, respectful and adaptable individuals prepared for life's journey. Along the way we will encourage and inspire each other to continue growing as beacons of light in our own lives and the wider world.

### Our Mission Statement

St. George's Central seeks to provide quality education rooted in the Christian faith, serving the spiritual, moral, and educational needs of the community of which it is part.

### Intent

#### Phonics (reading and spelling)

At St George's Central CE Primary School and Nursery we believe that all our children can become fluent readers and writers. This is why we teach reading through '*Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised*', which is a systematic and synthetic phonics programme. We start teaching phonics in Nursery/Reception and follow the '*Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised*' progression, which ensures children build on their growing knowledge of the alphabetic code, mastering phonics to read and spell as they move through school.

As a result, all our children are able to tackle any unfamiliar words as they read. We also model the application of the alphabetic code through phonics in shared reading and writing, both inside and outside of the phonics lesson and across the curriculum. We have a strong focus on language development for our children because we know that speaking and listening are crucial skills for reading and writing in all subjects.

### Comprehension

At St George's Central CE Primary School and Nursery we value reading as a crucial life skill. By the time children leave us, they read confidently for meaning and regularly enjoy reading for pleasure. Our school uses the phrase '**Reading, it's a kind of Magic**' as a motto for our school approach to reading. Our readers are equipped with the tools to tackle unfamiliar vocabulary. We encourage our children to see themselves as readers for both pleasure and purpose.

### Implementation

#### Foundations for Phonics in Nursery

We provide a balance of child-led and adult-led experiences for all children that meet the curriculum expectations for 'Communication and language' and 'Literacy'. These include:

- Sharing high-quality stories and poems.
- Learning a range of nursery rhymes and action rhymes.
- Activities that develop focused listening and attention.
- attention to high-quality language.

We ensure Nursery children are well prepared to begin learning grapheme-phoneme correspondences (GPCs) and blending in Reception.

#### Daily phonics lessons in Reception and Year 1

We teach phonics for 30 minutes a day. In Reception, we build from 10-minute lessons, with additional daily oral blending games, to the full-length lesson as quickly as possible. Each Friday, we review the week's teaching to help children become fluent readers.

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Children make a strong start in Reception: teaching begins in Week 2 of the Autumn term. We follow the *'Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised'* expectations of progress:

- Children in Reception are taught to read and spell words using Phase 2 and 3 GPCs, and words with adjacent consonants (Phase 4) with fluency and accuracy.
- Children in Year 1 review Phase 3 and 4 and are taught to read and spell words using Phase 5 GPCs with fluency and accuracy.

#### **Daily Keep-up lessons ensure every child learns to read**

Any child who needs additional practice has daily Keep-up support, taught by a fully trained adult. Keep-up lessons match the structure of class teaching, and use the same procedures, resources and mantras, but in smaller steps with more repetition, so that every child secures their learning.

We timetable daily phonics lessons for any child in Year 2 or 3 who is not fully fluent at reading or has not passed the Phonics Screening Check. These children urgently need to catch up, so the gap between themselves and their peers does not widen. We use the *'Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised'* assessments to identify the gaps in their phonic knowledge and teach to these using the Keep-up resources – at pace.

If any child in Year 3 to 6 has gaps in their phonic knowledge when reading or writing, we plan phonics 'catch-up' lessons to address specific reading/writing gaps. These short, sharp lessons last 10 minutes and take place at least three times a week.

#### **Teaching reading: Reading practice sessions three times a week**

We teach children to read through reading practice sessions three times a week. These:

- Are taught by a fully trained adult to small groups of approximately six children.
- Use books matched to the children's secure phonic knowledge using the *'Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised'* assessments.
- Are monitored by the class teacher, who rotates and works with each group on a regular basis.

Each reading practice session has a clear focus, so that the demands of the session do not overload the children's working memory. The reading practice sessions have been designed to focus on three key reading skills:

- Decoding.
- Prosody: teaching children to read with understanding and expression.
- Comprehension: teaching children to understand the text.

In Reception these sessions start in Week 4. Children who are not yet decoding have daily additional blending practice in small groups, so that they quickly learn to blend and can begin to read books. In Year 2 and 3, we continue to teach reading in this way for any children who still need to practise reading with decodable books.

#### **Home reading**

The decodable reading practice book is taken home to ensure success is shared with the family. Reading for pleasure books also go home for parents/carers to share and read to children. We use the *'Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised'* parents' resources to engage our families and share information about phonics, the benefits of sharing books, how children learn to blend and other aspects of our provision, both online and through workshops.

#### **Additional reading support for vulnerable children**

Children in Reception and Year 1 who are receiving additional phonics 'keep-up' sessions read their reading practice book to an adult daily.

#### **Ensuring consistency and pace of progress**

All teachers and teaching assistants teaching *'Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised'* have received relevant training and support to successfully deliver the programme. Therefore, we have the same expectations of progress.

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We all use the same language, routines and resources to teach children to read so that we lower children's cognitive load. Weekly content grids map each element of new learning to each day, week and term for the duration of the programme. Lesson templates, Prompt cards and 'How to' videos ensure staff all have a consistent approach and structure for each lesson. The English Leader and SLT members use the Audit and Prompt cards to regularly monitor and observe teaching; they use the summative data to identify children who need additional support and gaps in learning.

### **Ensuring reading for pleasure**

*'Reading for pleasure is the single most important indicator of a child's success.'* (OECD 2002)

We value reading for pleasure highly and work hard as a school to implement our reading motto: **'Reading, it's a kind of magic'**.

We read to children every day. We choose these books carefully as we want children to experience a wide range of books, including books that reflect the children at St George's Central CE Primary School and Nursery and our local community as well as books that open windows into other worlds and cultures. Every classroom has an inviting book corner that encourages a love for reading. We curate these books and talk about them to entice children to read a wide range of books. In Nursery/Reception, children have access to the reading corner every day in their free flow time and the books are continually refreshed. Children from Nursery/Reception onwards have a home reading record. Parents/carers record comments to share with the adults in school. Adults in school will write in this on a regular basis to ensure communication between home and school. As the children progress through the school, children are encouraged to write their own comments and keep a list of the books/authors that they have read. The school library is made available for classes to use at protected times. It must be booked via the school booking system. Children across the school have regular opportunities to engage with a wide range of Reading for Pleasure events (book fairs, author visits and workshops, national events etc).

### **Impact**

#### **Assessment**

Assessment is used to monitor progress and to identify any child needing additional support as soon as they need it.

#### **Assessment for learning is used:**

- Daily within class to identify children needing 'keep-up' support.
- Weekly in the 'Review lesson' to assess gaps, address these immediately and secure fluency of GPCs, words and spellings.

#### **Summative assessment is used:**

- Every six weeks to assess progress, to identify gaps in learning that need to be addressed, to identify any children needing additional support and to plan the Keep-up support that they need.
- By SLT and scrutinised through the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* assessment tracker, to narrow attainment gaps between different groups of children and so that any additional support for teachers can be put into place.

### **Statutory assessment**

Children in Year 1 sit the Phonics Screening Check. Any child not passing the check re-sits it in Year 2.

### **Ongoing assessment for catch-up**

Children in Year 2 to 6 are assessed through their teacher's ongoing formative assessment as well as through the half-termly *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* summative assessments.

### **Monitoring**

The teaching staff monitor their children's progress through questioning, observation, discussion, teacher assessment, Assessment for Learning, marking work and formal assessment. The teaching of English is managed through book monitoring, lesson observations and drop-ins, monitoring of short and medium term planning, interviews with children, discussion during staff meetings, learning walks and tracking children's progress in formal assessments.

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### **Role of the Subject Leader**

The school subject leader for English is responsible overseeing Phonics and Early Reading throughout the school. This includes:

- Ensuring continuity and progression from year group to year group.
- Advising staff and arranging and delivering in-service training where appropriate. This will be in-line with the current School Improvement Plan and within the confines of the school budget.
- Advising and supporting colleagues in the implementation and assessment of Phonics and Early Reading throughout the school.
- Assisting with the requisition and maintenance of resources required for the effective teaching of English. Again this will be within the confines of the school budget.
- The monitoring of Phonics and Early Reading, in different ways, to ensure for example, that planned lessons are being delivered, that all aspects are being covered and that tasks are suitably differentiated.
- Analysing data from assessments to inform future whole-school actions, strategies and planning.
- Keeping up to date on changes to the curriculum or any new initiatives.
- Regular meetings/updates with the governor responsible for English/Phonics and Early Reading.

### **The role of the Governing Body**

The Governing Body is responsible for ensuring that:

- There is a current policy statement and curriculum for the teaching of Phonics and Early Reading.
- Phonics and Early Reading is included in the basic curriculum.
- Sufficient time and resources are devoted to Phonics and Early Reading to enable the school to meet its legal obligations and to deliver quality Phonics and Early Reading teaching.

### **The role of the Headteacher**

It is the Headteacher's duty to ensure that:

- Phonics and Early Reading is provided as part of an English education in accordance with the Governors' Agreed Syllabus for all registered children at the school.
- Appropriate staffing and resources are made available to meet the aims and objectives of Phonics and Early Reading within the school.

### **Conclusion**

At St George's Central CE Primary School and Nursery we believe that it is our professional duty to share this policy with all new members of staff, parents and carers on request. The policy will be reviewed in the light of experiences, new developments or requirements. The leader will discuss any aspect of this policy on request

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