

Phonics & Early Reading Policy

At St James Primary School we have aspirations for every single child to succeed. Through our Christian vision we thoroughly believe that all children have the potential to thrive regardless of their starting points, personal context and characteristics. Our children learn through a supportive and purposeful curriculum, linked tightly to the educational programmes set out in the statutory framework for the early years foundation stage, that demonstrates that "With God there is no limit to what you can do. There is no obstacle you can't overcome. Through Him all things are possible." (Matthew 19:26) Our staff are committed to developing a love of learning, whilst developing the skills and values to support the all-round development of every pupil. St James C of E Primary School is a special place where we dream, believe, learn and achieve.

Intent

At St James we strive to teach children to read effectively and quickly using the Read Write Inc. Phonics (RWI) programme from when our children are in Nursery. This includes teaching synthetic phonics, sight vocabulary, decoding and encoding words as well as spelling and accurate letter formation.

We passionately believe that teaching children to read and write independently are the core purposes of our school. These fundamental skills not only hold the keys to the rest of the curriculum, but also have a huge impact on children's self-esteem and future life chances. With reading at the heart of our curriculum, we believe that we are providing our children with the tools to develop a love of reading and ultimately be independent and inquisitive learners.

Using the RWI phonics program we teach children to:

- Read accurately, fluently and with good understanding
- Develop the habit of reading widely and often, for both pleasure and information
- Write clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting their language and style in and for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences

RWI is taught in line with National Curriculum expectations for each year group.

Implementation

Children learn the forty four common sounds in the English language and are taught how to blend these sounds to decode (read) words.

We start by teaching children to read and blend the first thirty Set 1 sounds. Once they have conquered this skill, they start reading stories and texts that have words made up of the sounds they know. This means that they can embed and apply their phonic knowledge and start to build their reading fluency. Once secure, children learn Set 2 and Set 3 sounds and then read texts with increasingly more complex sounds and graphemes. Throughout this process there is a focus on comprehension, reading with expression and reading for enjoyment.

Children are taught in small groups which reflect their phonic knowledge and reading fluency. We regularly assess children so that they are taught in a RWI group which matches their phonic knowledge. We make sure that pupils read books that are closely matched to their increasing knowledge of phonics and ability to read 'tricky words'; so they experience early reading success and gain confidence that they are readers.

The Early Reading Team ensures that phonics teachers are highly skilled through monitoring and coaching sessions and regular training sessions using the RWI portal and regular RWI development days in school.

The lowest 20% of children are closely monitored and given regular 1:1 tutoring and receive additional 1:1 reading time with an adult in school. They are put in smaller RWI groups with experienced RWI teachers to support their needs where possible. In the Early Years we target the lowest 20% of children with regular pinny time within the provision and every other opportunity throughout the day.

To ensure parental involvement we share RWI virtual classroom clips through Tapestry and Seesaw and send home matched reading resources for children to consolidate what they have learnt in school. When children complete their phonics assessment parents are informed of the sounds that require further consolidation and are given links to the virtual classroom in order to do this.

Home reading books are fully decodable and match the children's phonic ability. These are changed weekly by the RWI teacher and link to the book they have been reading in school that week.

The lowest 20% of pupils in Key Stage 2 complete RWI assessments regularly and through those they are grouped accordingly. Their books are matched to their phonic ability using the RWI scheme and they receive weekly interventions with highly skilled RWI teachers. This takes place in a small group setting or 1:1 depending on the needs of the pupil. These pupils are tracked using RWI trackers and the interventions are highlighted to show progression.

Impact

The use of a synthetic phonics programme gives children a flying start with their reading, writing and spelling. It is an effective tool to ensure children 'keep-up' rather than 'catch-up.' The development of children's phonic knowledge is embedded to also support a child's writing skills. With regular assessments, we ensure we meet the needs of all pupils. The progress of each child is closely monitored and tracked and parents/carers are regularly updated in regards to their child's learning. This results in a high percentage of children meeting the Early Learning Goal for Reading at the end of Reception and the Phonic Screening Check in Year One. In Year Two, continuation of RWI lessons alongside Whole Class Guided Reading ensures children can read fluently and access texts at their level and answer questions about these in range of ways. In Key Stage 2 these children work hard to close the gap in order to catch up with their peers and become competent, confident readers.

Prepared by: Mrs H Sheehan & Mrs L Parkinson

Reviewed: September 2021

Next Review Date: September 2022