



**SACRED HEART**  
CATHOLIC PRIMARY  
SCHOOL & NURSERY

## Phonics Policy

*This is our school.*

*Together we worship; Together we learn; Together we belong.*

*With the love of God, our dreams and ambitions come true*



**September 2023**

**Policy Date:** September 2023

**Policy Status:** Statutory Policy

Awaiting approval by Governing

Body October 2023

**Review Cycle:** 18months or as required

**Next Review Date:** January 2025



*At Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School & Nursery we are proud to provide a safe, stimulating and inclusive learning environment where every member of our community is valued and respected.*

### **Mission Statement**

**‘Together we worship, Together we learn,  
Together we belong – with the love of God...  
our dreams and ambitions come true.’**

Our broad, balanced, creative curriculum and enrichment activities provide opportunities for everyone to achieve and succeed. Together we take pride in making a positive contribution to our school and the wider community.

This policy should be referred to in conjunction with the curriculum, assessment and teaching and learning policies.

### **SAFEGUARDING STATEMENT**

“Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment”.



## Phonics Intent

At Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School and Nursery, our Intent is that through the teaching of phonics, we will equip children with the skills and knowledge to become independent and fluent readers, which in turn, will boost self-esteem and promote a love of learning, which will enable children to be proud of who they are and of what they can achieve.

Our families are from a varied and multi-cultural community, with children speaking many different languages which makes our school rich in cultural diversity. Through the teaching of phonics, we want to promote a love of reading. We value reading as a key life skill, and are dedicated to enabling our children to become lifelong readers. Through daily phonics lessons we set high expectations in speech, language and communication. We believe that being able to read fluently promotes a sense of self-worth and allows the children to learn at a deeper level and gives them access to the wider curriculum.

At Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School and Nursery, we use the Read Write Inc. Phonics programme (RWI) which includes teaching synthetic phonics, sight vocabulary, decoding and encoding words as well as spelling and accurate letter formation.

The phonics curriculum is designed to:

- Develop reading skills.
- Encourage fluency.
- Give children a solid base upon which to build as children progress through school.

## Implementation of Phonics

In order for children to read for meaning, phonic skills of decoding, segmenting and blending must be taught and built upon from the Early Years Foundation Stage, all the way through a child's school journey to year 6.

We will support all children to learn to read through clear leadership; consistent teaching and learning approaches; regular monitoring and assessment along with a joint commitment between school and home. Phonics teachers, with support from the Phonics and English Lead, draw upon careful observations and continuous assessment to ensure children are challenged and to identify children who may need additional support. Phonics teaching takes place daily and pupils are taught in differentiated groups. The pupils rapidly learn phonemes and graphemes they need to represent them. Simple mnemonics help them to grasp this quickly. This is especially useful for pupils at risk of making slower progress.

Pupils have frequent practice in reading high frequency words with irregular spellings – common exception words. We make sure that pupils read books that are closely matched to their increasing knowledge of phonics and the common exception words. This is so that, early on, they experience success and gain confidence that they are readers.

All children read aloud during phonics or whole class reading. In addition, some pupils may read at least once more per week with a teacher, teaching assistant or reading volunteer; the focus being on the lowest 20%. At Sacred Heart, the systematic teaching of phonics has high priority in Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. We use a synthetic phonics teaching programme produced by Ruth Miskin called Read Write Inc. (RWI) Phonics as a basis to teach our pupils to read and write. Pupils usually complete the programme by Year 2; some may even finish towards the end of Year 1. Pupils in Lower Key Stage 2 who need extra support with decoding may also follow the programme. For children in Upper Key Stage 2, who need extra practice to learn to read, we want to make sure they catch up quickly and leave our school a reader. Fresh Start is structured in the same way as the Phonics programme, but uses age-appropriate texts.

Pupils start Read Write Inc. phonics when they start EYFS, we group children by their reading progress during RWI sessions. The speed sound session lasts for minutes. We re-assess children every half term so we can place them in a group where they will make the most progress. Staff may also use 'Pinny Time' to revisit key sounds/words at incidental points throughout the day in. Through constant assessment, children are identified that need extra support to progress, therefore fast track one to one tutoring takes place for those pupils that are working below the expected levels. These interventions are designed to be short and intense.

RWI Phonics is presented in a simple but exciting format so that pupils can learn how to read and write sounds effortlessly. First we teach pupils the different pictures that relate to the sounds in the programme. This is introduced in Foundation 1 so that pupils are familiar with the images in preparation for further learning in F2. This is followed by learning one way to read and write the first 40+ sounds in English, using the pictures to help identify the different sounds. -We use a Frog called Fred to play 'Fred Talk' games to help with oral blending and to assist pupils when reading words by sound-blending. Fred says the sound and children help him blend the sounds to read each word. Then we teach the children different spellings of the same sounds and use phrases to help them remember each sound, for example, 'may I play?' accompanies the ay sound. We refer to speed sounds charts so that pupils can begin to make connections between the different graphemes they are learning to represent the sounds. -We want pupils to work together so teamwork is a key part of the RWI sessions.

Alongside this, the teachers read a wide range of stories, poetry and non-fiction to pupils; they are soon able to read these texts for themselves. Embedding the alphabetic code early on, means that pupils quickly learn to write simple words and sentences. We encourage them to compose each sentence aloud until they are confident to write independently. We make sure they write every day. Pupils write at the level of their spelling knowledge.

The quality of the vocabulary they use in their writing reflects the language they have heard in the books the teacher has read to them; they have also discussed what the words mean.

Our aim is for pupils to complete the phonics programme as quickly as possible. The sooner they complete it, the sooner they will be able to choose books to read at their own interest and comprehension level.

Through the teaching of systematic phonics, our aim is for children to become fluent readers by the end of Key Stage 1.

With decoding taught as the prime approach to reading, pupils will become familiar with this strategy and have the confidence to work out unfamiliar words in any new texts they encounter even when they have come to the end of the RWI programme. Pupils will have the opportunity to develop their fluency and comprehension as they move through the school; accessing a range of texts independently.

Attainment in reading is measured using statutory assessments such as the end of EYFS, Key Stage 1 and 2 and following the outcomes in the Year 1 Phonics Screening check. Additionally, we track our own reading attainment through the use of RWI half termly and screening assessments, NFER reading papers, plus ongoing teacher assessment. More importantly, we believe that reading is the key to unlock all learning and so the impact of our reading goes beyond the statutory assessments. We give all the children the opportunity to enter the amazing new worlds that a book opens up to them and share texts from a range of cultures or genres to inspire them to question or seek out more for themselves. We want reading to be the golden thread running through a child's journey at Sacred Heart. When they leave us, we want pupils to possess the reading skills and love of literature which will help them to enjoy and access any aspects of learning they encounter in the future.

## **Principles.**

### **Phonics aims:**

The national curriculum for Reading aims to ensure that all pupils:

- apply phonic knowledge and skills as the route to decode words
- respond speedily with the correct sound to graphemes (letters or groups of letters) for all 40+ phonemes, including, where applicable, alternative sounds for graphemes
- read accurately by blending sounds in unfamiliar words containing GPCs that have been taught
- read common exception words, noting unusual correspondences between spelling and sound and where these occur in the word
- read words containing taught GPCs and –s, –es, –ing, –ed, –er and –est endings
- read other words of more than one syllable that contain taught GPCs
- read words with contractions [for example, I'm, I'll, we'll], and understand that the apostrophe represents the omitted letter(s)
- read books aloud, accurately, that are consistent with their developing phonic knowledge and that do not require them to use other strategies to work out words
- reread these books to build up their fluency and confidence in word reading

### **Phonics in EYFS.**

Phonics begins as soon as children enter our school in Nursery. Children develop their speaking and listening skills through singing songs, nursery rhymes and playing exciting games helping them to develop language.

Securing a strong understanding of the alphabetic code from an early age is an essential part of the reading process. The simple mnemonics help children to learn new sounds speedily, and make strong links with writing and handwriting. In EYFS, Phonics is delivered daily as a whole group and in Autumn 2 in differentiated groups. For Key Stage one, pupils are assessed at the start of Autumn 1 and placed in differentiated groups according to their level. Children are then encouraged to apply the skills they have learnt in other areas of the curriculum within continuous provision activities. Read Write Inc speed sounds charts and picture cards are clearly displayed in these areas to encourage children to use the skills they are developing when reading independently. Reading is planned for using the Development Matters Objectives.

## **Phonics in Key Stage 2.**

We aim for all children to be accurate and speedy readers by the time they enter Key6 Stage 2. We have high expectations of our pupils' progress. If a child arrives in Key Stage 2 reading below their chronological age or with English as an additional language, then they are taught phonics until they are able to catch up with their peers. Phonics is taught in KS2 in two different ways. If children have not passed the phonics screening check in KS1 then children from year 3 will have daily phonics lessons with KS1 in bespoke groups. In years 4, 5 and 6, phonics is taught within daily intervention groups through the Read Write Inc. 'Fresh Start' modules, which are phonically matched to children's reading levels but are more age appropriate for older children.

## **The contribution of Phonics to other subjects.**

### **English**

Phonics is an essential part of the reading process. Through the Read Write Inc programme strong links are made between phonics, reading and writing in order to encourage children to use the skills acquired to read speedily and spell accurately. Handwriting is also a key aspect of the programme, children are taught to write and orientate letters accurately through the use of simple mnemonics.

### **PSHE**

The Read Write Inc programme teaches pupils to work effectively with a partner to explain and consolidate what they are learning. This provides the teacher with opportunities to teach team work, cooperation and respect for others.

### **Science, Geography, History, ICT, DT, Art**

The skills developed in phonics can be applied in all curriculum areas when children are required to read or write. They build speedy reading skills that allow them to access texts and

gain information with ease. They also learn how to spell words accurately for writing. The focus on handwriting allows children to present their work neatly in all areas of the curriculum.

### **Assessment.**

At the start of the year, using the Read Write Inc. phonic assessment, we assess all pupils from KS1 and those who didn't pass the phonics screening check in Year 3. We use this data to assign them to homogenous Phonics groups. This gives us a very good indication of how well they are making progress relative to their starting points. At the end of every half term, the children are re-assessed to monitor progress and new groups are created. From the assessments, we identify children who are not progressing and support them with 1:1 fast track tutoring. At the end of Autumn 1, Reception children start to be assessed.

### **Inclusion.**

We teach phonics to all children, regardless of their ability. Phonics forms part of our school curriculum policy to provide a broad and balanced education for all our children. Our teachers provide learning opportunities that are matched to the needs of children and children are assessed half termly in order to be placed in the correct bespoke learning group, and our work in phonics takes into account the targets set for individual children in their Child Centred Plans (CCPs). Fast track tutoring which is a 1:1 support programme is used to target those children who are assessed as not being able to segment and blend. It is the responsibility of all teachers at to ensure that all pupils irrespective of gender, ability, including gifted pupils, ethnicity and social circumstance, have access to the music curriculum and make the greatest progress possible. We promote British values set out by the Government's 2011 Prevent Strategy: democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs.

Staff are encouraged to challenge the children who can work at a greater depth by;

- expecting them to interrogate more demanding sources;
- expecting them to work with greater independence;
- raising expectations about how they might communicate their ideas.

### **Health and Safety.**

Staff follow sound classroom practice to ensure safety in lessons. Risk assessments are carried out when pupils are to be taken off school premises to undertake visits. For further information please refer to the Health and Safety policy, the Risk Assessment file and Educational visits file, all of which are kept in the Head teacher's Office.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation.**

It is the responsibility of the Subject Leader to monitor this policy in practice with the support of the Management Team. Learning and teaching will be monitored by;

- scrutiny of medium term and short term planning;
- scrutiny of pupils' work;
- pupil interviews;
- lesson observations;
- appropriateness and range of resources.

Following any curriculum monitoring a Review Statement is added to the action plan which contributes to the review of the current year's School Development Plan and informs the SDP of the forthcoming year.

The policy will be reviewed every 18 months or sooner if required, as part of the school's monitoring cycle of curricular areas. It will be reviewed in the light of outcomes from the above monitoring and evaluation, advice and guidance from the LA and DFE