

# Phonics Policy



## Vision

At St. Thomas' C of E Academy, our curriculum is built upon our mission statement, to enable all children to "Grow, learn and shine together with God". We inspire children to be 'Active Learners' and 'Creative Thinkers' through the use of the 'St Thomas' 10 Star Learning behaviours' and the 'St Thomas' 'Ds'.

## Intent

Our pupils learn to read and write effectively using the Read Write Inc (RWI) Phonics Programme which is a systematic programme for the teaching of phonics, reading, spelling and writing. We want all pupils to begin their journey to read with confidence, develop a love of reading and apply their skills competently to writing.

### **We aim to ensure that all pupils:**

- Decode letter-sound correspondences quickly and effortlessly, using their phonic knowledge and skills
- Read common exception words on sight
- Understand what they read
- Read aloud with fluency and expression
- Spell quickly and easily by segmenting the sounds in words
- Learn letter formation and handwriting skills.



## Implementation

The RWI programme is delivered to:

- Pupils in EYFS to Year 2 who are learning to read and write
- Any pupils in Years 2, 3 and 4 who need to catch up rapidly
- Struggling readers in Years 5 and 6 follow Read Write Inc. Fresh Start.

Pupils are taught to work effectively with a partner to explain and consolidate what they are learning. This provides the teacher with opportunities to assess learning and to pick up on difficulties, such as pupils' poor articulation, or problems with blending or alphabetic code knowledge. We group pupils homogeneously across Reception and Year One according to their progress in reading rather than their writing.

When RWI begins, we emphasise the alphabetic code. The pupils rapidly learn sounds and the letter or groups of letters 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. This learning is consolidated daily. 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. Re-reading and discussing these books with the teacher supports their increasingly fluent decoding. EEF research suggests "the importance of children reading books that match their phonics knowledge they need to confidently practice what they already know -matched to children's current level of skill in terms of their phonemic awareness and their knowledge of letter sounds and patterns"

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.

### **We follow the RWI approach to support the delivery and fidelity of the phonics sessions**

**Praise** – Children learn quickly in a positive climate.

**Pace** – A good pace is the key to each session to ensure all children are engaged and on task.

**Purpose** – Every part of the lesson has a specific purpose.

**Passion** – This is a very prescriptive programme. It is the energy, enthusiasm and passion that teachers put into the lesson that bring the teaching and learning to life!

**Participation** – A strong feature of RWI lessons is partner work and the partners 'teaching' each other.

Children in Reception and Year One are taught daily phonics lessons. In the first four weeks, the initial sounds (Set 1 Speed Sounds) are taught in class groups. After this period, children are individually assessed and grouped homogeneously according to their stage not age. Children receive daily phonics teaching in these groups using the RWI structured lesson format. This lesson starts with a 10minute speed sounds lesson which teaches oral blending, new speed sounds and revision of previous speed sounds, oral blending, decoding words, reading common exception words, decoding 'alien' (pseudo) words, and spelling. Children then read and comprehend a book which is carefully matched to their phonics knowledge following a 3 day programme.

All classrooms and teaching spaces across the school display the RWI Speed Sounds chart to support children with their reading and spelling.

By the time children complete the transition from KSI to KS2 we intend that they will have completed the RWI phonics programme. Their phonic development will continue to be explicitly taught through the school's spelling programme. It is our aim that children in Year 2 complete the RWI programme by end of the Autumn term in Year 2. Those children who have not reached the expected level by the time they leave KSI will continue to access the RWI programme and receive additional targeted intervention to ensure they catch up with their peers.

A small number of children may reach upper KS2 and continue to require support for reading. These children will be assessed and complete a more age-appropriate phonics and reading programme called 'Fresh Start' which, like RWI, will teach the children the reading and comprehension skills required at this development stage in a more age-appropriate way using anthology texts rather than story books. Similarly, to the RWI programme, Fresh start pupils are frequently assessed, and progress is reviewed on a half termly basis.



**Assessment and Monitoring**

We assess all pupils following Read Write Inc. Phonics using the RWI Assessments, at least half termly and the Reading Leader rearranges groups accordingly. Regular assessments ensure that children receive targeted teaching quickly according to their needs. Children who are progressing through the programme quicker than their peers are moved into a different group and those who are at risk of falling behind the programme's pace and expectations are given additional support to help them catch up. The effectiveness of these sessions and the impact on progress is regularly evaluated by the Reading Leader.

Children in Year 1 complete the phonics screening check at the end of the year.

**Parents/Carers**

We endeavour to involve and train parents/carers in supporting phonics and reading at home through workshops, information sessions, newsletters and online resources. Through the rigorous assessment of pupils through this scheme, we ensure that pupils select appropriate books to take home for reading, as well as Reading for Pleasure books to promote the Love of reading for all.

**Impact**

Our goal is for children to:

1. Work out unfamiliar words quickly – including new vocabulary and names.
2. Read familiar words speedily – that is, words they have been taught.
3. Read texts - including the words they have been taught – fluently.
4. Love to read.

	YR children can:	Y1 children can:	Y2 children can:
End of Autumn 1	Read single-letter Set 1 sounds (first 16)	Read Purple Storybooks Read Set 2 sounds	Read Blue Storybooks with increasing fluency and comprehension
End of Autumn term	Read all Set 1 singleletter sounds Blend sounds into words orally	Read Pink Storybooks Read first 9 Set 3 sounds	Read Grey Storybooks
End of Spring 1	Blend sounds to read words Read short Ditty stories Read Set 1 Special Friends	Read Orange Storybooks Read 17 Set 3 sounds	
End of Spring term	Read Red Storybooks Read 4 double consonants	Read Yellow Storybooks Read all Set 3 sounds and additional graphemes (e-e, ie, ue, au, kn, wh, ph)	
End of Summer 1	Read Green Storybooks	Read Yellow Storybooks	
End of Summer term	Read Green or Purple Storybooks Read first 6 Set 2 sounds	Read Blue Storybooks	