

# St John Vianney Catholic Primary School, West Denton



*Through following Jesus, we aim to be a caring, happy school, where everyone is valued and appreciated and can reach their true potential. We hope to act justly, love tenderly, and walk humbly with our God*

## Phonics Policy 2023-2025

Date reviewed: November 2023

Date of next review: November 2025



## Our whole school curriculum vision

### Vision

At St John Vianney Catholic Primary School, we endeavor to provide a broad and balanced curriculum which inspires and provides opportunities for success for all of our learners. Through our curriculum, we strive to create independent, curious, creative and critical thinkers, problem solvers and innovators. We aim to provide engaging learning opportunities that encourage our pupils to develop and fulfil their potential academically, socially, emotionally and spiritually. We strive to provide a range of activities and opportunities through a carefully sequenced and progressive curriculum in all subject disciplines, which fosters a passion for learning, stretching beyond the confines of primary school and creates lifelong learners. Our vision is that our curriculum will ignite passion, expand horizons and raise aspirations for all of our learners. We aim to equip our pupils with the knowledge and skills that will prepare them for the world of work in an ever-evolving landscape, and with the confidence, resilience and tolerance to live harmoniously with others.

### Intent

Through our curriculum we aim to:

- be inclusive to all learners and provide opportunities for all learners to succeed, regardless of their individual starting points;
- foster a lifelong love of learning;
- develop a rich subject knowledge, including substantive and disciplinary knowledge, conceptual and procedural knowledge;
- make meaningful links between topics within a subject, between different disciplines and across year groups;
- make links to the world in which we live, which goes beyond the white western experience, thereby instilling a positive attitude of respect and tolerance of other societies, cultures and religions;
- raise the self-esteem of children as capable and resourceful learners;
- develop children's ability to think creatively, solve problems and innovate;
- develop children's capacity and confidence working independently and collaboratively;
- to understand the purpose and value of their learning and how it is placed on a timeline of the past, present and future.

We believe that all learners should experience success across the curriculum and be allowed to develop their own interests and passions within the curriculum. Therefore, our curriculum is delivered with the understanding that all of God's children are blessed with different talents and skills, and the knowledge that there is 'something for everyone' within both core and foundation subjects. For this reason, we ensure that the same value and high standards of learning and teaching are upheld in all subjects across the curriculum. In ensuring success for all children across the curriculum, we aim that this will create confident, resilient and impassioned children who have high self-esteem as learners.

Alongside academic success, the emotional, spiritual and physical wellbeing of children is of high priority, and as such, regular and meaningful opportunities for personal development are integrated throughout the curriculum. We believe that it is our duty to educate and develop the whole child. Our PSHE and RSE curriculum has been refined to ensure that pupils build positive relationships with others, feel valued and those who are most vulnerable are identified and supported. Our curriculum has the flexibility to respond to the needs and priorities of our children and of the local area.

It is our aim that all children develop a knowledge and understanding of and take pride in the British Values of our rich and diverse society and its history. Throughout the curriculum, we present children with the experiences of a diverse range of people, through texts, key figures in different disciplines and exploring the history through a lens that is not always that of the white western experience.

We believe that successful learners are aware of the key skills and strategies of that help them to 'know more and remember more' and make progress. We developed a toolkit of fundamental characteristics of effective learning – LEARNER. These principles are explored with children and modelled within lessons by teachers, creating an ethos of 'lifelong learning' within St John Vianney Catholic Primary School.

At St John Vianney Catholic Primary School we want children to learn to read fluently, accurately and confidently because we know that reading is the key that unlocks the whole curriculum and enables them to access their learning. Therefore, the ability to decode efficiently is essential.

### **Intent of Phonics**

At John Vianney Primary School, we use Unlocking Letters and Sound to teach our children Phonics and early reading skills. By teaching phonics daily to children in Reception, Year One and Year Two we aim to ensure that our children quickly develop the skill of matching sounds to letters or groups of letters which will enable them to feel confident as readers and writers.

Our high-quality systematic, synthetic phonics programme is taught with rigour and fidelity. We teach our phonics, so that is accessible to all, by planning for 100% engagement from each child. Children will develop stamina and learn to read with expression and confidence. We continually aim to make strides towards closing the word gap. We place our quality phonics teaching in a language rich curriculum, with exposure to a range of high-quality texts. We endeavour to empower our pupils to develop into lifelong learners who read for both purpose and pleasure. Working alongside parents and carers we want to provide our pupils with the skills they need to have a successful start to their lives as readers and to ensure that our children develop a love of reading.

Our aims:

- Teach the 150+ graphemes that are represented by the 44+ phonemes of the English language along with exception words in a planned, progressive way.
- Ensure there is rigour, pace and fidelity to our phonics scheme and it's delivery.
- Read confidently and fluently, and seek to acquire knowledge independently.
- Build children's speaking and listening skills and early language development.

- Develop the reading skills they need to access all areas of the curriculum
- Understand the difference between real and alien words
- Understand the meaning of what they read and what is read to them
- Ensure home reading books match to the child's phonics ability.
- Develop a lifelong enjoyment of reading, taking genuine pleasure from what they read
- Give intervention to children quickly who are at risk of falling behind.
- Children have pride in their reading and the progress they are making.
- Children are engaged and motivated to deepen their knowledge in specific areas linked to the National Curriculum.
- Develop cross curricular links and strengthen further links with the local and wider community and global world.
- Deepen children's knowledge and understanding by planning extracurricular visits.

### **Implementation**

- Ensure fidelity to the Unlocking Letters and Sounds programme and consistency across the whole school. This is a DfE validated systematic synthetic phonics programme.
- High quality daily phonics lessons with direct whole class teaching
- Promote a 'phonics first' approach and in both our guided reading sessions and in the books, children take home, texts are very closely matched to a child's current phonics knowledge so that every child can experience real success in their reading.
- Children are grouped for guided reading sessions in EYFS and KS1 and during this time use books from Ransom Reading Stars Phonics or decodable books from Oxford University Press, to ensure complete fidelity to the Unlocking Letters and Sounds progression we follow.
- In EYFS and KS1, we use a two-book system where each child will have one fully decodable book and one book for pleasure in their book bag. The decodable books are changed once a week, once they have been read at home and signed by their parent/carer. The books for pleasure can be changed by the children as often as they choose.
- Children have daily Story time sessions
- Whole school use of Unlocking Letters and Sounds glossary to ensure consistency in key vocabulary and language in all classrooms
- Children are regularly assessed and supported to keep up through bespoke 1:1 intervention to ensure no child is left behind at any point in the progression.
- Once children progress beyond decodable texts, they move onto our book scheme so that they can continue to progress in their decoding, fluency and comprehension skills to become avid, expert readers.
- Phonics is highly valued by the Headteacher and all staff
- Phonics Leader is an experienced teacher with the knowledge and skills to support others
- Teachers have good knowledge of the subject they are teaching. Quality CPD and coaching ensuring all staff, including Head Teacher and senior leaders, have been trained in Unlocking Letters and Sounds by an accredited trainer.

## Phonics Content

### **EYFS**

We begin teaching phonics in the first few weeks of term 1 in Reception and children make rapid progress in their reading journey. Children begin to learn the main sounds heard in the English Language and how they can be represented, as well as learning 'Common Exception Words' for Phases 2, 3 and 4. They use these sounds to read and write simple words, captions and sentences. Children leave Reception being able to apply the phonemes taught within Phase 2, 3 and 4.

### **Key Stage One**

In Year 1, through Phase 5, children learn any alternative spellings and pronunciations for the graphemes and additional Common Exception Words. By the end of Year 1 children will have mastered using phonics to decode and blend when reading and segment when spelling. In Year 1 all children are screened using the national Phonics Screening Check.

In Year 2, phonics continues to be revisited to ensure mastery of the phonetic code and any child who does not meet age related expectations will continue to receive support to close identified gaps

For further details, please see the Unlocking Letters and Sounds progression document on the school website: <https://www.stjohnvianneynewcastle.org/web/phonics/568710>

### **Planning**

Unlocking Letters and Sounds includes everything you need to teach phonics from Foundation Stage to the end of Autumn term in Year 2. We use these resources to ensure fidelity to the programme and will support all staff, from ECTs to experienced members of a school team, to deliver high quality phonics provision.

The resources include: a full progression for GPCs and CEWs; daily lesson plans from the start to end of the programme, including pedagogy guidance for every phase; slides for digital whiteboards for every lesson; videos and written walkthroughs to exemplify lesson structure and pedagogy; an action and image for GPCs in Phases 2 and 3; a glossary to ensure consistency in language in all classrooms; classroom resources, including flashcards, mats and wall friezes ; models for guided reading and pre-prepared guided reading lesson plans and resources; a collection of decodable reading books (covering Phases 1 to 5) that offer progression on a week-by-week basis. Planning is monitored by the Senior Team and the Phonics Champion.

### **Impact**

- Children are engaged and motivated to learn developing their understanding further.
- Cross curricular links are made and this, therefore, deepens the children's knowledge.
- Children understand that the presentation and quality of work is essential in all areas.
- Children are fluent readers by the end of Key Stage One.
- Children in Year One pass the phonics screening check in Summer Term.
- Children who have completed the ULS programme are able to decode fluently and accurately, allowing them to access a greater range of texts with growing independence.

- As children progress through the school, they focus on developing their fluency and comprehension skills.
- Attainment in reading is measured using the statutory assessments at the end of Key Stage One and Two. These results are measured against the reading attainment of children nationally.
- Children develop confidence, fluency, curiosity and a lifelong love of reading that will enhance the learning and the lives of all pupils at St John Vianney Primary School. The positive impact of excellent reading skills will be felt across all curriculum areas and that an enjoyment of reading goes far beyond the classroom.

### **Pupils with SEN**

Teachers make appropriate adaptations to the curriculum and their teaching style. This ensures that all pupils regardless of need, are able to access the curriculum and succeed across the curriculum.

### **Metacognition in Phonics**

Within all subjects at St John Vianney, teachers employ metacognitive strategies in lessons, which are based upon EEF research and guidance. In English, these strategies are evident within lessons, through:

- activating relevant prior knowledge from previous Phonics learning and year groups (vertical curriculum links);
- where applicable, activating relevant prior knowledge from other curriculum areas within the current year group (horizontal curriculum links);
- where applicable, activating relevant prior knowledge from other curriculum areas and year groups (diagonal curriculum links);
- explicit instruction of strategies, knowledge and skills in Phonics;
- teacher modelling of strategies, knowledge and skills, and effective learning behaviours in Phonics;
- memorisation of strategies, knowledge and skills in Phonics;
- guided practice of tasks in Phonics;
- independent practice of tasks in Phonics;
- structured reflection upon understanding and learning behaviours, which is seen in Phonics, namely through end of lesson discussion and feedback, verbal self-assessment.

Metacognition is also promoted across whole topics of work, such as through the use of discussion, encouraging children's retention of knowledge by drawing prior learning back into the working memory, building upon it and creating schemas in the long-term memory – the principle behind this being to ensure that learning is not forgotten. Within Phonics lessons, explicit modelling of strategies is skilfully employed by teachers to verbalise the internal voice of the reader and model the skills and self-regulation used by a successful reader.

### **Assessment**

Assessment is regarded as an integral part of teaching and learning and is a continuous process. We strive to make our assessment purposeful, allowing us to match the correct level of work to the needs of the pupils, thus benefiting the pupils and ensuring progress.

Phonics Tracker, an online tracking tool, is used and updated half-termly in EYFS and KS1 and continues to be updated as the child moves through school. The assessment identifies the children's progress so far as well as any gaps in their learning.

In addition to Phonics Tracker, we also complete a phonics benchmarking assessment every term. PM Benchmark is then used when children move from the decodable phonics books and onto the school reading scheme.

Year 1 phonics screening check takes place in June. The purpose of the phonics screening check will be to confirm that all children have learned phonic decoding to an age-appropriate standard. Children who have not reached this level should receive extra support from their school to ensure they can improve their decoding skills, and will then have the opportunity to retake the phonics screening check.

### **Intervention**

To ensure no child is left behind at any point in the progression, children are regularly assessed and supported to keep up through bespoke 1:1 intervention. These include GPC recognition and blending and segmenting interventions. The lowest attaining 20% of pupils are closely monitored to ensure these interventions have an impact.

### **Monitoring**

The Phonics subject champion is responsible for monitoring the standard of the children's work and the quality of teaching in Phonics. The Phonics subject champion is also responsible for supporting colleagues in the teaching of Phonics, for being informed about current developments in the subject, and for providing a strategic lead and direction for the subject in the school. The Phonics subject champion gives the headteacher an annual audit in which she/he evaluates the strengths and weaknesses in the subject and indicates areas for further improvement. We allocate specific time for the vital task of reviewing samples of children's work, talking to the children about Phonics and for visiting classes to observe teaching in the subject. These tasks are carried out at least three times a year, with staff being given dedicated time out of class to support this.

### **Equal Opportunities**

We are committed to providing a teaching environment conducive to learning. Each child is valued, respected and challenged regardless of ability, race, gender, religion, social background, culture or disability, in line with the School Policy for Equal Opportunities.

### **Supporting Documents**

This policy is to be read in conjunction with and used alongside the subject 3I statement and where appropriate the End of Year expectation document.

Headteacher's signature \_\_\_\_\_

Phonics Lead's signature \_\_\_\_\_

Chair of Governor's signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date: Governor approval 30<sup>th</sup> November 2023

Renewal time frame: Revisited every two years