



St Ralph
Sherwin
Catholic Multi Academy Trust



Phonics & Early Reading Policy

Christ the King Catholic Voluntary Academy

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Introduction

At Christ the King we strive to ensure that all children become successful, fluent readers by the end of Key Stage One and believe this is achievable through a combination of strong, high quality and discrete phonics teaching combined with a whole language approach that promotes a 'Reading for Pleasure' culture.

This policy is aimed at reinforcing a consistent, high quality approach to the teaching of phonics across the Early Years Foundation Stage, (EYFS,) Key Stage One and on into Key Stage Two for children who still need this further support.

What is Phonics?

"Phonics is a way of teaching children to read quickly and skillfully. They are taught how to recognise the sounds that each individual letter makes and identify the sounds that different combinations of letters make. Children can then use this knowledge to 'de-code' new words that they hear or see. This is the first important step in learning to read." DFE 'Information for Parents' 2013

At Christ the King Primary School, we use a systematic teaching of phonics to support children in learning to read and write. High quality texts are used to drive children's enthusiasm and motivation for reading and writing. Guided and independent writing gives children opportunities to apply their phonic knowledge. Shared reading and individual reading sessions also allow children to apply their phonic knowledge.

Objectives

To ensure that children progress in their phonic knowledge through:

- Daily phonic sessions
- Phonics being promoted as a tool to help children decode words to read and spell
- Children being encouraged to use and apply their phonic knowledge in independent work, ^{SEP}guided writing sessions and individual or group reading where appropriate.

Planning

Christ the King School plans phonics based on the 'Floppy's Phonics' programme. Floppy's Phonics is a rigorous, easy-to-use synthetic phonics-teaching programme that engages children from the outset and enables them to learn to read quickly. We use Floppy's Phonics alongside the Letters and Sounds programme to provide our children with a comprehensive phonics education.

Teachers in Reception, Year 1 & 2 follow through the phonics phases in a systematic way to allow children to make progress. The phonics planning gives opportunity for sounds to be revised, new sounds to be taught, children to read and write words and apply their learning.

- In Nursery they focus predominately on Phase 1, which concentrates on developing children's speaking and listening skills and lays the foundations for the phonic work, which starts in phase 2. The emphasis during Phase 1 is to get children attuned to the sounds around them and ready to begin developing oral blending and segmenting skills.
- In Reception we focus on Phases 2 & 3 where letters and sounds are introduced one at a time. Two sounds are taught in isolation each week following the set sequence. As soon as each set of letters are introduced, children are encouraged to use their knowledge of the letter sounds to blend and sound out words. Towards the Summer Term we start to look at Phase 4 of the programme, which is then revisited in Year 1. Tricky words are also introduced in Reception.
- In Year 1 at the start of the year all the previous phases will be revisited to check the children's phonics knowledge. Then the teacher will focus on teaching Phases 3, 4 & 5 in preparation for the phonics screening check. The phonics screening check is a short, light-touch assessment to confirm whether individual children have learnt phonic decoding to an appropriate standard. It will identify the children who need extra help so they can be given continued support throughout school to improve their reading skills.
- In Year 2 the teaching of phonics continues, with the aim of children becoming fluent readers and accurate spellers. The teacher focuses on Phase 5 and by this time the children should be able to read hundreds of words using one of three strategies: reading them automatically, decoding them quickly and silently or decoding them aloud.

Although formal phonics teaching is usually complete by the end of Year 2, children continue to use their knowledge as they move up the school. The whole aim of phonics teaching is not just to learn the sounds, but to use them as a tool for reading and spelling. The children who haven't passed their phonics screening check will continue to receive focused phonics sessions and will be continually monitored.

Teaching

All children in Reception, Year 1 & Year 2 have a daily phonics session of 20-25 minutes. Children are assessed as a baseline when they enter Reception and periodically assessed on Phonics tracker against the phases to ensure children continue to make progress. Other assessment of independent reading and writing also ensures a rounded picture of children's

application of their phonic knowledge.

Developing a love of Reading

At Christ the King, reading is promoted as an intrinsic part of teaching and learning. It forms a pivotal part of our curriculum. We recognise that the skill of reading provides children with access to the world around them and a wealth of knowledge, which will support their learning and development in all other areas. However, we also believe that reading brings joys and experiences that cannot be achieved in any other way; discovering new worlds, reflecting on the past and exploring emotions from the viewpoints of others who are similar and very different.

Every classroom at Christ the King has its own book corner, and a central library is maintained too. The children have access to enabling classroom environments, allowing the independent and cooperative use of vocabulary triangles, word mats, key word displays and language rich walls.

The school has invested in a reading scheme to support children to apply their phonic knowledge and skills, as well as develop their reading comprehension. Reading books that match the code allow children to consolidate and apply their phonics knowledge. Reading books are organised in line with the Floppy's Phonics and Letters and Sounds scheme and children are matched to books that include graphemes and tricky words children have been taught. This makes it easy for teachers, parents and children to choose a text that was matched to the child's growing phonic knowledge and that does not encourage a child to guess at words if they included GPCs they had not yet been taught.

Our ultimate aim at Christ the King is to promote a 'love of reading', which is achieved through a focus on developing fluency and comprehension.

FLUENCY – Fluency is the ability to read a text accurately, quickly, and with expression. When fluent readers read silently, they recognise word automatically. They group words quickly to help them gain meaning from what they read. Fluent readers read aloud effortlessly and with expression. They reading sound natural, as if they were speaking. It is important that the children gain a strong understanding of reading and therefore we stress the importance of not 'rushing' through the reading stages.

COMPREHENSION – We like our children to not only decode words in stories but also to gain a good understanding of the story and structure of books. We encourage children to discuss a variety of factors relating to the books they have read such as:

- Retelling the story in their own words
- Discussing language choices made by the author
- Predicting what will happen next
- Making inferences on the basis of what has been said

Reading at home/Parental involvement

Research shows that children who read daily develop reading fluency at a more rapid rate and become more confident, eloquent writers. We aspire to this for all our children and believe that the most important thing that parents can do at home to help their children achieve at school is to share books with them. We encourage children to read daily at home with their adults and try to ensure that those who do not get a daily read at home have one in school.

We provide reading workshops for early reading skills every year to support parents in how they can help the development of reading at home. Also in Reception we have 'secret storyteller' on a Thursday afternoon where a parent comes into class to read to the children. Throughout EYFS and KS1 we encourage parents to come into class to read with their child in a morning and also provide cooperative reading opportunities throughout the year such as World Book Day.

Cross Curricular Links

Phonics is seen as one aspect of a rich literacy environment. In Reception, a self-access phonics area helps children immerse themselves in the different sounds as well using it in many aspects of their play. Outside, children are encouraged to go on sound or letter hunts, practice writing letters in the sand or making signs using their phonic knowledge for different areas of the provision. The modeling of writing and reading may be an appropriate time to notice different letter sounds or non-decodable words all the while ensuring the meaning of a word or story is not lost.

In Year 1 and 2, phonics is linked to literacy through dramatic progress in writing.

Assessment

Assessment is carried out at the end of each Phonics phase to assess the children's knowledge. This information is used to identify areas that need to be revised or repeated as well as any further support parents could do at home.

At the end of Year 1, the Phonics Screening Check looks at children's ability to decode real words and pseudo words.