

# Phonics and Early Reading

October 2021



## INTENT

At All Saints', we have designed an early reading curriculum to ensure children become confident and fluent readers. It is our intent to nurture enthusiastic and motivated readers who will develop a lifelong love of reading. Phonics is a vital part of this reading journey and provides children with the tools to become skilled readers.

Alongside the important skill of decoding, we teach children how to comprehend and understand what they are reading. We aim for all children to have strong word recognition skills, a rich vocabulary and good comprehension skills. Our expectation is that all children will be fluent readers by the end of Year 2.

## IMPLEMENTATION

We want our children to learn to read quickly and effectively. This process begins in Foundation where we follow a systematic approach using the 'Letters and Sounds' programme. We make it interactive and engaging for the children enabling them to remember each sound. Alongside this, we use the Read Write Inc handwriting programme to develop the children's letter formation.

Phonics is taught daily. Staff systematically teach the relationship between each **phoneme** (sound) and the corresponding **grapheme** (letter). The focus is placed on recognising these quickly so children can then start to read words by **blending** the sounds together and **segmenting** them in order to spell. In addition, they learn to read by sight a range of high frequency and common exception words. This focus provides children with the skills they need to begin to read and write words, captions and whole sentences as soon as possible. They then progress on to learning combinations of letters as **digraphs** (two letters to make one sound) e.g. 'ck' 'oo', 'sh' and **trigraphs** (three letters to make one sound) e.g. 'igh' and 'air'.

Daily phonics teaching continues into Year 1 where children continue to learn new graphemes for phonemes they already know e.g. 'a' as ai/ay/a/a\_e, as well as alternative pronunciations for the graphemes they already know e.g. cow/ snow. They are also taught the Common Exception Words (i.e. words that are not phonetically consistent – was said)) for Year 1 and 2 set out in the National Curriculum. From Year 2 onwards, children consolidate their knowledge and learn different spelling rules and when to apply them.

Children will be given reading books that are matched to their growing phonic knowledge. This allows the children to not only reinforce the learning of new phonemes but experience success in reading quickly. It gives them confidence to develop fluency, build on their reading comprehension and motivate them to read more. In KS1, teacher-led guided reading sessions also take place weekly both in small groups and whole class sessions. The children will read carefully selected texts to improve fluency, broaden their vocabulary and deepen their understanding through skills of retrieval and inference.

## IMPACT

Through the teaching of systematic phonics, our aim is for children to become fluent readers by the end of Key Stage One. This way, children can focus on developing their fluency and comprehension as they move through the school. Attainment in phonics is measured by the Phonics Screening Check at the end of Year 1. However, we firmly believe that reading is the key to all learning and so the impact of our reading curriculum goes beyond the results of the statutory assessments.

Teachers regularly assess the pupils' phonics knowledge using our own phonics assessment. These regular assessments inform planning and allow teachers to identify any gaps in learning. Extra support is provided to those in Year 2 who have not passed phonics screening in Year 1 and interventions are planned for those children who are working below expected levels. Likewise, any child moving into Year 3 who has not achieved the expected levels by the end of Year 2 will be given the necessary support to progress in their reading.

*Written by Karen Brown, English subject lead and Key Stage 1 leader, and Michelle Atkinson, Early Years Foundation Stage Leader*  
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