

St Alban's C of E Academy



Phonics Policy

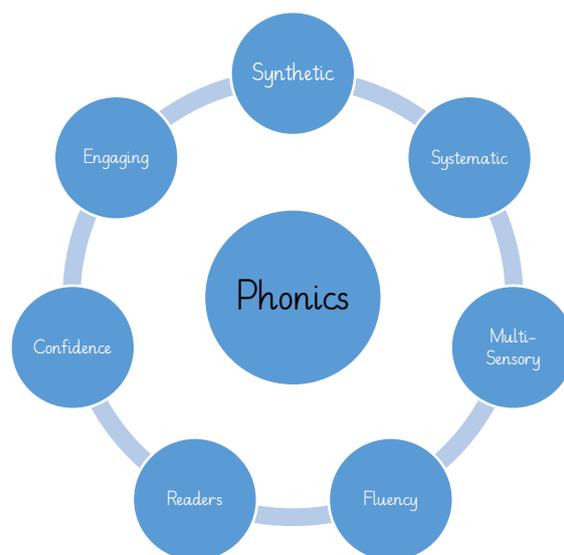
2020-2021

Intent

At St Albans we are committed to the delivery of excellence in the teaching of Phonics. We aim to develop each child so that they are able to read with fluency as well as develop a love of reading that will stay with our children all their lives.

Being able to read is the most important skill children will learn during their early schooling and has far-reaching implications for lifelong confidence and well-being. The independent review of early reading conducted by Jim Rose confirmed that 'high quality phonic work' should be the prime means for teaching children how to read and spell words. The review also highlighted the importance of developing from the earliest stages children's speaking and listening skills, ensuring that beginner readers are ready to get off to a good start in phonic work by the age of five. Such work should be set within a broad and rich language curriculum.

The use of phonics is one of the many skills needed to be able to be a reader and writer. We aim to teach high quality phonics to ensure the children have the best start possible in reading and writing. The learning of phonics is the beginning of children's body of knowledge, skills and understanding that are an essential part of learning to read. In order to read and understand texts children must learn to recognise/decode the words on the page. Good quality phonics teaching allows the child to be secure in the skills of word recognition and decoding which allows children to read fluently. This will result in children being able to read for pleasure and will allow them to move onto developing higher order reading for meaning skills. These phonic skills need to be taught systematically and involve variety e.g. multi-sensory resources for all learners.



Implementation

Our children are entitled to a Phonics curriculum, which enables them to:

- Gain a progressively deeper understanding of the phonetic structure of the English language.
- Apply their phonic knowledge and skills to decode unfamiliar words fluently and accurately.
- Read rapidly to apply what they have learned across the whole curriculum.
- Become fluent readers, confident speakers and willing writers.
- Develop a life-long love of reading.

Teaching and learning

In line with the School's policy and commitment to excellence in Phonics, each class in Reception and KS1 will teach phonics as a discrete lesson every day and will include phonics as part of teaching and learning throughout other curriculum lessons on a daily basis. It will continue into Key Stage 2, where necessary, to support those children who do not yet have the phonetical knowledge and skills they need.

The structure of each lesson at St Alban's and the journey of Phonics across the week enables all aspects of the blending and segmenting of phonemes/graphemes; lessons are uniquely planned and tailored to meet the needs of all our learners. The teacher should provide stimulating experiences and opportunities to motivate the child, using a range of resources to engage individuals and groups of children.

Organisation and Planning

The EYFS/English Lead is responsible for Phonics in school.

This includes:

- Ensuring continuity and progression from year group to year group and the transition from each phase.
- Providing all members of staff with guidelines and non-negotiables to show how aims are achieved and how the variety of all aspects of phonics is to be taught
- Advising and supporting colleagues in the implementation and assessment of phonics in their phase of the school.
- Assisting with the requisition and maintenance of resources required for the teaching of phonics, within the confines of the school budget

- Monitoring the quality of teaching and learning in phonics across the phase of the school.

The class teacher is responsible for:

- Ensuring progress in the acquisition of phonic knowledge and skills with due regard to the National Curriculum for English and the non-negotiables for each phase.
 - Developing and updating skills, knowledge and understanding of phonics
 - Identifying needs in phonics and adapting planning to suit all children.
 - Keeping appropriate on-going records
 - Planning effectively for phonics, liaising with Phonics leader when necessary
 - Informing pupils and parents of their progress, achievements and attainment

Age Related Expectations for the end of the school year:

By the end of EYFS children should:

- read and understand simple sentences.
- use phonic knowledge to decode common words and read them aloud accurately.
- confidently read by sight the Stage 2 and 3 common exception words
- use phonic knowledge to write words in a way which matches how the sounds are said.
- write some irregular common words.

By the end of Year 1 children should:

- apply phonic knowledge and skill as the prime approach to reading unfamiliar words that are not completely decodable;
- read many frequently-encountered words automatically;
- read phonically decodable three-syllable words;
- read a range of age-appropriate texts fluently;
- demonstrate understanding of age-appropriate texts.
 - read decodable words that end –s, –es, –ing, –ed, –er, –est
- Say the correct sound to grapheme for all the 40+ phonemes up to Stage 5.

By the end of Year 2 children should:

- Read accurately most words of two or more syllables.
- Read most words containing common suffixes. 5
- Read and spell most common exception words for year 2.
- Read words accurately and fluently without overt sounding and blending.
- Sound out most unfamiliar words accurately, without hesitation.
- Segment spoken words into phonemes and represent these by graphemes.

All teachers have a range of resources to use which are appropriate for the level at which the children are working. They include practical resources such as the alphabetic code poster, sounds frieze, grapheme tiles, magnetic letters and phonic strips etc., which should be used in every lesson to create a point of reference. These resources can be added to so that children are continually engaged with their learning. There should also be age and phase appropriate displays in both Reception and Key Stage 1 classrooms, and available to children who require them in KS2, to support the teaching and application of phonics in Reading and Writing.

The alphabetic code

All readers should be taught four skills:

- grapheme–phoneme correspondences (that is, the alphabetic code) in a clearly defined, incremental sequence
- to synthesise (blend) phonemes (sounds) in order all through a word to read it
- to segment words into their constituent phonemes for spelling
- that blending and segmenting are reversible processes.

English represents the sounds of the language and uses an alphabet to do this. It is generally accepted that English has 44 sounds (although this number varies slightly, depending on regional accents).

The way the 26 letters of the alphabet are used in English (singly or in combination) to represent the 44 sounds is referred to as the alphabetic code. In the alphabetic code in English:

- A single phoneme can be represented (spelt) in different ways, using one, two, three or four letters. For example, the sound /aw/ can be represented as 'or', 'saw', 'haul', 'lore', 'fraught' and 'sought'
- One grapheme (that is, a letter or combination of letters) can represent different sounds. For example, the digraph (two letters) 'ow' sounds different in 'crowd' and in 'low'; the four letters combined in 'ough' are pronounced 6 differently in 'through', 'rough' and 'bough'; the letter 'c' represents a /s/ sound at the beginning of 'circus' and a /k/ sound in the middle, and so on.

The lack of a one-to-one correspondence between a sound and a letter in English is frequently used as an argument against using phonics in teaching reading (and spelling). Therefore it is important to up-skill all the children and provide them with opportunities to practise the reading and spelling of these words. The sounds are not taught in alphabetical order, but in order of usefulness, so that children can start to read and spell simple words as swiftly as possible. There are also phonically irregular words, which we refer to as 'common exception words' such as 'the', 'some' or 'once' that are taught throughout the different phrases.

A very common sequence begins by teaching children how to represent each of the following six sounds by a letter (as below):

Sound	Letter
/s/	s
/a/	a
/t/	t
/i/	i
/p/	p
/n/	n

If these sounds are learnt securely and the children are also taught the skill of blending sounds together to read whole words, they can then read (and spell, by segmenting) simple vowelconsonant (VC) words such as 'it', 'in', 'is' and 'at' and consonant-vowel-consonant (CVC) words such as 'sat', 'pin', 'nip', 'net', 'tip'.

The skills of blending and segmenting

Blending and segmenting are, 'reversible processes': that is, if you can blend the sounds together to read a word, you should also be able to identify and break down (segment) the individual sounds in a word you hear to spell it. To spell the word, you need to represent each sound you hear by a letter – or more than one letter.

The skill of blending sounds together needs to be taught directly. Children may be able to say the sound a letter 'makes' when shown the letter (for instance, on a flashcard), but this does not necessarily mean that they can blend individual sounds together to make a whole word. (Letters do not actually 'make' sounds: they are just a way of representing that sound in writing.) In segmenting to spell a word, the teacher or the child is listening to a whole word, identifying the individual sounds (not letters) that make up the word choosing a letter or more than one letter to represent each individual sound.

Correct articulation

Correct articulation is vital in helping children to learn to blend sounds together. We make sure that the sound produced (each individual phoneme) is as precise and accurate as possible and that no additional sounds are added. For instance, the sound /m/ that starts 'mother' or is embedded in 'impress' needs to sound /mmm/ and not /muh/. The clearer the sound, the easier it is for a child to blend together (synthesise) the individual sounds to read a word because there are no unnecessary sounds getting in the way.

Common exception words

Children will be taught to read words that are not completely phonically regular. St Alban's adapts the Floppy's Phonics Language and we refer to them as 'tricky words'. Children need to be taught to read these words on sight, so that they do not have to spend time puzzling them out. Teachers help children to practise their speedy recall of tricky words. In terms of spelling, children need to remember the tricky parts of a word, that is, the letters that do not match the usual grapheme-phoneme correspondences they have learnt. For example, the word 'said' is not phonically regular in that the sound /e/ in the middle of the word is normally written 'e' as in 'bed' (or sometimes 'ea' as in 'bread', 'dread' or 'read' – past tense) and not 'ai' as in 'paid'. However, the sounds at the beginning and end of 'said' are represented with 's' and 'd', just as one might expect; it is only the middle of the word that is tricky.

Multi-sensory approaches

Multi-sensory learning opportunities featured strongly in high quality phonic work and often encompassed, variously, simultaneous visual, auditory and kinaesthetic activities involving, for example, physical movement to copy letters shapes and sound, and manipulate magnetic or other solid letters to build words. Sometimes, mnemonics, such as a picture of a sun or an apple in the shapes of 's' and 'a', were used to help children memorise letters.

Planning

The school follows the systematic approach laid out in Floppy's Phonics Sounds and Letters programme, which we have adapted to meet the requirements of the new National Curriculum. Staff complete weekly plans for phonics which ensure progression and effective, high quality teaching.

Intervention

Children who still need extra support to develop their phonic knowledge across the EYFS, Key Stage 1 and 2 are identified and targeted for intervention. There are a range of intervention strategies which the school uses and the most appropriate one is selected once a child's needs have been assessed.

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. It is the class teacher's responsibility to keep track of the progress made by all children in their class, regardless of their phonic ability. Each individual child has their own phonics tracker, which is updated termly and continues to be updated as the child moves through school.

Assessment for Learning: We continually assess our pupils and recording their progress. Information for assessment is gathered in various ways: by talking to children, asking questions, observing their work, setting specific tasks. Teachers use this assessment information to plan further work and set new targets.

Assessment of Learning: The attainment and progress of children in phonics is assessed regularly across the year, both discretely at the end of each phase and through Reading and Writing assessments. At the end of Year 1, children participate in the phonics screening check which assesses their knowledge of grapheme-phoneme correspondence and their skills in blending. This information is submitted to the Local Authority. Those children who do not succeed in the phonics screening check are highlighted for further intervention and receive targeted support before completing the screening check again at the end of Year 2. For children who do not succeed a second time, provision is made for them to receive intervention and targeted support in Key Stage 2. Children need to be taught the alphabetic code – the relationship between sounds and letters in English – and the screening check is designed to assess how much of it they know. The non-words in the check are useful for identifying children who may know the alphabetic code (or at least parts of it) but are struggling with the skills of blending sounds together to make whole words. There may also be children who are finding it difficult to learn to read whose problems are not related to blending or knowing

the alphabetic code. The screening check still acts as an important diagnostic tool in the first instance. The check is intended as a test of phonic decoding – not as a wider test of reading – to assess whether children have learnt key knowledge and skills by the end of Year 1. Comprehension is a separate dimension and is tested at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2.

Feedback: Children are provided with constructive and timely feedback in lessons. Teachers provide parents with feedback on their child's progress and achievement at parent's evening and through the end of year report. Assessment information is also passed onto the next teacher as part of transition between year groups and phases.

Inclusion

All children have equal access to the curriculum as expressed in our Equal Opportunities Policy. We will ensure that phonics is accessible to pupils by:

- Setting suitable learning objectives and differentiated success criteria.
- Responding to the variety of learning styles
- Overcoming potential barriers of individuals and groups This is monitored by analysing pupil performance throughout the school to ensure that there is no disparity between groups.

Gifted and Talented

In phonics, staff will develop differentiated weekly plans to ensure pupils who are identified as gifted in reading and achieving exceptionally high levels of achievement are catered for. For these pupils, accelerated learning experiences where programmes of study from the next school phase or Key stage, are accessed by the pupils through investigative work or enrichment activities are planned for giving these pupils open ended investigations to complete that link to the English/phonics phase of studies being covered. Support from the school English Leader can be sought to support this process.

Non-negotiables for teaching and learning of Phonics

At St Albans we follow the systematic approach laid out in Floppy's Phonics Sounds and Letters, which we have adapted to meet the requirements of the new National Curriculum. Staff complete weekly plans for phonics which ensure progression and effective, high quality teaching.

In every discrete phonics lesson:

- In each class there will be a focus phoneme for the week for the whole class to be working on. The sound will be differentiated according to the ability of each child in the class. Planning of this phoneme will show a journey across the week.

- All lessons start with a clear learning objective which is linked to the phase of letters and sounds that the year group are working on.
- The learning objective will be called 'WE ARE LEARNING TODAY...'
- The learning objective will specify if the phoneme is a 'reading' focus (blending) or a writing focus 'segmenting'. This will be covered throughout the week so the children can investigate and explore both aspects in and out of context.
- ' • New phonemes will be taught using the correct articulation and terminology and all children will use this terminology in their learning. E.g, phonemes, digraphs, trigraphs, split-digraph,
- At the start of every lesson phoneme flashcards are used as a quick warm up to refresh and rehearse previous sounds for each phase. This will be differentiated for each year group. Phoneme flashcards can also be used throughout mini-plenaries and independent learning when children are practising phonemes.
 - The Lowest 20% to be identified. These 'Spotlight Children' should be seated closest to the teacher during teacher-led part of the lesson
 - All classrooms to have a phonics display with very easy access for focused teaching and to embed learning. Display permanently: the alphabetic code chart, the alphabet, tricky words poster; Display Cumulatively: frieze strips, tricky words posters and Say the Sounds posters

Lessons follow the structure outlined below through the teaching of skills and subskills

REVISIT & REVIEW: Revise previously taught sounds and graphemes using flashcards, frieze and Say the Sounds Posters

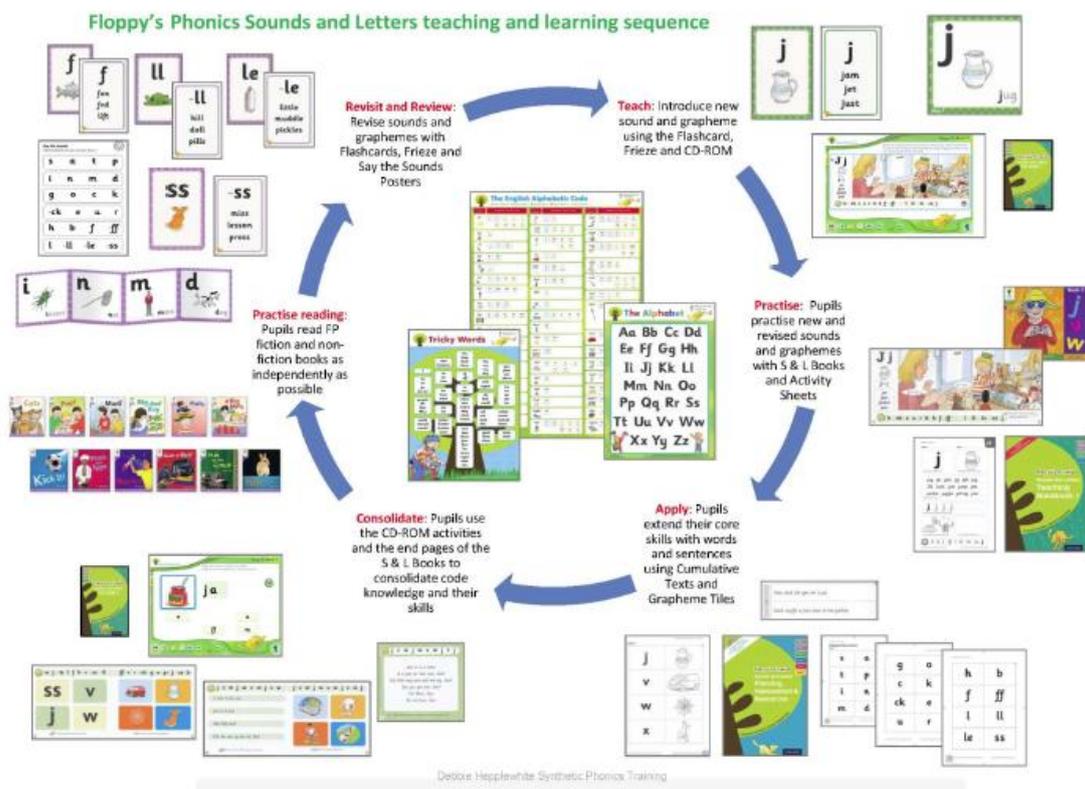
TEACH: Introduce new sound and grapheme using flashcards, frieze and the Interactive Resources.

PRACTISE: Pupils practise new and revised sounds and graphemes with Sounds & Letters Books and Activity Sheets

APPLY: Pupils extend their core skills with words and sentences using Cumulative Texts and Grapheme Tiles

CONSOLIDATE: Pupils use the Interactive Resource activities and the end pages of the Sounds & Letters Books to consolidate code knowledge and their skills

PRACTISE READING: Pupils read Floppy's Phonics fiction and non-fiction books as independently as possible



- Feedback will be given throughout the lesson to individuals to move learning forwards and drive progress. Children will be given extensions to learning opportunities for children to apply phonemes in context.
- Other adults will impact learning throughout the whole phonics lesson by using questions and reinforcement of key strategies taught with individuals.
- Other adults will model and demonstrate new learning with groups/individual children.
- Outcomes to learning will be demonstrated in a variety of ways depending on the strategy/learning opportunity. E.g, multi-sensory resources will support learning in a practical way but there will also be opportunities to rehearse and explore writing of key phonemes and words.
- The teacher/TA will use higher order questions when asking the children to explain strategies used and ways to read and spell a new word.

Technical Vocabulary

Skills: Our Lingo

Phonics: is the ability to identify that there is a relationship between the individual sounds (phonemes) of the spoken language and the letters (graphemes) of the written language.

Recognition: saying the phoneme when shown the grapheme

Recall: finding or writing the grapheme that represents a particular phoneme

Sound Talk: segmenting words into sounds (phonemes) in order to teach blending

Phonics Fingers: left hand, palm facing, tally each sound to the thumb and fingers

Sound dash: draw a dash underneath each sound replaces sound buttons – these will also act as writing lines.

Blend: squashing sounds (phonemes) together to make larger units such as syllables or words

Segment: breaking words or parts of words into the component sounds (phonemes)

Sound (as a verb): saying the phonemes that each grapheme represents in order to blend them

Over-sound: sounding words prior to blending out of habit rather than as required for accurate decoding

Decoding: being able to use visual, syntactic, or semantic cues to make meaning from words and sentences.

Syntax: the set of rules and principles that govern the structure of sentences in a given language, usually including word order

Semantic: meaning in language

Whole-word segmenting: the process of segmenting the whole word before finding or writing the letters rather than taking one letter at a time

Terminology

Systematic Synthetic Phonics (SSP): an approach to the teaching of reading in which the phonemes (sounds) associated with the particular graphemes (letters) are pronounced in isolation then blended (synthesised) together. GPCs are taught in a clearly defined sequence.

Phoneme: the smallest unit of sound in a word – often referred to as 'a sound'

Grapheme: a letter (or sequence of letters) that represent (s) a phoneme

Grapheme-phoneme correspondence (GPC): the letter that matches the sound

Tricky/common exception word (CEW): a word that contains GPCs that do not follow the usual pattern or have not yet been taught within the programme

Digraph: a combination of two letters representing one sound e.g., *ph*, *ey*

Trigraph: a combination of three letters representing one sound i.e., *igh*

Alternative graphemes: additional common graphemes used to represent familiar phonemes

Alternative pronunciations: alternative ways of pronouncing graphemes that have already been taught

Adjacent consonants: two or more consonants next to each other at the beginning or end of a word or syllable

Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the subject leader and member of the SLT.