



PHONICS POLICY

1. **WHAT IS PHONICS?**

- 1.1. Phonics is a method of teaching reading and writing where children are systematically taught the relationships between the sounds in our language and the letters used to represent those sounds. Once children have been taught which sounds are linked to which letters they are able 'crack the code' and can confidently have a go at reading and writing anything.

2. **AIMS**

- 2.1. At Our Lady's we aim to deliver high quality phonic teaching which secures the crucial skills of word recognition that, once mastered, enable children to read fluently and automatically enabling them to concentrate on the meaning of the text.
- 2.2. To establish consistent practice, progression and continuity in the teaching and learning of phonics and spelling throughout the school.
- 2.3. To differentiate phonics and spelling work according to the needs of pupils, so that all pupils are given sufficient challenge at a level at which they can experience success.
- 2.4. To give children word work strategies that will enable them to become fluent readers and confident writers.

3. **EXPECTATIONS**

Phonics sessions will:

- 3.1. Be taught every day without fail;
- 3.2. Follow the Letters and Sounds programme;
- 3.3. Be no longer than 20 minutes; (However, sessions may be shorter than this in the Foundation Stage in the Autumn Term.)
- 3.4. Be structured using the Revisit/Review – Teach – Practise – Apply approach;
- 3.5. Be active and engaging and have a quick pace;
- 3.6. Give every child the chance to segment and blend at least 20 words;
- 3.7. Give the children opportunities to hear themselves saying new sounds;
- 3.8. Teach one new thing each day;
- 3.9. Encourage children to write more quickly, yet accurately.

Teachers should:

- 3.10. Use agreed actions for segmenting, blending and remembering sounds where necessary.
- 3.11. Use the following terms where appropriate: phoneme, grapheme, diagraph, split diagraph, blending and segmenting.
- 3.12. Display phonemes that have been taught in the classroom.
- 3.13. Model segmenting and blending before asking the children to do the same.
- 3.14. Plan phonics using day to day assessments. Planning and teaching should be flexible.
- 3.15. Differentiate where necessary using different words or phrases, resources, adult support, etc.
- 3.16. Give children frequent opportunities to apply phonic skills in writing.
- 3.17. Ensure all children have regular access to fully decodable texts to apply their learning in phonics through reading.
- 3.18. Be target led – All children need to be secure in Phase Five by the end of the Summer Term in Year One. What must happen for this to be the case? (Intervention, different approaches, revision of phonemes.)

4. WHEN SHOULD DIFFERENT PHASES BE TAUGHT?

Phase	Length	When?
Phase Two	Six weeks	This should be taught during a child's first term in reception class and the vast majority of children should be secure at Phase Two by Christmas. As soon as children can read a phoneme, they should be expected to write it as well.
Phase Three	Twelve weeks	The vast majority of children need to be secure at Phase Three by the end of their first year in school. This phase can be slowed down to ensure children are secure with phonemes before moving on as they have two terms.
Phase Four	Four weeks – six weeks	This can be taught in reception class if children are secure in Phase Three. At the latest, it should be taught at the beginning of Year 1.
Phase Five	Throughout Year One	As soon as children have covered Phase Four, they need to move on to Phase Five.
Phase Six	Throughout Year Two and Year Three	When children know almost all grapheme-phoneme correspondences and their spelling is usually phonemically accurate, they are ready to move onto Phase Six.

5. ASSESSMENT

- 5.1. In Reception and Key Stage One, all children will be informally assessed throughout session and future phonics work planned accordingly.
- 5.2. All children will be formally assessed at the end of each term in the following areas:
 - grapheme phoneme correspondence knowledge;
 - segmenting and blending;
 - reading of tricky words;
 - reading of non-words.
- 5.3. At the end of Year One it is statutory for all children to complete the Year One Phonics Screening Check. This takes place in June. Children who do not achieve the required standard in Year One will need to retake the check the following year to ensure they have made good progress.

6. SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

- 6.1. When a teacher identifies a child is making limited progress in phonics, they will immediately discuss with parents, SENCO and Phonics Leader. Relevant actions are made to address the concerns and any intervention work undertaken is monitored.

7. INVOLVING PARENTS

- 7.1. The teaching and learning of phonics can only truly succeed with the support, involvement and understanding of parents. We endeavour to support parents as their child learns to read and write by:
 - Holding phonics information sessions for parents to explain specialist vocabulary and how the teaching of phonics works;
 - Letting parents know what their child has been working on in class and what they can do at home;

- Offering them the opportunity to see phonics taught in school;
- Giving parents resources and strategies for supporting phonics at home during Parents' Evening.

8. **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES**

- 8.1. At Our Lady's we believe that all children regardless of their gender, age ethnicity, academic or physical ability are given equal opportunities to reach their full potential successfully and confidently.
- 8.2. We ensure equal access in a variety of ways:
- Displays and resources reflect the above as positive role models;
 - The content of what is planned reflects our diverse society;
 - Where appropriate group children flexibly to promote confidence and social skills;
 - Ensure that appropriate structures/resources are in place so that children can access the curriculum.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

This policy has been written and reviewed with due regard to the legal duties set out in the Equality Act 2010, to ensure that no member of our school community suffers discrimination or disadvantage regardless of age, race, gender reassignment, disability, civil partnership, religion and belief (or lack of belief), pregnancy and maternity, gender or sexual orientation.

APPENDIX 1

Definitions

Phoneme – sound made by a letter or group of letters; the smallest unit of sound in a word.

Grapheme – the written spelling of a sound.

Diagraph – two letters which work together to make one sound.

Trigraph – three letters which work together to make one sound.

Split diagraph – two letters which work together to make a sound with another letter between them.

Blending – saying the sounds in a word one after another to read it.

Segmenting – breaking words down into their phonemes in order to spell them.