

Lanchester All Saints' Catholic Primary School



Phonics Policy

Recruitment and Selection Policy Statement

All Saints' Catholic Primary School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

Our School Policy for the teaching of Phonics

In All Saints', we use the Sounds Write scheme to teach phonics. The Sounds Write programme begins with the sounds in the language and moves from the sounds to the written word. There is a training requirement as part of the programme; all staff delivering the scheme have attended a four-day course based on the method.

The Sounds-Write approach ensures that:

- Children develop key concepts about the way English is written
- Children practise the skills essential for reading and spelling accurately
- Children learn the sounds and the associated spellings of English

Key Concepts:

- **Letters represent sounds (letters do not 'make' sounds)**
- **A sound can be spelled with 1,2,3 or 4 letters.** The English language contains single letter spellings. For example, in the word 'cat' c-a-t. However, many sounds are spelled with two or more letters e.g. oa in boat, ou in out and igh in high.
- **The same sound can be spelled in more than one way.** In English every sound that we say can be represented by at least 2 different spellings. In many cases, the number of different spellings of the same sound is much larger. The sound 's' for example is written in different ways in these words: sat, city, voice, mess, house, listen, scent. There are 44 speech sounds and around 175 different ways to spell those sounds, using a combination of the 26 alphabetic letters. New readers must learn that there are more ways than one to represent the same sound so that they learn to look very carefully in order to spell well.
- **Many spellings can represent one sound.** For example, one spellings of /o/ can represent /o/ in dog, /oe/ in go and /oo/ in do. Readers need to be able to swap sounds (phoneme manipulation) to read the word accurately if another possible sound for that spelling has been tried first.

Key Skills:

- **Blending:** as words are composed of sounds, in order to read we need to be able to blend (put together) sounds together and at the end 'hear' a meaningful word. Daily practise in the Sounds Write lessons will develop good blending.
- **Segmenting:** as the English written language is a sound to spelling code it is important that children are taught to segment (break up) the sounds in words so they can read and spell with ease. Through segmenting children have the opportunity to notice the ways in which the individual sounds are spelled.
- **Phoneme Manipulation:** skilled readers are able to add, change or omit sounds in words and understand how this manipulation of sounds makes new words. This skill of phoneme manipulation is essential so that a new reader can swap sounds around to deal with same spelling but different sound concept.

Skills are taught via a range of lessons including (but not limited to): sound review; syllable lessons; seek the sound; dictation; and symbol search.

Implementation of the Sounds Write Scheme at All Saints'

Throughout the infant classes, we extend the number of sounds taught and also the number of spellings covered. The order of teaching the sounds and spellings are included in our progression documents. Through whole class instruction, extension activities, small group practice all children in our school will be equipped with the necessary concepts, skills and knowledge to become independent in reading, writing and spelling. As with all tasks some children will learn quicker and

some will need extra practise and teaching. Each child's progress will be commensurate with their level of ability. Daily phonics intervention takes place for children in the infant classes who need additional practise and throughout Key Stage Two.

Transition from Key Stage One to Key Stage Two

In Year Three, any child who is not yet at the expected standard of reading will receive phonics intervention; in most cases, unless the pupil is new to our school, they should have been receiving additional phonics input throughout Key Stage One also. Our decodable reading scheme bridges the jump from Year Two to Year Three.

Sounds Write in Key Stage Two

Teaching staff use the principles of Sounds Write to teach the spelling of polysyllabic words throughout Key Stage Two.

Monitoring of Progress

At the end of each unit, those implementing the Sounds Write Scheme (either as a whole class or as an intervention group) record the progress of pupils. For pupils in the intervention group, they take two diagnostic assessments per year so accurate assessment of the skills needed for reading can be monitored. At the end of each term, infant classes undertake a general reading and spelling activity that shows the understanding of the units that have been taught that term. These assessments will highlight certain misconceptions which will then inform future teaching and intervention. Children who are on track but need further support with a particular unit or sound are given immediate support.

Decodable Readers & Guided Reading

We have Sounds Write decodable readers in school as well as Dandelion readers (please see Appendix One for an overview of books and units available).

When reading with a group or an individual, we follow the Sounds Write teaching principles:

- Looking closely at the specific sounds covered
- Using fingers (where necessary) to say the sounds and read the words
- Using the error scripts to support children in reading accurately

Children in EYFS and Key Stage One read each week with their class teacher. They take a decodable reader home from a previously taught unit so it can be read fluently. Each child also chooses a library book to take home to enjoy with their family.

The children who are receiving phonics intervention also read frequently with an adult across the course of a week with a decodable reader taken from a unit which has been previously taught in the intervention group. For Key Stage Two children who receive additional phonics support, will read frequently to an adult in school, with their decodable reader.

Weekly Spellings

All classes' half termly spelling lists are available to view on our website.

In Reception and Year One, weekly spelling lists link to the Sounds Write units they are covering in class; spellings are not tested weekly however a selection of the words from the spelling lists are used during the reading/spelling termly assessment.

From Years Two to Six, spellings are linked to word lists from the National Curriculum, including Common Exception Words. These spellings are tested weekly. For the Year Two spellings these lists aligned with our Sounds Write teaching.

All children have access to Spelling Shed where each week's lists are uploaded. For pupils who receive additional phonics teaching, they have access to Sounds Write word lists too for consolidation but they are not tested on these.

Links with Parents

Parents in the infants are invited to Sounds Write Phonics sessions each year. They are given access to free training to further support their understanding of Sounds Write. Additional information is given to parents outlining the key concepts and skills we focus upon and an overview of the sound-spelling correspondences we cover throughout the infants. This information is also available on our website.

Families of pupils who are receiving intervention in Key Stage Two also have access to additional information and workshops. To support the spelling across school, all families have access to Spelling Shed, an interactive platform where they can access the weekly spellings set by each teacher.

Monitoring

This policy was implemented in September 2021. It will be reviewed annually or earlier if necessary.
Reviewed September 2024

Appendix One – Decodable Readers

There are three stages of reading books that children will explore throughout their learning journey at All Saints'. These stages progress in content and difficulty. These are:

1. **Dandelion Launcher** books are for children who lack confidence when reading. These books introduce some of the spellings of the sound and include large text size and small amount of content.
2. **Dandelion Reader** books are for children who are developing their confidence when reading. These books introduce all of the spellings of the sound but still have large text size with slightly more content than the Dandelion Launchers.
3. **Sounds-Write** books are for children who are confident when reading. These books introduce all of the spellings of the sound but have smaller text size and more content than both Dandelion books.

As children progress through the Sounds-Write program, it is necessary to differentiate according to the children's needs as pupils may show different levels of understanding across the sound units. Therefore, the level of book the children receive weekly may vary depending on their confidence and understanding of a particular sound. It is incredibly important that the children read the book that is most suited to them to aid their fluency when reading.