



## St Helens Primary School

### Phonics Vision statement

*'The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more you learn, the more places you'll go.'* Dr Seuss

1. Subject: Phonics
2. Leader: Mrs Rees
3. Link Governor: Courtney Hendy
4. Why phonics is important?

Our intent: Phonics is the key to our English curriculum so our intention is to deliver a systematic synthetic phonics scheme that enables teachers and schools to teach phonics in a fast and engaging way so that all children become confident readers by the age of six. We aim to provide children with a strong foundation upon which to tackle the complex processes of reading and writing.

Our Bug Club Phonics texts include fiction, comics and non-fiction. The range includes plays and poetry which are rich in vocabulary and help to develop language comprehension through engaging contexts, characters and storylines. This range of phonics materials will enable children to practise their phonics skills whilst developing an enjoyment of reading.

Bug Club Phonics matches the expectations of the national curriculum and the early learning goals. The order of grapheme introduction matches that recommended by the DfE's Letters and Sounds programme and Bug Club Phonics provides inbuilt formative and summative assessment unit-by-unit and term-by-term. This progression will enable us to ensure all children's phonetic knowledge, understanding and skills develop so that they can decode words confidently and engage with higher order reading and writing skills.

We follow the accredited Bug Club Phonics program which is purposefully designed to support us with teaching all pupils, including disadvantaged and SEN pupils, together as much as possible. The Clackmannanshire research (which underpins the programme) showed that keeping most children together during the daily Phoneme Sessions fostered a sense of social inclusion and boosted the performance of the children who were progressing more slowly. Targeted interventions will be delivered based on assessment, specifically focusing on disadvantaged and SEN pupils to enable good progress.

Our Implementation: All pupils in EYFS and Key Stage 1 follow the Bug Club Phonics programme for high quality phonics teaching.

On entry into school, parents of EYFS pupils are invited to attend meetings to understand the phonics programme and the support available for them for reading and spelling at home. Communication is maintained throughout KS1 using home-school diaries with specific phonic guidance related to the current reading book.

Bug Club phonics is a six phase teaching programme designed to teach children how the alphabet works for reading and spelling.

### Progression in Phonics

Phase Two is taught on entry to school in EYFS and teaches 21 letters. The purpose of this phase is to move children on to blending and segmenting with letters. During this phase they will be introduced to reading two-syllable words and some high frequency 'tricky' words.

Children in EYFS continue onto Phase Three. The purpose of this phase is to teach another 25 graphemes. They will also learn letter names, read some more tricky words and also begin to spell some of these words.

Children entering Phase Four will consolidate their knowledge of graphemes in reading and spelling, by learning to read and spell words containing adjacent consonants and polysyllabic words.

In year 1 children begin Phase Five, we broaden their knowledge of graphemes and phonemes for use in reading and spelling. They learn new graphemes and alternative pronunciations for these where relevant. When spelling, they will learn to choose the appropriate graphemes to represent phonemes and begin to build word-specific knowledge of the spellings of words.

During Phase Six, children become fluent readers and increasingly accurate spellers.

Phonics is the step up to word recognition. Automatic reading of all words - decodable and tricky - is the ultimate goal.

Details of the expected progress for a pupil at St Helens can be found in the Phonics Progression Document.

### Assessment

Pupils are assessed in their progression in phonics using Bug Club assessment grids. These are detailed assessments of knowledge and skills which are then used to plan next steps, targeted support/extensions and identify extra support that may be required. These assessments are carried out after units eg daily or weekly and there are formative half termly assessments to gain an overview of learning for each child following our phonics program..

All children, including vulnerable children follow the systematic phonics progression, this can be adapted to suit individual needs eg including a sensory element of teaching. To support progress children that require additional support are provided with visuals, sound maps and other resources to support their learning. They also receive targeted intervention to allow for catch up and best progress.

At Key Stage 2, pupils who have been identified as requiring further support, continue to use their assessment grids to inform teacher planning of interventions. These interventions occur within the school day and we aim for families to continue to work on these areas at home.

Throughout the school children are encouraged to read at home with an adult on a regular basis. Children have access to books matched to their phonic/reading ability until children become fluent readers. Through the engaging online reading world, which strengthens home school links, children can also access allocated, levelled Bug Club eBooks online to read both at school and at home.

## 5. National curriculum and phonics coverage

The objectives for word reading in KS1 and KS2 are clearly set out for each year group in the National Curriculum:

### Key stage 1:

Year 1 pupils should be taught to

- Apply phonic knowledge and skills as the route to decode words.
- Respond speedily with the correct sound to graphemes for all 40+ phonemes.
- Read accurately by blending sounds in unfamiliar words.
- Read words containing taught GPCs and -s, -es, -ing, -ed, -er and -est endings.
- Read other words of more than one syllable that contain taught GPCs.
- Read words with contractions.
- Read aloud accurately books that are consistent with their developing phonic knowledge.

Year 2 pupils should be taught to

- Continue to apply phonic knowledge and skills as the route to decode words until automatic decoding has become embedded and reading is fluent.
- Read accurately by blending the sounds in words.
- Read accurately words of two or more syllables and words containing common suffixes.
- Read further common exception words.
- Read familiar words without overt sounding and blending.
- Read aloud books closely matched to their improving phonic knowledge.
- Re-read these books to build up their fluency and confidence in word reading.

### Key stage 2

Year 3 and 4 pupils should be taught to

- Apply their growing knowledge of root words, prefixes and suffixes to both to read aloud and to understand the meaning of new words they meet.
- Read further exception words, noting the unusual correspondences between spelling and sound, and where these occur in the word.

Year 5 and 6 pupils should be taught to:

- Apply their growing knowledge of root words, prefixes and suffixes to both to read aloud and to understand the meaning of new words that they meet.

## 6. Early Years Foundation stage

In EYFS, we promote early reading in children as soon as they arrive with us in September as we believe this underpins their natural curiosity of storytelling and enjoyment of stories. We follow the bug club phonics programme and start teaching individual phonemes during daily phonic sessions, as well as how to segment and blend sounds in words to read them.

Within every area of provision in the reception classroom, children are exposed to a wealth of rich phonics and reading opportunities. Within our indoor and outdoor environment, we also embed sound recognition and provide ample opportunities for the children to apply their learning within their play, both independently and adult led.

Our EYFS endeavours to create rich learning experiences which reflect the children's interests and fascinations, therefore our planned activities are carefully crafted to match their needs. For example, we fish

out letters in the water tray, we shape and mould letters and sounds using the playdough, and we mark make using a variety of messy play materials such as shaving foam and gloop.

In conjunction with following the Bug Club daily phonics sessions, we continue to work on phase 1 phonics skills for example distinguishing between environmental, instrumental and body sounds during our letters and sounds sessions and within our continuous provision. In addition, we develop an awareness of rhyme, alliteration and oral sound blending through engaging children in various daily activities.

We recognise the importance of parental engagement and children reading at home with their families, therefore during the first few weeks of Reception, all parents are invited to attend 'An Introduction to Phonics' workshop whereby they are given an overview of the expectations of reading in St Helens Primary School reception. This includes an insight into what a daily lesson looks like, how physical phonics can be implemented at home, and what our home reading books entail. To conclude the workshop, all our families are provided with a phonics pack to ensure children are given the opportunity to continue to rehearse, consolidate and apply their phonic knowledge at home.

Within the Statutory Framework for the EYFS (2021), children should be taught how to

- Say a sound for each letter in the alphabet and at least 10 digraphs
- Read words consistent with their phonic knowledge by sound-blending
- Read aloud simple sentences and books that are consistent with their phonic knowledge, including some common exception words.

#### 7. Links to other subject areas

At St Helens we do not see phonics as a standalone subject. In school we recognise the impact good phonics teaching can have on children learning to read and write, but we see it as part of a rich learning culture.

Children are exposed to a wide variety of books, texts and new language to encourage their love of learning.

In all lessons e.g. science, art, RE, teachers reflect back on phonics to support children with spelling. Children are also encouraged to sound out words and apply their phonics knowledge.

#### 8. British Values

At St Helens Primary the key values flow through the very fabric of our school ethos. Pupils are reminded of them through assemblies, displays and implicitly through planned units of work. The values of tolerance and respect permeates all areas of school life, this promotes a climate within which pupils feel safe and facilitates learning at school.

Within our phonics lessons children are encouraged to join in and work together. Everyone's contributions are encouraged, respected and valued.

#### 9. The impact of our phonics curriculum

The structure of the phonics curriculum provides children with a strong foundation upon which to tackle the complex processes of reading and writing as they progress through the school. This systematic process will boost children's self esteem, confidence and learning. Therefore supporting children with achieving their age related expectations across the curriculum.

We are able to provide an inclusive phonics education by keeping most children together during the daily phoneme sessions which fosters a sense of social inclusion and boosted the performance of the children who were progressing more slowly. Targeted interventions based upon assessment and the needs of individual children will allow quick and secure catch up and good progress for all children. SEN and disadvantaged pupils

are supported through the teaching of a regular, systematic process that allows for regular assessment and additional intervention sessions which facilitates best progress.

Our range of Bug Club materials will enable children to practise their phonics skills whilst developing an enjoyment of reading.

Bug Club Phonics matches the expectations of the national curriculum and the early learning goals. Our teaching, learning structure and regular assessment ensures all children's phonetic knowledge, understanding and skills develop so that they can decode words confidently and engage with higher order reading and writing skills.