



Victoria Road Primary School

Phonics and Early Reading Policy

Signed:..... Head Teacher

Signed:..... Chair of Governors

Reviewed and Amended: September 2022

This Policy will be reviewed: September 2025

Intent

At Victoria Road Primary School we are committed to providing great reading provision and developing pupils' proficiency in, and love of, reading. We ensure that all children have the skills, knowledge and understanding to become confident and enthusiastic readers and writers. We believe that high-quality phonics teaching improves literacy levels and gives all children a solid base on which to build and develop their reading habits so that they read widely and often for reading and information. Through daily, systematic and consistent high-quality phonics teaching, children learn to blend and segment words for reading and spelling. To allow our children to develop a strong phonological awareness and effective blending, decoding and comprehension skills, we have chosen to use a DfE Validated synthetic phonics programme (SSP) called FFT Success for All Phonics from FFT. The programme supports our intentions to teach children to read and write independently so that they are able to access a broad and exciting curriculum and flourish as learners throughout their time at our school.

Implementation

We maintain fidelity in the implementation of our phonics teaching by using FFT Success for All Phonics which allows the children to learn phonics through a highly structured programme of daily lessons across FS/KS1, using a variety of fun activities in multi-sensory and systematic ways. Each session gives an opportunity for children to revisit their previous experience, be

taught new skills, practise together and apply what they have learned and celebrate their achievements. It follows the teaching principles of:

- Revisit and Review
- Teach and Model
- Practise and Apply
- Celebrate Achievement and Assess

Time is incorporated to allow for consolidation so that children can secure their skills, knowledge and understanding. The programme is underpinned by a set of seven core principles, designed to support all teachers and children.

Core principles:

- Systematic Progression
- Regular Assessment
- Early Intervention
- Multisensory Approach
- Cooperative Learning
- Application of Skills
- Reduced Workload and Collegiate Approach

Reading materials have been designed to support rapid and sustained progress and are well-matched to the scope and sequence of the programme. A comprehensive set of 68 decodable shared readers is provided by the programme.

The FFT Success for All Phonics Scope and Sequence is set out clearly and provides detailed guidance and support for teachers to plan and deliver high quality lessons. A synthetic approach to teaching 'puresounds' and the skills of segmenting and blending are incorporated into the teaching and learning materials.

Lessons are planned so that children build on their skills sequentially and systematically and can be adapted and modified to meet the needs of the children accordingly.

Training and support is offered through FFT Success for All Phonics and FFT and our school support staff through this training offer. All staff are given the skills, knowledge and understanding to deliver high- quality phonics lessons and to achieve strong and sustained pupil outcomes in phonics and early reading and writing.

Impact

Through the consistent, systematic and daily teaching of the FFT Success for All Phonics programme,our aim is for children to become fluent, confident readers by the end of Key Stage One. Children are regularly assessed informally by the teacher within the lessons and over a sequence of lessons to ensure they keep up. If children need additional support, they are provided with keep-up sessions to ensure they stay on track with the rest of the class.

More formal assessments are completed every half term using FFT's Reading Assessment Programme (RAP) which covers all KS1 assessments including phonics skills, decoding, reading fluency, comprehension and the Year 1 phonics screening check.

Children who require further additional support (catch-up) are identified using a range of assessment information and will be supported through small group or one-to-one interventions such as Tutoring with The Lightning Squad, a reading tutoring programme where pupils work in small groups with a tutor to improve their reading skills. The tutoring is a blended approach with face-to-face tutoring supported by an online tutoring platform. The tutoring activities are designed and structured to improve reading skills, fluency, comprehension, spelling and phonics.

At the end of Year 1 children are statutorily assessed using the Phonics Screening Check. This screening check confirms whether the child has met the appropriate phonics standard and can be used diagnostically to identify areas that need further attention going forward. Children who do not meet the required standard will continue their phonics lessons so that they are ready to retake the screening at the end of Year 2.

Through the FFT Success for All Phonics programme and our commitment to phonics teaching, children will be equipped with the skills, knowledge and understanding to decode unfamiliar words using a range of strategies. They will have a firm phonic base to support them on their literacy journey through school. They will develop their fluency and comprehension skills,

take pleasure in exploring the rich literary world around them, acquire a love of reading and flourish as readers.

First Steps to Phonics

Children who need a slower pace of learning, have SEND or other needs that prevent them from accessing the FFT Success for All Phonics lessons can access First Steps to Phonics. The First Steps to Phonics programme is designed to introduce children gradually to phonics by first embedding phonological awareness before moving on to teaching Grapheme-Phoneme Correspondences (GPCs).

The programme seeks to reduce the cognitive load for children by gradually introducing more phonics skills during the year. This keeps early sessions short, which is appropriate for young children. It also enables them to understand and master initial skills before moving on to apply them for reading and writing.

Throughout First Steps to Phonics, each GPC is taught over 2 days, instead of 1 day as in FFT Success for All Phonics lessons. This provides more opportunity for consolidation, helping children to remember the GPCs they are taught.

Daily Shared Reader Lessons

In Reception and Year 1 Shared Readers are fully decodable texts in a wide range of genres that include familiar characters, settings and topics relevant to children of all ages. Over the course of 3 terms, children will on average read 32 Shared Readers linked to the progression of sounds in their daily phonic lessons. It is important that children don't simply know their phonics but can apply that knowledge to the skill of reading itself. That is why the Shared Readers are carefully aligned to the phonics lessons and allow children to practise reading the new and recently taught GPCs as well as the Common Exception Words to which they have been introduced.

To support both teachers and children, the Shared Reader lessons follow a consistent daily structure with clear timing goals for each activity. This consistent approach enables lessons to be taught with pace as everybody understands the routine and what is expected.

Each Shared Reader is designed to be read over 5 days. In Reception Term 1, the lesson plans are 15 minutes long, before progressing to 20 minutes in Term 2 and 30 minutes in Term 3 in order to be ready for a full 30-minute session in Year 1. In addition, the five-day schedule also provides opportunities to develop comprehension, fluent reading and to consolidate letter formation, spelling and sentence writing.

During their reading sessions, children are introduced to conventions for grammar and punctuation, so they learn how they impact on reading.

Understanding these conventions also aids comprehension and their ability, eventually, to write with meaning.

Tutoring Programme Tutoring with the Lightning Squad (TWL)

TWL is an approved tutoring programme that is designed to enable pupils to catch up with their reading skills. It provides assessment, planning and teaching tools for tutoring pupils in pairs or individually. The programme provides structured reading activities and practice to address skill development in fluency, phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary and comprehension. In a TWL tutoring session, pupils work in pairs on a computer. During the activities, partners take turns completing activities and providing feedback to each other. The member of staff works with pupils to provide support, teaching and helping them if they get stuck, conducting quick checks to verify mastery and providing feedback to ensure success.

Wider Reading and Home Reading Guidance

The Shared Reader books will be sent home at the end of each week, children will receive a hard copy of the book, which they will read at home for the following week. Children will be familiar with this book from the Shared Reader lessons they have had during the week.

Children will also take home a book for parents to read to them, this is their reading for pleasure book. These are books that are regularly seen on

children's bookshelves and in the library. They are stories that excite children and instil a love of reading.

At Victoria Road Primary School, we prioritise reading for pleasure by promoting reading and striving for mastery within the teaching and learning we offer. We have chosen FFT Success for All programmes because they set reading expectations high. The language in the Shared Readers is rich, varied and motivating. We encourage active reading across the school by:

- Reading to the children every day.
- Offering a rich and diverse range of texts to children, opening their eyes to the world and different cultures.
- Providing book areas in classrooms for children to select and have access to quality texts that are age and stage appropriate.
- Giving every child a home reading record.
- Celebrating reading through events, visits, visitors and in celebration time.
- Provided high quality reading for pleasure books which children are able to change and take home regularly.

Assessment

Making accurate assessments of individual pupils against key learning outcomes is essential for a mastery approach so that learning can be built incrementally in progressive and systematic steps as soon as they need to. Assessment is used to monitor progress and to identify any child needing

additional support. The assessment expectation across the programme is for daily, formative monitoring and feedback to be carried out and for this to be supported and validated by using the Reading Assessment Programme (RAP).

RAP provides an effective diagnostic assessment tool which identifies a child's strengths and areas of development and is used to inform the next steps in teaching and learning. Progress is demonstrated using the summative assessments as they provide an accurate and systematic picture and include elements such as an assessment of fluency.

Staff Training and Development

At Victoria Road Primary School our staff receive regular, biweekly training and updates to ensure that the assessment information has a positive impact on outcomes for all our children.

We have an ongoing commitment to achieve the very best for all our pupils making for impactful practice. We set expectations high and measure the impact against these expectations. Our findings are built into action planning and are part of our continual cycle of improvement. We pledge our commitment to continued development with phonics and early reading and look to research and new initiatives to expand and enhance the provision we offer.