Cottesmore St Mary Catholic Primary School

Phonics Policy



‘Mane nobiscum Domine’
(Abide with us O Lord)

Date of policy review: May 2026
Next review: May 2028

Policy written by: Katie McFarland

Policy reviewed & passed by: Curriculum Committee

Key person responsible for Phonics: Katie McFarland

Other policies linked to this policy: Guided Reading, Handwriting, Spelling, Assessment, Teaching and Learning, Literacy

Contents

Flow Chart – Page 4

Rationale – Page 5

Principles – Page 5

Read Write inc Phonics – 6

Teaching Staff – Page 6

Planning – Page 6

Progress and Assessment – Page 7

Monitoring – Page 7

Phonics Screening check – Page 7

How are Parents and Carers Informed of their child's learning?- Page 8

Appendix 1: Language - Page 9

Appendix 2: Resources – Page 10

Our Mission

As a community of life-long learners,
with Christ at the centre,
we strive to do our best and make a difference to the world.

Dare to dream and always have hope,
revealing Jesus to others through the choices we make,
while living life to the full.



('Stay with us Lord' Luke 24:29)

Mane Nobiscum Domine – Stay with us Lord
Luke 24:29

LOVE BELIEVE ACHIEVE

Phonics Policy Flow Chart for Teachers

All phonics lessons in the Foundation Stage and KS1 to be daily.

Foundation Stage: Autumn Term
First 4 weeks: Children are taught as a whole class with the Teacher for 20 minutes a day, including Speed Sounds Set 1 and Word Time lessons and letter formation.
After 4 weeks: Teachers are placed into four phonic groups.
Any children not keeping up to have additional five minutes group work or one-to-one tutoring.

Foundation Stage: Spring and Summer Terms
Children are taught in four differentiated phonic groups across the year group for 30 minutes a day, including Speed Sounds Lessons for 15 minutes and Word Time, Ditties or Storybook Lessons for 15 minutes.
Any children not keeping up to have additional group work, one-to-one tutoring or move groups. In addition, any children making good progress will move group.
Anyone making weak or good progress will be flagged up by the class teacher, including in pupil progress meeting, including actions and ways forward. Children will be assessed half termly and groups readjusted based on progress and attainment.

Year 1:
Children are taught a daily phonics lesson, lasting 40 minutes. This will include a speed sounds lesson, spelling and storybook lesson.
Children will be placed in differentiated groups across Year 1 and 2. Any children who join the school at a later date will be assessed and placed in an appropriate group.
Children will be assessed half termly and groups readjusted based on progress and attainment.

Year 2:
From September, children who have passed the Year 1 phonics screening and have been assessed as completing the RWI phonics programme will be placed in a Guided Reading group. Children who have not passed the Year 1 phonics screening or have been assessed as still needing to work within the RWI phonics programme will be placed in one of the appropriate Year 1 and 2 phonics groups. As more Year 2 children finish the programme, one of the groups will move to being another Guided Reading group.
Children are taught a daily phonics or Guided Reading lesson, lasting 45 minutes. This will include a speed sounds lesson, spelling and Storybook lesson. Any children who join the school at a later date will be assessed by the Phonics Leaders and placed in an appropriate group. The Phonics Leader will continue to track children's movement through the programme.
Children who did not pass the Year 1 phonics screening will be retested in June, so assessment regularly takes place to check they are on track to pass. Any children who are not on track to pass will receive 1:1 support. Any children who do not pass this re-test will receive further support in Year 3.

Key Stage 2:
Any children in Years 3 and 4 who have not reached the standard at the end of the RWI programme will have additional phonics support. Any children who have failed the phonics screening retest at the end of Year 2 will also receive support in continuing to build and apply their phonic knowledge.
Children in Years 5 and 6 reading at a level below ARE will have phonics intervention sessions, if identified by the class teacher that this is needed. The phonics assessment tools will be used to identify gaps in knowledge.
For all Key Stage 2 children, this will be in addition and not replacing their normal literacy lessons.

COTTESMORE ST MARY CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL
PHONICS POLICY

Rationale

At Cottesmore, we truly value reading and we strive to ensure that all children become fluent, confident readers. We believe this is achievable through high quality, discrete phonics teaching, linked with a literate rich curriculum.

Principles

Phonics teaching should:

- include a discrete phonics lesson daily
- provide plenty of opportunities for children to practice their skills within other lessons
- involve all adults working with the children in the classroom
- involve parents

The discrete phonics lesson should:

- be differentiated across Key Stage One and the Foundation Stage, with frequent movement between groups;
- be well paced;
- enable *all* the children to participate in *all* of the lesson;
- be taught with passion;
- be taught positively, so that children are praised for their successes and are motivated to develop their skills as quickly as possible.

Read, Write, Inc Phonics

At Cottesmore we follow the Read, Write Inc phonics program.

In addition, we teach pupils to work effectively with a partner to explain and consolidate what they are learning. This provides the teacher with opportunities to assess learning and to pick up on difficulties, such as pupils' poor articulation, or problems with blending or alphabetic code knowledge. We group pupils homogeneously, according to their progress in reading rather than their writing. This is because it is known that pupils' progress in writing will lag behind progress in reading, especially for those whose motor skills are less well developed

In Year R we emphasise the alphabetic code. The pupils rapidly learn sounds and the letter or groups of letters they need to represent them. Simple mnemonics help them to grasp this quickly. This is especially useful for pupils at risk of making slower progress. This learning is consolidated daily. Pupils have frequent practice in reading high frequency words with irregular spellings – common exception words. We make sure that pupils read books that are closely matched to their increasing knowledge of phonics and the common exception words. This is so that, early on, they experience success and gain confidence that they are readers. Re-reading and discussing these books with the teacher supports their increasingly fluent decoding.

In Read Write Inc. Phonics pupils:

• Decode letter-sound correspondences quickly and effortlessly, using their phonic knowledge and skills

• Read common exception words by sight

• Understand what they read

• Read aloud with fluency and expression

• Spell quickly and easily by segmenting the sounds in words

• Acquire good handwriting.

Teaching Staff

The Teacher and Teaching Assistant in each class will take a group of approximately 15 children. Some groups may be larger and some may be smaller, but in most situations, the Teachers will take the larger groups or those requiring the most support. The adults will swap groups at least termly to ensure that children are taught by a range of staff.
The Phonics Leader will support other staff in carrying out the programme. They will support other staff through helping them to plan and modelling lessons. They will offer practice sessions and suggest resources to support teaching, from the Read Write Inc website.

Planning

It will be the responsibility of the teaching member of staff for a phonics group to plan and prepare their session for the children and gather the resources they need. They will base their planning on the Speed Sound and Storybook Lesson Plans. At the end of the phonics session, they will make a note of any children who struggled, or were not being challenged enough on the plans and inform the Phonics Leader.
The Phonics Leader will support all staff, and Teaching Assistants in particular, in through coaching during live lessons.

Progress

The Teachers, Teaching Assistants and Phonics Leader will work together to ensure progress for all. It is the responsibility of the member of staff in each phonics group to raise any children who are not keeping up with the pace of the programme, or anyone who is making more rapid progress, to the Phonics Leader. Their job will be to then assess the child and take the action of either moving them to a more appropriate group or putting in place one-to-one tuition. All intervention should be carried out as early as possible.

Assessment

Children will be assessed at least half termly, using the Read Write Inc assessment tool, by a consistent key adult to ensure consistency in judgement when assessing. This data will be used to group children based on the outcome of the assessment.

Reading will be assessed termly by the class teacher, and judgements of levels added to Compass. This will be based on information gathered in class guided reading sessions, other lessons and information from their phonic group.

Classrooms

All classrooms across the school will display a phonics sound chart on the wall, the complexity of which reflects the level of phonic knowledge of the children.

How will phonics be monitored and evaluated?

The Phonics Leader will offer coaching and feedback during phonics sessions. The Phonics Leader will also be responsible for tracking children over time as they progress through the programme. Their role will involve looking at the data to see where support might be best targeted. The tracking grids will then be used by class teachers to fill any knowledge gaps in afternoon speeds sounds lessons, 1.1 tutoring or pinny time – short burst sound recall practice. Additionally, a Read Write Inc consultant will visit twice per academic year, to coach staff and offer an action plan, giving feedback to staff.

Phonics Screening Check

In the summer term, all children in Year 1 will undertake the National Phonics Screening Check, unless an exemption is agreed with the Headteacher. This an assessment carried out in school during which the children will be assessed on their ability to decode a range of 40 real and ‘alien’ words. Alien words are a selection of phonetically decodable nonsense words. If the children are not secure in decoding these words and therefore do not pass the assessment, they will be offered further support as they enter Year 2 and will repeat the assessment the in summer of Year 2.

How are Parents/Carers informed about their child’s learning?

Parents/Carers will be involved in every stage of their child’s phonic development. The phonics leader will conduct an annual meeting for parents during the first half term of each year to inform parents, ‘This is how we do it’ at Cottesmore St Mary. This will also be shared as a video version for those unable to attend.

At Parent/Carer consultation meetings, achievement in phonics sessions will be shared, including if the child is on track according to Read, Write Inc groupings.

Phonics video lessons from the Read, Write Inc Subscription will be sent home weekly to children in Reception and Key Stage 1. These videos will correspond to the sounds that the child has been learning during that week. Reading books sent home will also match the sounds that children have been taught in their phonics group. Paper packs can also be shared to further support at home.

For children who have taken the Phonics Screening Check, the score will be shared with Parents, informing them of whether their child has met the expected standard, or if they will need further phonics support in Year 2. The same applies for Year 2 children retaking the screening. Overall end of year Reading levels will be shared with Parents and Carers in the Annual Summary report, sent out in Summer 2.

APPENDIX 1

LANGUAGE

Staff and children at Cottesmore St Mary will use these terms to ensure the fidelity of the language that is used across the school.

Blending: This skill is essential for reading. It's when the individual sounds are run together so they make a word. Eg. /d/ /o/ /g/ is blended to become dog. This can be done orally so that children hear the sounds and say the word. It can be done by looking at the graphemes written down, knowing the individual sounds they make and putting them together, so reading dog.

Digraph: This is a type of grapheme. It is a group of two letters together, used to make one sound. Eg. /ea/ as in tea.

Fred Fingers: Fred is a puppet who says, reads and spells words in sounds. He never speaks in whole words, so the children copy him when they have to spell a word. Eg. If the word is moon, they know Fred would say it, "/m/, /oo/, /n/". They know this is three sounds, so they hold up three "Fred" fingers. They say a sound for each finger and can then use this as a way of helping them to spell a word.

Fred Talk: Fred is a puppet who says, reads and spells words in sounds. He never speaks in whole words, so the children have to do that for him. Eg. If Fred says, "/c/, /a/, /t/", the children say "cat". Fred Talk is used to practise blending.

Grapheme: A letter or group of letters that is used to write one sound or phoneme. Eg. The sound /igh/ can be written using the grapheme igh as in knight, i-e as in knife or ie as in tie.

Green words: These are words that are made up of graphemes that children have been taught. They are 'go for green' because children will be able to decode them using their current knowledge. Children use 'Fred Talk' to read and 'Fred Fingers' to spell these words.

Phoneme: This is a single sound, usually articulated with one mouth movement. Eg. /c/, /ee/. In the phonics lessons, these will mostly be referred to as 'Speed Sounds', but children will also know the technical or proper name is phoneme.

Red Words: These are common words with an uncommon spelling that children just have to learn by sight. Eg. said, the. Some words start off as red and become green as the children's phonic knowledge gets greater. Eg. she. In the past these words may have been referred to as key words or high frequency words.

Root: The part of the word that gives the most meaning. Eg. cook in cooking and cooked.

Segmenting: This skill is essential for spelling. It's when a word is broken down into its individual sounds. Eg. I can say the word pig and hear it is made up of the sounds /p/ /i/ /g/. This can be done orally so that children hear the word and say each sound. It can be done by saying the word, then writing down the individual sounds, so spelling pig.

Split digraph: This is a type of grapheme. It is a group of two letters split up, used to make one sound. Eg. i-e as in knife.

Speed Sound: An alternative way of saying phoneme. This term is used on a more daily basis.

Syllables: A chunk within longer words.

Trigraph: This is a type of grapheme. It is a group of three letters together, used to make one sound. Eg. /igh/ as in bright.

APPENDIX 2

CLASSROOM RESOURCES

CHARTS
Every classroom and all other rooms used for teaching will have a speed sound chart on display. In the Foundation Stage and Year 1, it will be the Simple Speed Sounds chart. In the older classes, it will be the Complex Speed Sounds chart. Smaller copies of the charts will also be available for children to use at their tables during writing activities. In the Infants they will also be available in the independent writing corners.

FRED
All classes in the FS and KS1 will have a soft toy character called Fred to use in phonics lessons and other story times.

SOUND CARDS
All teachers and teaching assistants in the FS and KS1 will carry around Speed Sound cards to use throughout the day. Eg. To ask a child to say a sound before they go out to play.

MAGNETIC LETTERS AND BOARDS
In the FS and KS1, all classes will have access to the school sets of magnetic boards and the speed sounds in magnetic letters. These will be used during phonic lessons and also during other activities to promote reading.

POINTERS
All children in the FS and KS1 will have access to pointers to help them through their phonics lessons and other activities where they are required to blend sounds for reading.