



St Thomas More Catholic Primary School,  
Saffron Walden

## PHONICS POLICY

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## PHONICS POLICY

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

At St Thomas More Catholic Primary School, we are committed to ensuring that every child develops strong foundational literacy skills, enabling them to read and write with confidence and fluency. Phonics plays a central role in achieving this goal, providing children with the tools to decode words, understand spelling patterns, and develop a love of reading. We follow the **Unlocking Letters and Sounds** scheme, a structured, systematic, and progressive approach to phonics, which supports the teaching of early reading and spelling from Reception through Key Stage 1. This policy outlines our approach to phonics teaching, including planning, assessment, and intervention strategies, ensuring consistency across the school and promoting the highest standards of literacy for all pupils. Through this approach, we aim to equip our children not only with essential reading and writing skills but also with the confidence and enthusiasm to engage with texts across all areas of the curriculum, fostering a lifelong love of learning in line with the values of St Thomas More Catholic Primary School.

## 2. PRINCIPLES OF PHONICS TEACHING

At St Thomas More, phonics teaching is:

- **Systematic and progressive** – following the Unlocking Letters and Sounds sequence to ensure coverage of all phonemes, digraphs, trigraphs, and spelling patterns.
- **Multi-sensory** – engaging children through visual, auditory, and kinaesthetic activities to reinforce learning.
- **Differentiated** – providing support and challenge to meet the needs of all learners, including those with SEND or English as an additional language.
- **Consistent** – ensuring children experience continuity in teaching methods, language, and expectations across all classes.
- **Reinforced across the curriculum** – applying phonics skills in reading, writing, spelling, and other subject areas.

## 3. INTENT

Our phonics curriculum aims to:

- Provide consistent, systematic, high quality phonics teaching through the Unlocking Letters and Sounds (ULS) scheme.
- Ensure that every child becomes a fluent, confident reader by the end of Key Stage 1.
- Offer timely and effective intervention for pupils who are not yet meeting expected milestones.
- Promote reading as a joyful activity that support spiritual and academic development.
- Ensure quality of opportunity by tailoring support to individual needs.

## 4. IMPLEMENTATION

### 4.1 Teaching Programme

- Phonics is taught daily in Reception and Year 1, following the structure, progression and sequence of the Unlocking Letters and Sounds scheme.

- Each session lasts 20-30 minutes following the Unlocking Letter and Sounds routines: Review, Teach, Practise and Apply.
- Teaching is delivered using consistent mantras, grapheme flashcards, decodable books, blending routines and segmenting strategies aligned with Unlocking Letters and Sounds.
- Children reading decodable books matching precisely to the grapheme phoneme Correspondences (GPCs) and Common Exception Words they have learned so far.

#### **4.2 Organisation**

- Pupils are grouped whole-class as recommended by ULS, with responsive in the moment differentiation
- additional adults support targeted pupils during the practise and apply stages

#### **5. ASSESSMENT**

- Teachers assess pupil's phonics progress weekly, reviewing GPC retention, blending, segmenting and reading fluency.
- Half termly assessments using the Unlocking Letters and Sounds Assessment Record (See Appendix 1) track cumulative knowledge, this is then added to the ULS whole class assessment spreadsheet.
- In Year 1, pupils complete regular Phonics Screening Check practise to identify gaps early.

#### **6. INTERVENTION**

Some pupils will require additional support to make expected progress. Interventions follow the ULS approach and are:

- Short, sharp and frequent (5-10 minutes, 3-5 times a week)
- Led by trained staff using ULS materials and routines.
- Based on precise identification of gaps e.g. specific GPCS, blending skills, fluency.
- Monitored continuously and formally reviewed every half term.

#### **7. INDIVIDUAL PHONICS PLANS (SUPPORT FOR PUPILS RECEIVING INTERVENTION)**

Any pupils receiving phonics intervention must have an Individual Phonics Plan (IPP)

##### **7.1 Purpose**

To ensure targeted, consistent support, clear communication between staff, and systematic monitoring of progress.

##### **7.2 The Individual Phonics Plan must include:**

A: pupil's information

- Name
- Year group
- SEN status or additional needs

B: Book Level at the beginning of the half term

C: In class provision

Detail how phonics is reinforced within class e.g.

- Adult support during daily phonics lessons
- Pre-teaching of graphemes
- Additional opportunities to practise blending/segmenting
- Regular revisiting of flashcards and tricky words

D: Intervention details

Specify:

- Type of intervention (e.g. ULS Phase 2 GPC precision grids, blending, oral blending)
- Frequency and duration e.g. 4xweekly, 5minutes)

E: Implementation

How will these interventions be put in place

F: What will the impact be

G: Progress at the end of the half term

Each half term, staff must record the progress the child has made with these interventions

- GPCs now known
- Improvement in blending/ segmenting
- Reading fluency changes
- Decodable book level movement
- Pupil engagement and confidence

### **7.3 Responsibilities**

- The class teacher oversees each Individual Phonics Plan (IPP) and ensures all staff are aware of targets
- The Phonics lead monitors IPPs half termly
- The SENDCO supports pupils with additional needs where appropriate
- Accurate records of interventions delivered

## **8. INCLUSION**

In line with Catholic teachings on the dignity of each child, all pupils are valued as individuals.

Adjustments may include:

- Multisensory teaching approaches
- Additional repetition and overlearning
- Adapted resources
- Smaller group or 1:1 support
- Liaison with specialists where needed

## **9. PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT**

Parents are central partners in supporting reading development. We:

- Provide phonics workshops and guidance on ULS approaches
- Send home fully decodable reading books matched to phonics ability
- Share target GPCs and tricky words.
- Encourage daily reading and communication of progress.

## **10. MONITORING AND REVIEW**

The phonics lead conducts learning walks, lesson observation and data analysis

This policy is reviewed annually or sooner if significant changes occur within ULS programme or statutory requirements.

## **11. STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS**

The school adheres to:

- Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework
- National Curriculum expectations
- Year 1 Phonics Screening Check statutory guidance
- DfE validated SSP programme requirements

Appendix A: ULS individual assessment record



Individual Assessment Record

Name of child:

Date of assessment and colour of highlighting:

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Phase 1 Oral blending	m - a - n s - o - ck c - u - p p - e - g f - i - sh h - a - n - d t - e - n - t f - l - a - g	
Phase 2 Set 1 Set 2 Set 3 Set 4 Set 5	s a t p i n m d g o c k ck e u r h b f ff l ll ss	sat tap sap pat pan pin sit tip mad got pod cat can kit run sick deck red den hit hiss huff bill fun but
Phase 2 Common exception words	I no go to the into	
Phase 3 Set 6 Set 7 Set 8 Set 9 Set 10 Set 11 Set 12	j v w x y z zz qu ch sh th ng ai ee igh oa oo ar or ur ow oi ear air ure er	jam van wet box yet zip fuzz quit chip shop thing rain sheep high boat book hoot farm fork hurt cow coin dear hair pure corner
Phase 3 Common exception words	me we be he she was you they all are my her	
Phase 4 Words with adjacent consonants  Polysyllabic words	spot trip gloss track swim bend lost went damp green train smart growl spoil chest tenth best paint boost handstand shampoo starlight floating lunchbox pondweed	

Phase 4 Common exception words	said have like so do some come were there little one when out what	
Phase 5a  Y1 NC	ay ou ie ea oy ir ue(glue) ue (cue) aw wh ph ew (blew) ew (few) oe au ey /zh/ a_e e_e i_e o_e u_e  nk ph wh tch ve	day cloud tie treat enjoy girl blue rescue lawn wheel dolphin blew nephew goes launch donkey division make these shine explode flute cube stink phone whale catch serve
Phase 5 Common exception words	oh their people Mr Mrs looked called asked water where who again thought through work mouse laughed because many any eyes different once please friends	
Phase 5b Alternate pronunciations of graphemes	a acorn fast wash e relax i mind o both u unit put ow snow ie chief ea head er herb ou soup could mould y by gym very ch school chef c cell g gent ey grey	
Phase 5c Alternative spellings	/ch/ picture catch /j/ fudge /m/ lamb /n/ gnat knit /r/ wrap /s/ listen house /z/ please /u/ love /i/ happy donkey /ear/ here beer /ar/ father half /air/ there pear bare /or/ ball four caught /ur/ learn word /oo/ would push /ai/ day came /ee/ see these happy chief key /igh/ pie by time /oa/ low toe bone /i(y)oo/ cue stew tune /oo/ clue June blew /sh/ special station sugar chef	

## Appendix B: Individual phonics plan template



Individual phonics plan

Name:

Year:

Term	Book level	In class provision	Intervention	Implementation	What will the impact be	Progress at the end of the half term
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						