



*St Francis of Assisi
Church of England Primary School*

"Live, love and learn together in the light of Christ."

The Teaching of Phonics

Phonics is the study of letters and sounds and these are the building blocks used by children to develop reading, writing and spelling skills. Knowing and being able to use the letter sounds is vital for reading and writing.

At St Francis of Assisi Primary School, phonics is taught throughout EYFS and KS1 in the main and in further year groups where necessary. We are proud to use our own phonics scheme, 'St Francis of Assisi Phonics' to plan and deliver our lessons. 'St Francis of Assisi Phonics' is a synthetic and systematic programme, which teaches the 44 phonemes of the English language alongside the 26 letters of the alphabet in explicit phonic sessions. Lessons focus on teaching the skills of segmenting and blending sounds together to be able to read and spell words phonetically. Common Exception Words (as listed in the National Curriculum) may be taught separately due to their more unusual spelling patterns which do not fit with phonics teaching.

Phonics is taught in short, whole class sessions every day: these lessons follow the same pattern in all year groups and classes so that pupils are familiar with the process. In all phonics sessions, pupils have the opportunity to revise and rehearse previously taught phonemes, learn and practise reading and writing a new phoneme explicitly and within words and sentences, and they also benefit from a challenge activity. Children are taught to 'ask the question' to distinguish between different alternative spellings of phonemes. Pupils who do not make progress at the same rate as their peers within lessons, or who have fallen behind, are quickly identified and benefit from fast and effective interventions to help them make accelerated progress.

In Reception and Year 1, phonics is the only strategy used to learn to read. Pupils' reading books precisely match the phonemes they have been taught at school. Pupils take home phonetically decodable reading books to practise reading aloud to their parents using phonics as their only strategy to read.

Parents are invited into school to learn more about the teaching of Phonics while their children are in Reception and Year 1. We enjoy open dialogue between parents and staff at school to discuss pupils' phonics journeys.

Phonics teaching directly leads into the teaching of spelling at KS2, where staff and children use the same lesson structures to deliver specific and systematic spelling lessons. Pupils build upon their phonic knowledge when learning to spell and continue to 'ask the question' when they come across alternatively spelled phonemes in writing and during spelling lessons.

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