

St Mary's Primary School

How we teach Phonics



Unlocking Letters and sounds is a systematic synthetic phonics programme which follows the progression of the 2007 Letters and Sounds framework, with the addition of some KS1 National Curriculum objectives.

Through ULS children will learn the 150+ graphemes that are represented by the 44 phonemes of the English language along with common exception words (CEWs) in a planned, progressive way. This is achieved through daily phonics lessons and reading practice using fully decodable books matched to the child's phonic knowledge.

What does Phonics look like in class?

Phonics begins in our Nursery where children take part in Phase 1. During this phase children develop their ability to listen to, make, explore and talk about sounds. Activities concentrate on developing children's speaking and listening skills, phonological awareness and oral blending and segmenting.

Phase One activities are arranged under the following seven aspects.

- Aspect 1: General sound discrimination – environmental sounds
- Aspect 2: General sound discrimination – instrumental sounds
- Aspect 3: General sound discrimination – body percussion
- Aspect 4: Rhythm and rhyme
- Aspect 5: Alliteration
 - Aspect 6: Voice sounds
- Aspect 7: Oral blending and segmenting

Formal phonics teaching begins in the first few weeks of term 1 in Reception and children make rapid progress in their reading journey. Children begin to learn the main sounds heard in the English Language and how they can be represented, as well as learning 'Common Exception' words for Phases 2, 3 and 4. They use these sounds to read and write simple words, captions and sentences. Children leave Reception being able to apply the phonemes taught within Phase 2, 3 and 4.

In Year 1 through Phase 5a, b and c, the children learn any alternative spellings and pronunciations for the graphemes and additional common exception Words. By the end of Year 1, children will have mastered using phonics to decode and blend when reading and segment when spelling. In Year 1 all children are screened using the national phonics screening check.

In Year 2, phonics continues to be revisited to ensure mastery of the phonetic code and any child who does not meet age related expectations will continue to receive support to close identified gaps.



Our teachers always follow the lesson plans from Unlocking Letters and Sounds, which follows the same repetitive structure of; revisit, teach, practice, apply, revise (address misconceptions). This alongside a carefully planned progression ensures consistency.

Lesson Structure

Lesson	1	2	3	4	5
Revisit	Sing the alphabet song – point to each letter in turn. Recap the graphemes already learned so far, clicking through the grapheme slides at a good pace. Recap the CEW already learned so far, clicking through the CEW slides.				
	Revisit blending to read mess bell laptop	Revisit blending to read jet jog Jack	Revisit blending to read vet vat vets	Revisit blending to read wag win wig	Revisit blending to read exit tax six
	Revisit oral blending jump jigsaw jelly	Revisit oral blending velvet vase brave	Revisit oral blending weather window cobweb	Revisit oral blending exit taxi mix	Revisit oral blending junk vein water vixen
Teach	Teach new GPC j	Teach new GPC v	Teach new GPC w	Teach new GPC x	Focus GPCs j v w x
	Teach new CEW me				Revisit and read me
Practise	Blending for reading jog jet jacket Segment and write for spelling: jam Jack	Blending for reading vat vet Segment and write for spelling: van vets Vic	Blending for reading will win wag Segment and write for spelling: wig web	Blending for reading fox fix Segment and write for spelling: ox mix box	Blending for reading jam vet wax Segment and write for spelling: fox cobweb
Apply	Write the sentence Jack had a jog.	Read the sentence Get the vac into the van.	Write the sentence Fill a bucket at the well.	Read the question Can the fox fix the box?	Write the sentence A vet has a pet fox.
Revise Address misconceptions	j me	v	w	x	j v w x me

Assessment

Assessment is on-going through every lesson and teachers are constantly using what they have seen in the lessons to recap sounds already taught. Teachers adapt lessons where necessary and alter the teaching sequence to address gaps and misconceptions. Phonics lessons provide children with the opportunity to apply their phonics through reading and writing and support language development and prosody.

We assess children's reading by carefully tracking their reading skills. We use previous phonics screening checks in Year 1 every term to check the children's progress.

To ensure no child is left behind at any point in the progression, children are regularly assessed and supported to keep up through bespoke 1-1 interventions. These include GPC recognition and blending and segmenting interventions. The lowest attaining 20% of pupils are closely monitored to ensure these interventions have an impact.