



## Phonics and Early Reading Rationale

### ***Intent:***

Our fundamental aim is to teach every child to read as quickly as possible, and be enthused about reading. We strive to teach children to read accurately and fluently with good comprehension, as well as develop the habit of reading widely and often, for both pleasure and information. These essential skills not only unlock doors to the rest of the curriculum, but also have a huge impact on children's self-esteem and future life experiences.

### ***Implementation:***

Here, at St Catharine's, we are dedicated to enabling our children to become enthused, engaged and successful lifelong readers. To achieve this, we implement structured daily phonic lessons where phonetic knowledge is developed. We use the Read, Write, Inc programme to deliver a highly successful, rigorous reading programme which is carefully matched to the new curriculum. Children progress through 3 sets of sounds, allowing them to learn the essential 'building blocks' of words to help them read and spell with greater fluency.

All staff who deliver the RWI programme have been trained which has given them the skills, knowledge and confidence to plan, deliver and assess phonics to a high standard. Staff are very clear on progress expectations and which sounds children are expected to know by each half term. Reading leaders, teachers and teaching assistants use their professional judgement on a daily basis to assess the children in their group, and identify any gaps in children's phonetic knowledge. Throughout Early Years and KS1, children are assessed formally each half term by the reading leader and placed in specific focus groups which means that children's individual needs for phonics are being met alongside children of the same ability. Daily observations and formative assessments of children's phonic knowledge, coupled with a robust assessment approach each half term, ensures children are given the correct book which is carefully matched to their phonic understanding, and the acquisition of sounds which have been taught. Equally, this means children are issued with the correct home reading book for them to enjoy at home, thus allowing them to



experience early reading success, gain confidence and consolidate the learning that takes places in school.

### Reading in EYFS

In EYFS, we promote early reading in children as soon as they arrive with us in September as we believe this underpins their natural curiosity of storytelling and enjoyment of stories. We begin to teach individual phonemes during daily phonic sessions, as well as how to segment and blend sounds in words to read them. Within every area of provision in the reception classroom, children are exposed to a wealth of rich reading opportunities. Within our indoor and outdoor environment, we also embed sound recognition and provide ample opportunities for the children to apply their learning within their play, both independently and adult led. We endeavour to create rich learning experiences which reflect the children's interests and fascinations, therefore our planned activities are carefully crafted to match their needs. For example, we use the water spray bottles when recognising 'red words', we fish out letters in the water tray, we shape and mould letters and sounds using the playdough, and we mark make using a variety of messy play materials such as shaving foam and gloop.

In conjunction with our daily phonics sessions, we distinguish between environmental, instrumental and body sounds during our letters and sounds sessions and within our continuous provision. In addition, we develop an awareness of rhyme, alliteration and oral sound blending through engaging children in various daily activities. In Reception, we instil a love of reading with various stories that can be shared with the children. Like KS1 and KS2, every term, Reception focus on a high-quality text and we provide opportunities for the children to sequence, retell and use role play to develop their imagination and own ideas of storytelling.

We recognise the importance of parental engagement and children reading at home with their families, therefore during the first few weeks of Reception, all parents are invited to attend 'An Introduction to Phonics' workshop whereby they are given an overview of the expectations of reading in



reception. This includes an insight into what a daily lesson looks like, how physical phonics can be implemented at home, and what our home reading books entail. To conclude the workshop, all our families are provided with a RWI phonics pack to ensure children are given the opportunity to continue to rehearse, consolidate and apply their phonic knowledge at home.

At St Catharine's, we recognise the need for raising the profile of early reading and engaging our parents, therefore we regularly host a 'Books for Breakfast' session. This is a great opportunity for parents to bring their children to school in the morning and read with their child in the different areas of provision. Children love this experience, and also enjoy the selection of pastries, fruit and fresh juices which are on offer.

### ***Impact:***

Our consistent approach to the teaching of our systematic phonics curriculum enables children to become confident, fluent readers and increasingly accurate spellers, which in turn, unlocks doors to the rest of the curriculum allowing children to flourish in all areas.