



PHONICS POLICY	
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Growing in God's love; Learning as we go.

ENDURANCE FORGIVENESS PEACE

FRIENDSHIP TRUST KOINONIA

THANKFULNESS

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Mission statement

To provide a high quality education for all of our children with a Christian environment.

Vision

We are a safe, loving, supportive Christian family which values each child's individuality and uniqueness created in the image of God. We nurture the talents given by God to inspire pupils to achieve and succeed, and foster a sense of awe and wonder of God's world:

- Form foundations of lifelong faith through Gospel values, and sincere meaningful prayer.
- Guide pupils to determine their own personal moral values, and a respect and understanding of other races, religions and ways of life.
- Develop future citizens who cherish the word in which they live and their responsibilities within it.
- A curriculum which has a breadth of experience and equality of opportunity for all.

Aims

At St James' we aim to:

- Ensure progression of reading skills across the school.
- Inspire pupils to read through exciting shared experiences.
- Develop a clear understanding of the structure and language features associated with different text types.
- teach pupils to decode letter-sound correspondences quickly and effortlessly, using their phonic knowledge and skills.
- teach pupils to read 'tricky' words on sight.
- teach pupils to understand what they read.
- teach pupils to read aloud with fluency and expression.
- teach pupils to spell quickly and easily by segmenting the sounds in words.
- develop a love for reading.

Teaching and Learning

Phonics is the foundation of early reading. Our school uses Read Write Inc. Phonics to deliver high-quality, systematic synthetic phonics (SSP). The programme is for pupils in Reception to Year 2 who are learning to read and write. The progression of skills within Read Write Inc. follows a sequenced, cumulative structure that enables all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged or have SEND, to build fluency, accuracy and comprehension.

In Read Write Inc. Phonics, pupils:

- decode letter-sound correspondences quickly and effortlessly, using their phonic knowledge and skills
- read common exception words on sight
- understand what they read
- read aloud with fluency and expression
- write confidently, with a strong focus on vocabulary and grammar
- spell quickly and easily by segmenting the sounds in words
- acquire good handwriting

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In addition, children are taught to work effectively with a partner to explain and consolidate what they are learning. This provides the teacher with opportunities to assess learning and identify difficulties, such as pupils' poor articulation, or problems with blending or alphabetic code knowledge.

Pupils are grouped homogenously, according to their progress in reading rather than their writing. This is because it is known that pupils' progress in writing may fall behind their progress in reading, especially for those whose motor skills are less well developed.

Progression of Skills

The RWI programme is structured into clear stages that reflect the progressive development of phonics from foundational skills to fluent reading.

a. Set 1, 2 and 3 Sounds

- **Set 1 Sounds:** Introduced in Nursery and Reception. These include single-letter sounds and some digraphs (e.g. 'sh', 'ch').
- **Set 2 and 3 Sounds:** Taught once children are secure in Set 1. These involve more complex sounds and graphemes (e.g. 'ay', 'igh' and alternative spellings e.g. 'ea', 'ee').

b. Word Reading

- Teaching of blending begins as soon as children know a few single sounds.
- Children are taught to read 'green words' (decodable) and 'red words' (common exception words) within storybooks.
- Progression from decoding to fluent reading is supported through colour-coded books, increasing in complexity.

c. Language and Comprehension Development

- As per the DfE's *Reading Framework (2023)*, the programme includes vocabulary enrichment and reading comprehension strategies alongside decoding.
- Emphasis is placed on language development through partner talk, role play and story discussion.

By the end of Year 1, most children are expected to have completed the full programme, moving on from 'storybooks' to accessing a wide range of age-appropriate reading material. Children who do not complete the programme by the end of Year 1 continue structured phonics teaching in Year 2 or beyond, until they have achieved sufficient proficiency.

Our expectation, aligned with the DfE Reading Framework (2023), is that the majority of children exit the phonics programme securely and in good time, having developed both decoding fluency and comprehension confidence for their age.

Assessment and Outcomes for Children

Phonics assessments are conducted every half term (six times per year). RWI assessment templates and materials are used consistently and are administered by the Reading leader. Progress is tracked using RWI assessment sheets and the school's internal tracking system.

Children are assessed on:

- Knowledge of Set 1, 2 and 3 sounds.
- Word reading, including blending skills and speed sounds.

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- Fluency and expression through reading RWI storybooks.

Groupings are adjusted immediately following the assessment, ensuring "best fit" for each learner. Children who are reading below age-related expectations are noted for intervention. Additional assessments may be undertaken to monitor the progress of targeted children.

Intervention and Support

Children identified as making slower progress receive immediate targeted support using RWI 1:1 tutoring intervention. Tailored sessions are planned based on identified gaps in sound recognition, blending or reading fluency. Progress of those receiving intervention is regularly reviewed to determine ongoing need. Children in KS2 who have not successfully completed the phonics programme receive targeted support and may continue to access phonics sessions in order to close any gaps. Regular 1:1 and small group interventions are also in place for children who are new to school.

Resources

A wide range of high-quality teaching and learning resources are used to effectively implement the RWI programme and support pupils' progression through the skills framework.

- Each group is provided with appropriate RWI storybooks, speed sound cards, green and red word cards, ditties, and Fred Talk materials.
- The school maintains a well-organised central phonics resource bank to ensure consistency, with resources replaced and updated regularly.
- Teaching spaces are resourced with visual aids and phonic displays to reinforce strategies and support learning across settings.

Equal Opportunities and Special Needs

We are committed to ensuring that all children, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds and with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are given the same opportunities to progress and succeed in reading. Read Write Inc. is particularly effective in supporting these learners due to its structured, incremental and multi-sensory approach. Teaching is targeted and adapted to meet individual needs through daily 1:1 or small group tutoring sessions. Where necessary, visual, auditory and kinaesthetic prompts are used to support understanding and retention of new sounds. Additional resources such as visual timetables, sound mats, pictorial cues and structured routines ensure accessibility and consistency for pupils with SEND. Staff collaborate with the SENCO to regularly review progress and adjust provision, ensuring that teaching is always ambitious, scaffolded, and inclusive.

Home Reading and Parental Involvement

Parents are introduced to RWI in Reception. Regular workshops, newsletters, and online resources (e.g. RWI videos) are offered to help parents support reading at home. Staff communicate phonics progress regularly and provide advice on sound pronunciation, blending strategies, and home reading practices. All children are provided with home-school reading books which follow the Read Write Inc programme.

Library

The school library plays an essential role in the development of pupils' reading for pleasure, complementing the structured approach offered by RWI. While RWI provides a systematic base for teaching phonics and early word reading, our library gives children opportunities to explore a wealth of texts beyond the programme, helping to foster a lifelong love of reading. Children are given the opportunity to choose a book from the school library on a weekly basis.

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