

Reading and Phonics Policy September 2020

Rationale

At St Erth Community Primary School we aim to inspire a love of reading that will continue for years to come. This is approached through meaningful reading experiences inspired by inspirational texts. We encourage and plan for a range of reading experiences so that pupils can apply their reading skills across the curriculum and throughout the day with activities to support phonics carefully planned into the curriculum.

Research has shown that the teaching of systematic, synthetic phonics is the most effective way of teaching young children to read. Reading does not look like reading at first – we need to give children the building blocks to be able to segment and blend the phonemes in a word to be able to decode any word they come across in their lives. By following our own systematic synthetic programme based on Letters and Sounds, incorporating good practise and resources from our experience and adopting an all-encompassing approach with extended learning opportunities, children at St Erth are being offered a quality approach to becoming confident readers.

Aims

- Ensure progression of reading and comprehension skills across the school.
- Teach reading through Phonics sessions, Guided Reading, whole class shared reading, and through opportunities for children to read with an adult on a 1:1 basis.
- Try to develop a culture of reading that involves strong links with parents who actively engage in regular reading at home with their children.
- Provide meaningful reading experiences using the contexts inspired by quality core texts linked to termly topics.
- Use whole class story time, or class novel, as an essential part of our whole school approach, to enrich the scope of texts that children access, secure high expectations, inspire learners, and model lively, joyous reading aloud.
- For our approach to the teaching and learning of phonics to be all-encompassing, progressive, coherent and ultimately led by quality-first teaching to all.
- Language comprehension and composition are developed by talking to people, listening to and talking about stories, and by learning poetry and songs.
- Decoding and encoding can be taught through a systematic synthetic phonics programme

Phonics

At St Erth, we follow our bespoke programme of study for phonics to introduce the skill of learning to read. We ensure that the teaching of phonics is lively, interactive and investigative. We use a multisensory approach so that children learn from simultaneous visual, audio and kinaesthetic activities, designed to secure essential phonological knowledge and skills. Each session has fidelity to our scheme by adhering to the steps for learning (metacognitive approach adopted through the whole curriculum): revisit and review – teach – practise – apply – assess. Staff work very hard to promote phonics at every opportunity so that pupils recognise that it is not a stand-alone subject, but an integral part of all their reading and writing development. We incorporate good practice from other validated schemes and have developed a planning system that promotes phonics through extended activities throughout the day for EYFS and Year 1 and also links to nursery rhymes and songs.

We also believe phonics should be taught in whole year groups in Reception and Year 1 rather than split into ability groups. It is detrimental to children and their confidence to group into abilities so early. Quality first teaching and an 'all-encompassing' approach should help to secure the sounds taught. For those children who need further support – with the day's focus obvious to all: adults in classes are proactive in identifying and supporting those children who may require further support. Those children who are not practising their sounds at home, are quickly identified and time is given for them to do this at school with support.

As the academic year unfolds in all age groups, children identified who need further intervention with reading may do this in small groups or one-to-one but wherever possible, not during whole-class teaching time. Leaders ensure that staffing capacity allows this to take place effectively.

Reading Sessions

Through independent reading, shared reading in literacy lessons and cross-curricular sessions, guided reading groups and reading for pleasure, reading in Key Stage 2 develops and extends the phonetic skills acquired during the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1.

Children explore a wide variety of genres, both fiction and non-fiction which allows them to access, input ideas and understand what they are reading. They are given opportunities to speculate on the tone and purpose of texts they explore as well as to consider both the themes and audience. These are carefully mapped and regularly reviewed to ensure children become engaged with reading from the beginning giving children opportunities and recognising that reading 'is it one of the most important ways to make a difference to their life chances, whatever their socio-economic background.' (p.13 The Reading Framework)

Our children take part in Guided Reading sessions to develop their reading ability and comprehension through specific teaching. These books, mostly linked to the topic theme, are intended to extend and challenge pupils and motivate them to progress, whilst allowing them to take risks, explore new strategies, encounter new vocabulary and demonstrate comprehension with the support of the adults within the classroom.

In Key Stage 1 texts are shared in Guided Reading sessions and throughout the day. This may be as whole class, small groups or one-to-one. In Reception the children should experience at least 5 types of 'text' throughout the day including stories, non-fiction, nursery rhymes and poetry. In Year 1/ Year 2, extended texts may be explored and built upon over time when the children are ready to progress onto this.

In Key Stage 2, high-quality texts are chosen to support the Topic. Children experience these at least one book between 2 and Guided Reading objectives are planned through the school's English curriculum. Evidence to support this learning is recorded in floor books (also used in Year 2). Where appropriate, small group guided reading also takes place alongside Project X Code for reading intervention. Key Stage 2 children are frequently heard reading through Guided Reading sessions and individuals are identified who need further support reading one-to-one with teachers, TAs and parent helpers. Phonics and reading interventions, as well as individuals who require daily opportunities to read, particularly for the lowest 20%, are prioritised throughout the school.

Reading Books

Children will receive a variety of reading material to take home. Initially, this will be flashcards of phonics, captions and high-frequency words learnt so far. Then, children will receive a page with decodable words (only using phonemes taught) and pictures to discuss. Sometimes, children will take home a picture with questions to discuss rather than read, or a book with no words to make up stories to. As the phonemes are taught, children will access further texts and be sent home with decodable, age-appropriate books or bespoke stories written by teachers.

Children work through the book bands (linked to the phases and sets of sounds taught) with Teachers and Teaching Assistants making assessments through one-to-one and group reading. Progress through the book bands is recorded on a sheet kept in individual reading journals to ensure children are progressing well. These are monitored by the class teacher and intervention offered to those who are not progressing as expected. Once children are confident readers, they will become a free-reader. Initially, adults will still provide guidance and discussion in choosing appropriate texts and a 'new free-reader' section is available in the library and classrooms. These 'free-readers' are continually monitored and their text choices recorded to be able to ensure they are engaging well with a range of high-quality texts. As with phonics, those children who do not regularly read at home, will be identified and supported in school. This will be through teacher, TAs and parent helpers.

Parental Involvement

An introductory phonics workshop is offered to parents at the beginning of Reception and Year 1. During this workshop, parents are made aware of how phonics is taught, what support can be given at home, and the national expectations of attainment for the end of the year. Where this has not been able to take place, parents have met with teachers in parent's evening and phonics has been discussed. We also have a section on our website about phonics at St Erth which parents have been directed to which includes links to the pronunciation of phonemes and useful documents. The vital part parents play in supporting reading in the home environment is also acknowledged and discussed. This is reiterated in Year 2-6 for

those children who need further support in phonics, parents are spoken to during parent's evening or APDR meetings.

Reception children are provided with a Phonics Wallet. New learning is added to these wallets, so parents are aware of phonics taught. Parents are supported with strategies of pronunciation and the skill of blending phonemes to read words.

2022 update: due to COVID, face to face meetings have not been as frequent as we would like but parents have been updated through parents evenings, Seesaw and other informal meetings.

Assessment

Pupils are assessed through quality questioning, discussions and observations throughout the day. Assessments are annotated during guided reading or one to one reading sessions. Phonics is formally assessed at the end of each phase taught and individual and group assessment sheets are in the resource pack and are used throughout the phase and term. These assessments are recorded in class and on a central system to allow leadership to monitor. In Key Stage 2, reading is also assessed through NFER tests which offer a standardised score for teachers to use alongside the evidence gathered in classroom practise to form a well-rounded judgement of progress and attainment. These are discussed during termly pupil progress meetings with SLT.

Children who did not successfully pass the Year 1 Phonics Screening Check continue to be supported and assessed throughout Year 2 and beyond if required.

Provision is made for children who need extra support or extension, through regular interventions and quality first teaching (particular attention paid to the lowest 20%). Any children who are not working at the expected level in phonics by the end of KS1, receive additional phonic intervention during KS2. Staff working within KS2 are supported to deliver these interventions through personalised support such as training and observations of phonics in practise.

Additional documents available at school to support this policy:

- St Erth Phonics Scheme: Letters and Sounds, Phonics and Reading.
- St Erth Reading Curriculum.
- Reading Spines for each class.
- Training timetable and documents.
- The Reading Framework.