

Our Phonics Rationale

At Ardleigh St Mary's CEVC Primary School we understand the importance of phonics as a crucial component of reading development; we strive to ensure all children become fluent readers and confident writers by the end of Key Stage One.

Through the use of the Letters and Sounds programme we aim to build children's speaking and listening skills in their own right as well as to prepare children for learning to read by developing their phonic knowledge and skills. The programme sets out a detailed and systematic programme for teaching phonic skills for children starting in Reception, with the aim of them becoming fluent readers by the time they leave Key Stage 1. The children have two daily sessions of phonics and, if appropriate, extra sessions will be timetabled to ensure that all children are making the desired progress. New phonics skills are taught in the main 20 minute session (to give all the children exposure to new graphemes and keep them moving forward in the Letters and Sounds programme) and the children are assessed regularly to identify any gaps in their learning and these gaps are then addressed during the second, shorter daily session of phonics. Any children who are not working at an age-appropriate level are quickly identified and will be placed on a provision programme that is tailored to their individual needs.

We have chosen to follow the Letters and Sounds programme because it is well structured (building on key skills in a structured and systematic way) and, unlike other published schemes, it provides us with the flexibility to adapt activities to cater specifically for the children's varied learning styles and interests to keep them engaged. Ultimately, we find that a high level of engagement has a very positive impact on the children's progress and attainment.

We supplement the Letters and Sounds programme through the use of good quality resources that cater for all learning styles within the classroom. These resources include the multi-sensory methods of Jolly Phonics, as well as interactive games and resources from the PhonicsPlay, Phonics Bloom and Twinkl websites. When children enter our Reception class, we also use the resources from 'The Ultimate Guide to Phonological Awareness' to ensure that they are secure in the essential early skills that will act as the building blocks for their ability to develop their knowledge of grapheme-phoneme correspondence.

Progression Through the Letters and Sounds Programme:

We begin by ensuring that all children who enter Reception are secure in Phase One of the Letters and Sounds programme. This incorporates the skills of rhyming, onset and rime, syllable awareness and initial sound awareness. By the end of the Reception year the children will have had exposure to all 44 graphemes within Phases Two and Three of the programme and will learn how to blend sounds together to read simple CVC words, segment CVC words into their separate sounds for spelling and begin to read simple captions.

As the children move into Key Stage 1 and move into Phase 4 of Letters and Sounds, they will spend the first four weeks consolidating their knowledge of the 44 graphemes already taught, as well as developing their blending and segmenting skills to include words that contain adjacent consonants and polysyllabic words. Throughout Year 1, they will move onto Phase 5 where they will broaden their knowledge, learning new graphemes and alternative pronunciations for these and graphemes that they already know. Children will become quicker at recognising graphemes of more than one letter in words and at blending the phonemes they represent. When spelling words they will learn to choose the appropriate graphemes to represent phonemes and begin to build word-specific knowledge of the spellings of words. Finally, in Phase 6 of the programme, throughout Year 2, as they become more fluent readers, the children will expand their knowledge to include spelling rules, such as suffixes, prefixes, and the dropping or doubling of letters.