The Beacon CE Primary School

Phonics Handbook

(Updated September 2026)

The Beacon CE Primary School

Our Christian Vision is

Learning Together, Following Jesus

Jesus said, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will have the light of life.”

John 8:12

Phonics Handbook

At The Beacon CE Primary School we strive to ensure that all children become successful, fluent readers by the end of Key Stage One and believe this is achievable through a combination of strong, high quality, discrete phonics teaching combined with a whole language approach that promotes a ‘Love of Reading’ culture.

We believe that high quality teaching of phonics is the key to developing independent readers and this is given the highest priority. We want ‘every child to be a reader’ and we implement a rigorous and sequential approach to developing speaking and listening and teaching reading, writing and spelling through systematic phonics.

This handbook is aimed at reinforcing a consistent, high-quality approach to the teaching of phonics across the Early Years Foundation Stage, (EYFS,) Key Stage One and on into Key Stage Two for children who still need this further support.

Pedagogy Overview of Phonics:

Phonics is a way of teaching children to read quickly and skilfully. Children are taught how to:

- recognise the sounds that each individual letter makes;
- identify the sounds that different combinations of letters make such as ‘sh’ or ‘oo’; and

- blend these sounds together from left to right to make a word.

Children can then use this knowledge to decode new words that they hear or see.

Intent

Our School Aims:

- To teach children aural discrimination, phonemic awareness and rhyme awareness to support application into reading and writing.
- To encourage repetition and consolidation, so that decoding and the skills of segmenting and blending are automatic.
- To encourage children to segment and blend as a way into fluent and automatic reading, writing and spelling.

We want our children, regardless of their background, needs or abilities to:

- To learn to read and write all 44 graphemes in the English language.
- To learn specific strategies to help them remember common exception words.
- To experience teaching of phonics which is lively, interactive, multi sensory and investigative.
- To apply their phonic skills in all areas of the curriculum.

Teaching and Learning in Phonics at The Beacon CE Primary School

At the Beacon Primary School we follow the Read Write Inc programme to teach phonics and reading in Reception and into Key Stage 1. Our 2-3 Room and Nursery children are immersed in phonics activities that support the development of their Communication and Language skills. Our main aim is that our children develop their phonological awareness, to deepen their knowledge of blending and segmenting and reading and that they become fluent readers.

Read Write Inc Principles

We have five core principles to teaching and learning. All staff teaching RWI must:

- Purpose – Know the purpose of every activity and share with the children
- Passion – Be passionate about teacher to engage children
- Pace – Teach at an effective pace
- Participation – Ensure every child participates throughout the lesson.
- Praise – Praise effort and progress (not ability)

Read Write Inc

Reading

Read Write Inc. Phonics teaches children to read accurately and fluently with good comprehension. Children learn the English alphabet code: first they learn one way to read the 40+ sounds and blend these sounds into word, then learn to read the same sounds with alternative graphemes. They experience success from the very beginning. Lively phonics books are closely matched to their increasing knowledge of phonics and 'red' words and as children re-read the stories, their fluency increases.
Children will take home a Read Write Inc. book and a RWI Book Bag book which are engaging texts to support children with additional reading practice outside the classroom. The Book Bag books are uniquely matched to the existing Read Write Inc. Phonic Storybooks to reinforce children's learning of phonics at the appropriate level, helping them to make even faster progress in reading.

Handwriting

We want children to see themselves as writers, so we make handwriting enjoyable from the start. We use mnemonics – memory pictures – to help children visualize the letter before they write it down.

The Order of Teaching Sounds

Individual sounds are called 'speed sounds' – because we want your child to read them effortlessly. All children are entry assessed and put into broad Speed Sound Groups for the first four weeks on the school term.

Set 1 Speed Sounds

Set 1 sounds are the initial letter sounds. They are taught in the following order:

m, a, s, d, t, i, n, p, g, o, c, k, u, b, f, e, l, h, sh, r, j, v, y, w, th, z, ch, qu, z, ng, nk

Set 2 Speed Sounds

There are 12 Set 2 'speed sounds' that are made up of two or three letters, which represent just one sound, e.g. ay as in play, ee as in tree and igh as in high.

When children learn the Set 2 sounds they will learn: the letters that represent a speed sound e.g. ay, a simple picture prompt linked to the 'speed sound' and a short phrase to say e.g. may I play.

Every speed sound has a list of green words linked to it, so the children can 'sound out' and 'sound blend' words containing the new speed sounds they have just learnt, for example s-p-r-ay = spray.

Set 2 speed sounds are taught in the following order:

ay, ee, igh, ow, oo, oo, ar, or, air, ir, ou, oy

Set 3 Speed Sounds

When learning their Set 2 speed sounds the children will be taught that there are more ways in which the same sounds are written, e.g. ee as in tree and ea as in tea.

Set 3 speed sounds are taught in the following order:

ea, oi, a_e, i_e, o_e, u_e, aw, are, ur, er, ow, ai, oa, ew, ire, ear, ure, tion, tious/cious

Fred Talk 

Fred the Frog helps children read and spell. He can say the sounds in words, but he can't say the whole word, so children have to help him. To help children read, Fred (the teacher) says the sounds and then children say the word. Example: Fred says c-a-t, children say cat, Fred says –l-ight, children say light



Fred Fingers

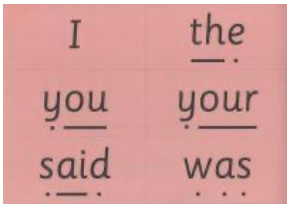
Children are taught to use their fingers to help them write words. Children will say a word out loud and then break it down into its individual sounds using their fingers. So, if a word has three sounds in like dog, d-o-g or ship, sh-i-p the children will hold up three fingers. If the word has four sounds in, the children hold up four fingers. The children then 'pinch' each finger as they say the sounds they need in the word. This supports them when writing words as they write a letter that represents each sound.

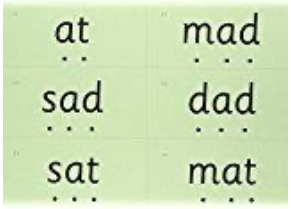
Fred in your head 

Once children can sound out a word, we teach them to say the sounds in their heads. We hold up a word card to give children time to mime the sounds, and then push the word card forward as a signal to say the word together, until they can say the word straight away.

Red and Green Words

Red word cards feature common words with an uncommon spelling, e.g. ai in said. Green word cards are used in speed sounds lessons, for children to practice words blending for reading.





Nonsense Words / Alien Words

As children develop their skills, we want them to be able to apply their knowledge of sounds and decoding skills to read any unfamiliar words, whether it is real or nonsense. During lessons, children have opportunities to practice their decoding skills by sounding out the letters in 'Alien words'. This shows us that children are using their decoding skills and not replying on existing knowledge of real words. This is an important part of the Phonic Screening Test which children complete at the end of Year 1.

Word Time Lessons

Once the children have learned a few initial sounds, they can begin to blend the sounds together to read real words in a Word Time session. Each word time session involves oral blending the sounds the children have learned and know. Children have opportunities to practice Fred talking the words until they become able to read them on sight. Ditty lessons follow on from this, the children go from reading single words to whole sentences.

Story Book Lessons

Once children are reading whole sentences, children move into storybooks. These storybooks are closely matched to their developing phonic knowledge. All storybook consist of green words, linked to the sounds the children have been learning. Red words (words that are not decodable) and also challenge words which support the children's developing vocabulary. The child practice these words individually ad then can apply this knowledge when seeing them in the context of a story.

<u>We teach Phonics as follows:</u>

2 – 3 Room:

Children in our 2 – 3 Room access a range of phonics activities during Key Person time and provision in the learning environment. All practitioners' segment and blend words regularly to support children's learning and development and opportunities to apply phonics and skills are planned into child initiated and key person group activities.

Nursery:

Children in our 3 – 4 Nursery classes access a range of phonics activities during input time and provision in the learning environment. A focused activity is set up for children to access during the day. All practitioners' segment and blend words regularly to support children's learning and development and there are lots of opportunities for children to apply their skills during story time. Children also have access to RWI sound cards and friezes in the learning environment.

Reception: (RWI)

Children work in differentiated groups on a daily basis and are taught through Read Write Inc. Phonics skills are also embedded in writing and reading tasks in Literacy sessions. Regular tracking of children's progress takes places through the Sets to inform planning. Our aim is that children will be moving onto Green and Purple storybooks by the end of Reception. By secure we mean letter and sounds correspondence and the application independently into reading and writing. We provide RWI 1:1 tutoring for children who are not keeping up with the RWI programme.

Year 1: (RWI)

Children work in differentiated groups on a daily basis and are taught through Read Write Inc. Phonics skills are also embedded in writing and reading tasks in Literacy sessions. Regular tracking of children's progress takes places through the Sets to inform planning.

Our aim is that children will be secure in Set 1, Set 2 and Set 3 Sounds and will have made a good level of progression in Storybooks. Children will also have plenty of practise in recognising 'Alien' or pseudo words, in readiness for the Phonic Screening Check and to give them the confidence to read any word. Children should aim to read and write all the common exception words for Year 1. Targeted support is provided for those children identified as under - performers or newly arrived into the country. We also provide 'RWI 1:1 Tutoring.

Year 2: (RWI)

Targeted support is provided for those children who did not meet the required standard in phonics in Year 1, these children will also follow Read Write Inc. We also provide RWI 1:1 Tutoring.

<u>Parents as Partners</u>

We are fully committed to developing strong partnerships between home and school. Co-operation and support from parents is paramount if a child is to become a successful and competent reader. It is our policy that children receive two reading books a week. The Read Write Inc story book that children have read during the week and a RWI Book Bag book. We encourage parents and carers to read at home and comment in children's reading diaries, so there is a clear dialogue between home and school.

We also provide regular workshops for families to attend to gain a better understanding of what and how we teach at The Beacon CE Primary. We believe that it supports family members to build upon the work we are doing in school, which further supports the children's learning and development.

Year 1 National Phonics Screening Check

All children in Year One will be screened using the National Assessment materials during the summer term. If the children in Year One do not meet the required standard in the screening check they will be retested when they are in Year Two. This data is submitted to the local Authority.

Staff development and training

At The Beacon CE Primary, we are committed to ensuring all our Teachers and Teaching Assistants have access to high quality, up to date training to ensure that provision is of a high quality. This is through weekly 'in house' RWI training sessions led by our Reading Leads in EYFS and KS1. Our reading leaders also support staff teaching RWI through regular 'team teaching sessions', embedding what has been shared during the weekly RWI meetings. We also work with the local Authority and having specialist teachers trained on the Readers Count training. Training needs are reviewed on a regular basis as part of our whole school CPD provision and we continue to develop expertise in the teaching on phonics.

Assessment

Formative Assessment in RWI: Daily formative assessment opportunities are built into every RWI lesson. Choral response, group work, partner work, the small class sizes all allow teachers to evaluate children's phonic knowledge and hence modify the pace and focus of their lessons. Formative assessment opportunities provide all staff with knowledge of which children are making slow, steady or speedy progress and hence they can liaise with the Reading Leader to provide additional support (for children making slower progress) or an immediate assessment (for pupils making speedy progress) to allow such pupils to change group.

Summative Assessment in RWI: All pupils are assessed every 6-8 weeks, or more frequently for those making speedier progress, using RWI Assessment materials. The assessment is conducted by the Reading Leader and the materials assess the children's sound to grapheme correspondence, ability to apply phonic knowledge to decode regular words and to read common exception words. Children's reading fluency is also evaluated. Children's progress is tracked, to record their phonic knowledge and decoding skills, and this information is used to reorganise groups, RWI Storybook level and the focus of the phonics input of the lesson. Summative assessment is used to update RWI tracking sheets, which monitors pupils' progress over time, and also to update the Sounds Assessment Tracker. Assessment information, from both the formative and summative assessment progresses, is used to provide updates to parents via Parents' Evening updates or more specific meetings with parents.

Children in Year 3 and 4 who require additional phonics teaching continue with RWI in smaller groups. Children in Year 5 and 6 who still require additional phonics are taught using the RWI Fresh Start programme.

Inclusion

All of our children are entitled to access RWI resources and teachings at a level appropriate to their needs arising from race, gender, ability or disability. A range of inclusion strategies are embedded in practice and teachers are aware of the special educational needs of the children in their RWI group, as well as those who have English as an additional language.

Children making accelerated progress will move groups to ensure that an appropriate level of challenge is provided. Children that need additional support to consolidate their phonic knowledge and its application will generally be taught in smaller groups where they have the opportunity to consolidate their knowledge prior to moving onto the next stage. If appropriate, further intervention will be provided to support their phonic development. Specific arrangements for the provision of children with SEND will be communicated to parents and carers during SEND review meetings.

In Years 5 and 6, children who require additional support attend interventions where they follow the RWI 'Fresh Start' Programme. This follows the same structure as RWI lessons (mentioned above) but with more age - related texts.

Interventions

All staff who teach RWI have a pinny. 'Pinny time' can happen anywhere and at any part during the day. Staff will store speed sound cards, green words and red

words. These are then used to target specific children across the day to ensure that they receive additional exposure and are taught the sounds and words they require.

Specific members of staff have been trained to run interventions daily with children who have been identified through assessment. These interventions are tracked and monitored to ensure impact.

The role of the practitioners who teach phonics;

- To plan and deliver multi sensory phonic sessions, following the 'sequence of teaching in a discrete phonics session'
- Model good practice in use of phonics strategies across the curriculum.
- Ensure that classrooms are well stocked with attractive and appropriate resources for the teaching of phonics.
- Keep up to date with record keeping and assessment.
- Ensure training is kept up to date and relevant to match the needs of groups and individual children they teach.

The role of the Phonics Lead;

- To advise the Head Teacher and SLT of any action required (eg resources, standards etc) school and work with them to improve standards of attainment in phonics.
- To purchase, organise and maintain teaching resources.
- To assist with diagnosis and remediation of learning difficulties / challenge of more able, including G&T and offer specialist advice in supporting these children.
- To encourage and lead training for TAs, teachers and parents.
- To inform staff about current developments in the subject.
- To provide a strategic lead and direction for the subject in the school.
- To monitor tracking grids and evaluate progress.