



# PHONICS AND EARLY READING

## St Bartholomew's Primary School

---

At St Bartholomew's, we use a systematic approach to the teaching of synthetic phonics to enable children to develop secure reading and spelling skills. It is proven that high quality phonics teaching is *'the best route for children to become fluent and independent readers (through) securing phonics as the prime approach to decoding unfamiliar words'* (L&S Notes of Guidance). A strong emphasis on high quality teaching of phonics can substantially reduce the number of children at risk of falling below age-related expectations for reading.

The St Bartholomew's phonics sequence builds on the progression outlined in the Bug Club Phonics scheme. This sequence sets out clear expectations of pupils' progress in phonics term by term. It is to be used as a tool for informing all teaching of phonics including in whole class sessions, interventions and 1:1 reading. The sequence sets out the pace that we expect a typical child to progress through the phonics programme. This pace can be adapted/reduced for high attaining children, with those children who are not on track receiving interventions to enable them to keep up with their peers. Through a multi-sensory approach and quality-first teaching, children's acquisition of speaking and listening skills, and phonic knowledge and skills are greatly enhanced.

## **I. WHY DO WE USE BUG CLUB PHONICS AS THE FOUNDATION FOR OUR PHONICS TEACHING?**

- It is based on the progression used in the [Clackmannanshire study](#), which proved systematic synthetic phonics to be the most effective way to teach children to read.
- It was analysed as part of the Bug Club UCL Institute of Education (IOE) randomised control trial which showed pupils were 11 months ahead of their expected age equivalent reading score after 5 terms of use. We were one of the schools who participated in this research project over a two-year period.
- The Clackmannanshire Study shows Bug Club Phonics, as an SSP, to be very effective for the lowest-attaining 20%.

## **2. STRUCTURE OF PHONICS LESSONS**

### **Classroom organisation**

*'It is recommended that the children are kept together for the daily sessions in spite of different ability levels. This has been shown to foster a sense of social inclusion and boost the performance of the children who are progressing more slowly. However, you will need to differentiate your questioning within the lesson to ensure that all children are fully engaged. Some of the follow-up activities are provided at different levels to help support different ability levels.'*  
**BCP Teaching and Assessment Guide**

### **Part One: Revision**

1. Reading: Children revisit individual phoneme/grapheme correspondences before they read the words as they appear.
2. Spelling: Children segment the words they hear and form the correct grapheme.

3. Writing: Children practise forming the graphemes. As the children are on the carpet this should be air writing or with their finger on the carpet or partner's back.

### **Part Two: Introduce new phoneme/s**

1. Introduction: Children listen to the phoneme and look at it recorded with the correct corresponding grapheme. Think about GPC. Children are challenged to consider the position of the sound in words.
2. Reading: Blending and segmenting. In Bug Club Phonics, blending for reading and segmenting for spelling are given equal prominence, though blending is always taught first in a session.
3. Spelling: *'Paired work is useful because it enables the children to explain what they are doing and hear explanations from others, and in so doing consolidate the learning.'* **BCP Teaching and Assessment Guide**
4. Writing: Children should be taught the correct start and exit points for each letter, which should not include 'lead-in' strokes from the line (this is in-line with PenPals, our whole-school approach to handwriting). *'Children should respond to dictation from the teacher, practising writing words in sentences that include only the GPCs and exception words they have learnt.'* **Reading Framework 2022**

### **A note on handwriting:**

*'Learning to form letters and spell words requires considerable effort and attention. Schools, therefore, should consider the advantages to children of delaying the teaching of joined handwriting. Nearly all the headteachers in the schools Ofsted visited for its 'Bold beginnings' survey did not teach a cursive or pre-cursive script in Reception. They told inspectors that they believed: ... it slowed down children's writing, at a point when they already found manual dexterity tricky and the muscles in their shoulders,*



*arms and hands were still developing.'*  
**Ofsted (2017). 'Bold beginnings: The Reception curriculum in a sample of good and outstanding primary schools' Manchester: Ofsted' Reading Framework 2022**

*'Teaching the formation of the letters at the same time as the sounds helps to consolidate the letters in memory. Once children are competent at writing the letters, they need not use the individual boards for spelling.'* **BCP Teaching and Assessment Guide**

### **Part Three: Wrap-up**

Teachers may choose to share a book from the ones suggested at the end of a lesson.

### **Follow-ups**

Follow up at other points in the day: *'At other times, the children should be given tasks that allow them to practise and apply what they have been taught to read and write independently, while the teacher identifies and helps those who need more support.'* **Reading Guidance 2022**

### **Amendment to scheme**

Through many years of experience with Bug Club Phonics we have found that it works best to integrate the language-specific sessions into the main phonics sessions, and so work on High Frequency and Common Exception words occurs in every lesson.

## **3. AGREED PRACTICE**

At St Bartholomew's we have made some agreements that ensure the teaching of phonics is consistent across the school. These are as follows:

- Phonics sessions take place every day in three parts.
- All children access phonics lessons.

- Phonics teaching focuses on the rigorous practice of blending and segmenting of words containing new and previously learned grapheme-phoneme correspondences.
- Phonics teaching follows the sequence of 'Bug Club Phonics'.
- Technical language is used with the children – phoneme, grapheme, digraph etc.
- When spelling aloud beyond simple CVC (consonant vowel consonant such as c-a-t) words, letter names are used.
- Activities that require all the children to participate are used most of the time.
- Once learned, children are expected to use new grapheme-phoneme correspondences, high-frequency and tricky words in their reading and writing.

## **4. SCAFFOLDS**

Children are taught to use sound buttons and phoneme frames with developing independence. We use a multi-sensory approach to engage and stimulate the children in their learning and application of phonics. Across the school we have a rich and varied environment which children can access to support their phonic knowledge and application. The terminology we use with the children is consistent and modelled within the lesson.

## **5. COMMON EXCEPTION WORDS**

Our school's agreed approach to the teaching of common exception words is that children are encouraged to use their knowledge of synthetic phonics as much as possible to work out how to read unknown words aloud. The bits of a word that are 'tricky' and do not directly

correspond to known grapheme-phoneme correspondence are identified and discussed as a teaching point. We call these 'tricky' words or sight words in school. Within this sequence, we have identified where we expect 'tricky' words and decodable common exception words to be taught. This includes the decodable high frequency word list from Letters and Sounds (which makes up the 100 high frequency word list), alongside the National Curriculum Common Exception Words.

## 6. READING

Children have opportunities to apply their phonic knowledge using phonetically decodable Dandelion Reader books in Reception and books from the Bug Club scheme in KS1. The sequence of reading books shows a cumulative progression in phonics knowledge that closely matches the school's phonics programme. Once the children are secure with the new content that has been taught, they are able to read the books from that set within the phase, to develop their fluency. For this reason, the Bug Club books are out of sync with the teaching sequence by a step, to ensure the children are secure applying their sounds knowledge and recognition of high frequency words. However, a child may be given the next set of books if they are secure by the end of a letter set. They may also read books from parallel schemes within school, alongside their main Bug Club book, both for enjoyment and fluency.

Many children will move away from solely reading scheme books during year 2 and as they progress into KS2. Bug Club books are still used for those needing additional support and closer monitoring in KS2. This intervention

support is supplemented by the Rapid Reader approach.

## 7. DATA

Our children regularly achieve at or above the national average in statutory assessments for phonics and reading.

### Year 1 Phonics Screening

	2017	2018	2019	2022
<b>School</b>	72%	91%	88%	76%
<b>National</b>	81%	82%	82%	76%

### Year 2 Reading – Expected Level

	2017	2018	2019	2022
<b>School</b>	85%	92%	83%	82%
<b>National</b>	76%	75%	75%	67%

### Year 6 Reading – Expected Level

	2017	2018	2019	2022
<b>School</b>	79%	90%	83%	83%
<b>National</b>	72%	75%	74%	74%

## 8. ASSESSMENT

### EYFS:

- Reception baseline in first 6 weeks.
- Termly phonics assessment and data drop.
- Summer term PIRA

### Year 1:

- Termly phonics assessment and data drop
- Phonics screening assessment each term
- PIRA paper at the end of each full term

**Year 2:**

- On-going intervention and assessment for children who did not reach the expected standard in the year 1 phonics screening
- PIRA paper at the end of each full term
- Year 2 SATs preparation and papers in May

**KS2:**

- On-going intervention and assessment for children who did not reach the expected standard in the KS1 phonics screening
- PIRA paper at the end of each full term
- Year 6 SATs preparation and papers in May in year 6

**Rocket Phonics key principles**

- Steady pace and progression of two letter-sounds per week (rather than the usual four) so that knowledge and skills are embedded from the start
- Whole-class mastery style teaching to ensure no child is left behind
- Teaching through original illustrated stories to develop phonics skills and a love of reading
- Consistent daily practice of reading and writing to gradually build children's confidence
- Flexible yet structured teaching materials that can be adapted to suit the needs of every class

**9. NEXT STEPS:**

The school is currently a control group in a research project with Rising Stars looking at the impact of the Rocket Phonics scheme. We are interested in the outcome of this research as we continually review the best scheme to use for teaching systematic, synthetic phonics.

Rocket Phonics is potentially appealing to us as it is centred around mastery – one of our key curriculum drivers.

## Appendix 1

Bug Club Scheme linked to phonics progression



Phase 2 Set 1& 2	s/a/t/p/i/n/m/d	
Phase 2 – Set 3	g/o/c/k	to
Phase 2 – Set 4	ck/e/u/r	the, no, go
Phase 2 – Set 5	h/b/f/ff/l/ll/ss	I, into
Phase 3 – Set 6	j/v/w/x	me, be
Phase 3 – Set 7	y/z/zz/qu	he, my, by
Phase 3 – Set 8	ch/sh/th/ng	they, she
Phase 3 – Set 9	ai/ee/igh/oa/oo-oo	we, are
Phase 3 – Set 10	ar/or/ur/ow/oi	you, her
Phase 3 – Set 11	ear/air/ure/er	all, was
Phase 4 – Set 12	Consolidation	said, have. Like, so, do, some, come, were, there, little, one, when, out, what
Phase 5 – Set 13 (alternatives graphemes)	wh, ph, w, f	oh, their
Phase 5 – Set 14 (alternatives graphemes)	ai, ay, a-e, eigh, ey, ei	Mr, Mrs
Phase 5 – Set 15 (alternatives graphemes)	ee, ea, e-e, ie, ey, y	called, looked, asked
Phase 5 – Set 16 (alternatives graphemes)	igh, ie, i-e, y, l, eigh	water, where
Phase 5 – Set 17 (alternatives graphemes)	oa, ow, o-e, o, oe	who, again
Phase 5 – Set 18 (alternatives graphemes)	oo, ew, ue, u-e, u, oul	thought, through,
Phase 5 – Set 19 (alternatives graphemes)	or, aw, au, al, our	work, because, laughed
Phase 5 – Set 20 (alternatives graphemes)	ur, ir, er, ear	Thursday, Saturday, thirteen, thirty
Phase 5 – Set 21 (alternatives graphemes)	ow, oi, ou, oy	different, many, any
Phase 5 – Set 22 (alternatives graphemes)	ear, air, eer, ere, are	eyes, friends
Phase 5 – Set 23 (alternatives graphemes)	c, k, ck, ch	one, two, once
Phase 5 – Set 24 (alternatives graphemes)	s, ce, c, sc, st, se	great, clothes
Phase 5 – Set 25 (alternatives graphemes)	l, ge, g, dge	it's, I'm, I'll, I've
Phase 5 – Set 26 (alternatives graphemes)	l, m, n, r, le, mb, kn, gn, wr	don't, can't didn't
Phase 5 – Set 27 (alternatives graphemes)	ch, sh, e, o, u, tch, sh, ea, (w)a, o	first, second, third