



Phonics and Early Reading

Intent:

Our fundamental aim is to teach every child to read as quickly as possible, and be enthused about reading. We strive to teach children to read accurately and fluently with good comprehension, as well as develop the habit of reading widely and often, for both pleasure and information. These essential skills not only unlock doors to the rest of the curriculum, but also have a huge impact on children's self-esteem and future life experiences.

Implementation:

Here, at St. Leonard's, we are dedicated to enabling our children to become enthused, engaged and successful lifelong readers. To achieve this, we implement structured daily phonics lessons where phonetic knowledge is developed. We use Essential Letters and Sounds synthetic phonics programme to deliver a successful, rigorous reading programme which is carefully matched to the curriculum. Children progress through the programme, allowing them to learn the essential 'building blocks' of words to help them read and spell with greater fluency. All staff who deliver the Essential Letters and Sounds phonics programme have been trained which has given them the skills, knowledge and confidence to plan, deliver and assess phonics to a high standard. Staff are very clear on progress expectations and which sounds children are expected to know by each half term. School leaders, teachers and teaching assistants use their professional judgement on a daily basis to assess the children's progress. In addition, throughout Early Years and KS1, children are assessed formally each half term. These robust assessment processes allow us to identify any gaps in children's phonetic knowledge. We are determined that all children will learn to read, so when any gaps are identified we immediately put intervention strategies in place to allow pupils to catch up, ensuring that children's individual needs for phonics are being met. Daily observations and formative assessments of children's phonic knowledge, coupled with a robust assessment approach each half term, ensures children are given the correct book which is carefully matched to their phonic understanding, and the acquisition of sounds which have been taught. This means children are issued with the correct home reading book for them to enjoy at home, thus allowing them to experience early reading success, gain confidence and consolidate the learning that takes places in school.

Reading in EYFS

In EYFS, we promote early reading in children as soon as they arrive with us, as we believe this underpins their natural curiosity of storytelling and enjoyment of stories. We begin to teach individual phonemes during daily phonic sessions in Reception, as well as how to segment and blend sounds in words to read them. Within every area of provision in the EYFS classroom, children are exposed to a wealth of rich reading opportunities. Within our indoor and outdoor environment, we also embed sound recognition and provide ample opportunities for the children to apply their learning within their play, both independently and adult-led. We endeavour to

create rich learning experiences which reflect the children's interests and fascinations, therefore our planned activities are carefully crafted to match their needs. For example, we fish out letters in the water tray, we shape and mould letters and sounds using the playdough, and we mark make using a variety of messy play materials such as shaving foam and gloop. In conjunction with our daily phonics sessions, we distinguish between environmental, instrumental and body sounds during our letters and sounds sessions and within our continuous provision. In addition, we develop an awareness of rhyme, alliteration and oral sound blending through engaging children in various daily activities. We instil a love of reading with various stories that can be shared with the children. Like KS1 and KS2, every half-term, EYFS focus on a high-quality text and we provide opportunities for the children to sequence, retell and use role play to develop their imagination and own ideas of storytelling. We recognise the importance of parental engagement and children reading at home with their families, therefore during the first half of the autumn term, all parents are invited to attend 'An Introduction to Phonics' workshop where they are given an overview of the expectations of reading at St. Leonard's CE First School. This includes an insight into what a daily lesson looks like, how phonics skills can be practised at home, and what our home reading books entail. Additionally, parents receive weekly information outlining the phonics learning taking place in school and are encouraged to help their children practise their phonics skills.

Comprehension:

As well as teaching the mechanics of reading through phonics, we aim to develop key comprehension skills to enable children to become more successful readers, to read to learn and to develop a lifelong love of reading. Throughout Key Stage 1 and 2 we use the reading strategies based on the National Curriculum requirements within our whole-class and small group teaching of reading. We use a skills-based approach to reading using the Reading Vipers as a set of skills. Therefore, in EYFS, when teachers read high quality stories to the children, they develop the essential comprehension skills by using effective questioning and discussion to explore children's understanding of the story and new vocabulary.

Impact:

Our consistent approach to the teaching of our systematic phonics curriculum enables children to become confident, fluent readers and increasingly accurate spellers, which in turn, unlocks doors to the rest of the curriculum allowing children to flourish in all areas.