



Benson Church of England Primary School

Phonics Policy

Approved by:	Teaching & Learning Committee
Date:	January 2025
Next review date:	January 2027

Intent

At Benson C of E Primary, we believe that reading has the power to impact across the whole curriculum and therefore the early skills of decoding are the essential stepping stones into reading. We aim to provide pupils with a high-quality, engaging, and progressive education in Phonics; using the review and revisit, teach, practice, apply, consolidate process to embed learning. We endeavour to equip all children with the skills needed for reading and writing in their early stages of school life.

Phonics sessions teach children to speak, read, write, and apply sounds confidently - supporting their progress in all areas of the curriculum. To ensure we equip all children with these early reading skills, Phonics is taught daily across Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 with support for children in Key Stage 2 as necessary. Our Nursery class started using the programme in January 2025.

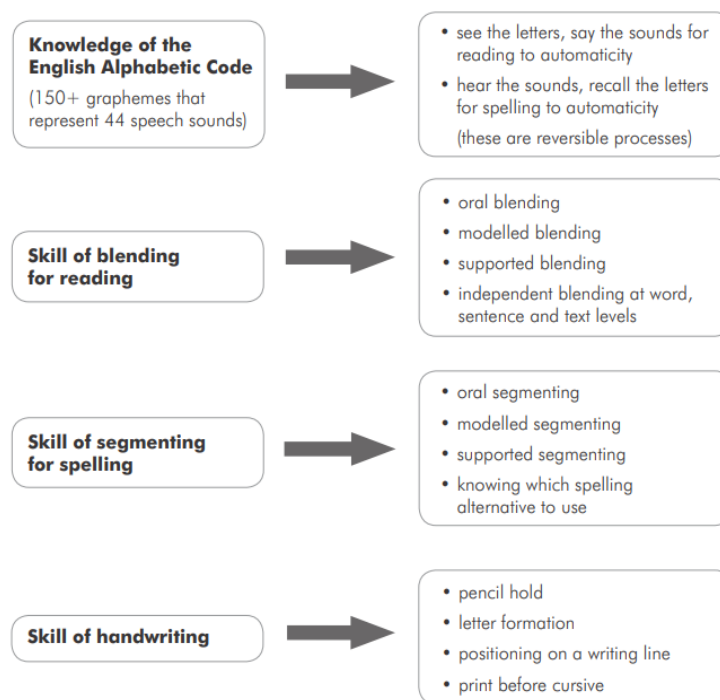
Through structured sessions we aim to provide children with the confidence to apply their phonics knowledge in new situations. We aim to ensure that all children will take the Phonics Screening Test with confidence and achieve a pass mark before the end of KS1.

Implementation

At Benson Primary C of E Primary school, we use the Rocket Phonics Scheme which is a Department for Education validated story-based Systematic Synthetic Phonics programme for Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 2. This programme is fully decodable and is aligned to Letters and Sounds (2007), providing a complete package of resources to teach reading and writing.

Fundamental concepts of Rocket Phonics:

- Phonics is taught for a minimum of 30 minutes daily.
- All staff are supported with regular phonics professional development training.
- A clear pathway is followed through the alphabetic code.
- Children are not asked to read texts by themselves that they can't yet read.
- The Teaching & Learning Cycle (review and revisit, teach, practise, apply, consolidate) is followed.
- Children are supported to keep up, so they do not need to catch up.
- Phonics is taught at letter-sound, word, sentence, and text levels.
- Core phonics provision is distinguished from phonics enrichment activities.
- Teachers have clarity about what, why and how they are teaching.
- Teachers focus on details, such as accurate modelling and pencil hold.
- The Systematic Synthetic Phonics Teaching Principles (knowledge of the code and the skills of blending, segmenting, and handwriting) are taught explicitly.



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Five things to expect:

- A steady pace and progression so that all children can keep up.
- Language-rich, online teaching storybooks (Big Books) which present new letter-sound correspondences within the context of captivating, illustrated stories plus a range of fully decodable Target Practice Reader books and eBooks that directly tie in with the progression of phonics lessons.
- Practical, skills-based Pupil Practice Booklets to support daily practice and application of learning.
- Explicit guidance on the fundamental aspects of phonics teaching, as well as the aspects that can be adapted to suit the class.
- Weekly plans for a weekly overview as well as detailed daily plans so the programme is suitable for experienced and inexperienced phonics teachers.

Impact

Through the teaching of systematic phonics, our aim is for children to become fluent readers by the end of Key Stage 1. Children can then focus on developing their fluency and comprehension as they move through the school. Progress in phonics is continually reviewed through periodic phonic assessments and evidence from their reading and writing. In June, attainment in phonics is measured by the Phonics Screening Test in Year 1, and for those children in Year 2 who did not achieve a pass mark at the end of Year 2. The national Phonics Screening Check is undertaken to confirm that the children have learned to decode to an age-appropriate standard and determines what level of provision they will require the following year. Those children who do not pass the phonics screen have additional support interventions in either a small group or 1:1 with a school adult. Children in Key Stage 2 who are identified through screening as needing additional phonics support also take part in regular interventions in either a small group or 1:1 with a school adult.

Expectations

These are the fundamental expectations to ensure that all teachers and adults working with the children provide a consistent and cohesive approach to teaching phonics.

1. Frequency

- Phonics is taught every day for at least 30 minutes.
- Adults will hear children read individually once a week. Children will participate in reading activities such as phonics sessions, guided reading, and wider curricular activities.
- Adults will aim to read daily with those children who are progressing at a slower pace until they are more confident readers.

2. Equipment

- All classrooms have a Rocket phonics frieze on display.
- Adults who lead a phonics session use the Rocket Phonics big books, flash cards and friezes to aid learning.
- Each classroom has a set of Rocket Phonics word mats available for children to access.

3. Lesson format

- Lessons will follow the Teaching & Learning cycle from Rocket Phonics:

Review and revisit ➡ Teach ➡ Practice ➡ Apply ➡ Consolidate

4. Terminology

- Teachers and Teaching Assistants will use 'pure sounds' when teaching phonics, or when supporting reading and writing activities.
- Here is a link to help with the correct pronunciation.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UCI2mu7URBc>

Phonics Vocabulary that will be used throughout the school:

Blending – process of using phonics for reading

e.g., 'Let's blend these sounds together: c-a-t as in cat

segmenting – process of using phonics for spelling and writing

e.g., 'Let's segment the word: cat is segmented as c-a-t'

phoneme – smallest unit of sound in a word

grapheme – a letter or group of letters representing one sound (phoneme)

digraph – two letters which together make one sound

trigraph – three letters which together make one sound

quadgraph – 4 letters which together make one sound

split digraph – two letters, which work as a pair to make one sound but are separated within the word

vowel digraph – a digraph in which one of the letters is a vowel

5. Handwriting

- Reception Children will be taught the print formation of lower- case and capital letters with clear start and finish points.
- Year One and Year Two: Lead-ins will be taught as a progression of the children mastering letter formation with lead outs.
- We will use the Benson C of E Primary School Handwriting scripts to support the correct modelling to children (see attachment A).
- All adults supporting handwriting need to ensure that children are using a Tripod grip.

6. Assessments and tracking

- We carry out a baseline assessment (start of the year), formative (ongoing tracking after each session or week) and summative assessments (end of every half term) for children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2.
- Year 1 pupils will use the three Rocket Phonics 'Phonics Screen Check Practice Papers' to prepare for the national Phonics Screening Check.

7. Reading books

- Reception Children will receive at least three books per week. One book is the Rocket Phonics book which will be issued after they have completed their first 6 weeks of phonics teaching. The second book is an enhancement book which we ask parents to read with their children. We do not expect the children to read these books, as they are used to encourage the joy of reading and sharing stories. The third book is a free choice Library book which parents can read to their children .
- Year One children will receive three books per week. One is a Rocket Phonics book to match their ability level. The second book is an enhancement book which we ask parents to read with their children. We do not expect the children to read these books, but they are used to

encourage the joy of reading and sharing stories. The third book is a free choice Library book which parents can read to their children .

- For those children in Year Two and Three who still require support for reading will receive at least one Rocket Phonics book per week to match their decoding ability. Any other books that go home are labelled as an enhancement book which we ask parents to read with their children. We do not expect the children to read these books, but they are used to encourage the joy of reading and sharing stories.