

**Charles Saer Community Primary School**  
**Phonics and Early Reading Policy**

**Intent**

At Charles Saer Community Primary School, we are committed to giving our pupils the best possible start on their reading journey so that they will become fluent, independent readers who have a love of books. For this reason, we have selected to use a systematic, synthetic phonics planning programme using the Letters and Sounds approach titled ***Red Rose Letters and Sounds***. It is a rigorous and thorough programme which ensures that children learn sounds speedily whilst still having opportunities for consolidation. Through interactive daily phonics, they build on their growing knowledge of the alphabetic code and are taught the skills they need to read quickly and skilfully and to master the skills required to segment and spell. This supports our pupils in becoming enthusiastic and successful readers and writers. Red Rose Letters and Sounds is not a validated scheme as it is not affiliated with one reading scheme publisher. We see this as a strength as it provides the freedom for our school to choose a variety of decodable texts from a range of reading schemes, ensuring a wider reading diet for our children.

**Implementation**

**Phonics in Nursery**

Children are introduced to systematic synthetic phonics based on Letters and Sounds Phase One (Red Rose Letters and Sounds are still developing this part of the programme). This is broken down into seven 'Aspects' :

- General sound discrimination – environmental
- General sound discrimination – instrumental sounds
- General sound discrimination – body percussion
- Rhythm and rhyme
- Alliteration
- Voice sounds
- Oral Blending.

Each aspect are made up of three 'Strands' :

- Tuning in to sounds (auditory discrimination)
- Listening and remembering sounds (auditory memory and sequencing)
- Talking about sounds (developing vocabulary and language comprehension).

Through daily phonics activities, the children develop speaking and listening skills and become attuned to the sounds around them, preparing them for oral blending and segmenting. The children revisit the different aspects of phonics throughout their time in Nursery and experience the different strands as their skills develop. In addition to timetabled phonics sessions, staff use opportunities in continuous provision to develop the children's experiences and skills further.

## Daily Phonics in Reception and KS1

We teach phonics for 30 minutes a day. In Reception, (following the baseline period) we build from 10-minute lessons, with additional daily oral blending and segmenting games, to the full-length lesson as quickly as possible. During continuous provision children are given opportunities to practice and apply their phonics skills.

We aim to follow the Red Rose Letters and Sounds expectations of progress:

Children in Reception are taught to read and spell words using Phase 2 and 3 GPCs, and words with adjacent consonants (Phase 4) with fluency and accuracy.

Children in Year 1 review Phase 4 and are taught to read and spell words using Phase 5 GPCs with fluency and accuracy.

## Ensuring consistency and pace of progress

All staff required to teach phonics have had full training from a Red Rose Letters and Sounds Consultant or our phonics lead. We follow Red Rose Letters and Sounds with fidelity. This scheme provides detailed planning and a clear structure which all staff follow when teaching phonics including:

- overviews for each phase with termly expectations
- word banks that directly match the teaching of focus graphemes
- additional word banks to broaden and deepen vocabulary in order to provide stretch and challenge
- comprehensive daily planning following revisit / review, teach, practise, apply
- carefully sequenced tricky words and high frequency words with high expectations for application into reading and spelling
- application opportunities planned throughout to ensure blending and segmenting of words and sentences

This ensures a consistent approach and structure throughout our phonics lessons.

The Phonics Lead regularly monitors and observes teaching to ensure quality and continuity.

## Keep-up lessons

### Reception and Year 1

Any child needing additional practice has regular catch-up sessions, taught by a fully trained adult. These can take the form of 10 minute sessions or Fast Track Phonics. The type of intervention is discussed with the phonics lead to ensure an appropriate match for the child/children. Children at risk of falling behind urgently need to catch up, so the gap between themselves and their peers does not widen.

10 minute sessions - These sessions match the structure, procedures and resources of class teaching but in smaller steps with more repetition, to provide children with optimum opportunities to become secure in their learning.

Fast Track Phonics - This is an intervention programme created by the authors of Red Rose Letters and sounds. “The intent behind the programme is to provide rigorous and thorough planning to enable children, who are falling behind, to catch up with the earlier phases of phonic knowledge to ensure effective application in reading and writing”. (Fast Track Phonics 2025)

### Year 2 and Beyond

Children in Year 2 who have not passed the phonics screening check continue to access Red Rose Letters and Sounds at the appropriate stages. They may also access the updated Bounce Back Phonics (an intervention programme created by the authors of Red Rose Letters and sounds). This programme includes carefully sequenced 12 weeks planning focusing on Phase 4 and the high value Grapheme Phoneme Correspondences from Phase 5. Once they complete Phase 5, they move onto the Red Rose Spelling Programme.

Any child in KS2 who did not pass the phonics screening check in Year 2 or is still working within the phonics phases of Red Rose Letters and Sounds are assessed and placed on the Precision Phonics programme which is designed specifically to support children who may struggle in this area.

### Reading and Comprehension

Our main focus in Nursery is around developing children’s language and communication skills. This is achieved effectively through the use of story. Inspired by the “Talk Nursery” approach (Lancashire County Council), our focus books and story sessions are used to broaden the children’s vocabulary and develop their comprehension. Children access an activation week where key vocabulary is explored and “activated” followed by a reading week and finally a review week. During this time children are exposed to a wide range of quality texts, linked to the focus theme. In addition to this, children have a cosy space to explore books of their choosing, alone, with a friend or with an adult.

In Reception, shared reading is taught through the “Talk Reception” approach (Lancashire County Council). Each half term, children explore a fiction text, non-fiction text and rhyme linked to the term’s theme. Children participate in daily shared reading sessions to develop their listening and attention skills, comprehension skills and extend their vocabulary. Through these activities, children also learn that stories have a beginning, middle and an end, as well as common parts (such as characters, settings, problems, actions, and resolutions). As the year progresses, guided reading is introduced according to the children’s readiness. Books are available throughout the Reception provision to support a love of reading.

In KS1, focus texts are used as the inspiration for writing in English lessons and are complemented by a variety of additional text to support the theme during story time.

Guided reading books are carefully matched to recent learning in phonics. There are two sessions for each book. For emergent and early readers the first session focuses on phonics and the decoding of the book and the second session focuses on comprehension.

### Home reading

In Nursery and Reception, children are able to select books from our home library to take home and share with their parents.

In Reception and KS1, children are sent home books which are fully decodable and closely match previous learning in phonics lessons. Our books support children from phase 1 to phase 5. Additional books may be sent home to help close gaps in learning. Children who are fluent readers and have completed the phonics scheme access Book-Banded Books.

### **Impact**

### **Assessment**

Assessment for Learning - Children are carefully monitored by staff as they teach using the 'revisit / review, teach, practise, apply' approach and the focus of the sessions are adapted to meet the needs of the group. Consolidation weeks are used to ensure children are keeping up and applying the skills taught.

Summative Assessment - Children's grapheme recognition and blending is assessed half-termly using Phonics Tracker. This enables gaps in learning to be identified and appropriate intervention to be planned to close the gap.

Children in Year 2 to 4 are assessed through their teacher's ongoing formative assessment as well as through the half-termly reading assessment records. Children still accessing phonics are assessed half termly using the Phonics Tracker.

### Statutory Assessment -

Children in Year 1 sit the Phonics Screening Check. It is administered during the summer term by a familiar adult and the Phonics or English lead. The check involves pupils reading 40 words- 20 real words and 20 pseudo words.

Any child not passing the check, re-sits it in Year 2.

### **Staff CPD and monitoring**

All staff receive regular training in early reading and phonics to ensure everyone has up to date knowledge of how best to support children in early reading and phonics. Through learning walks, book looks, data scrutiny and pupil progress conversations the intent, implementation and impact will be regularly monitored.

