

St Martin's CE Primary School and West Butterwick CE Primary School

Reading and Phonics Overview

Intent

At St Martin's CE Primary School, we intend that all of our pupils will leave our school as highly effective communicators, in order for them to become successful global citizens. We aim to equip our pupils with excellent phonic knowledge, fluency and accuracy in reading, across a wide range of contexts, throughout the curriculum. We intend that our pupils will develop a rich and extensive vocabulary and excellent comprehension skills, through the study of a wide variety of high quality, challenging texts. We aim to instill a love of reading, so that our children are motivated to read for both study and for pleasure, in order for them to grow culturally, emotionally, intellectually, socially and spiritually.

Phonics

At St Martin's Primary, we teach phonics using a linguistic phonics programme called Sounds-Write. This programme is successful in teaching children to read and spell because it starts with what all children know from a very young age – speech sounds. Using a very systematic approach, it teaches them how these sounds are 'coded' within our writing system.

The four key concepts children need to learn are:

1. letters are symbols that represent sounds
2. sounds can be spelled using 1, 2, 3 or 4 letters
3. the same sound can be spelled in different ways
4. the same spelling can represent different sounds

The three key skills children need to master are:

1. blending
2. segmenting
3. phoneme manipulation

Children in EYFS begin with the Initial Code where they practice all 3 key skills whilst learning the 1:1 sound-spelling correspondences and securing their understanding of key concept 1. This enables them to decode (read) and encode (spell) a wide range of words and sentences. At first, children learn to read and write simple one syllable words with a CVC structure. The complexity of the word structure systematically builds up so that children apply their code knowledge to monosyllabic words with up to 6 sounds.

Once the Initial Code has been mastered, children continue to practice all 3 key skills whilst learning Extended Code which explores key concepts 2, 3 and 4. Learning of the Extended Code is a lifelong process – we all continue to develop our understanding of this code whenever we encounter new words! Whilst learning the Extended Code, children read and write monosyllabic and polysyllabic words at an age-appropriate level.

Children in EYFS and KS1 have a 30 minute phonics lesson every day, in addition to their English lessons. Sounds-Write strategies are integrated into Reading, Writing and SPAG lessons for pupils in KS2.

Reading

Reading is a priority in EYFS. In Nursery, children develop a love of books and reading through high quality texts (many taken from the Pie Corbett reading spine) being read to them on a daily basis. These books are often repeated, to enable children to become familiar with the building blocks of stories and of reading in general. In Reception, children start using the Sounds-Write phonics programme delivered by highly trained staff. Children have access to quality books, which are matched to their current phonic knowledge. All this enables the children to quickly build up the fluency and confidence of their reading.

The key focus of reading in KS1 is to ensure that children can decode words accurately and develop a good standard of fluency. (This is judged at approximately 90 words per minute as detailed in the Year 2 assessment framework.) The Sounds Write phonics programme is the principle method of achieving this, alongside a range of reading opportunities throughout the curriculum.

Children across the school also take part in whole class guided reading sessions. These consists of studying a range of high quality stimulus, including fiction texts, non-fiction texts, video clips and images, which enable children to develop skills such as inference and retrieval. We ensure that all pupils have the opportunity to explore a wide ranging and diverse selection of quality texts throughout their time at our school. KS2 pupils access to the 'Reading Plus' programme, which has a proven track record of supporting fluency.