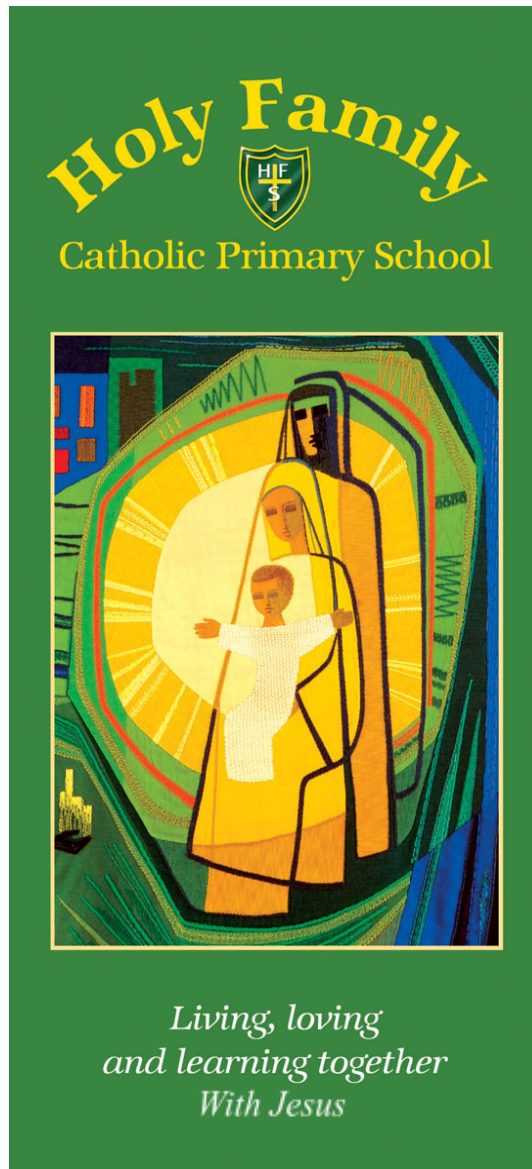


Holy Family Catholic Primary School

The Rosary Trust



Phonics Policy



PHONICS POLICY

Mission Statement

This policy has been written in line with the School's Mission Statement:

*'In our Catholic School, with God at the centre of our lives,
we offer every child a high standard of education.
We meet individual needs, in a caring and loving community,
which celebrates our faith'.*

.....Living, Loving, Learning, Together with Jesus.....

At Holy Family School we strive to ensure that all children become successful, fluent readers by the end of Key Stage 1 and believe this is achievable through a combination of strong, high quality, discrete phonics teaching combined with a whole language approach that promotes a 'Reading for Pleasure' culture. To achieve the age-related expectations, children at the end of Key Stage 1 need to read fluently at 90 words per minute. As children move into Key Stage 2, it is vitally important that even those who have made the slowest progress are able to read age-appropriate texts independently and with fluency. For children to engage with the wider curriculum, they need to be able to read well, making inferences and drawing on background knowledge to support their developing understanding of a text when they read. In order to achieve this, children need to be able to draw not only on their phonic knowledge but also on their wider reading and comprehension skills, each of which must be taught. The first step in this complex process is the link between spoken and written sounds.

This policy is aimed at reinforcing a consistent, high-quality approach to the teaching of phonics across Foundation stage, Key Stage 1 and on into key stage two for children who still need this further support.

At Holy Family School, Essential Letters and Sounds (ELS) is our chosen Phonics programme. The aim of ELS is to get all children to read well, quickly. It teaches children to read by identifying the phonemes (the smallest unit of sound) and graphemes (the written version of the sound) within words and using these to read words. Essential Letters and Sounds is a systematic synthetic phonics programme and was validated by the Department for Education in June 2021.

All members of staff are trained to teach ELS to ensure that we have an expert team of reading teachers. As a staff team, we regularly meet to review our practice and to practise teaching together. This ensures that all children receive high quality teaching every day. Our classrooms are well resourced to ensure that every child has the resources required to learn to read well.

Reading is at the heart of everything that we do and is a central part of every pupil's life at our school. We instill a love of reading from the very beginning of their education, every child at our school is a reader and so are their teachers. We believe all children can become confident readers during their time in primary education. Children's love for reading is evident through their continuous engagement, desire to read for pleasure and their understanding of a range of texts, authors and illustrators and this is further developed throughout our reading curriculum.

To ensure all children learn to read well, quickly, children learn Phonics from the very start of Foundation. It is explicitly taught every day in EYFS and KS1 during a dedicated slot before break during the morning timetable. Throughout the day, children use their growing Phonics knowledge to support them in other areas of the curriculum and have many opportunities to practise reading decodable texts precisely matched to the phonic knowledge. We know that reading is a fundamental life skill and ensure that all children leave our school able to read well.

ELS is a whole class teaching model. This means that every single pupil has the same opportunities when learning to read. Learning to read well, early, is a priority for every child. Children who may find it harder to learn how to read are given extra support from staff every day. We ensure that all children have to learn, to read well and keep up rather than have to catch-up.

Daily Phonics lessons continue in Year 1 and further through the school to ensure all children become confident, fluent readers.

We follow the ELS progression and sequence. This allows our children to practise their existing phonic knowledge whilst building their understanding of the 'code' of our language. As a result, children can tackle any unfamiliar words that they might discover.

We teach children the more rarely used GPCs (Grapheme-Phoneme-Correspondence) through the ELS progression. This means that they can decode and read more words with increased fluency.

ELS is supported by a wide range of completely decodable texts. These cover both fiction and nonfiction and are exciting and engaging for all our pupils. We match the home reading texts to each child's current phonic knowledge to ensure that they consolidate their most recent teaching and learning at home.

Children experience the joy of books and language whilst rapidly acquiring the skills they need to become fluent independent readers and writers. ELS teaches relevant, useful and ambitious vocabulary to support children's journey to becoming fluent and independent readers.

At Holy Family School, we begin by teaching the single letter sounds before moving to digraphs (two letters spelling one sound), trigraphs (three letters spelling one sound) and quadgraphs (four letters spelling one sound). We teach children to:

- Decode by identifying each sound within a word and blending them together to read fluently
- Encode by segmenting each sound to write words accurately.

The structure of ELS lessons allows children to know what is coming next, what they need to do, and how to achieve success. This makes it easier for children to learn the GPCs we are teaching (the alphabetic code) and how to apply this when reading.

ELS is designed on the principle that children should 'keep up' rather than 'catch up'. Interventions are delivered within the lesson by staff and any child who is struggling with the new knowledge can be immediately targeted with appropriate support. Where further support is required, 1:1 intervention is used where needed. These interventions are short, specific and effective.

ELS is designed to make use of all the teaching time during the phonics lesson – through targeted support where required, reducing the need for external interventions - meaning that there is minimal disruption to curriculum teaching time.

Where further phonic support is required in Key Stage 2, this is timetabled daily to ensure that any child rapidly catches up.

Children are assessed in week 5 of each half term to ensure that any specific gaps can be targeted immediately.

We reinforce the link between reading and writing in every ELS lesson through the independent application of the children's understanding. We also ensure that all our staff reference the learning from ELS lessons when writing as part of the wider curriculum.

Reviewed Spring 2025

Review due Spring 2028