



DATCHET ST. MARY'S C OF E PRIMARY ACADEMY

Phonics Policy

Review Date: Autumn Term

Vision

At Datchet St Mary's our vision is 'We are one, we are strongest working together in unity' 1:Corinthians 12-14. This vision is the heart of everything that we do.

Policy produced by: Amelia Gilchrist

To be reviewed: Annually

At Datchet St Mary's our vision is 'We are one, we are strongest working together in unity' 1: Corinthians 12 – 14. This vision is at the heart of everything that we do. In English pupils use our vision to work with talk partners, drama for writing and collaborating with visitors. We use our school trips as stimulus for writing and work with a partner to edit our work. Using our big write every term we work as a school to improve our writing.

Members of staff responsible: Amelia Gilchrist

Links to other policies: Handwriting policy, marking and feedback policy, EYFS policy, English policy

Intent

At Datchet St Mary's Primary Academy we want every child to be successful, fluent readers and writers by the end of Key Stage One and we believe that this is achievable through a combination of strong, high quality, discrete phonics teaching combined with regular, daily opportunities for developing reading skills. The teaching of phonics is a key strategy that is used to help our pupil to read, write and spell.

At Datchet St Mary's, we aim

- To provide consistent, high quality phonics teaching that ensures all pupils have a strong foundation upon which to tackle the complex processes of reading and writing.
 - To ensure that the teaching of synthetic phonics is systematic and progressive throughout the foundation stage and key stage one
 - To ensure that pupils have sound phonetic knowledge, understanding and skills so that they can decode words confidently and engage with higher order reading and writing skills.
- To teach pupil aural discrimination, phonemic awareness and rhyme to aid reading, writing and spelling development.
- To encourage the use of segmenting and blending so that decoding skills provide a sound foundation for reading, writing and spelling.
 - To ensure the teaching of phonics is lively, interactive and investigative.
 - To ensure pupils use phonic awareness across the curriculum.
 - To ensure that pupils know the 44 phonemes within the English language.
 - To ensure that pupils recognise the graphemes within words and associate them with the appropriate phoneme when reading.
 - To ensure pupils are taught strategies to identify and decode 'tricky words' within the English language

Implementation

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 led by our Reading/Phonics Lead. As a staff team, we regularly meet to

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review our practice and to practise teaching together. This ensures that all children receive high-quality first 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. Reading 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 Reception. It is explicitly taught every day during a dedicated slot on the timetable. Throughout the day, children use their growing Phonic 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. This includes reading 1:1 with a member of staff, with a partner during paired reading and during whole class reading sessions. 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 their teacher every day. We ensure that all children 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 where interventions are needed 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 more rarely used GPCs 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 non-fiction 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. We also provide children with a shared reading text. This allows children to be exposed to a range of books and the expectation is that children read these books with parents supporting any new vocabulary.

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 Datchet St Mary's we begin by teaching the single letter sounds before moving to digraphs (two letters spelling one sound), trigraphs (three letters spelling one sound) and quadraphs (four letters spelling one sound).

We teach children to:

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- 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 the teacher and any child who is struggling with the new knowledge can be immediately targeted with appropriate support. Where further support is required, interventions are used throughout the school 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 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.

Impact

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 teachers reference the learning from ELS lessons when writing as part of the wider curriculum.

Teachers use formative assessment following the ELS tracking programme. Assessments will inform teachers of targeted intervention sessions that may be needed. A phonics tracker is completed by each class teacher in September, December, March and July to identify the number of pupils in the class working within each phase. The phonics Screening Check is completed in the summer term of Year 1. The test assesses pupils' phonics skills and each pupil is scored against a national standard. Those pupils not achieving the standard will retake the test in the summer term of Year 2.