



Phonics Ambition

Intent

At St Patrick's Catholic Voluntary Academy, phonics is a high priority as we are passionate about ensuring our pupils become confident, enthusiastic and life-long readers and writers. We believe that systematic, synthetic phonics provides all learners, particularly the most disadvantaged or those with SEND, the strong foundations and skills to ensure they succeed. Our intention is that, through our ambitious and effective teaching of phonics, children learn to segment words to support their spelling ability, blend sounds to read words and apply this knowledge to books that match their developing knowledge.

Alongside our phonics scheme, sharing stories, information texts, rhymes and poetry with the whole class or small groups is also used widely to develop a love for reading, as are regular visits to the school library.

Implementation

At St Patrick's Catholic Voluntary Academy, we use the ALS Letters and Sounds programme, a quality first teaching approach to phonics. This allows our whole class approach to phonics teaching and learning to be progressive and consistent from our Nursery up to Year 2 and beyond with clear learning milestones. Children in our Nursery work on Phase 1 phonics, which concentrates on developing their speaking and listening skills, sound discrimination and crucially their phonological and phonemic awareness. This lays the foundations for applying the sounds they learn in Reception and KS1. As children move into Reception, they continue to build on their phonemic awareness and are quickly introduced to Phase 2 which marks the start of our SSP approach. This is subsequently followed by Phases 3 and 4 later in their Reception year. Pupils have discrete, daily phonics sessions where they revise previous learning, are taught new graphemes/phoneme correspondences, practise together and apply what they have learnt. Through our phonics scheme, the children are taught the 44 phonemes that make up all the sounds required for reading and spelling. These phonemes include those made by just one letter and those that are made by two or more. At the start of Year 1, the children work through phase 5 and in Year 1 and 2 the children are introduced to alternative ways of representing the same sound to strengthen their spelling ability.

Teachers at St Patrick's regularly and systematically check learners' skills and knowledge application, identify possible misconceptions and provide clear feedback. In doing so they respond and adapt their teaching and where necessary identify the need for timely interventions which are used to support specific needs and support pupils to keep up.

Impact

Through the teaching of systematic phonics, our aim is for children to become fluent readers by the end of Key Stage 1. Once children have acquired a strong phonic knowledge they can then focus more on developing their fluency and comprehension and reading for meaning. Targeted and timely intervention sessions enable a greater proportion of pupils to keep up to meet year group expectations or, in the case of those working significantly below expectations, to make better than expected progress. The phonics subject lead provides an action plan for the subject and monitors this throughout the year while addressing new areas for development and improvement annually. Attainment in phonics is measured by the phonics screening test at the end of Year 1 and historically we have always been within or above the national average. Children at St Patrick's develop a confident and a 'can-do' attitude towards reading and their love of reading is continually fostered both personally and by the staff at St Patrick's.