

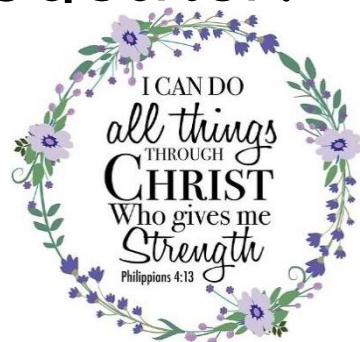
ST. GERARD'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL



Phonics Policy 2026 - 2028

“With Christ at our side and St Gerard as our guide, we live, love, learn and pray together.”

SUPERSONIC
Phonic Friends



Intent

At St. Gerard's Catholic Primary School, we believe that every child should have the opportunity to become a confident, fluent reader and writer. We endeavour to provide a language-rich environment where children develop strong speaking, listening and communication skills alongside the essential knowledge and skills needed to read and write successfully.

We recognise that phonics provides the foundations for early reading and writing. Through a consistent, systematic and engaging approach, we aim to ensure that all children develop the knowledge, confidence and fluency needed to become successful readers.

We use Supersonic Phonic Friends, a systematic synthetic phonics programme which takes children on a carefully structured journey from simple to increasingly complex phonics knowledge. The programme develops children's ability to listen carefully, hear and identify sounds in words, learn the spellings that represent those sounds and apply their knowledge when reading and writing. The progression moves from developing firm foundations in phonological awareness through The Basics, before children progress through increasingly complex phonics knowledge and the Higher Levels of Phonics.

Our children learn phonics through a consistent shared language and a memorable cast of Supersonic Phonic Friends. Characters such as Listening Len, See it Sam, Segmenting Seb, Blending Ben, Building Bill, Reading Rex and Writing Ron help children understand and remember the important skills involved in learning to read and write.

We want our children to develop a love of reading alongside the confidence to tackle unfamiliar words. We have high expectations for every child and are committed to ensuring that children who need additional support receive timely intervention so that no child is left behind.

Implementation

At St. Gerard's, phonics is taught through a consistent and systematic approach using Supersonic Phonic Friends. Children take part in regular, carefully structured phonics lessons which build upon their previous knowledge and enable them to apply their learning when reading and writing.

From Nursery onwards, children develop the firm foundations needed for successful phonics learning. Through listening activities, songs, rhyme, rhythm, alliteration and oral blending and segmenting, children develop their phonological awareness and learn to tune into the sounds around them and within words. These essential skills prepare children for the systematic teaching of phonics.

As children progress through Reception and Key Stage 1, they follow the carefully sequenced Supersonic Phonic Friends progression. The programme moves from Firm Foundations in Phonics through The Basics, including the development of children's ability to recognise, build, read and write words, before progressing to adjacent consonants and the Higher Levels of Phonics.

A consistent shared language is used throughout phonics teaching so that children become increasingly familiar with the routines and expectations of their learning. Children are encouraged to:

"Listen with Len, so you don't need a pen!"

"Let's see it with Sam!"

Segment with Seb

Blend with Ben

Build with Bill

Read with Rex

Write with Ron

"Read with speed!"

"Write with all your might!"

These memorable characters and phrases support children in understanding the different processes involved in reading and writing. For example, children learn to segment words into individual sounds with Seb, blend sounds back together with Ben and use their phonics knowledge to build, read and write words.

Children are actively involved in their learning through consistent routines and interactive responses. They use bossy phonic fingers, word whispers, turn, talk and tell opportunities and the familiar my turn, our turn, your turn approach. These routines encourage every child to participate and provide teachers with regular opportunities to check children's understanding.

During lessons, children are taught to listen carefully to sounds before looking at the spellings that represent them. They develop their understanding of how sounds and spellings work together and learn to apply this knowledge when decoding and encoding words. Children are regularly encouraged to segment and blend, because, as our Supersonic Phonic Friends remind us, "A super segment and a brilliant blend helps us to hear the word at the end."

Phonics teaching is adapted to meet the needs of all learners. Teachers use ongoing assessment and observation to identify children who require further support or additional challenge. Where gaps are identified, timely intervention and targeted practice are provided to ensure that children can keep up with the programme.

Reading and phonics are closely linked at St. Gerard's. Children are provided with opportunities to apply their developing phonics knowledge through appropriately matched reading materials, alongside books that are shared and enjoyed for pleasure. As children's reading becomes increasingly fluent, they develop the confidence and independence to access a wider range of texts.

We also recognise the important role that parents and carers play in children's early reading development. We aim to provide opportunities and guidance that help families understand how phonics is taught in school and how they can support their child's reading journey at home.

Impact

The impact of our phonics teaching is seen in children who develop the knowledge, confidence and skills needed to become successful readers and writers.

Through regular assessment and careful teacher observation, we continually monitor children's progress and use this information to inform future teaching and intervention. Assessment takes place throughout lessons through questioning, discussion, observation and children's application of their phonics knowledge when reading and writing.

We expect our children to increasingly demonstrate that they can:

- listen carefully and identify the sounds within words;
- confidently segment words into individual sounds;
- blend sounds together to read words;
- recognise and recall the spellings that represent different sounds;
- apply their phonics knowledge when reading unfamiliar words;
- use their developing knowledge to spell and write words;
- read with increasing fluency, confidence and expression;
- develop a growing love of reading.

As children progress through the Supersonic Phonic Friends programme, they build upon their previous learning and become increasingly secure in making connections between sounds and spellings. The programme encourages children to move from recognising and building simple words towards applying increasingly complex phonics knowledge in both reading and writing.

Children who require additional support are identified quickly and receive targeted intervention to address gaps in their phonics knowledge. We believe that high-quality first teaching, combined with effective assessment and timely support, gives every child the best possible opportunity to succeed.

Ultimately, our aim is for every child at St. Gerard's to leave their early reading journey with the confidence to approach words independently, the skills to read fluently and accurately and, most importantly, a lifelong love of reading.

Policy reviewed by: Miss Crane (English/Phonics Lead)

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