



Essential Letters and Sounds Policy at Blackburn The Redeemer

“It is essential that by the end of their primary education, all pupils are able to read fluently, and with confidence, in any subject in their secondary education”

The National Curriculum 2021

At the Redeemer, reading is a central part of every pupil’s life at our school. We instil a love of reading from the very beginning of their education to ensure that every child at our school is a reader. 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.

Phonics

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. Our classrooms are well resourced to ensure that every child has the resources required to learn to read well.

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 their 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 we want to 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. **ELS** is designed on the principle that children should ‘keep up’ rather than ‘catch up’. Targeted support is given within the lesson so that any child who is struggling can be immediately targeted with appropriate support. Where further support is required, 1:1 or

small groups interventions are used. These interventions are short, specific and effective. Where further phonic support is required in Key Stage 2, this is timetabled to ensure that any child is given every opportunity to catch up.

To ensure all children learn to read well and quickly, children at The Redeemer, 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 are able to use their growing phonic knowledge to support them in other areas of the foundation stage curriculum and have many opportunities to practise reading decodable texts precisely matched to their phonic knowledge. This includes 1:1 reading with an adult, paired reading and whole class and group reading sessions.

Daily Phonics lessons continue in Year 1 and further through the school where necessary. 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 in the summer term of Year 1. 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. 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 The Redeemer, 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:

- 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, thus reducing their cognitive over load. This makes it easier for children to learn the GPCs we are teaching (the alphabetic code) and how to apply this when reading and understanding texts.

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

Early Reading

Throughout Key Stage One, our whole class, shared and guided reading sessions balance the teaching of reading between word reading, wider decoding skills, fluency, grammar for reading, wider comprehension strategies and response to text in order to develop fluent readers who understand what they are reading. Fluency and comprehension is taught from an early age to prevent comprehension difficulties arising as the language demand of the texts they encounter increases.

In Key Stage One the teaching of specific skills follow the approach below:

- Teaching specific vocabulary and looking at vocabulary in context
- Teaching fluency. Teacher model read- children respond in a variety of ways
- Children shared reading
- Comprehension lessons

A range of whole class approaches are used to develop reading skills such as:

- Whole class, teacher led reading
- Choral reading
- Paired reading
- Individual reading with an adult
- Guided group reading

Reading for Pleasure

At the Redeemer we strive to foster a culture of reading for enjoyment.

- We develop social reading environments in our classrooms
- Teachers share with the children the books they are reading and share book recommendations in class
- We encourage independent readers to read throughout the week
- All teachers have a specific slot on their timetable to read aloud to children. Teachers and children select a range of high quality reading material including poetry, non-fiction and novels. These are books to be shared and enjoyed throughout the week.

National Curriculum for reading in Key Stage One

Year 1 programme of study

Reading – word reading

Statutory requirements

Pupils should be taught to:

- apply phonic knowledge and skills as the route to decode words
- respond speedily with the correct sound to graphemes (letters or groups of letters) for all 40+ phonemes, including, where applicable, alternative sounds for graphemes
- read accurately by blending sounds in unfamiliar words containing GPCs that have been taught
- read common exception words, noting unusual correspondences between spelling and sound and where these occur in the word
- read words containing taught GPCs and –s, –es, –ing, –ed, –er and –est endings
- read other words of more than one syllable that contain taught GPCs
- read words with contractions [for example, I'm, I'll, we'll], and understand that the apostrophe represents the omitted letter(s)
- read aloud accurately books that are consistent with their developing phonic knowledge and that do not require them to use other strategies to work out words
- re-read these books to build up their fluency and confidence in word reading.

Reading – comprehension

Statutory requirements

Pupils should be taught to:

- develop pleasure in reading, motivation to read, vocabulary and understanding by:
 - listening to and discussing a wide range of poems, stories and non-fiction at a level beyond that at which they can read independently
 - being encouraged to link what they read or hear read to their own experiences
 - becoming very familiar with key stories, fairy stories and traditional tales, retelling them and considering their particular characteristics
 - recognising and joining in with predictable phrases
 - learning to appreciate rhymes and poems, and to recite some by heart
 - discussing word meanings, linking new meanings to those already known
- understand both the books they can already read accurately and fluently and those they listen to by:
 - drawing on what they already know or on background information and vocabulary provided by the teacher
 - checking that the text makes sense to them as they read and correcting inaccurate reading
 - discussing the significance of the title and events
 - making inferences on the basis of what is being said and done
 - predicting what might happen on the basis of what has been read so far
- participate in discussion about what is read to them, taking turns and listening to what others say
- explain clearly their understanding of what is read to them.

Year 2 programme of study

Reading – word reading

Statutory requirements

Pupils should be taught to:

- continue to apply phonic knowledge and skills as the route to decode words until automatic decoding has become embedded and reading is fluent
- read accurately by blending the sounds in words that contain the graphemes taught so far, especially recognising alternative sounds for graphemes
- read accurately words of two or more syllables that contain the same graphemes as above
- read words containing common suffixes
- read further common exception words, noting unusual correspondences between spelling and sound and where these occur in the word
- read most words quickly and accurately, without overt sounding and blending, when they have been frequently encountered
- read aloud books closely matched to their improving phonic knowledge, sounding out unfamiliar words accurately, automatically and without undue hesitation
- re-read these books to build up their fluency and confidence in word reading.

Reading – comprehension

Statutory requirements

Pupils should be taught to:

- develop pleasure in reading, motivation to read, vocabulary and understanding by:
 - listening to, discussing and expressing views about a wide range of contemporary and classic poetry, stories and non-fiction at a level beyond that at which they can read independently
 - discussing the sequence of events in books and how items of information are related
 - becoming increasingly familiar with and retelling a wider range of stories, fairy stories and traditional tales
 - being introduced to non-fiction books that are structured in different ways
 - recognising simple recurring literary language in stories and poetry
 - discussing and clarifying the meanings of words, linking new meanings to known vocabulary
 - discussing their favourite words and phrases
 - continuing to build up a repertoire of poems learnt by heart, appreciating these and reciting some, with appropriate intonation to make the meaning clear
- understand both the books that they can already read accurately and fluently and those that they listen to by:
 - drawing on what they already know or on background information and vocabulary provided by the teacher
 - checking that the text makes sense to them as they read and correcting inaccurate reading
 - making inferences on the basis of what is being said and done
 - answering and asking questions
 - predicting what might happen on the basis of what has been read so far
- participate in discussion about books, poems and other works that are read to them and those that they can read for themselves, taking turns and listening to what others say
- explain and discuss their understanding of books, poems and other material, both those that they listen to and those that they read for themselves.