



**Buckingham Park**  
Church of England Primary School  
Excellence, through God who strengthens us

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# Phonics and Early Reading Policy

## 2022-2023

<b>Date Adopted by Full Governing board:</b>	02.02.23
<b>Last reviewed on:</b>	16/01/2023
<b>Next review due by:</b>	16/01/2024

## 1. Aims and expectations

- 1.1. At Buckingham Park Church of England Primary School it is important that every member of the school community feels valued and respected, and that each person is treated fairly and well. We are a caring community, built on a clear Christian foundation and rooted in Christian values. We aim to provide the highest quality all round education, for each and every child, in partnership with parents, within the context of a Christian community. In short, 'Excellence, through God who strengthens us'.
- 1.2. Buckingham Park Church of England Primary School is committed to creating a school community where exemplary behaviour is at the heart of productive learning. Everyone, staff, children and parents alike, are expected to maintain the highest standards of personal conduct, to accept responsibility for their behaviour, and encourage others to do the same.
- 1.3. All school policies are therefore designed to support the way in which all members of the school can live and work together in a supportive way. It aims to promote an environment where everyone feels happy, safe and secure.
- 1.4. The school has a set of values that are based on Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. These are a means of promoting good relationships, so that people can work together with the common purpose of helping everyone to learn. These values are displayed below:

We are kind, helpful and polite  
We do our best  
We are honest  
We share  
We are peacemakers  
We forgive others  
We take care of everything, and everyone

- 1.5. The school expects every member of the school community to behave in a considerate way towards others and by following these set of values.

## Introduction

At Buckingham Park Church of England Primary School, we have used the **Letters and Sounds: Principles and Practice of High Quality Phonics (DCSF, 2007)** and the **2017 updated EYFS Framework** successfully to deliver the required pace and progression for phonics teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. Having reviewed our approaches to phonics and early reading in the light of the Government's Policy Paper, [The reading framework: teaching the foundations of literacy](#), we have now adopted the [Lesley Clarke Synthetic Phonics](#) programme as our systematic, synthetic phonics programme. The programme builds on the 2007 Letters and Sounds publication.

## **Intent**

### **Phonics (reading and spelling)**

At Buckingham Park Church of England Primary School, we aim to develop confident, fluent and passionate readers and writers from an early stage. We use 'Lesley Clarke Synthetic Phonics' which is a complete systematic synthetic phonics programme (SSP). Phonics is taught daily and we teach children that the letters of the alphabet represent sounds (phonemes) and that these are put together to make words. The children learn to recognise the different graphemes that they will see when they are reading or writing.

Our phonics teaching starts as soon as the children start in Reception and it follows a specific sequence (see outline in appendix) that allows our children to build on their previous phonic knowledge and master specific phonic strategies. As a result, our children are able to tackle any unfamiliar words that they might discover.

At Buckingham Park, we also model these strategies in shared reading and writing outside of the phonics lesson and across the curriculum. We have a strong focus on the development of language and language skills for our children because we know that speaking and listening are crucial skills for reading and writing in all subjects.

Synthetic phonics is about learning to synthesise (blend) the graphemes (letter or letters) in the order in which they occur to pronounce a word; segment speech sounds (phonemes) in order in a word and select graphemes to represent them to spell the word.

### **Comprehension**

At Buckingham Park, we value reading as a crucial life skill. By the time children leave us, they read confidently for meaning and regularly enjoy reading for pleasure. Our readers are equipped with the tools to tackle unfamiliar vocabulary. We encourage our children to see themselves as readers for both pleasure and purpose. Because we believe teaching every child to read is so important, we have a Phonics and Early Reading Leader who drives the early reading programme in our school. This person is highly skilled at teaching phonics and reading, and they monitor and support our reading team, so everyone teaches with fidelity to the Lesley Clarke Synthetic Phonics programme.

## **Implementation: How We Teach Phonics**

### **Foundations for Phonics in Nursery**

- We provide a balance of child-led and adult-led experiences for all children that meet the curriculum expectations for 'Communication and language' and 'Literacy'. These include:
  - sharing high-quality stories and poems
  - learning a range of nursery rhymes and action rhymes
  - taking part in Nursery Rhyme Week and EYFS Communication Week
  - activities that develop focused listening and attention, including oral blending
  - attention to high-quality language
- We ensure Nursery children are well prepared to begin learning grapheme-phoneme correspondences (GPCs) and blending in Reception.

## **Daily phonics lessons in Reception and Year 1**

Starting in Reception we follow Lesley Clarke Synthetic Phonics which has a four-part lesson structure and teaching sequence (review, teach, practise, apply) which promotes independence, resilience and success in all our learners.

At Buckingham Park, we:

- Teach children that phonics helps us to read and write.
- Whole class teaching allows all children to access Quality First Teaching, catch up sessions and interventions are also provided for those children who need more practice and support.
- Ensure that all phonics teaching is delivered with pace, enthusiasm and passion.
- Use approved decodable books so that children can directly apply their new knowledge and phonic skills at an appropriate level. We use a range of decodable books which have been carefully organised to match the sounds a child is learning.
- Invite all parents to attend phonics and reading workshops to support their children with the development of their child's phonics skills.
- Classrooms are well resourced with phonic working walls and resources which are readily available empowering children to independently make correct spelling choices.
- We teach phonics for 25 minutes a day. In Reception, we build from 15-minute lessons, with additional daily oral blending games, to the full-length lesson as quickly as possible. Each Friday, we review the week's teaching to help children become fluent readers.
- Children make a strong start in Reception: teaching begins in Week 2 of the Autumn term.
- We follow the Lesley Clarke Synthetic Phonics programme expectations of progress (please see appendix):

-Children in Reception are taught to read and spell words using Phase 2 and 3 GPCs, and words with adjacent consonants (Phase 4) with fluency and accuracy.

-Children in Year 1 review Phase 3 and 4 and are taught to read and spell words using Phase 5 GPCs with fluency and accuracy.

- We timetable daily phonics lessons for any child in Year 2 or 3 who is not fully fluent in reading or has not passed the Phonics Screening Check. These children urgently need to catch up, so the gap between themselves and their peers does not widen. We use the Lesley Clarke Synthetic Phonics Programme Revised assessments to identify the gaps in their phonic knowledge and teach to these using the Keep-up resources – at pace.
- If any child in Year 3 to 6 has gaps in their phonic knowledge when reading or writing, we plan phonics 'catch-up' lessons to address specific reading/writing gaps. These short, sharp lessons last 10 minutes and take place at least three times a week. It should be noted that if a child has a dyslexic profile or diagnosis, they will complete the TOE-BY-TOE intervention.
- Where progress is not demonstrated, these children will be highlighted to the school SENDCO for potential investigation for underlying SEN needs and strategies employed to ensure progress is made.

## **Teaching Reading**

In Reception each child will have Guided Reading sessions every week, will be heard read individually by a trained adult once a week and take part in Whole Class Reading sessions once per week. This is in addition to reading taught through SSP daily phonics lessons.

-The guided reading session is taught by a fully trained adult to small groups of approximately six children using books matched to the children's secure phonic knowledge using the Lesley Clarke Synthetic Phonics assessments and book matching grids

-These sessions are monitored by the class teacher, who rotates and works with each group on a regular basis.

-Each reading practice session has a clear focus, so that the demands of the session do not overload the children's working memory.

-The reading practice sessions have been designed to focus on three key reading skills:

- decoding
- comprehension: teaching children to understand the text
- prosody: teaching children to read with understanding and expression

• In Reception these sessions start in Week 4. Children who are not yet decoding have daily additional blending practice in small groups, so that they quickly learn to blend and can begin to read books. Whilst children are learning to recognise graphemes and able to blend, they will be given a textless book to build on comprehension and storytelling skills.

• In Year 2 and 3 (and above, where necessary) we continue to teach reading in this way for any children who still need to practise reading with decodable books.

## **Impact**

<b>Year (Y1)</b>	<b>School</b>	<b>National</b>	<b>Local Authority</b>
<b>2013</b>	<b>40.7%</b>	<b>69%</b>	<b>65.9%</b>
<b>2014</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>74%</b>	<b>72%</b>
<b>2015</b>	<b>66.1%</b>	<b>77%</b>	<b>77.4%</b>
<b>2016</b>	<b>90%</b>	<b>81%</b>	<b>81%</b>
<b>2017</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>81%</b>	
<b>2018</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>82%</b>	
<b>2019</b>	<b>86%</b>	<b>82%</b>	<b>82%</b>
<b>2020</b>			
<b>2021</b>			
<b>2022</b>	<b>76%</b>		

## Glossary

**Phoneme** - The smallest unit of sound. There are approximately 44 phonemes in English (it depends on different accents). Phonemes can be put together to make words.

**Grapheme** - A way of writing down a phoneme. Graphemes can be made up from 1 letter e.g. p, 2 letters e.g. sh, 3 letters e.g. tch or 4 letters e.g. ough.

**GPC** - This is short for Grapheme Phoneme Correspondence. Knowing a GPC means being able to match a phoneme to a grapheme and vice versa.

**Digraph** - A grapheme containing two letters that makes just one sound (phoneme).

**Trigraph** - A grapheme containing three letters that makes just one sound (phoneme).

**Oral Blending** - This involves hearing phonemes and being able to merge them together to make a word. Children need to develop this skill before they will be able to blend written words.

**Blending** - This involves looking at a written word, looking at each grapheme and using knowledge of GPCs to work out which phoneme each grapheme represents and then merging these phonemes together to make a word. This is the basis of reading.

**Oral Segmenting** - This is the act hearing a whole word and then splitting it up into the phonemes that make it. Children need to develop this skill before they will be able to segment words to spell them.

**Segmenting** - This involves hearing a word, splitting it up into the phonemes that make it, using knowledge of GPCs to work out which graphemes represent those phonemes and then writing those graphemes down in the right order. This is the basis of spelling.