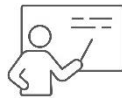


At St. James' we believe reading is a gateway skill that makes all other learning possible, and phonics is crucial to unlocking the reading code – we want all children to read well quickly.

Intent – we aim to:



Deliver daily phonics through a high quality systematic synthetic phonics programme, followed with fidelity and consistently implemented to equip children with the skills they need to decode and become confident and fluent readers.

To provide decodable books that are closely matched to children's phonic knowledge and abilities, following the ELS progression, supporting each child's growing knowledge of the alphabetic code and enabling opportunities to be successful when practising and consolidating learning.

Ensuring that all children 'keep up' rather than 'catch up' by undertaking regular ongoing assessments and targeting intervention.

Ensure the highest number of children possible pass their Phonics Screening Check, with expectations that are aspirational yet achievable.

Implementation – how do we achieve our aims?

We believe that reading is an essential life skill and are committed to ensuring that every pupil will learn to read regardless of their background, needs or abilities/starting points. We also recognise that learning to read is key to academic success, and this is supported by research by the Education Endowment Fund (EEF). Phonics teaching is recognised as an important component in the development of early reading skills, particularly for children from disadvantaged backgrounds. The EEF considers phonics to be one of the most secure and best-evidenced areas of pedagogy. Studies have shown that an effective Systematic Synthetic Phonics Programme (SSP) has a positive overall impact (+5 months).

Our reading curriculum ensures children have regular opportunities to **read for practice**, **read for meaning** and **read for pleasure**. High quality phonics teaching provides children with the skills to learn how to read (reading for practice), which enables reading for meaning and makes reading more pleasurable. Therefore, phonics is a vital part of our approach as it is the foundational building block on which our reading curriculum is based on.

A systematic approach



To ensure our children develop a strong phonic awareness and effective decoding and blending skills, we have chosen to implement the validated phonics programme **Essential Letters and Sounds (ELS)**. ELS teaches children to read using a systematic synthetic phonics approach and is designed to be used as part of an early learning environment that is rich in talk and story, where children experience the joy of books and language whilst rapidly acquiring the skills to become fluent independent readers and writers. The principles of ELS are based upon: the delivery of whole-class, high-quality first teaching following consistent lesson structures; the use of consistent terminology by teachers, children and parents and consistent resources that support effective teaching; repetition and reinforcement of learning; regular and manageable assessment to ensure that all children 'keep up' rather than 'catch up'.
The programme has clear expectations which are mapped out term by term from Reception to the beginning of Year 2.

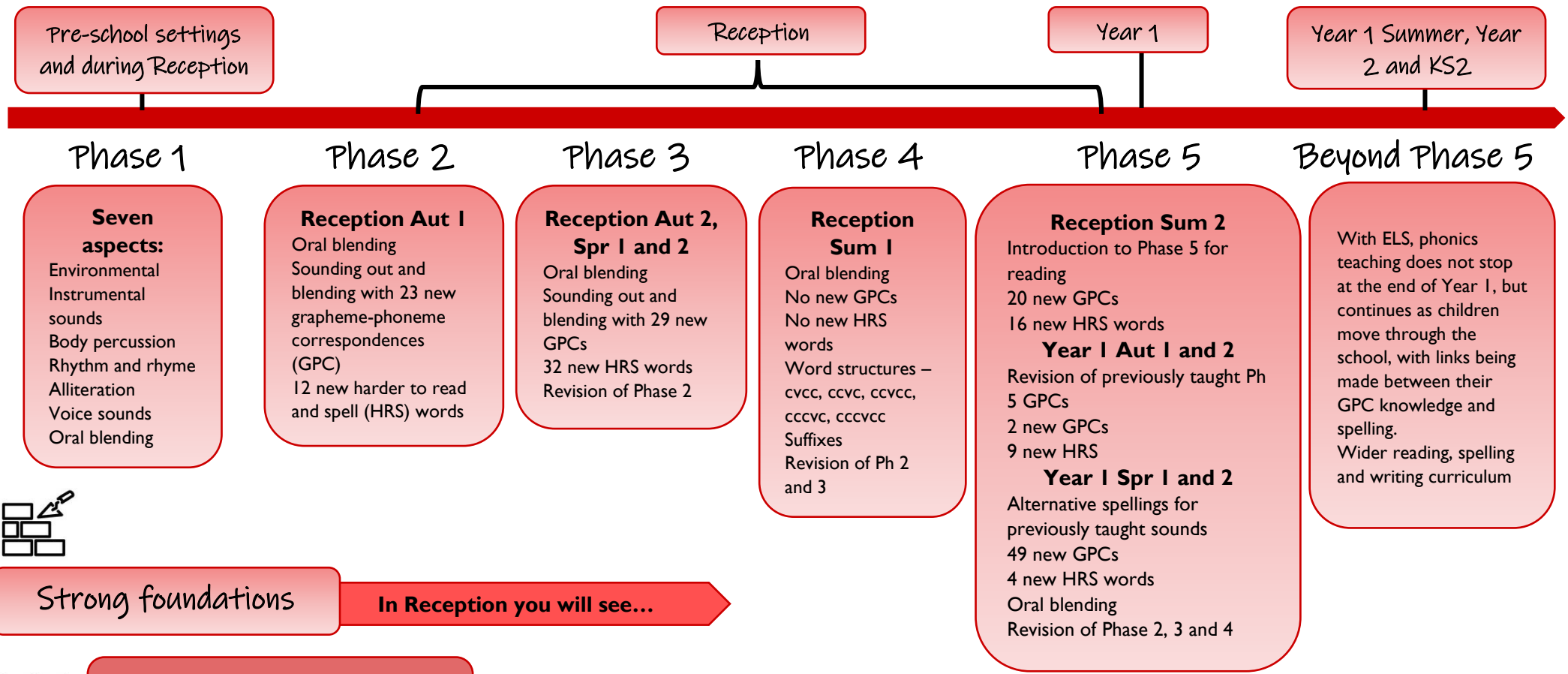
Rigorous assessment

Assessment of the children's reading skills is key to ensuring that all children make rapid progress through the programme and that they 'keep up' rather than 'catch up'. Baseline assessments take place during the first week in Reception. After that assessment takes place on the fifth week of each term. Using the assessment cycle alongside daily in-class assessments ensures the identification of any sound and grapheme gaps, and difficulties with blending and decoding, which enables direct intervention to be actioned immediately.

Decodable reading books

It is vital that whilst children are learning to read, they read books that match their phonic knowledge. The Oxford University Press decodable readers supports Essential Letters and Sounds. These books are carefully matched to every aspect of the programme and enable children to practise and develop their phonic knowledge and reading fluency.

Progression through the programme



Strong foundations

In Reception you will see...



Children learning in a language-rich environment.



Children have the opportunity to develop language skills through high-quality adult interactions.



Daily engaging and accessible child-initiated activities. These activities encourage children to develop their speaking and listening skills.



Children have access to a range of high-quality literature and mark-making and writing resources.



Children have the opportunity to engage in challenging adult-led and independent tasks to consolidate their learning.

Rigorous practice

In Reception and Year 1 phonics lessons you will see...



Phonics is taught daily and has a regular slot on all class timetables.



Repetition and reinforcement of learning ensures new knowledge sticks.



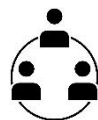
Phonics is taught in whole-class sessions led by the teacher, who explicitly models new learning, strategies and skills.



Regular assessment points ensure that all children 'keep up' rather than 'catch up'. Timely assessments within the phonics lessons identify gaps in learning, make 'closing the gap' a priority.



All teachers have access to high quality planning and all lessons follow a consistent structure, minimising the cognitive load placed on the learner. This allows children to predict what is coming next, what they need to do, and how to achieve success.



Children work independently, with peers or in guided groups.



Children have access to fully decodable books to read at home which allow them to practise and develop their phonic knowledge and reading fluency.



The use of consistent resources that support effective teaching – the same visual representations and mnemonics are used by all teachers.



Children are encouraged to apply their phonic knowledge across the curriculum.

Supporting all learners

A whole-class approach ensures that all children benefit from the full curriculum. Children who encounter difficulties are supported by the teacher throughout the lesson, and where further support is required, ELS has additional interventions to ensure that any learning gaps are quickly filled. Since interventions are delivered within the lesson by the teacher any child who is struggling with the new knowledge can be immediately targeted with appropriate support usually during the Apply activity. If children require further support to achieve the outcomes of the lesson and keep up with the pace of the programme, ELS has three interventions that are delivered on a one-to-one basis: oral blending, GPC recognition and blending for reading.

Continuing the phonics journey

Although we expect that the majority of children will have successfully completed the Phonics programme by the end of Year 1, we recognise that some children may benefit from further phonics instruction and we will ensure that high quality phonics teaching and provision is in place for:

- Children who did not meet the expected standard in the PSC at the end of Year 1 or 2
- Supporting children with English as an additional language
- Children with SEND who are struggling with decoding.

Phonics Screening Check

The Year 1 Phonics Screening Check (PSC) is a statutory assessment for all schools. Children are assessed at the end of Year 1 and the focus of the check is phonic decoding. The check confirms whether a child has made the expected progress in phonics and identifies children who will require extra support in Year 2. It is carried out on a one-to-one basis by a child's class teacher or a teacher who is familiar to them. The check consists of 40 words for children to read; these are a combination of real words and pseudo-words or 'alien' words. Those children who do not meet the expected standard in the PSC will continue their phonics learning in Year 2, alongside whole class reading and Jane Considine's Spelling Book approach. This allows children to consolidate their learning and develop confidence in applying their phonic knowledge to decode words, within a group aimed at their specific ability and to ensure they are ready to retake the PSC at the end of Year 2.

Impact – how will we know we have achieved our aims?



Children can decode, segment and blend confidently, and by the end of Year 1 are ready to move from learning to read to reading to learn.



Children feel successful in reading and are motivated to read because books are matched to their needs and abilities.



By implementing high quality and timely intervention effectively, the majority of children become fluent, confident readers by the end of KS1.



A high number of children pass the Phonics Screening Check at the end of Year 1.