

THE ST. CHRISTOPHER SCHOOL

Academy Trust - Special School

Mountdale Gardens, Leigh-on-Sea, Essex SS9 4AW

Head Teacher: Mr D Woodman

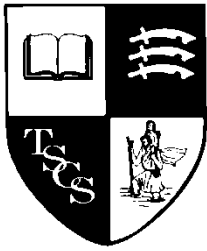
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SEN Trust Southend



THE ST. CHRISTOPHER SCHOOL ACADEMY TRUST PHONICS POLICY – PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL

First written: April 2012

Latest Revision: May 2026

MISSION STATEMENT

It is our school mission that high-quality phonic work is delivered in a personalised, accessible and multi-sensory way to enable all pupils to achieve expected progress.

AIMS

(outlined in 'The phonics and early readers; an overview', Primary Framework for literacy, Primary National Strategy 2006)

The processes by which children comprehend spoken language are the same as those by which they comprehend the words on the page; the difference being that the first relies upon hearing the words and the second upon seeing the words in written form. Obviously, in order to comprehend written texts children must first learn to recognise, that is decode, the words on the page.

High-quality phonic teaching secures the crucial skills of word recognition that, once mastered, enable children to read fluently and automatically thus freeing them to concentrate on the meaning of the text.

Children at The St Christopher School Academy Trust will be given the opportunity to develop their decoding skills and progress from 'learning to read' to 'reading to learn' for purpose and pleasure. The ultimate goal of learning to read is comprehension.

To achieve this, practitioners and teachers are clear about which activities are designed to teach children to acquire word recognition skills, and which will help children develop higher order comprehension skills.

PRINCIPLES OF HIGH-QUALITY PHONIC WORK AT THE ST CHRISTOPHER SCHOOL ACADEMY TRUST

The Rose Report makes it clear that 'high-quality phonic work' should be taught systematically and discretely as the prime approach used in the teaching of early reading.

Beginner readers should be taught:

- grapheme–phoneme correspondences in a clearly defined, incremental sequence
- as soon as children have learnt between 6-8 alphabet sounds, they can begin to apply the highly important skill of blending (synthesising) phonemes in the order in which they occur, all through a word to read it



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In writing pupils should be taught:

- to apply the skills of segmenting words into their constituent phonemes to spell
- that blending and segmenting are reversible processes.

High-quality phonic work will be most effective when:

- it is part of a broad and rich curriculum that engages children in a range of activities and experiences to develop their speaking and listening skills and phonological awareness
- It is multi-sensory, encompassing simultaneous visual, auditory and kinaesthetic activities to enliven core learning
- it is systematic, that is to say, it follows a carefully planned programme with fidelity, reinforcing and building on previous learning to secure children's progress
- it is taught within Literacy lessons and discretely across the curriculum.
- there are opportunities to reinforce and apply acquired phonic knowledge and skills across the curriculum and in such activities as shared and guided reading
- children's progress in developing and applying their phonic knowledge is carefully assessed and monitored.

SYSTEMATIC SYNTHETIC PHONICS

Following DfE advice in April 2021 we revisited our use of Letters and Sounds (*as outlined in 'Letters and Sounds: Principles and Practice of High Quality Phonics' Primary National Strategy 2007*) and, in 2024, invested in the DfE approved Twinkl scheme to support the teaching of phonics. This ensures we are providing a systematic, orderly framework through which teachers can support children in developing their phonic knowledge and skills and in securing the word recognition skills to support them as fluent readers.

Systematic, high quality phonics teaching is essential and is needed for children to achieve the goal of reading. The Twinkl programme is designed as a time limited programme of phonics work aimed at securing fluent word recognition skills for reading by the end of Key Stage 1. However, we continue this approach across the Key Stages, relevant to the needs and progress of the learners.

Children learn how to decode or break words into separate sounds which can then be blended together to read an unknown word. Children tackle each word by first identifying each sound, then blending the sounds together before saying the word and identifying its meaning.

EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE AND KEY STAGE ONE

EYFS pupils begin their phonics journey by developing a range of skills through the teaching of the Level 1, 7 Aspects: Environmental Sounds, Instrumental Sounds, Body Percussion, Rhythm and Rhyme, Alliteration, Voice Sounds and Segmenting and Blending. Activities support general sound discrimination, the exploration of sound patterns, the ability to distinguish between different vocal sounds along with listening, attention and memory. When appropriate, children are introduced to phonics using a multi-sensory approach and personalised approach.

KEY STAGE TWO

In Key Stage 2 literacy is taught daily and phonics is an integral part of the lessons. Pupils recap and reinforce their knowledge of phonics taught during Key Stage 1. Phonics is delivered through a multisensory approach and sessions are delivered according to the needs of the children with some learners continuing to focus on the 7 Aspects where others may move on through the phases to Phase 6. Where children are working beyond phase 6, phonic sessions are used to work on National Curriculum spelling rules.

KEY STAGE THREE AND KEY STAGE FOUR

Phonics continues to be delivered in Key Stage 3. Learners following our subject specific curriculum route are streamed for English lessons and the teacher will be responsible for delivery of phonics at their level.

Other Key Stage 3 learners receive phonics instruction from their class tutor with the use of phonics being reinforced in all lessons to support them with their reading and writing. For some learners, exploring the 7 Aspects will still be of relevance and, although phonics skill will still be promoted, the use of functional reading skills such as symbol recognition and the application of the use of symbols in real life scenarios will become a greater focus. In Key Stage 4, whole class phonics teaching will no longer be a focus but, for those learners who would benefit, small group and individual interventions are delivered if relevant. For learners who are not able to engage with phonics by Key Stage 4, the use of functional reading skills such as symbol recognition becomes the priority.

ADDITIONAL AND COMPLEMENTARY RESOURCES USED ACROSS THE SCHOOL

Big Cat Reading Books
Rhino Readers
Twinkl
Education City
IDL Literacy Intervention programme

CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

Where possible, the classroom environment has age appropriate displays concentrating on both sounds and key words.

ASSESSMENT AND MONITORING

All Key Stages use teacher-based assessments, using tools relevant to their children but underpinned by our use of synthetic systematic phonics. Progress is monitored using the Twinkl phonics tracker. Where learners have been identified as needing additional support, small group interventions are used in Primary with Secondary learners assessed as needing extra support, developing their ability to use their phonics via the IDL Literacy intervention programme.

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Faye Warrington (EYFS & KS1 English Coordinator)

Reviewed and amended January 2015
Reviewed and amended September 2015 AC NR
Reviewed and amended May 2018 MH NA JKS
Reviewed and amended June 2021 JKS SW
Reviewed and amended April 2022 JKS SW MH
Reviewed and amended May 2026 SW, FW