

Hanley St Luke's Church of England Academy

Headteacher: Mrs Z Cooper

Telephone: 01782 234390/1

Email: office@hanleystlukes.com

Website: www.hanleystlukes.com



Phonics Policy

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Subject lead	Hayley Furey
Governor/Committee (where applicable)	Julie Salisbury

Our Vision:

Jesus said: 'I have come that they may have life and have it to the full.'

Promoting *life-long learning*

Developing *life-giving relationships*

Exploring *life-enhancing faith*

Inspiring *life-enriching aspiration*

Opportunities for Life

This policy outlines the teaching, learning, organisation, and management of phonics at Hanley St Luke's C of E Primary Academy.

At Hanley St Luke's our Mission is to:

- Promote Christian belief and practice and to encourage the moral and spiritual development of all people in our school.
- Develop in each person a sense of self-worth and the necessary qualities to become a full and valuable member of British society
- Encourage the full academic potential of each child.
- In our school we promote honesty, courtesy, kindness, perseverance and respect. We celebrate all our many differences and diversity, believing each individual is special and valued by God.

Our Commitment to Phonics at Hanley St. Luke's C of E Aided Primary Academy

At Hanley St. Luke's, we are passionate about helping every child become a confident, fluent reader—and it all starts with phonics. We believe that high-quality phonics teaching gives children the best possible foundation for success in reading and writing, and opens the door to a lifelong love of books and learning.

Phonics is one of the most important building blocks in early literacy. By learning how letters and sounds work together, children develop the skills they need to decode (read) and segment (spell) words accurately. This forms the basis for fluent reading, confident writing, and strong comprehension skills as they move through school.

Our goal is to ensure that every child is equipped with the tools they need to become not just capable readers, but children who love to read.

What is Phonics?

Phonics is a method of teaching children to read by linking the sounds of spoken English (phonemes) to the letters or groups of letters (graphemes) that represent those sounds in written words. Here's a quick breakdown of the key terms:

- **Phoneme:** The smallest unit of sound in a word – there are around 44 in English (e.g., *s, ch, ay*).
- **Grapheme:** The written letter or group of letters that represent a sound (e.g., *a, sh, igh*).
- **Blending:** Putting sounds together to read a word (e.g., *c-a-t* becomes *cat*).
- **Segmenting:** Breaking a word down into sounds to spell it (e.g., *ship* becomes *sh-i-p*).
- **Digraph:** Two letters that make one sound (e.g., *ch, th, oo*).
- **Trigraph:** Three letters that make one sound (e.g., *igh, ear*).
- **Split digraph:** Two letters that make one sound, but are split by another letter (e.g., *a-e* in *cake* or *o-e* in *home*).
- **Tricky words** (also known as common exception words): Words that don't follow regular phonics rules and must be memorised (e.g., *said, was, the*).

Our Phonics Approach: Supersonic Phonic Friends

At Hanley St. Luke's, we use the Supersonic Phonic Friends programme to teach systematic synthetic phonics from Nursery through to Year 2—and beyond if needed. This fun, active, and highly engaging programme brings phonics to life for our children, helping them become confident readers and writers from an early age.

Supersonic Phonic Friends is based on the well-known Letters and Sounds framework and follows a clear, structured progression that's fully aligned with the Early Years Foundation Stage and the National Curriculum. It ensures consistency in phonics teaching across our Early Years and Key Stage 1 classrooms, giving every child the best possible start on their reading journey.

What makes this programme so special is its creative and imaginative approach. Children are taken on an enchanted phonics adventure, meeting a cast of friendly woodland characters who each represent different reading and writing skills. With the support of these 'Supersonic Friends'—along with catchy rhymes, actions, and phrases—children learn phonics in a way that's both memorable and meaningful.

Every session is filled with movement, games, and exciting learning opportunities, designed to actively engage children and help them apply their phonics knowledge to real reading and writing tasks.

We believe that reading and spelling should be taught with precision and consistency. Supersonic Phonic Friends provides high-quality planning and a range of resources to support the teaching of phonics across all phases. To make sure every child receives the right support for their stage of phonics learning, we group children based on their current phonics knowledge. These groups are reviewed regularly through half-termly assessments, helping us to tailor teaching to each child's needs. This targeted approach means every child is challenged appropriately, supported where needed, and given the best chance to make strong progress in their reading journey.

Daily Phonics Teaching Structure

EYFS (Nursery):

Phonics teaching at Hanley St. Luke's begins in Nursery with *Firm Foundations in Phonics*, the first phase of the Supersonic Phonic Friends programme. This phase follows a carefully structured sequence that enables children to progressively build on their prior knowledge and develop secure phonological awareness. The focus at this early stage is on developing listening skills and the ability to discriminate between sounds in the environment, as well as in songs, stories, and rhymes. These essential pre-phonics skills lay the groundwork for future reading and writing. Once children are able to confidently identify and differentiate between sounds, they begin to explore the concept that words are composed of individual sounds (phonemes), engaging in early oral blending and segmenting through playful activities such as 'I spy' and sound matching games.

The nursery phonics curriculum is organised into seven aspects.

Aspect 1- Environment sounds.

Aspect 2- Instrumental sounds.

Aspect 3- Body percussion.

Aspect 4- Rhythm and rhyme.

Aspect 5- Alliteration.

Aspect 6- Voice Sounds,

Aspect 7- Oral blending and segmenting.

EYFS (Reception)

At Hanley St. Luke's, phonics teaching in Reception follows the next progressive stages of the Supersonic Phonic Friends programme, building directly on the auditory skills developed in Nursery through *Firm Foundations in Phonics*.

The Basics 2 – Listen, Recognise, Build, Read and Write

In *The Basics 2*, children are introduced to the first 18 phonemes of the English language. Using their previously developed auditory processing and memory skills, they begin to:

- Recognise phonemes and their corresponding graphemes
- Segment and blend sounds to read simple words
- Begin to write using phonically plausible spellings

By the end of this phase, children will be able to hear up to three sounds in a word, read, and write simple CVC words using the 18 core spellings for sounds.

Phonics Progression – The Basics 2:

Group Phonemes Tricky Words

Group 1 s, a, t, p	–
Group 2 i, n, m, d	l, is
Group 3 g, o, c, k	the, to
Group 4 ck, e, u, r	go, no
Group 5 h, b, f, l	has, his, as
Group 6 ll, ff, ss	of, into

The Basics 3 – Recognise, Build, Read and Write

In *The Basics 3*, children are taught the remaining **26 phonemes** of the English language. They continue to practise reading and writing simple and more complex CVC words, while also being introduced to alternative pronunciations and developing the skill of choosing the correct spelling for a sound in context.

By the end of this phase, children can confidently:

- Hear and identify sounds in words
- Recognise and use all 44 phoneme-grapheme correspondences
- Read and write a range of CVC and tricky words, including those with more complex spellings.

Phonics Progression – The Basics 3:

Group Phonemes Tricky Words

Group 1	j, v, w, x	her, was, you
Group 2	y, z, zz, qu	he, she, we, me, be
Group 3	ch, sh, th, ng	they, my, by
Group 4	ai, ee, igh, oa	are, all
Group 5	oo, oo, ar, or	some, come
Group 6	ur, ow, oi, er	so, do
Group 7	ure, ear, air	little, out

Year 1 Phonics

In Year 1, children continue to grow as confident readers by developing their ability to hear and remember sequences of sounds, including more complex ones. They begin to explore words with adjacent consonants, such as *think*, *coast*, and *blink*, and learn to read and spell words with four or more sounds (CVCC and CCVC structures). Children also deepen their understanding of the 44 sounds (phonemes) they learned in Reception by discovering different ways to spell them. With the help of fun characters like *Switch it Mitch* and *Choose to Use Suze*, they begin to recognise spelling patterns and rules, helping them choose the correct spelling for each sound. By the end of Year 1, your child will have been introduced to over 100 ways to represent those 44 sounds—giving them a strong foundation for spelling and reading with fluency.

Phonics sessions continue every day for 25–30 minutes. Lessons follow the Supersonic Phonic Friends structure: *revisit and review, teach, practise, and apply*—a consistent and engaging approach that helps learning stick.

Each session is packed with fun and interactive activities, including games, writing, and reading, to make learning enjoyable and meaningful.

Phonics Progression Year 1:

- **The Basics 4:** Children practise blending and segmenting longer words with adjacent consonants (e.g. *swim*, *clap*, *jump*). No new sounds are introduced in this phase; the focus is on applying what they already know to longer words.
- **The Higher Level 5:** Children explore the ‘complex code’—learning alternative spellings for the sounds they already know. This helps them read and write with greater accuracy and flexibility.

Group 1 – Common vowel digraph alternatives

- ai/ay (e.g. rain/play)
- ee/ea (e.g. see/seat)
- igh/ie (e.g. light/pie)
- oa/oe (e.g. boat/toe)
- oo/ue (e.g. moon/blue)

Group 2 – Split digraphs (magic e)

- a-e (e.g. cake)
- e-e (e.g. these)
- i-e (e.g. time)
- o-e (e.g. home)
- u-e (e.g. cube)

Group 3 – Vowel and consonant alternatives

- oi/oy (e.g. coin/boy)
- ur/ir (e.g. burn/bird)
- ow/ou (e.g. cow/house)
- or/aw (e.g. fork/claw)
- w/wh (e.g. wet/when)

Group 4 – Less common and silent letter alternatives

- air/are (e.g. hair/care)
- n/kn (e.g. net/knit)
- r/wr (e.g. red/write)
- f/ph (e.g. fan/photo)
- or/au (e.g. fork/haunt)

Group 5 – More unusual spellings

- gn (e.g. gnome)
- ore (e.g. more)
- ey (e.g. monkey)
- y (e.g. happy)
- ew (e.g. new)

Children also meet 'Nonsense Nan', who helps them practise reading both real and made-up (alien) words in preparation for the Year 1 Phonics Screening Check. They also continue to learn more tricky and high-frequency words to build fluency.

Year 2 Phonics

From Year 2, we continue to explore grapheme phoneme correspondence and learn spelling rules to support our reading and writing development. Supersonic Phonic Friends allows us access to a tailored programme of spelling rules for both children in Year 1 and Year 2.

Targeted Support and Intervention

We recognise that some children may need extra support to keep up with their phonics learning. To ensure every child makes strong progress, we offer a range of targeted interventions tailored to individual needs.

- Daily tailored intervention sessions are delivered to help children revisit and secure key phonics skills.
- These sessions are short, focused, and designed to match the specific gaps in each child's learning.
- Trained staff lead the sessions either 1:1 or in small groups, focusing on helping children catch up quickly and confidently.

Children take part in pre- and post-teach interventions to support learning before and after the main phonics lesson. This boosts their understanding and confidence, helping them get the most out of their whole-class teaching.

For children with more significant gaps, we also offer additional group sessions known as 'Micro Phonics Bursts'. These targeted, high-impact sessions provide extra practice in key areas to help close the gap and build solid phonics foundations.

Our goal is to ensure that every child receives the right support, at the right time, so they can thrive as readers and writers.

KS2: Additional Phonics Support

We are committed to making sure every child becomes a confident reader. If a child has not yet met the expected level in phonics by the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2), we provide targeted support to help them catch up.

This support is based on careful diagnostic assessments to identify exactly what each child needs. Using the Supersonic Phonic Friends programme, trained staff deliver focused teaching in small steps, either one-to-one or in small groups, ensuring each child receives the right level of guidance and practice.

Phonics and SEND

At Hanley St Luke's, we are committed to ensuring that all children, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), receive high-quality phonics teaching. Phonics sessions are carefully adapted to meet individual needs, with additional support provided through targeted interventions, small-group or 1:1 teaching, and multi-sensory approaches. For some children, especially those not yet ready for formal phonics instruction, interventions focus on developing pre-reading skills and phonological awareness, such as listening to sounds, rhyme,

rhythm, and oral blending. Our staff work closely with the SEND team to ensure that every child can access the phonics curriculum and make progress at their own pace.

Assessment and Monitoring

- Phonics assessments are carried out every half term using the Supersonic Phonic Friends tracking tools.
- Assessments track progress in both reading and spelling and inform groupings and intervention planning.
- The subject leader and class teachers work collaboratively to analyse data, monitor progress, and identify children who need additional support.

National Phonics Screening Check

- All Year 1 pupils take the statutory Phonics Screening Check on the 9th June 2026.
- Children who do not pass are given additional support and re-take the test in Year 2.
- The results inform future teaching and intervention planning.

Parental Involvement

- Parents are kept informed of their child's phonics learning through Supersonic Phonic Friends newsletters.
- Workshops are offered to help parents understand phonics and support their child's learning at home.
- Home learning tasks and flashcards are shared to reinforce classroom learning.