

Hanley St Luke's Church of England Academy

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Phonics Policy

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Subject lead	Hayley Furey
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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*).

These terms underpin our systematic approach to phonics teaching using the Supersonic Phonic Friends programme.

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.

Firm Foundations in Phonics (EYFS- Nursery)

At Hanley St. Luke's, we recognise that strong foundations in communication and language are essential for future success in reading and writing. Before children begin formal systematic synthetic phonics teaching, they must first develop secure listening, attention, speaking and auditory memory skills.

Research consistently shows that the strongest predictor of early reading success is children's ability to tune into, discriminate between, remember and manipulate sounds within spoken language. Therefore, in Nursery and throughout the Early Years, we place great emphasis on developing children's communication and language skills alongside their phonological awareness.

We understand that "reading and writing float on a sea of talk." Children need rich opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills through meaningful interactions, storytelling, singing, nursery rhymes, conversations, role play and language-rich experiences. These opportunities support children to develop:

- listening and attention skills,
- auditory discrimination,
- vocabulary and language comprehension,
- confidence in speaking,
- short-term auditory memory,
- and phonological awareness.

Through our Firm Foundations approach, children learn to recognise and play with sounds in spoken language before being introduced to written graphemes. This includes developing awareness of:

- environmental sounds,
- instrumental sounds,
- body percussion,
- rhythm and rhyme,
- alliteration,
- voice sounds,
- oral blending and segmenting.

These early experiences pave the way for successful phonics teaching by helping children hear, identify, remember and manipulate sounds within words. Children gradually develop the ability to orally blend sounds together to hear words and orally segment words into individual sounds.

At Hanley St. Luke's, we believe these foundations are essential. Without secure communication, language and phonological awareness skills, children may find the demands of reading and spelling increasingly difficult as they progress through school. By prioritising strong foundations from the very beginning, we support children to become confident, capable and enthusiastic readers and writers.

Our provision is carefully designed to ensure children experience:

- high-quality interactions with adults,
- repeated exposure to stories, songs and rhymes,
- opportunities for sustained shared thinking,
- language-rich continuous provision,
- and daily opportunities to develop listening and speaking skills.

This strong foundation supports not only early reading and writing development, but also children's vocabulary growth, confidence, social development and overall readiness for learning.

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. We recognise that children develop at different rates and, where needed, Firm Foundations provision will continue in Reception to further support listening, attention, communication and language, auditory memory and phonological awareness skills before children access the full systematic synthetic phonics programme. Teaching is carefully adapted to ensure all children are supported and challenged appropriately.

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

In The Basics 2, children are introduced to the first 18 phonemes and corresponding graphemes. 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 are able to hear up to three sounds in a word and read and write simple CVC words using the 18 core spellings.

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 phoneme-grapheme correspondences. They continue to practise reading and writing simple and more complex CVC words, while also being introduced to alternative pronunciations and spellings.

By the end of this phase, children can confidently:

- hear and identify sounds within 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	Phonemes	Tricky Words
Group 5	oo, oo, ar, or	some, come
Group 6	ur, ow, oi, er	so, do
Group 7	ure, ear, air	little, out

This secure foundation enables children to transition into Year 1 phonics with confidence and fluency.

Year 1 Phonics

In Year 1, children continue to develop as confident readers and writers by building on the phonics knowledge and skills taught in Reception. They learn to hear, remember and manipulate more complex sequences of sounds and begin to read and spell words containing adjacent consonants, such as think, coast and blink, including words with CVCC and CCVC structures.

Children deepen their understanding of the 44 phonemes by exploring alternative graphemes and pronunciations within the English alphabetic code. Through the Supersonic Phonic Friends programme, children are introduced to spelling patterns and rules using memorable characters such as Switch it Mitch and Choose to Use Suze, helping them to select appropriate graphemes when reading and writing. By the end of Year 1, children will have been introduced to over 100 grapheme representations of the 44 phonemes, providing a secure foundation for fluent reading and accurate spelling.

Phonics sessions take place daily for 25–30 minutes and follow the consistent Supersonic Phonic Friends structure of revisit and review, teach, practise and apply. Lessons are engaging, interactive and carefully sequenced to support children in applying their phonics knowledge in both reading and writing.

Phonics Progression – Year 1

The Basics 4

Children practise blending and segmenting longer words containing adjacent consonants (e.g. swim, clap, jump). No new phonemes are introduced during this phase; instead, the focus is on applying previously taught knowledge to read and spell increasingly complex words.

The Higher Level 5

Children begin to explore the ‘complex code’ by learning alternative graphemes and pronunciations for the phonemes they already know. This supports children in reading and spelling with increasing accuracy, fluency 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

- 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 are also introduced to ‘Nonsense Nan’, who supports them in practising the reading of both real and pseudo-words (alien words) in preparation for the Year 1 Phonics Screening Check. They continue to develop automatic recognition of tricky and high-frequency words to support reading fluency.

Year 2 Phonics

In Year 2, children continue to build on their phonics knowledge by consolidating and applying previously taught grapheme–phoneme correspondences (GPCs). The focus is on developing fluency in reading, accuracy in decoding, and increasing automaticity when encountering both familiar and unfamiliar words.

Children revisit and embed alternative spellings and pronunciations, applying their phonics knowledge with increasing independence across reading and writing activities. They continue to practise reading words containing adjacent consonants, common suffixes, and more complex spelling patterns to support fluency and comprehension.

Daily phonics sessions continue in Year 2, following the Supersonic Phonic Friends structure. Lessons provide regular opportunities to revisit prior learning, practise key skills, and apply phonics knowledge through reading and writing tasks.

Children who require additional support continue to access targeted intervention to address gaps and secure key phonics knowledge. Where appropriate, children also receive continued phonics-based support to ensure they become confident, fluent readers.

Targeted Support and Intervention

We recognise that some children require additional support to secure and consolidate their phonics learning. To ensure all pupils make strong progress, we provide targeted interventions linked to the **Supersonic Phonics Friends** programme, tailored to individual need.

Children are identified for intervention through ongoing formative assessment within lessons and half-termly phonics assessments. This ensures support is timely, responsive, and closely matched to identified gaps in learning.

Interventions vary according to year group and need and are delivered by a trained member of staff. Sessions are short and focused (approximately 5–10 minutes) and may take place on a 1:1 basis or in small groups. They are designed to revisit and reinforce key phonics skills, build confidence, and support children to keep up with whole-class teaching.

Pre-teach and post-teach interventions are used to support learning before and after the main phonics lesson. Pre-teach sessions introduce key concepts to support understanding and accessibility, while post-teach sessions reinforce learning and address misconceptions, strengthening retention and fluency.

For pupils with more significant or persistent gaps, additional small-group interventions are provided through targeted practice sessions, such as 'Micro Phonics Bursts'. These high-impact sessions focus on systematic reinforcement of essential phonics knowledge to close gaps and secure foundational skills.

Intervention support extends into Key Stage 2 for children who continue to require phonics-based catch-up, ensuring continuity and progression in reading development.

Our aim is to ensure that every child receives timely, appropriate, and effective support so that they become confident, fluent readers and writers.

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), have access to high-quality phonics teaching and make appropriate progress.

Phonics teaching is carefully adapted to meet individual needs. Where required, children receive additional support through targeted interventions, small-group or 1:1 teaching, and multi-sensory approaches to support engagement and understanding.

For some children, particularly those not yet ready to start Basics 2, interventions focus on developing early pre-reading skills and phonological awareness. This includes activities such as developing listening skills, rhyme and rhythm awareness, sound discrimination, and oral blending.

Staff work closely with the SEND team to ensure that provision is precisely matched to need and that all children can access the phonics curriculum at an appropriate level.

In addition, we use the **Supersonic Phonics Friends SEND pathway** for children who require a more tailored approach. This structured pathway supports pupils in building secure foundations in phonological awareness and phonics at a pace appropriate to their developmental stage.

Our aim is to ensure that every child is supported to develop the skills they need to become confident and successful readers.

Assessment and Monitoring

- Phonics assessments are carried out every half term using the Supersonic Phonic Friends assessment booklet and tracking sheets.
- Assessments track progress in reading and inform groupings and targeted intervention planning.
- Children in Year 1 and those in Year 2 who are retaking the Phonics Screening Check also complete a half-termly practice phonics screening assessment to support familiarity, identify gaps, and inform targeted support.
- The subject leader and class teachers work collaboratively to analyse assessment data, monitor progress, and identify children who require additional support.

National Phonics Screening Check

- All Year 1 pupils take the statutory Phonics Screening Check in June 2026.
- Children who do not meet the expected standard receive additional support and retake the check in Year 2.
- Screening outcomes are used to inform future teaching, intervention planning, and curriculum adaptation.

Parental Involvement

We recognise the importance of parental partnership in supporting early reading development.

- Parents are kept informed of their child's phonics learning through Supersonic Phonic Friends newsletters.
- Each time a new group of grapheme–phoneme correspondences (GPCs) is taught, children take home a learning leaflet. These support parents to practise sounds, read words, and play phonics games with their child at home.
- Children's reading books are carefully matched to their current phonics knowledge using half-termly assessment outcomes. Parents are encouraged to read these books regularly with their child to reinforce classroom learning and develop fluency and confidence.
- Phonics workshops are offered to support parents in understanding phonics and how to best support learning at home.