

Phonics Policy

Vision: To be a community of courageous life-long learners, who are rooted in God, live out our Christian values and enjoy life in all its fullness. (Col 2:1-7)

Mission: Growing together, rooted in God and inspiring one another through our values and our broad enriched curriculum.

Strapline: Growing together, rooted in God, having fullness of life (Col 2:1-7)

Date of Statement: October 2025

Date of Statement review: October 2028

English Lead: Mrs G Healy

Date: 20th October 2025

Link Governor: Mrs G Tyler

Date: 20th October 2025

1. Vision

At Aston Rowant, we believe that **every child can become a confident, fluent reader**, regardless of their starting point. High-quality phonics teaching provides the foundations for all reading and writing. Rooted in our Christian vision of **Growing Together**, we ensure all children experience success, develop resilience and take joy in learning to read.

Our approach reflects our school values:

- **Gratitude** for stories, language and opportunities to learn
- **Resilience** when tackling new sounds and applying them in reading
- **Outreach** through reading shared texts and communicating with others
- **Wonder** in the discovery of words and meaning
- **Trust** in their own growing skills
- **Harmony** through supportive group learning

2. Intent

We aim for all children to:

- Develop strong phonemic awareness
- Blend and segment confidently
- Apply phonics knowledge accurately in reading and writing
- Become fluent, enthusiastic readers as early as possible
- Experience success regardless of background, need or previous learning
- Access phonically matched books that build fluency and confidence

High-quality phonics empowers children to become independent readers who love books for life.

3. Implementation

3.1 Our Chosen Programme: Rocket Phonics

Aston Rowant uses Rocket Phonics, a validated systematic synthetic phonics (SSP) programme.

Rocket Phonics provides:

- A fully structured, progressive sequence of sounds
- Daily consistent routines that build confidence
- High-quality decodable books
- Multi-sensory, engaging activities
- Opportunities for immediate practice and application
- Built-in assessment and responsive teaching

What Rocket Phonics Looks Like at Aston Rowant

Daily phonics sessions include:

- Revisiting previously taught graphemes
- Teaching a new GPC (grapheme–phoneme correspondence)
- Blending for reading and segmenting for spelling
- Rapid application in reading, writing and oral blending
- Immediate practice using partner work, whiteboards and word/sentence reading
- Optional extension challenges for rapid graspers

Children read Rocket Phonics fully decodable books that match their exact phonics phase. These books feature:

- Controlled vocabulary
- Repeated patterns for confidence
- Storylines that are age-appropriate and engaging
- Gradual progression in complexity

We follow Rocket Phonics with fidelity to ensure consistent practice across EYFS and KS1.

3.2 Daily Phonics in EYFS and KS1

- Taught every day, 30 minutes minimum
- Small-group practice for children needing extra consolidation
- Regular blending practice
- Speedy reading of graphemes and words
- Writing simple words and sentences
- Consistent use of actions, routines, pronunciation and terminology

3.3 Assessment & Tracking

Assessment takes place:

- Formatively every lesson
- Weekly review sessions
- Half-termly phonics assessments
- End-of-phase checks
- Through monitored reading of decodable books

Children who need extra support receive daily Keep-Up sessions.

4. Provision for Children Who Do Not Pass the Year 1 Phonics Screening Check

Year 1

If a child does not pass the PSC in Year 1, they:

- Continue daily phonics using Rocket Phonics
- Receive targeted, precise small-group intervention
- Take home fully decodable books
- Are monitored closely by the Phonics Lead and class teacher

Year 2

Children are reassessed in June of Year 2.

If they still do not pass:

- They continue phonics teaching daily
- They receive individual intervention focusing on their specific gaps
- Their reading books remain fully decodable but matched to maturity and interest, not too young in content

Year 3

If a child does not pass in Year 2:

- They continue structured phonics intervention
- They receive daily blending and segmenting practice
- They access decodable books aimed at older readers (Still Rocket Phonics)
- Phonics is integrated with comprehension and vocabulary work
- They remain included in whole-class English lessons - we do not withdraw children in a way that reduces curriculum access

We focus strongly on confidence, identity as a reader, and positive reading experiences.

Year 4–6

Less common, but phonics support continues as long as necessary.

Older children receive:

- Tailored Rocket Phonics decodable texts written for older readers
- Books with mature themes, varied genres, and age-appropriate illustrations
- Additional practice built into guided reading, 1:1 sessions, or short daily intervention
- No visible indication to peers that they are reading phonics-based texts
- Flexible opportunities to access phonics without missing core learning

5. Creative Phonics Approaches for Older Readers (Year 3–6)

To maintain dignity, motivation and engagement, we use creative, age-appropriate strategies, such as:

Morphology & Etymology Teaching

- Prefixes, suffixes, roots
- Helps older children decode “big” words confidently

Phonics Through Real Texts

- Highlighting graphemes in high-interest texts (non-fiction, news, sports, biographies)
- Spotting patterns in unfamiliar vocabulary

Phonics-Rich Writing Activities

- Writing comics
- Creating Top Trumps (inspired by WBD 2025)
- Writing poems using patterned sounds (WBD 2024)

Drama & Oral Blending Games

- Whisper-blend games
- Character names, riddles, poetic lines
- Inspired by drama days like Grimm’s Fairy Tales workshops

Sentence-level phonics

- Dictation
- Sentence completion
- Sentence “innovation” using target graphemes

Phonics Apps and Digital Tools

Rocket Phonics compatible apps, games and interactive reading at a maturity-appropriate level.

These approaches ensure phonics never feels babyish, repetitive or disengaging for older pupils.

6. Books for Older Struggling Readers

Rocket Phonics provides a range of decodable books specifically designed for:

- KS2 pupils needing phonics support
- Children who want mature characters, themes and genres
- Readers who need to build fluency without feeling singled out

These include:

- Adventure stories
- Humorous stories
- Mystery
- Graphic-style narratives
- Non-fiction titles

All follow the Rocket Phonics progression, ensuring texts are matched to need while maintaining dignity and enthusiasm.

7. Inclusion

Our inclusion principles:

- Children remain part of the whole-class curriculum
- Interventions are short, focused and do not replace core subjects
- SEND learners receive visual, multisensory and structured support
- EAL learners benefit from phonics linked to vocabulary and oral practice
- Phonics teaching always builds confidence, never embarrassment

Books are chosen carefully so older readers never feel labelled or exposed.

8. Home Reading

Parents are supported to:

- Understand phonics phases
- Practise blending and segmenting
- Listen to their child read decodable books
- Celebrate progress, not perfection

Workshops and guidance are provided annually.

9. Impact

By the end of KS2, pupils:

- Read with fluency, confidence and enjoyment
- Decode unfamiliar words using phonics, roots and morphology
- Understand and apply spelling patterns
- Use phonics knowledge naturally in writing
- Have the resilience and independence needed for secondary school

Reading-for-pleasure evidence from World Book Day shows the positive cultural impact:

- *“World Book Day makes you want to read more.”*
- *“Books can be told in music, dance, pictures - not just words.”*