

EARLY READING POLICY

*St. Joseph's
Catholic
Primary
School*

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Early Reading Policy

“Trusting in God, Creating tomorrow, helping today.”

Intent

As a Catholic Academy, religious education and faith development are at the heart of our school curriculum developing the Catholicism and spirituality of our pupils.

This policy has been developed in order to ensure that the teaching of Early Reading contributes to the fulfilment of the school's mission statement:

As a school, we firmly believe that outstanding Early Reading today will enable our pupils to take their place in the world, creating a successful tomorrow.

Through our Early Reading policy we aim for all pupils to:

- Develop a positive relationship with reading, and enjoy doing this for both pleasure and to gather information. We feel a strong significance should be placed on helping children to develop a life-long love of reading.
- Have a clear emphasis on early reading, joint with phonics, from our Early Years Foundation Stage through Key Stage 1 and beyond.
- Equip our children with tools to tackle unfamiliar vocabulary.
- Have the ability to comprehend and understand what they are reading through regular reading practice sessions.
- Be fluent readers by the end of Key Stage One regardless of their background, needs and abilities.
- Communicate effectively through developing their reading skills so they can be proficient, enthusiastic, knowledgeable and responsive readers to a variety of texts - both fiction and non-fiction.

At St Joseph's we have a strong focus on language development for our children because we know that speaking and listening are crucial skills for reading and writing in all subjects. Early Reading knowledge and skills are carefully mapped to ensure progression through the use of the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised and St Joseph's Curriculum Intent Early Reading document, so that teachers know what to teach when and what prior learning has already been taught and embedded.

Implementation

Phonics Teaching

At St Joseph's Primary School we follow the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* principles and practice of high quality phonics. This follows:

- RTPA (Revisit, Teach, Practice and Apply) format for every phonics session taught daily from Reception through to Year 2.
- Short daily phonics sessions for Nursery looking at the foundations for phonics focussing on:
 - Phonemic awareness
 - Tuning into sounds
 - Oral blending
 - Learning new rhymes and action rhymes
 - Sharing high quality stories and poems
- A sequence of 30minute planned daily sessions for all children from the second week of Reception and throughout Key Stage 1.
- Children in Reception are taught to read and spell words using Phase 2 and 3 GPCs, and words with adjacent consonants (Phase 4) with fluency and accuracy.
- Children in Year 1 review Phase 3 and 4 and are taught to read and spell words using Phase 5 GPCs with fluency and accuracy.

Although phonics is taught as a whole class following a set sequence of lessons, additional intervention may be used to support the progress of some groups of children. (Please refer to the school Phonics Policy)

Reading Sessions

Children are exposed to books in several places throughout the school: in the school library, class reading areas, reading books taken home, and Reading Session's for EYFS and Key Stage 1 followed by Guided Reading sessions in Key Stage 2. Children from all year groups are exposed to a variety of traditional and well-known stories, poems, rhymes and non-fiction texts relevant to their age groups, daily as a whole class delivered by the Class teacher using the school Reading Spine. This not only helps to encourage the children to have a shared passion and love for reading, but it gives the opportunity to develop their Early Reading skills through class discussion, language comprehension and exposure to new vocabulary.

We teach children to read through reading practice sessions three times a week. These:

- are taught by a fully trained adult to small groups of approximately six children.

- use books matched to the children's secure phonic knowledge using the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised assessments and book matching
- are monitored by the class teacher, who rotates and works with each group on a regular basis.

Each reading practice session has a clear focus, so that the demands of the session do not overload the children's working memory. The reading practice sessions have been designed to focus on three key reading skills:

- decoding
- prosody; teaching children to read with understanding and expression
- comprehension; teaching children to understand the text

In Reception these sessions start in Week 4. Children who are not yet decoding have daily additional blending practice in small groups, so that they quickly learn to blend and can begin to read books.

In Year 2 and 3, we continue to teach reading in this way for any children who still need to practise reading with decodable books - the majority of children move to the Little Wandle Fluency programme during Spring Term in Year 2 and continue this throughout Year 3. Key Stage 2 Guided Reading sessions focus on children developing 5 key skills of Early Reading: Vocabulary, Retrieval, Inference, Sequencing and Prediction.

Fluency Programme

From Spring Term of Year 2, the school implements the *Little Wandle Fluency* programme to provide systematic and explicit instruction in reading fluency. This provision is designed for pupils who have successfully secured their phonics knowledge and are progressing towards greater accuracy, automaticity, prosody, and comprehension. Through the use of carefully structured sessions and appropriately challenging texts, pupils in Years 2 and 3 are supported to embed and extend their fluency skills, enabling them to access the wider curriculum with increasing confidence and independence. The school monitors progress closely to ensure that all pupils make rapid gains, and that any barriers to fluency are addressed promptly and effectively. This approach reflects the school's commitment to ensuring that all children develop as fluent, motivated readers with the skills required for lifelong learning.

Home Reading

The decodable reading practice book children access in school is then taken home on a Friday to ensure success is shared with the family.

- Reading for pleasure books also go home for parents to share and read to the children.

- We engage our families and share information about phonics, the benefits of sharing books, how children learn to blend and other aspects of our provision, both online and through the 'Phonics and Early Reading' EYFS/Key Stage 1 letter sent home with students at the start of each year.
- Children in Reception and Year 1 who are receiving any additional phonics Keep-up sessions read their reading practice book to an adult daily.

Reading for Pleasure

We value reading for pleasure highly and work hard as a school to grow our Reading for Pleasure pedagogy.

- We read to children every day from Nursery through to Year 6. The books are based around our Reading Spine developed using a selection of carefully chosen books to ensure the children experience a wide range of books, including books that reflect the children at St Joseph's Primary and our local community as well as books that open windows into other worlds and cultures.
- Every classroom has an inviting book corner that encourages a love for reading. We curate these books and talk about them to entice children to read a wide range of books.
- In Nursery and Reception, children have access to the reading corner every day in their free flow play, both indoors and outdoors, and the books are continually refreshed with a new selection to ensure children are engaging with a variety of high-quality texts.
- Children from Nursery onwards have a home reading record. The parent/carer records comments to share with the adults in school and the adults write in this on a regular basis to ensure communication between home and school.
- As children progress through school, they are encouraged to write their own comments and keep a list of the books/authors that they have read.
- The school library is made available for classes to use at all times. Children throughout school have regular opportunities to engage with a wide range of Reading for Pleasure events (books fairs, author visits, national events etc).
- Children in Nursery have access to a 'library' of carefully chosen books to choose with their parent/carer to take home and read together for pleasure.
- For reluctant readers in school, we have a reading buddy system in place, where children have a reading buddy from an older year group. Together these children share stories in a comfortable environment to help make reading an enjoyable experience, modelled by their peers and encourage them to develop a love of reading of their own.

Links through the wider curriculum

Wherever possible, English genres will link to the Imaginative learning project covered in the topic-based learning. The books covered as a whole class within English, and Topic, sessions are age appropriate and the content of these correlates to the National Curriculum statements for each year group. Allowing the children to be able to develop their Early Reading skills progressively through closely studying the texts as a class. (Please refer to the English Policy)

Impact

Assessment is used to monitor progress in Early Reading for all children, and to identify any children needing additional support as soon as they need it.

Summative Assessment:

- To assist in children developing Early Reading skills we are continually monitoring children's phonic knowledge and retention of taught graphemes, with the aim for all children to become fluent readers by the end of Key Stage 1. Assessment for learning is used daily in class reading sessions to identify any children needing keep-up support.
- Attainment in phonics is measured every six weeks using Little Wandle Assessment grids, identifying gaps in learning that need to be address, assessing progress, identifying children who may need additional support and to plan the keep-up support that is needed.
- The little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised placement assessment is used for any child new to the school to quickly identify any gaps in their phonic knowledge and plan and provide extra teaching.

Statutory Assessment:

- Year 1 Phonics screening check. Any child not passing the check re-sits this in Year 2.
- EYFS Statutory Assessment to measure GLD.

Early Reading Lead Assessment:

- Children from the lowest 20% of each year group from Reception through Key Stage 1 are listened to each half term throughout the year by the Early Reading Lead to ensure that keep-up sessions are having an impact on their progress and learning and to identify any additional gaps in learning.
- We also spend time talking to the children, through pupil interviews to ensure our children continue to have a love for reading and are enthusiastic and motivated readers who read for pleasure.
- The Reading Lead and SLT regularly monitor and observe teaching; they use summative data to identify children who need additional support and gaps in learning.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Headteacher has the responsibility for the leadership of the curriculum and delegates responsibility to key staff:

- the Deputy Headteacher co-ordinates the work of the subject leaders and ensures that the curriculum has progression and appropriate coverage;
- Subject leaders are responsible for the medium term plans and liaising with class teachers over the content and delivery of the units of work. They evaluate and monitor standards in their subject;
- Class teachers ensure that the curriculum is taught and that the aims are achieved for their class. They plan collaboratively to ensure parity across the year group;
- The Executive Headteacher and Head of School ensure that the progress of each pupil is tracked and that there is appropriate challenge support and intervention;
- Governors monitor the success of the curriculum at whole Governing Body meetings through the Executive Headteacher's report and reports from subject leaders.

Reviewed: September 2025

Review Date: September 2027