

Phonics and Early Reading Policy



St. Peter's CE Primary Academy, Hednesford

Reach for the Sky!

English – Phonics and Early Reading

Phonics and Early Reading Intent

At St Peter's Primary Academy, we recognise the importance of early reading and aim to create an inclusive, inspired and challenging curriculum which develops children's knowledge of Phonics, enabling them to become successful readers who develop a life-long love of reading. We aim to give children the best possible start on their reading and writing journey by teaching them the essential phonological skills and knowledge to decode and encode words independently from the outset. We recognise that the development of spoken language and the enjoyment and comprehension of quality literature go hand in hand to develop a lifelong love of reading and aim to nurture and develop these attributes alongside the phonics program.

At St. Peter's Primary Academy, we believe that all our children can become fluent readers and writers. This is why we teach reading through *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised*, which is a systematic and synthetic phonics programme. We start teaching phonics in Nursery/Reception and follow the [Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised progression](#), which ensures children build on their growing knowledge of the alphabetic code, mastering phonics to read and spell as they move through school.

As a result, all our children are able to tackle any unfamiliar words as they read. At St. Peter's Primary Academy, we also model the application of the alphabetic code through phonics in shared reading and writing, both inside and outside of the phonics lesson and across the curriculum. 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.

At St. Peter's Primary Academy, we value reading as a crucial life skill. By the time children leave us, they read confidently for meaning and regularly enjoy reading for pleasure. Our readers are equipped with the tools to tackle unfamiliar vocabulary. We encourage our children to see themselves as readers for both pleasure and purpose.

Phonics and Early Reading Implementation

Foundations for phonics in Nursery

- We provide a balance of child-led and adult-led experiences for all children that meet the curriculum expectations for 'Communication and language' and 'Literacy'. These include:
 - sharing high-quality stories and poems
 - learning a range of nursery rhymes and action rhymes
 - activities that develop focused listening and attention, including oral blending
 - attention to high-quality language.
- We ensure Nursery children are well prepared to begin learning grapheme-phoneme correspondences (GPCs) and blending in Reception.

Daily phonics lessons in Reception and Year 1

- We teach phonics for 30 minutes a day. In Reception, we build from 10-minute lessons, with additional daily oral blending games, to the full-length lesson as quickly as possible. Each Friday, we review the week's teaching to help children become fluent readers.
- Children make a strong start in Reception: teaching begins in Week 2 of the Autumn term.
- We follow the [Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised expectations of progress](#):
 - 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.

Daily Keep-up lessons ensure every child learns to read

- Any child who needs additional practice has daily Keep-up support, taught by a fully trained adult. Keep-up lessons match the structure of class teaching, and use the same procedures, resources and mantras, but in smaller steps with more repetition, so that every child secures their learning.
- We timetable daily phonics lessons for any child in Year 2 or 3 who is not fully fluent at reading or has not passed the Phonics screening check. These children urgently need to catch up, so the gap between themselves and their peers does not widen. We use the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* assessments to identify the gaps in their phonic knowledge and teach to these using the Keep-up resources – at pace.
- If any child in Year 3 to 6 has gaps in their phonic knowledge when reading, we plan 'catch-up' sessions to address specific gaps. These daily sessions last 10 minutes and focus on securing phonic knowledge, building accuracy, and developing speed and fluency. We use a programme developed by Staffordshire Educational Psychology Service that helps embed and secure learning from *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised*. TAs have received full training in both Little Wandle and the intervention in order to deliver these sessions effectively.

Teaching reading: Reading practice sessions three times a week

- 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
 - 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.



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- In Year 2, we continue to teach reading in this way for any children who still need to practise reading with decodable books.

Home reading

- The decodable reading practice book is taken home to ensure success is shared with the family.
 - Reading for pleasure books also go home for parents to share and read to children. These books are chosen by the child from our rotating library boxes.
 - We use the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* parents' resources to 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 workshops.

Ensuring consistency and pace of progress

- Every teacher in our school has been trained to teach reading, so we have the same expectations of progress. We all use the same language, routines and resources to teach children to read so that we lower children's cognitive load.
- Weekly content grids map each element of new learning to each day, week and term for the duration of the programme.
- Lesson templates, Prompt cards and How to videos ensure teachers all have a consistent approach and structure for each lesson.
- The Reading Leader and SLT regularly monitor and observe teaching; they use the summative data to identify children who need additional support and gaps in learning.

Ensuring 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. We choose these books carefully as we want children to experience a wide range of books, including books that reflect the children at St. Peter's Primary Academy 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/Reception, children have access to the reading corner every day in their free flow time and the books are continually refreshed. They also have access to a choice library, where they can take books home to share with their families.
- Children from Nursery/Reception onwards have a home reading record. The parent/carer records comments to share with the adults in school and the adults will write in this on a regular basis to ensure communication between home and school.
- As the children progress through the school, they are encouraged to write their own comments and keep a list of the books/authors that they have read.



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- Reading for Pleasure is celebrated and encouraged throughout St. Peter’s Academy with regular whole school reading events, cross curricular links, book fairs, author visits and national events.

Phonics and Early Reading Impact

Through assessment

Assessment is used to monitor progress and to identify any child needing additional support as soon as they need it.

- Assessment for learning is used:
 - daily within class to identify children needing Keep-up support
 - weekly in the Review lesson to assess gaps, address these immediately and secure fluency of GPCs, words and spellings.
- Summative assessment is used:
 - every six weeks to assess progress, to identify gaps in learning that need to be addressed, to identify any children needing additional support and to plan the Keep-up support that they need.
 - by SLT and scrutinised through the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* assessment tracker, to narrow attainment gaps between different groups of children and so that any additional support for teachers can be put into place.
- The *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* placement assessment is used:
 - with any child new to the school to quickly identify any gaps in their phonic knowledge and plan appropriate extra teaching.

Statutory assessment

- Children in Year 1 sit the Phonics screening check. Any child not passing the check re-sits it in Year 2.

Ongoing assessment for catch-up

- Children in Year 3 to 6 are assessed through:
 - their teacher’s ongoing formative assessment
 - weekly reviews of target words, reading speed and accuracy in line with the Staffordshire Educational Psychology intervention.
 - half-termly assessments to track progress in reading fluency, speed and accuracy.

As a learner

- The result of Phonics teaching at St Peter’s Primary Academy will be that children will have a secure knowledge of Phonics, enabling them to become confident readers and access learning across the whole curriculum.
- Children will apply the skills learnt in Phonics to their writing as they are confident in choosing the correct phoneme to grapheme correspondence.
- The high-quality teaching will be reflected in the EYFS and KS1 phonics assessment data, which has been consistently above national attainment for the past three years.
- Our approach to phonics aims to instil the foundations of the children’s reading journey and is the beginning of a life-long love of reading.



As a member of Society

- Children will be provided the opportunities to participate in events, groups and learning activities which enhance the experience of reading that children get at school.
- Participating in visits and visitors from the wider community in order to bring reading opportunities alive for the children. This includes links with local libraries, theatres, authors and members of the community.

As a school

- We will provide a stimulating and enriching reading culture that encourages and excites the children. We will provide opportunities for the children to discuss, share and recommend books that have inspired and impacted them.
- We celebrate and encourage reading often and widely for enjoyment as well as for knowledge.
- Reading is an integral part of the day and is integrated throughout our curriculum.
- The children will understand the importance of reading and how it can impact and help lead to ambitious, fulfilled futures.

