St Paul's
C of E Primary School

A place to belong

Phonics and Early Reading Policy

Headteacher:	**Christie Clarke**
Member of Staff Responsible:	**Daryl Bunton**
Reviewing Committee:	**Curriculum**
Effective Date of Use:	**Sep 2025**
Term of Next Review:	**Autumn 2026**
Non Statutory Policy	

St Paul's C of E Primary School

A Place to Belong

Our Christian Vision

Our school is a family where everyone feels safe, happy and valued, and is supported to achieve their full potential.

We will develop compassionate and caring individuals who depend on one another, are highly motivated, and have a life-long love of learning in preparation for the future.

Our Core Values

All that we do is underpinned by the core Christian values of *Family (Koinonia), Compassion, Perseverance and Forgiveness*

"Though we are many, we form one body, all joined together as members of the whole. We each have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. We must use them wisely."

Romans 12:5-8

Phonics and Early Reading Policy

Phonics (reading and spelling)

At St Paul's CE Primary School 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 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 Paul's CE Primary 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.

Comprehension

At St Paul's CE Primary, 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.

Because we believe teaching every child to read is so important, we have a Phonics and English Leader who drives the early reading programme in our school. These individuals are highly skilled at teaching phonics and reading, and they monitor and support our staff, so everyone teaches with fidelity to the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised programme.

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 additional phonics support for any child in Year 2 and above, 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.

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 using the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised assessments
    - 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 above, we continue to teach reading in this way for any children who still need to practise reading with decodable books.

Home reading

Reading practice book

This will be at the correct phonic stage for individual children and set by the class teacher. Children should be able to read this fluently and independently.

Sharing book

Children will not be able to read this on their own. This book is for parents and carers to read and enjoy together with their child. Children will choose this book themselves from the library.

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 and English Leaders and SLT use the Audit and Prompt cards to 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

'Reading for pleasure is the single most important indicator of a child's success.' (OECD 2002)

'The will influences the skill and vice versa.' (OECD 2010)

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

- We read to children regularly. We choose these books carefully as we want children to experience a wide range of books, including books that reflect the children at St Paul's CE Primary School and our local community as well as books that open windows into other worlds and cultures. Each class has a whole class text which they will explore in more detail that links to their topic to ensure a full breadth of understanding and allowing for more links to the wider world.
- We have a Reading Spine that illustrates the books covered in each year group and each class has a set of core texts that are read by an adult during Story Time. These texts have been chosen to expose children to a range of genres.
- 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 Reception, children have access to the reading corner every day in their free flow time and the books are continually refreshed.
- Children from 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.
- The school library is made available for children and parents to use, allowing them to borrow books to take home. Children across the school have regular opportunities to engage with a wide range of Reading for Pleasure events (book fairs, author visits and workshops, national events etc).

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.

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 2 to 6 are assessed through their teacher's ongoing formative assessment as well as through the half-termly Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised summative assessments.