



St Elizabeth's Catholic Primary School

"Love one another as I have loved you"

The teaching of Phonics and Early Reading at St Elizabeth's

Phonics

It is our priority to ensure that each child is taught to read. Phonics is the way that our students start their journey to become independent and fluent readers. From the moment the children join us in Reception, phonics is taught in a highly structured programme of daily lessons which continues throughout Reception and Year 1. It is our aim at St Elizabeth's to provide children with the skills necessary to be able to read confidently, access information throughout the curriculum whilst developing their own enjoyment of reading.

At St Elizabeth's, reading is at the heart of our curriculum and children will learn to read with confidence, fluency and understanding, providing them with the skills required to achieve a lifetime of enjoyment through reading. It is essential that our approach to teaching phonics and reading is accessible to all learners, regardless of background.

Phonics (reading and spelling)

At St Elizabeth's 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 Elizabeth's, 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 Elizabeth's, 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 that teaching every child to read is so important, we have a Reading Leader who drives the early reading programme in our school. The Reading Leader is highly

skilled at teaching phonics and reading, and monitors and supports the reading team, ensuring that all staff teach 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 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 Grapheme Phoneme Correspondence (GPC), and words with adjacent consonants (Phase 4) with fluency and accuracy.
- Children in Y1 review Phase 3 and 4 and are taught to read and spell words using Phase 5 GPC 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 strategies, but use smaller steps with more repetition, so that every child secures their learning.

We timetable daily phonics lessons for any child in Y2 or Y3 who is not fully fluent at reading or has not reached the expected standard in 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 these using Keep up resources at pace.

If any child in Y3 to Y6 has gaps in their phonic knowledge when reading or writing, we plan phonics 'catch up' lessons to address specific reading and writing gaps. These short, focussed sessions last 10 minutes and take place at least three times a week.

Teaching reading: Reading practice sessions three times a week

We teach children to read through reading practice sessions. 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 the book-matching grids on pages 11–20 of ['Application of phonics to reading'](#)
- 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, 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 Y2 and Y3 we continue to teach reading in this way for those 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.

Children also take home Reading for pleasure books from the Infant Library for parents to share and read to children.

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.

Phonics Workshops

Each year, we offer Phonics workshops for parents. These are opportunities for us to share our approach to phonics with parents and offer guidance and suggestions of how parents can support their child's reading journey at home.

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 School Leadership Team 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. In addition to learning systematic phonics, we recognise the significance of reading for meaning and teach phonics within this context. Our environments support the children's development as readers. Children have access to high quality texts and reading

experiences. Children have opportunities to read alone, with each other and significantly, with adults who model enjoyment in stories by reading aloud frequently.

- 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 Elizabeth's and our local community as well as books that open windows into other worlds and cultures.
- Every classroom has a book area which 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 to reflect the current topic and interests of the children.
- 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.
- Our KS1 and KS2 school libraries are made available for classes to use throughout the week. Children across the school have regular opportunities to engage with a wide range of Reading for Pleasure events (Book Week, author visits and workshops, the Spark Book Awards etc).

Assessment of Phonics and Early Reading

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 the School Leadership Team 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.

Phonics Screening Check

During the summer term in Year 1, children nationwide are tested on their phonic knowledge. The purpose of the screening check is to confirm that all children have learned phonic decoding to an age-appropriate standard. Children who do not meet the required standard for the check in Y1, enter again in Y2 with additional support. Parents are informed as to whether their child has achieved the national expectation within the child's end-of-year report.

In the academic year 2021/22, the Phonics Screening Check takes place in November for the Y2 children and it is expected to take place in Summer 2022 for children in Y1.