

# St Vincent De Paul R.C. Primary School, Knutsford

**Mission Statement:**

*Believe, Trust and Be Ready*

*“That they may have life, and to the full” John 10:10*



## Phonics and Early Reading Policy

Policy Date: November 2022

Review Date: November 2025



# Phonics and Early Reading at St Vincent's

## **The context of our school**

St Vincent de Paul Primary is a smaller than average Primary school which draws from a wide catchment area. Most pupils are White British heritage, 12% speak English as an additional language and pupil premium is below average. The percentage with SEN and EHP is also below average. Our attendance levels are very good. It is essential that our approach to teaching phonics and reading is accessible to all learners, regardless of background

## **Inclusion**

We aim to provide for all children so that they achieve as highly as they can in English according to their individual abilities. We will identify which pupils or groups of pupils are under-achieving and take steps to improve their attainment.

## **Equal Opportunities**

St. Vincent's has ambitions for every child, whatever their background or circumstances. Children learn and thrive when they are healthy, safe and engaged.

Our curriculum includes a wide range of texts and other resources which represent the diversity and backgrounds of all our children.

We believe in 'valuing what the child brings to school' and recognise the importance of supporting a child's first language, not only to foster self-esteem, but to assist in the learning of English.

## **Role of Phonics and Early Reading Lead**

The role of the subject leader involves:

- Modelling good practice;
- Being responsible for the upgrading and ordering of resources and arranging for their storage;
- Keeping informed about developments and new initiatives to support the teaching of language and literacy and ensure staff are informed;
- Auditing needs and organising staff training;
- Monitoring planning on a termly basis; scrutiny of books and lesson observations with constructive feedback;
- Supporting staff in planning and using resources;
- Updating the school policy when necessary.

# Intent

## Phonics (reading and spelling)

At St Vincent's, 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 Vincent'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 Vincent'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 teaching every child to read is so important, we have a Reading Leader who drives the early reading programme in our school. This person is highly skilled at teaching phonics and reading, and they monitor and support our reading team, so everyone teaches with fidelity to the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* programme.

# Implementation

## Daily phonics lessons in Reception and Year 1

- We teach phonics for 20 to 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, (grapheme- phoneme correspondence) 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 (grapheme- phoneme correspondence) 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 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 and 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 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, we continue to teach reading in this way for any children who still need to practise reading with decodable books.

## Home reading

- In Reception and Year 1, 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.
  - 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.

## Parents as partners

- In Reception, we hold parents 'Stay and Learn' sessions where we explain how Phonics is taught in school and give parents guidance of how they can support their child at home. We also hold a similar session in Year 1 and an additional session to explain the Phonics Screening to parents.

## Additional reading support for vulnerable children

- Children in Reception and Year 1 who are receiving additional phonics 'Keep-up' sessions read their reading practice book to an adult.

## Ensuring consistency and pace of progress

- Every KS1 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 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.'* (Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development - OECD 2002)

*'The will influences the skill and vice versa.'* (Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development - 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 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 Vincent's 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 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.

## Impact

### 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(grapheme- phoneme correspondence), 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.

### **Review and Evaluation**

Its implementation is the responsibility of all staff. Its use and effectiveness will be supported and monitored by the Phonics and Early Reading Lead and English Co-ordinator on behalf of the Head Teacher and Governors.