Reading and Phonics at St Peter's

At St Peter's, we want every child to become a confident, fluent and enthusiastic reader who understands, enjoys and develops a lifelong love of books. Reading is fundamental to children's learning and opens the door to knowledge, imagination and new experiences.

Our approach combines a systematic phonics programme, **Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised**, with a structured approach to reading comprehension based on Pie Corbett's **Talk for Reading** programme. Together, these approaches support children to develop the skills, knowledge and confidence they need to become successful, independent readers.

Phonics: Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised

Phonics is a fundamental part of learning to read and write. At St Peter's, we use **Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised**, a Department for Education validated systematic synthetic phonics (SSP) programme. It provides a carefully sequenced approach to teaching phonics, with clear progression from Reception through Year 1 and Year 2, alongside additional support for children who need it.

Phonics teaches children to recognise the relationship between letters and sounds, blend sounds together to read words and segment words into sounds to support spelling. Children also learn to read and spell tricky words that cannot always be read using their developing phonics knowledge alone.

Phonics is taught systematically, enabling children to build on their learning over time. Our approach supports consistent, high-quality teaching while allowing us to adapt provision and provide additional practice for children who need help to keep up.

Reading books matched to phonics

Children following the phonics programme practise reading books that are carefully matched to the sounds and words they have been taught. In school, children read and practise these books with adult support before bringing them home to develop their fluency, accuracy and confidence.

In Reception and Key Stage 1, children also take home a book to share with their parents or carers for pleasure. This provides opportunities to enjoy stories together, explore new vocabulary and develop a love of reading beyond the classroom.

Additional phonics support

We regularly assess children's progress to identify their developing skills and any areas where further support may be needed. Children who require additional practice may access **Little Wandle Rapid Catch-up**, which provides targeted teaching to help them strengthen their phonics knowledge and keep up with their peers.

The Year 1 Phonics Screening Check

In June, children in Year 1 take the statutory Phonics Screening Check. This assesses their ability to read words using their phonics knowledge, including unfamiliar words. Some children in Year 2 who did not meet the expected standard in Year 1 will retake the check.

The results help us understand children's progress and identify any further support they may need.

Reading Comprehension: Talk for Reading

Learning to read involves more than recognising words. Children also need to understand what they read, think critically about texts and develop the language to express their ideas. At St Peter's, our reading comprehension teaching is based on Pie Corbett's **Talk for Reading** programme, which complements the Talk for Writing approach already established within our curriculum. Our approach is informed by research from the **Education Endowment Foundation (EEF)**, which highlights the importance of developing oral language, explicitly teaching reading comprehension strategies and providing opportunities for pupils to discuss and reflect on their learning.

How do we teach reading comprehension?

Using high-quality texts from our school reading spine, teachers guide children to explore stories, poetry and non-fiction in depth. Through carefully planned lessons, children develop their ability to:

- Explore vocabulary and understand the meaning of unfamiliar words.
- Retrieve information and explain their understanding.
- Make inferences and predictions using clues from the text.
- Summarise key ideas and identify important information.
- Explain their opinions and support their ideas with evidence from the text.
- Discuss characters, events, themes and the choices made by authors.

Talk and discussion are at the heart of our approach. Children are encouraged to share their interpretations, listen to different perspectives, ask questions and build on one another's ideas. They are given opportunities to think deeply about meaning and discuss their responses before applying their understanding independently.

Through this approach, we aim to develop thoughtful, reflective readers who can engage confidently with a wide range of texts and enjoy discussing what they read.

How do we assess children's progress in reading?

We continually monitor children's reading development through classroom observations, reading activities and appropriate assessments. This helps teachers identify strengths, address misconceptions and plan teaching that meets children's needs. In phonics, assessment informs the teaching and support children receive, including their placement in appropriate reading groups and access to additional interventions where necessary. As children develop their reading comprehension, teachers assess how well they understand texts, explain their ideas and use evidence to support their thinking. This information helps us adapt teaching and ensure that children continue to make progress.

How can parents and carers support reading at home?

We work in partnership with parents and carers to celebrate children's achievements and discuss any concerns about their reading development.

Your support at home plays a vital role in helping your child become a confident and enthusiastic reader. Regular reading, shared enjoyment of books and positive conversations about texts can make a lasting difference.

We encourage parents and carers to:

- **Read together regularly.** Listen to your child read and make time to share stories, poetry and non-fiction books.
- **Practise phonics.** Encourage your child to say the sounds represented by the letters and blend them together to read words. When practising phonics, focus on the sounds rather than the letter names.
- **Talk about what you read.** Ask questions about characters, events and information. Encourage your child to make predictions, explain their ideas and talk about their favourite parts.
- **Read aloud to your child.** Sharing books that your child may not yet be able to read independently develops vocabulary, imagination and enjoyment.
- **Celebrate progress.** Offer encouragement and praise effort, helping your child develop confidence and resilience as a reader.
- **Be a reading role model.** Let your child see you enjoying books and other forms of reading in everyday life.

Reading books at home

In the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and Key Stage 1, children take home a phonics-matched reading book to practise reading independently, alongside a book to share and enjoy with their family. In Key Stage 2, regular reading to and with your child remains just as important. We encourage children to read books appropriate to their reading level, share their reading with an adult and discuss what they have read. We also recommend audio books or books that you can read to your child to help to develop their vocabulary and ideas for writing at a level that they may not be able to read independently.

Above all, we want children to see reading as an enjoyable and rewarding part of everyday life. By working together, we can help every child at St Peter's develop the skills, confidence and enthusiasm to become a lifelong reader.