

Phonics Policy
John Keble C of E Primary School
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Rooted in faith, Growing in Community, Thriving in Learning

"Love one another as I have loved you." John 13:34.

Phonics and early reading policy

At John Keble C of E Primary School, we believe reading is one of the most important skills we can teach our children. Through our inclusive phonics programme, we aim to ensure that all children become confident, competent and enthusiastic readers, achieving all that they can in a stimulating, supportive and aspirational environment. Our Phonics programme will support learning but also help to inspire a love of reading. It is essential that our approach to teaching phonics and reading is accessible to all learners, regardless of background.

Intent

Phonics (reading and spelling)

At John Keble c of E 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 John Keble C of E Primary School, 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 John Keble C of E Primary School, 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 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 Phases 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 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 Rapid Catch-up assessments to identify the gaps in their phonic knowledge and teach to these using the Rapid Catch-up resources – at pace.
- These short, sharp lessons last 15-20 minutes daily and have been designed to ensure children quickly catch up to age-related expectations in reading.

Teaching reading: Reading practice sessions three to five times a week (Year R – 2)

- We teach children to read through reading practice sessions three to five times a week in our 'Reading Squad' groups. These:
 - are taught by a fully trained adult to small groups of up to 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
 - are monitored by the class teacher, who rotates and works with each group on a regular basis.
- Each reading practice session in our Reading Squad 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 (including pre-reading and moving on to fluency)
 - prosody: teaching children to read with understanding and expression
 - comprehension: teaching children to understand the text.
- In Reception these sessions start in Week 4 of the phonics programme. 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 Years 2, we continue to teach reading in this way for any children who still need to practise reading with decodable books.
- Further information across the school can be found in our English Policy.

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.
 - 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.

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 daily.

Ensuring consistency and pace of progress

- Every teacher and LSA 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 remains a long-term priority because of its significant educational, social and personal benefits." Adapted from findings in the Reading for Pleasure Report, 2026.

"Reading improves academic attainment, mental health and wellbeing, development of empathy and much more." (House of Commons Education Committee, 2026)

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 John Keble C of E Primary School and our local community as well as books that open windows into other worlds and cultures.

- Classrooms have 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 and Key stage One, 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 in school write in this on a regular basis and record comments from Reading Squad sessions to ensure communication between home and school.
- Each class visits the school library every week.
- Children across the school have opportunities to engage in a range of reading for Pleasure activities and events e.g. author visits and workshops, books swaps, sponsored reads and competitions and national events such as World Book Day).

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, 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.
- A **placement assessment** is used:
 - with any child new to the school in [Reception](#) and [Year 1](#) to quickly identify their phonic knowledge and plan and provide appropriate teaching.

Statutory assessment

- Children in Year 1 sit the Phonics screening check. Any child not passing the check, continues with phonics lessons and Reading Squad sessions throughout Year 2 and re-sits the Phonics screening check in Year 2.

Ongoing assessment for catch up

- Children in Year 2 to 6 are assessed through teachers' ongoing formative assessment. The Rapid Catch-up initial assessment will be used to identify any gaps in their phonic knowledge and plan appropriate teaching.