



St Leonard's Church of England Primary School

Early Reading and Writing Policy

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Early Reading and Writing

This Policy is intended as a framework to enable the pupils at St Leonard's Church of England Primary School to learn to read and write well in a timely manner and to establish the foundations of a lifelong love of literacy.

This is in line with the school's mission statement:

In Jesus' footsteps... we grow in grace and knowledge.

This policy should be read in conjunction with other policies including

Early Years Policy
English Policy
Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy

Intent

Phonics (reading and spelling)

At St. Leonard'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 Nursery with rhymes, songs, games and oral blending using *Foundations for Phonics* from Little Wandle. We teach formal phonics lessons in Reception from the children's second week in school. We 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, our children are able to tackle any unfamiliar words as they read. We teach children to aim to read with automaticity and without overt sounding out and blending. At St. Leonard'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. *Little Wandle's* guidance for letter formations ensure early writing begins with accuracy and fluidity from Reception year.

Comprehension



Because we believe teaching every child to read and write are so important, we have an Early Reading and Writing subject 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

Foundations for phonics in Nursery (including early writing opportunities)

- We provide a balance of child-led and adult-led experiences for all children that meet the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum expectations for 'Communication and language' and 'Literacy'. These include:
 - o sharing high-quality stories and poems
 - o learning a range of nursery rhymes and action rhymes
 - o activities that develop focused listening and attention, including oral blending
 - o attention to high-quality language.
 - o small and large scale physical play spaces to support the physical development required for successful future writing.
 - o creative approaches that enhance fine motor control
 - o name writing and promoting an awareness of print in the environment
- We ensure Nursery children are well prepared to begin learning grapheme-phoneme correspondences (GPCs) and blending in Reception.

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:
 - o Children in Nursery are taught using Little Wandle's *Foundations for Phonics* programme.
 - o 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.
 - o 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 and dynamically assessed interventions 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.



short, sharp lessons 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 three times a week.
- These:
 - o are taught by a fully trained adult to small groups of children
 - o 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' (Appendix 2)
 - o are monitored by the class teacher and Early Reading & Writing Lead
 - o are documented on a form with the use of simple codes to quickly record pupil's achievements and progress
- 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:
 - o decoding
 - o prosody: teaching children to read with understanding and expression
 - o 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 3, we continue to teach reading in this way for any children who still need to practise reading with decodable books.

Home reading and parent workshops

- The decodable reading practice book is taken home to ensure success is shared with the family.
 - o Reading for pleasure books also go home for parents to share and read to children.
 - o 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.
 - o We provide sessions for our parents to engage in and learn more about phonics and early reading.

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 more frequently.

Ensuring consistency and pace of progress



- 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 Early Reading and Writing Lead and SLT 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)

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. Leonard's and our local community as well as books that open windows into other worlds and cultures.
- Every classroom in Early Years and KS1 has an inviting mini library 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 Nursery/Reception, children have access to the reading corner every day in their free flow time and the books are continually refreshed.
- In Nursery/Reception children have termly 'Favourite 5' and 'Top 10' books that are regularly read (off by heart) and embed a real love of stories and rich language opportunities.
- Children from Reception onwards have a home reading record. The parent/carer records comments to share with the adults in school which provides opportunities for personalised and individual reading support 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.

Developing Early Writing – introducing Pathways to Write

- During the academic year 2022-2023, our English Lead has introduced *Pathways to Write* from the Literacy Company for Reception to Year 6.
- *Pathways to Write* is a writing scheme for primary schools with a proven methodology built around units of work which develop vocabulary, reading and writing skills through the mastery approach.
- The units, for use with pupils from EYFS to Y6, provide clear detailed lesson plans and resources, linked to high-quality texts to ensure engaging and purposeful English lessons. Effective teaching strategies to challenge greater depth writers are included within each unit of work.
- During the current academic year, we are implementing this, monitoring its impact and effectiveness on the quality of children's written work.
- This programme's pedagogy aligns with our approach to reading in terms of avoiding cognitive overload and mastering learning.



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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:
 - o daily within class to identify children needing Keep-up support
 - o weekly in the Review lesson to assess gaps, address these immediately and secure fluency of GPCs, words and spellings.
- Summative assessment is used:
 - o 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.
 - o 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.
- The *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* placement assessment is used:
 - o with any child new to the school to quickly identify any gaps in their phonic knowledge and plan provide appropriate extra teaching.

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

- If a child in Y2 to Y6 cannot yet read fluently, they are assessed through:
 - o their teacher's ongoing formative assessment
 - o the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds* placement assessment
 - o the appropriate half-termly assessments.

For some children it may be appropriate to offer additional strategies or use additional assessments, which will be done in consultation with the SENCO.