

# St George's C. E. Primary School



## Phonics and Early Reading Policy

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## Phonics and Early Reading Policy



### Vision Statement

Jesus said: 'Love each other as I have loved you'. John 15:12

Our school motto, 'Everyone matters, everyone achieves' is at the heart of everything we do and believe.

At St George's Primary School, we aim to prepare the children in our care to become well-rounded members of society on their journey through school life and beyond. We strongly believe that children learn best and can achieve their potential when they are happy and content. We endeavour to provide a safe learning environment with a warm, welcoming atmosphere which creates a sense of belonging amongst the children, the staff, the families and the community. We embrace their individuality and diversity, always encouraging respect and acceptance of each other regardless of race, religion or culture.

We have high expectations of the children and we work hard to support them to become the best that they can be. For our children to flourish, socially and academically, we aim to provide an outstanding education that is both challenging and inclusive. All children are encouraged to embrace the many opportunities and the support school provides, so that they become curious learners who are motivated and resilient with a 'Can do' attitude. Our aim is to provide the children of St George's with countless positive experiences, along with happy lifelong memories, from their time with us. We also have high expectations of attendance. We encourage families to be at school every day and to arrive on time in order to not miss any learning.

Through our supportive and inclusive Christian ethos, we are proud to foster our school values of kindness, respect, friendship, perseverance, honesty, happiness and responsibility, embedding these within everyday life at school. We believe that the emotional health and wellbeing of the whole school community is fundamental to the ongoing success of our school.

We aspire to make our school a place of excellence where we educate, nurture and value everyone; that ALL children will enjoy learning and achieve their potential in the 'St George's Way.'

'Let us always meet each other with a smile, for the smile is the beginning of love.'  
Mother Teresa.

## **Intent**

### **Phonics (reading and spelling)**

At St George's C of E Primary School and Nursery, 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 ( following the Little Wandle Key guidance foundation for phonics) 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 George's C of E Primary School and Nursery, 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 George's C of E Primary School and Nursery, 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 3 Reading Leaders (Foundation Stage, Key stage 1 and Key Stage 2) who drive the early reading programme in our school. These people are 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**

- We provide a balance of child-led and adult-led experiences for all children that meet the curriculum expectations for 'Communication and language' and 'Literacy'. These include:
  - sharing high-quality stories and poems
  - learning a range of nursery rhymes and action rhymes
  - activities that develop focused listening and attention, including oral blending
  - attention to high-quality language.

- We use wordless books to establish book behaviours, book talk and to grow vocabulary with small groups of children.
- We ensure Nursery children are well prepared to begin learning grapheme-phoneme correspondences (GPCs) and blending in Reception.
- We follow the Little Wandle Foundation for Phonics teaching program in line with the school chosen scheme.

### **Daily phonics lessons in Reception and Year 1**

- We teach phonics for 20 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 Phase 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**

- In Reception and Year One, 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.
- Additionally, all children who have not mastered blending receive extra practice in blending.
- We timetable regular phonics lessons for any child in Year 2 or above who is not fully fluent at reading or has not passed the Phonics screening check. This helps to close the gap between themselves and their peers so that it 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 Rapid Catch-Up resources – at pace.

### **Teaching reading: Reading practice sessions three times a week**

- In Reception and Year 1, 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 two times a week and one whole class session taught by the class teacher.
  - use books matched to the children's secure phonic knowledge.

- 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 worded books.

### **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 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.
- New staff members promptly receive training to maintain consistency with existing practices.
- 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 Leaders and SLT regularly monitor and observe teaching; they use the summative data during Phonics Pupil Progress meetings to identify gaps in learning and children who need additional support.

### **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.

- 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 George's C of E Primary School and Nursery and our local community as well as books that open windows into other worlds and cultures.
- Every shared area within school 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 Nursery, 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.
- Children in Foundation Stage and Key Stage One choose a story to take home and share with their parents. This ensures that they have access to high quality books.
- 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.
- Children across the school have regular opportunities to engage with a wide range of Reading for Pleasure events (book fairs, author visits and workshops, national events etc).

## 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 Grapheme Phoneme Correspondences (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 Reading Leaders and SLT and scrutinised 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:

- with any child new to the school to quickly identify any gaps in their phonic knowledge and plan provide appropriate extra teaching.

### **Statutory assessment**

- Within 6 weeks of a child starting school in their Reception year, the teacher will carry out the Reception Baseline Assessment using the NFER materials.
- Children in Reception are assessed against the Early Learning Goals at the end of the Reception year.
- 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**

- Children in Year 2 to 6 are assessed through:
  - their teacher's ongoing formative assessment
  - the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds* placement assessment (if necessary)
  - the appropriate half-termly assessments.