 Sacred Heart Primary CVA 



Our Phonics Policy



**Phonics and early reading policy**

Sacred Heart school is based in Carlton, Nottingham and we are proud to be part of Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Multi-Academy Trust (OLOL). We love reading and value greatly the skills it takes to become a good reader because being a good reader opens up the world to children. 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 Sacred Heart, we believe that all our children can become fluent readers and writers. This is why we now teach reading through *Little Wandle (LW) Letters and Sounds Revised,* which is a systematic and synthetic phonics programme. We start teaching phonics in Nursery/Reception and follow the [*Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* progression,](https://www.littlewandlelettersandsounds.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Programme-Overview_Reception-and-Year-1-1.pdf) 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 can tackle unfamiliar words as they read. At Sacred Hear**t**, 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 Sacred Heart, 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.

We have a Reading Leader who drives the school reading programme in our school and a Phonics lead teacher who drives early reading. These staff are highly skilled at teaching reading and phonics, 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 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:](https://www.littlewandlelettersandsounds.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Programme-Overview_Reception-and-Year-1-1.pdf)
	+ 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.
	+ **Phonics Screening Check**

* + Children in Year One undertake the national Phonics Screening Check in June each year. This comprises 40 words made up of twenty real and twenty pseudo (‘alien’) words and read these to their class teacher.
	+ The individual pass rate is 32/40 which is 80%.
	+ Our school pass rate in 2024 was 93%.
	+ Any children who don’t pass the Phonics Screening Check are supported with phonics during Year Two when they can retake the test the following June.

**Keep-up lessons ensure every child learns to read**

* Children who need additional practice have regular 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 additional 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-upassessments to identify the gaps in their phonic knowledge and teach to these using the Rapid Catch-upresources – 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.
	+ The ‘Application of phonics to reading’.

is 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 –** breaking words into gpcs (grapheme (letter) /phoneme (sound) correspondence).
	+ **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 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 a similar way with a combined session covering decoding, if necessary, prosody and comprehension with a teacher or teaching assistant, for any children who still need to practise reading with decodable books. Children who have gained in fluency move onto the Fluency reading books.

**Home reading**

* The decodable reading practice book goes home each week. Also, Little Wandle decodable books can be accessed online to ensure success is shared with the family.
	+ Reading for pleasure books also go home for parents to share and read to children. We share the research behind the importance and impact of sharing quality children’s books with parents through a parent workshop, leaflets and the [Everybody read!](https://www.littlewandlelettersandsounds.org.uk/resources/my-letters-and-sounds/everybody-read/) resources.
	+ We use the [*Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* parents’ resources](https://www.littlewandlelettersandsounds.org.uk/resources/for-parents/) 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 Stay and Play/Parents evening 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 regularly to an adult.

**Ensuring consistency and pace of progress**

* Every teacher and teaching assistant 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 Phonics Leader and EYFS team 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.’* (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 **Sacred Heart** 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 Nursery/Reception, children have access to the reading corner every day in their free flow time and the books are continually refreshed.
* Children from Nursery/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. They might choose to keep a list of the books/authors that they have read.
* We use the Nottinghamshire Inspire Schools library service to access additional high-quality texts which support and enrich our curriculum.

**Key school Staff**

Our Reading subject leader is Sarah Armstrong

Our Phonics Subject leader is Jerry Lucas.

**Monitoring**

This is done through

* Regular assessments of children’s Phonics progress using LW.
* Reading assessments to move children on in reading based on teacher judgement using decoding, blending, prosody and comprehension skills.
* Drop ins to teaching sessions to support teaching staff.
* Staff training using Little Wandle Letters and Sounds CPD.
* Pupil feedback.

