



"And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders and goes home.
Then he calls his friends and neighbours together and says
"Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep" Luke 15: 5-6



Early Reading & Phonics Policy

Rationale

At St Maxentius C.E. Primary School, phonics is taught so that it is accessible to all: every child knows more, remembers more and understands more. Phonics is a key skill that supports the development of early reading skills. At St Maxentius, we combine quality phonics instruction with exposure to a range of phonics decodable texts and the promotion of reading for pleasure to provide our children with the skills they need to have a successful start to their lives as readers.

At St Maxentius we are "determined that every pupil will learn to read, regardless of their background, needs or abilities. All pupils, including the weakest readers, make sufficient progress to meet or exceed age-related expectations" (EIF – 2019) It is essential that our approach to teaching phonics and reading is accessible to all learners, regardless of background.

Bold Beginnings November 2017 stated that "all primary schools should: make sure that the teaching of reading, including systematic synthetic phonics, is the core purpose of the Reception Year."

This policy is aimed at reinforcing a consistent, high quality approach to the teaching of phonics across the Early Years Foundation Stage, (EYFS,) Key Stage One and on into Key Stage Two for children who still need this further support. We endeavour to instil and develop children's love of reading where they will become familiar with and enjoy listening to a wide range of stories, poems, rhymes and non-fiction.

Our Curriculum is designed to support our pupils' development of knowledge, skills, understanding and vocabulary in relation to all areas of school life. We constantly provide enhancement opportunities to engage our pupils, using memorable experiences to bring each topic to life and work to provide experiences that bring learning to life. The learning culture within our school is built around the Christian values that help to make our school a place where our pupils are 'believing and achieving together'.

Intent

At St Maxentius 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.



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As a result of this programme, we intend all our pupils to:

- Recognise, say and write all phonemes within each phase of letters and sounds
- Use their phonic knowledge to blend and segment phonetically decodable words
- Use their phonic knowledge to attempt to read and write more complex words
- Read easily, fluently and with good understanding, age and ability appropriate texts
- Develop the habit of reading widely and often, for both pleasure and information
- Write clearly, accurately and coherently, using phonic knowledge

At St Maxentius, 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.

The systematic teaching of phonics will begin on entry to Reception class and will continue throughout KS1 and into KS2 for those who still need it.

Comprehension

At St Maxentius, 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 two Reading Leaders, who drive 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.



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- 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

- 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 or 3 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 *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* assessments to identify the gaps in their phonic knowledge and teach to these using the Keep-up resources – at pace.
- If any child in Year 3 to 6 has gaps in their phonic knowledge when reading or writing, we plan interventions to address specific reading/writing gaps.

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 on pages 11–20 of ['Application of phonics to reading'](#)
 - 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 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

Co-operation and support from parents is paramount if a child is to become a successful and competent reader. At St Maxentius, we are fully committed to strong partnership working



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between home and school. It is our policy to send phonically decodable reading books home and to encourage parent and carers to contribute to their child's reading development, welcoming comments in individual reading diaries.

- 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 and drop-in sessions.

Additional reading support for vulnerable children

- Children in Reception and Year 1 who are receiving additional phonics Keep-up sessions will also have extra 1-1 reading practice with an adult.

Ensuring consistency and pace of progress

- Every teacher in our school has been or will be 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 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 Maxentius and our local community as well as books that open windows into other worlds and cultures.



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- 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 Reception, 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.
- The school library is made available for classes to use at protected times. 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).

Learning Environment

Resources in the classroom support the children in applying phonics to reading and writing. In each classroom throughout the school, a large grapheme/phoneme chart, tricky word displays and tablemats support children to be independent in their spelling whilst at the same time reinforcing the link between discreet phonics and learning and its purpose in reading and writing. Phonics games will also be readily available and provide opportunities for consolidation.

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.
- 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



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- 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
 - the appropriate half-termly assessments.

Impact

The impact and of this will be:

- Pupils will be confident in their phonic knowledge
- Pupils will be able to blend and segment words confidently
- Pupils will pass the Phonics Screening Test
- Pupils learn to love reading through fun but challenging phonic activities
- A culture is embedded where a secure knowledge of phonic sounds enables reading for pleasure as part of our reading curriculum.

Also, pupils will attain in line with national averages ensuring they are well prepared for their next stage of their education.

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Reviewed: June 2022

Next Review Date: June 2023