



## Phonics and Early Reading

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#### Intent

Phonics (Reading, Spelling and Writing)

At St Laurence's CE Primary School, we believe that all our children can become fluent readers and writers. We recognise the importance of reading to access the curriculum. To achieve this, we follow Bug Club, which is an approved systematic and synthetic programme. We start teaching phonics in Nursery/Reception and ensure that pupils build on their growing knowledge of phoneme, grapheme correspondence, mastering phonics to read, spell and write as they move through school.

Across the school, in all lessons, we model the application of the alphabetic code (segment words into the phonemes used and choose the appropriate graphemes). As a result, all our children are equipped to read and spell unfamiliar and ambitious vocabulary in all areas of the curriculum.

As a school, we have a strong focus on oracy for our children as we know and value the importance of speaking and listening.

Pupils are encouraged to express themselves by reading aloud and in public, which links to our whole school value of creativity. Through phonics and whole class teaching of reading, they have the necessary tools and wisdom to read what they want when they want and trust that through hard work and perseverance, they will progress with their reading over time.

#### 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 focussed listening and attention, including oral blending
- Attention to high-quality language

This ensures Nursery children are well prepared to begin learning grapheme-phoneme correspondence and blending in Reception.

##### Daily Phonics Lessons in Reception and Year 1

We teach phonics for 25 minutes a day. On top of this, we plan child and adult initiated opportunities for oral blending throughout the day. We ensure progress by following Bug Club. This means:

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Next Review: May 2026

- 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

### **Interventions**

Any child who needs additional support and practice receive regular intervention delivered by a trained adult. These interventions match the structure of Bug Club lessons, using the same procedures, mantras and resources, but in smaller steps with more repetition.

We timetable phonics interventions for any child in school who is not fully fluent at reading or has not yet 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 Bug Club assessments to identify the gaps in their phonic knowledge and fill them.

If any child in Year 3 to 6 has gaps in their phonic knowledge when reading or writing, we plan phonics interventions to address specific reading/writing gaps. These short, sharp, one to one interventions last at least 10 minutes and take place at least three times a week. Pupils are also given decodable, home reading books that match their current level of phonic attainment. The staff delivering these interventions have all had training on Bug Club and are supported by the phonics lead through regular training.

### **Teaching Early Reading**

As well as daily phonics lessons, pupils take part in whole class, direct teaching of reading sessions, with a focus on developing key reading skills. This happens at least three times a week. In Year 1, quality texts are selected that have strong cross curricular links. In Year 2, Pathways to Read planning is used to select texts. Our KS1 reading skills, which are displayed in each class, are also represented with visual and kinaesthetic prompts linked to each aspect comprehension, (such as a telescope for prediction and a magnifying glass or inference). The skills are vocabulary, retrieval, inference, predicting and sequencing. Each reading session focusses on one skill to ensure that pupils do not suffer from cognitive overload. As well as teaching reading skills, our direct teaching of reading encourages a love of reading, a chance to apply decoding skills. For more information on our whole class approach to teaching reading, please see our reading policy.

### **Decodable books matched to appropriate phase; phase 6 etc.**

In early years, books are shared on a daily basis to the class as an opportunity to promote a love of reading; develop good listening skills; develop an understanding of scanning left to right; provide an opportunity to decode words; encourage prosody and give pupils an opportunity to develop early verbal comprehension skills. The texts used in these sessions come from a range of sources. Some are e-books from Bug Club, which are fully decodable and come with a range of interactive activities, whilst others may be quality texts that link closely to themes and topics being covered in class. We also regularly include poetry, rhymes and singing opportunities.

### **Home Reading**

In EYFS and KS1, pupils are given phonetically decodable books to take home and read. These come from the Bug Club scheme of learning. We conduct half termly assessments of all the pupils to ensure that their book level is appropriate. Furthermore, all pupils are heard reading one to one routinely to ensure they are on the most appropriate level.

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Each year, we invite parents to come in for “phonics workshops” and “reading with your child” workshops to upskill our parents.

Pupils in vulnerable groups, needing catch up, receive daily reading support and any other appropriate interventions.

### **Progress in Early Reading and Phonics**

All staff have received appropriate training in reading and phonics to ensure that we all have the same expectations of progress. We all use the same language, resources and routines to manage pupils’ cognitive load.

SLT monitor reading and phonics through learning walks, scrutinising data and providing staff with feedback and holding discussions during key stage meetings. Pupils who are not making expected progress are flagged termly in our pupils not making expected progress proforma and support offered to ensure that these pupils are getting the right intervention to support their needs.

### **Ensuring Reading for Pleasure**

Reading for pleasure is highly valued at St Laurence’s. We actively promote this in a variety of ways for our youngest readers:

- We read carefully selected books to pupils on a daily basis - some will link to the learning that is taking place in class whilst others selected for being a high quality, enjoyable text.
- In EYFS and KS1 pupils have access to a reading corner, where children have access to an ever changing selection of books.
- From Reception onwards pupils have a home reading record. This allows for a dialogue about a pupil’s reading progress between home and school.
- All classes have the opportunity to visit the local library.

### **Impact**

Assessment is used to monitor progress and to identify any children needing additional support as soon as they need it. Assessment for learning is used daily in class to identify when pupils need immediate support and over time to identify when pupils need to secure fluency of specific GPCs, words and spellings. Summative assessment is used termly to assess progress and identify gaps in learning. For phonics, we use the Bug Club assessment materials. Results are also shared with SLT as part of our pupils not making expected progress meetings. When a new pupil starts, we use the Bug Club assessment materials to ensure we plan and provide the most appropriate support.

### **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**

Children in Years 2-6 are assessed through teachers’ ongoing formative assessments and with the Bug Club assessment resources in order to ensure those pupils, who need continued support with Phonics, are supported effectively.