



St Mary's Church of England Primary School

Early Reading and Phonics Policy

Our Vision is exemplified through our Mission Statement

Duty to Promote Wellbeing

The Education and Inspection Act 2000 places a requirement on schools to promote pupils' wellbeing (as defined in the Children Act 2004) as well as their academic achievement. It also includes a duty to support community cohesion. We are committed to promoting the health and wellbeing of our whole school community and fully recognise the significant connection between wellbeing and learning.

Approved by:	F. Port & C. Priestley	Date: September 2025
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Last reviewed on:	September 2025
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Next review due by:	September 2027
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The context of our school

In line with our school Mission Statement and Vision, 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 St Mary's Church of England Primary School, we believe that all our children can become fluent readers and writers. This is why we teach reading through *Sounds Write*, which is a systematic and synthetic phonics programme. We start teaching phonics in Reception and follow the *Sounds Write* 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 of our children are able to tackle any unfamiliar words as they read. At St Mary's Church of England Primary School, 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. Key vocabulary is woven through our wider curriculum subjects, with an emphasis on children being exposed to vocabulary which is ambitious.

Comprehension

At St Mary's Church of England Primary School, 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 across a range of subjects. We encourage our children to see themselves as readers for both pleasure and purpose.

Implementation

Daily phonics and spelling lessons in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2

- We teach phonics for 30 minutes a day. In Reception Class there is a combination of daily whole class teaching and small, adult-led groups.
- Children make a strong start in Reception: Teaching begins in Week 2 of the Autumn Term.
- We follow the *Sounds Write* scheme of phonics.
 - Children in Reception are taught to read and spell words using the *Initial Code*, as outlined by *Sounds Write*.
 - Children in Year 1 and Year 2 are taught to read and spell words using the *Extended Code*, as outlined by *Sounds Write*
 - Year 2 use a combination of both *Sounds Write Extended Code* and discrete spelling lessons from *The Spelling Shed*.

Daily Keep-up lessons ensure every child learns to read

- In Key Stage Two, discrete phonics interventions may be administered to children who require it. These children are closely monitored by their teachers and support staff, supporting where necessary. These are led by a members of staff who are trained in Sounds Write.

Home reading

- In Reception Class, Year One and Year Two, fully decodable reading books are sent home weekly to support our teaching in school. When children are secure in the *Extended Code* they can then choose their home reading books from the school library.
- We share information about phonics, the benefits of sharing books, how children learn to blend and other aspects of our provision, both online and face-to-face at Parents Evening.
- All children in school take part in the 'Daily Ten' reading challenge. Parents are encouraged to record their 1-1 reading with their child in their reading diaries. This is celebrated in our weekly 'Celebration Collective Worship'. Reception Children join this challenge during Autumn 2.

Reading 1-1 in school

- All children in Reception Class and Key Stage One read at least once with an adult each week. Their progress is closely monitored to ensure they are given a fully decodable book which is matched to their phonic ability. These books are in line with Sounds Write.

Additional reading support

- Children who are classed as receiving Pupil Premium or identified as being vulnerable will receive additional 1-1 reading sessions each week. This will be 1-1 with an adult who the child is familiar and comfortable with. Additional reading is also provided for the bottom 20% of each cohort, as identified by their class teacher.

- **Working with parents**

Parents are invited to meetings throughout the year, led by their child's teacher. These cover Early Reading in Reception Class, Phonics Screening in Year 1 and SATs in Year 2. Teachers communicate directly with the parents/carers of the children as identified as needing extra support in these year groups. Advice and extra materials are given to these families to support their learning at home.

In Reception Class, parents and grandparents are invited to share their favourite stories with the children on a weekly basis. This plays an important role in sharing a love of reading with the younger children.

In Reception Class, the class teacher communicates with the parents on a weekly basis on Class Dojo regarding what area of phonics is being covered each week. The class teacher also shares their favourite books through 'Book of the Week' to encourage a love of children's literature with the children and their family members.

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.

- Dedicated time is given to all teachers to read to their 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 Mary's Church of England Primary School and our local community as well as books that open windows into other worlds and cultures.
- In response to our most recent Literacy Audit, all teachers across the school have developed their reading corners to foster and encourage a love of reading.
- In Reception Class, children have access to the reading corner every day in their free flow time and the books are continually refreshed. This is a mixture of fiction, non-fiction and fully decodable books. Books are also chosen to reflect the children's interests.

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 and weekly within class to identify children needing further support to identify gaps and address misconceptions. Sounds Write assessments are used by support staff and teachers.
- **Summative assessment** is used:
 - every half term to assess progress, to identify gaps in learning that need to be addressed, to identify any children needing additional support and to plan the further support that they need.
 - by SLT and scrutinised through regular Pupil Progress meetings to narrow attainment gaps between different groups of children and so that any additional support for teachers can be put into place.
 - All data is shared with our trust, Rise, and gaps and trends are identified and acted on accordingly.

Formative and Statutory assessment

- Children in Year 1 sit the Phonics Screening Check. Any child not passing the check re-sits it in Year 2. Children who do not pass the Phonics Screening resit in Year 2 are given extra support in Year 3.
- At the end of EYFS, the children are assessed against the seventeen Early Learning Goals, including Writing and Word Reading.

Ongoing assessment for catch-up

- Children in Reception Class, Year 1 and Year 2 are assessed through their teacher's ongoing formative assessment as well as through the half-termly *Sounds Write* summative assessments.
- In Year 3, a member of staff, trained in Sounds Write, will use the Sounds Write intervention programme for children who need extra support.
- Nessy is currently being used in Year 3 and Year 4 as a reading and spelling intervention programme.