SS Peter & Paul Catholic Primary School

Our Approach to Phonics and Early Reading

How phonics and early reading are taught at SS Peter & Paul · Little Wandle · 2026–27

Intent

At SS Peter & Paul, rooted in our mission 'Learning Together, Achieving Together in Christ', we are determined that every child will learn to read, regardless of background, need or starting point. Reading is an essential life skill and the gateway to learning. Through the systematic teaching of Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised, we establish strong foundations in phonics and early reading so that children become accurate, fluent and confident readers. Our ambition extends beyond decoding: we want children to understand, enjoy and choose to read, developing the vocabulary, comprehension and reading behaviours needed to succeed across the curriculum and beyond, while nurturing a positive reading identity and lifelong love of books.

Implementation

- **Nursery:** Children develop the foundations for phonics through carefully planned listening, speaking and language-rich experiences. Rhyme Time is woven through each half term, alongside Tuning into Sounds, oral blending, stories, songs and sound play.
- **Reception & Year 1:** children follow Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised with fidelity. Phonics is taught explicitly and systematically every day, moving through a clear progression from Phase 2 to Phase 5 and building secure knowledge of the alphabetic code.
- **Reading practice:** children take part in three carefully structured reading practice sessions each week, focusing on decoding, prosody and comprehension. Fully decodable Little Wandle Big Cat books are precisely matched to secure phonic knowledge.
- **Keep-Up, not Catch-Up:** assessment identifies children at risk of falling behind quickly. Targeted daily Keep-Up provides additional practice so gaps are addressed promptly and pupils remain closely aligned with the programme.
- **Year 2 and KS2:** Year 2 builds on secure phonics through Little Wandle Spelling. Pupils in KS2 who have not secured the alphabetic code continue to receive structured support through Little Wandle Rapid Catch-Up.
- **Inclusion:** the Little Wandle SEND pathway, adapted teaching, repetition, modelling and carefully matched practice enable all pupils to make progress from their individual starting points while maintaining high expectations.
- **Home-school partnership:** families are supported through workshops, resources and regular communication. Home reading books are matched to children's secure phonic knowledge so that they experience success when reading at home.
- **Reading for Pleasure:** alongside decodable reading, children are immersed in high-quality stories, poems, rhymes and non-fiction, with regular book talk and shared reading experiences helping every child to see themselves as a reader.

Impact

- Children use their phonic knowledge confidently and independently to decode unfamiliar words and increasingly recognise words automatically.
- Children progress from effortful decoding to fluent, accurate reading with appropriate pace, phrasing, expression and understanding.
- Year 1 pupils apply their phonic knowledge independently in the statutory Phonics Screening Check; pupils requiring further support continue targeted teaching into Year 2 and beyond.
- Children demonstrate positive attitudes towards books and reading, talk enthusiastically about texts and authors, and increasingly choose to read independently for pleasure.

Assessment

- Teachers use ongoing formative assessment during daily phonics and reading practice to identify misconceptions and respond immediately.
- Little Wandle half-termly assessments identify secure learning, gaps and next steps, enabling Keep-Up and additional practice to be precisely targeted.
- Decodable books are matched to secure phonic knowledge, and progress in decoding, fluency, prosody and comprehension is monitored regularly.
- Subject leadership monitors phonics teaching, assessment, reading practice, intervention and pupil voice across the year to maintain fidelity, consistency and high expectations.