SS Peter & Paul Catholic Primary School

Our Approach to Reading

How reading is taught at SS Peter & Paul · 2026–27

Intent

At SS Peter & Paul, rooted in our mission 'Learning Together, Achieving Together in Christ', we aim to inspire a lifelong love of reading and ensure every child sees themselves as a reader. Reading is at the heart of our curriculum: children learn to read fluently, understand rich texts, talk about books and choose to read for pleasure. Through high-quality, diverse literature, we develop vocabulary, comprehension and oracy, opening windows onto new experiences and reflecting children's own lives.

Implementation

- **Reading Spine:** Our carefully curated Reading Spine offers a rich balance of fiction, non-fiction and poetry, prioritising literary quality, memorable language and texts worth revisiting.
- **Reading scheme:** Big Cat is our reading scheme. In Reception and Key Stage 1, children read fully decodable Little Wandle Big Cat books matched to the sounds they have been taught; beyond the phonics programme, banded Big Cat books widen what children can read independently. Books that go home are matched in the same way.
- **Progression and challenge:** Texts build in complexity, themes and ideas. Selection is informed by Doug Lemov's Five Plagues of the Developing Reader, using the plagues archaic language, non-linear timelines, complex narration, symbolism and resistant texts to support our reading spine.
- **Mirrors and windows:** Diverse, representative books enable children to recognise their own experiences and encounter different cultures, lives and perspectives.
- **Reading teaching:** Through shared and guided reading, explicit vocabulary teaching, discussion and comprehension activities, children develop fluency, understanding and confident responses to texts.
- **Reading for Pleasure:** Story time, book talk, author discoveries, recommendations and independent choice help children form their own reading identities.
- **Pupil voice and leadership:** Reading Ambassadors, pupil conversations and shared reading events create a community where books are visible, valued and celebrated.
- **Inclusion:** Adults adapt teaching and reading opportunities to individual starting points, supporting access to rich texts and ambitious reading experiences for all.
- **Home-school partnership:** Families are encouraged to read and talk about books together through home reading, workshops and Reading for Pleasure sessions.

Impact

- Children read with growing fluency, understanding and confidence, drawing on vocabulary and comprehension strategies across the curriculum.
- Children talk thoughtfully about books, authors, characters and ideas, and are increasingly willing to explore unfamiliar texts.
- Children experience books as mirrors and windows, showing curiosity, empathy and an appreciation of different perspectives.
- Children develop individual reading preferences and choose to read for pleasure, leaving school able to say: "I am a reader."

Assessment

- Teachers use ongoing assessment, questioning and discussion to identify strengths and next steps in fluency, vocabulary and comprehension.
- Reading responses, classroom observations and pupil conversations inform planning and help teachers match support and challenge.
- Pupil voice, reading choices and engagement in reading opportunities help evaluate children's attitudes towards reading and reading for pleasure.
- Subject leadership reviews the Reading Spine, classroom practice, reading opportunities and pupil voice to support consistency, progression and inclusion.