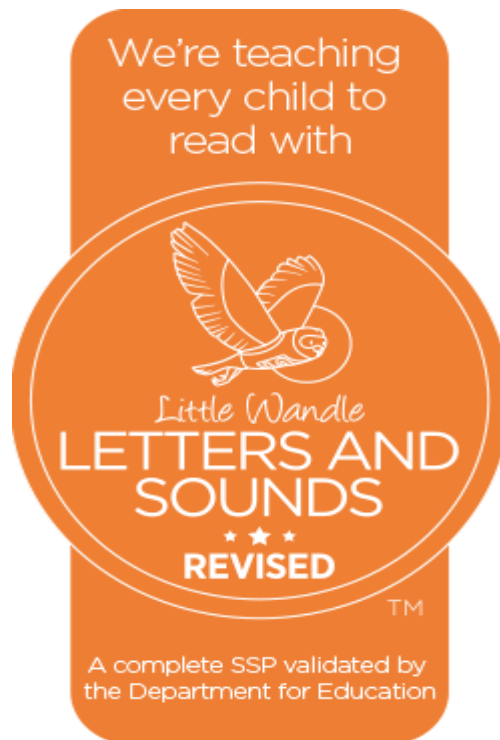


Jesus is the centre of our lives,
Our learning and friendships.
In a safe, happy and caring community
Where all are welcome.

HOLY CROSS CATHOLIC PRIMARY ACADEMY

PHONICS POLICY

January 2023



Intent

Phonics (reading and spelling)

At Holy Cross Catholic Primary Academy, 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.

As a result, our children are equipped with the skills to be able to tackle any unfamiliar words as they read. At Holy Cross Catholic Primary Academy, 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.

Comprehension

At Holy Cross Catholic Primary Academy, we value reading as a crucial life skill. By the time children leave us we want them to read confidently for meaning and regularly enjoy reading for pleasure. We want our readers to be equipped with the tools to tackle unfamiliar vocabulary. We encourage our children to see themselves as readers for both pleasure and purpose.

Implementation

Daily phonics lessons in Reception and Year 1

- We teach phonics every day. In Reception, we build from 10-minute lessons, with additional daily oral blending games, to a 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.
 - 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 children in Year 2 or any children in Year 3 who are not fully fluent at reading or have 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 phonics 'catch-up' lessons to address specific reading/writing gaps. These short, sharp lessons last 10 minutes and take place at least three times a week.

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

- The decodable reading practice book is set as an ebook each week to ensure success is shared with the family.
 - Reading for pleasure books also go home for parents to share and read to children.
 - A physical phonics book within the children's level is sent home.
 - 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.

Additional reading support for vulnerable children

- Children across the school receive additional Phonics 'keep up' sessions either on a 1:1 basis or in a small group.

Ensuring consistency and pace of progress

- Every teacher in our school has been 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 Holy Cross Catholic Primary Academy and our local community as well as books that open windows into other worlds and cultures.
- 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.
- Reading Zones are held half termly where parents are invited into school to read with their children.
- Classes buddy up for peer reading sessions regularly.
- Whole school events such as World Book day celebrate reading and give reading precedence within the school.
- Each class visits the local library every half term.
- 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).

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.
- Fluency assessments measure children's accuracy and reading speed in short one-minute assessments. They are used:
 - in Year 1 and Year 2 when children are reading the Phase 5 set 3, 4 and 5 books. Children who can read the final fluency assessment at 60-70+ words per minute are ready to exit the Little

- Wandle programme, and do not need to read any more of our fully decodable books. They have sufficient fluency and secure phonic knowledge to tackle any book at age-related expectations
- in Key Stage 2 for the children receiving Keep Up Support to assess if these children are ready to exit the programme.
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- A **placement assessment** is used:
 - with any child new to the school in [Reception](#) and [Year 1](#) to quickly identify any gaps in their phonic knowledge and plan and provide appropriate extra teaching.

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 Year 2 to 6 are assessed through their teacher's ongoing formative assessment as well as through the half-termly *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* summative assessments.

Safeguarding

Our school takes its responsibilities of safeguarding children very seriously. All staff will ensure at all times that the safety and well-being of children is the first consideration. Staff will consider the health and safety aspects of any activities offered to children and check the suitability of any visitors engaged to work with the children.

Equality

At Holy Cross Catholic Primary Academy, equality considerations are central to all that we do. We are committed to promoting equality of opportunity and to preventing all unlawful discrimination whether against individuals or groups on grounds of age, race, gender, physical or learning disability. Equality is simply not a minority issue. It is important to everyone.