



Saint Michael Catholic Primary School
Reading & Phonics Subject Policy

Mission Statement:

Excellence • Enrichment • Enjoyment

September 2025

Date for review: September 2026

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1. Aims

Intent - What are we trying to achieve?

At Saint Michael's, we aim for our pupils to develop a love for reading. We recognise that reading allows pupils to develop culturally, emotionally, intellectually, socially and spiritually. Reading is a gateway to learning and enables pupils to understand the world around them. Reading enables pupils to both acquire new knowledge and build on what they already know. If we do not teach our pupils to read confidently, we are effectively disenfranchising them from society. Our aim is for our pupils to be able to read fluently and comprehend what they are reading, building a rich vocabulary and a cultural capital that will transfer into their learning and their lives.

Implementation – How is the curriculum being delivered?

Our curriculum is designed to meet the National Curriculum Programme of Study. Reading focuses on the following strands:

Word Reading:

- Phonics and Decoding
- Common Exception Words
- Fluency Prediction,

Comprehension:

- Understanding and correcting inaccuracies
- Comparing, contrasting and commenting
- Words in context and authorial choice
- Inference and prediction
- Poetry and Performance
- Non-fiction

The Reading Progression Map sets out the knowledge, skills and understanding taught in each strand across the school and the vocabulary and cultural capital that will be taught by the end of each year.

Reading Lessons Years 2-6

The Reading Curriculum Map sets out the texts that will be taught across the school. Each half-term focuses on a text, chosen from the 'Take One Book' resource developed by the Just Imagine Story Centre, led by Nikki Gamble. Our curriculum comprises of a broad selection of Fiction, Graphic Novels, Picture Books and Non-Fiction, which give children the opportunity to experience high quality texts, themes and rich vocabulary.

Through the reciprocal reading and dialogic teaching approach advocated by Dr Wayne Tennent and Take One Book, pupils use high-quality texts to discuss and complete learning tasks that demonstrate their knowledge and skills in word reading, vocabulary development and comprehension. A 'How to' guide is written by the subject leader and shared with all teachers.

Our pupils will also be given opportunities to read in other curriculum subjects e.g. RE, history, geography, Design & Technology etc. Each class has a library which is well stocked with an array of fantastic books that promote a love of reading and reading for pleasure. The books have been carefully chosen to support our curriculum and offer a wide range of cultural influences through a range of genres.

Teachers use the Take One Book resources to plan sequences of learning based on a text. [The framework for each learning sequence follows the same structure.](#)

Pupils will be given feedback for each session so that they can make sustained progress over their school life.

Every fortnight, pupils from Year 1 to Year 6 are given a comprehension task as part of their Home Learning cycle. This allows them to reinforce comprehension skills and apply them independently.

At the end of each term, pupils will sit a PIRA assessment test, which allows teachers to assess the pupils' independent comprehension abilities. These assessments will help teachers form an overall 'point in time' assessment at the end of each term to inform future planning.

PM Benchmarking is also used to assess the reading age of pupils when needed.

Class Reading

We want our pupils to listen to a range of high-quality texts being read to them throughout the week. The Curriculum Map shows the poetry, non-fiction and fiction whole class texts that will be read by the teacher to the children each year. These texts have been carefully chosen to provide a range of high-quality material that we believe every child should experience. There is a selection of modern and classic texts from a range of genres, written by a range of authors and poets on a variety of topics and from a variety of cultures. Class texts are deliberately pitched at a more challenging level than the pupils would be able to read independently to provide challenge and expose advanced vocabulary, plots, characters and concepts. We want our pupils to appreciate the best literature that has been written and develop a rich vocabulary as they grow up. Teachers are free to choose additional texts to read to their class beyond the texts set out in the Curriculum Map.

Children need to be heard read regularly at school. Teachers will hear each child read regularly so that they can assess whether they are making progress with word reading, expression, intonation and comprehension. Children that need more support with reading will be heard read more often by supporting adults at school.

Children are given the opportunity to change their reading book each week.

Phonics

Phonics is a huge part of learning to read and is emphasised in the early teaching of reading and reinforced throughout each subsequent year of school so that our pupils can confidently decode words. We use the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised synthetic phonics programme in Nursery, Reception and Year 1. Those that do not achieve the expected standard in the Year 1 Phonics check are given additional support to do so in Year 2. Any child that does not meet the required standard in the phonics screening or the resit is given extra reading support as they progress through Key Stage 2.

We have a trained Reading Recovery teacher who supports children in Year 1 and Year 2.

Reading Books

Reading begins from day one, with Nursery children exposed to a variety of texts and in summer term two they take home lilac picture books to read with an adult. In Reception and Year 1, each child is issued with a reading book from our Little Wandle reading scheme within the first few weeks of term. These books support the phonics being taught in the classroom and the books are fully decodable so that children gain confidence and enjoyment from their reading. From Year 2 to Year 6, our reading scheme uses a range of publications, organised into levels. Children read these books until they are ready to choose their own texts appropriately as a 'Free Reader'. This usually occurs when children reach level 10 (white/lime), most commonly in Year 3. As a 'Free Reader', children are encouraged to bring in books from home, choose from the levelled readers or from their class library.

Reading at Home

We recognise that parents are the primary educators of their children. We ask parents to develop a 'Reading for Pleasure' culture at home from the earliest age. Once issued with a reading book from school, we ask that parents read with their child each day and record this in a Reading Record. Children will take home a reading book and will have access to a full library of E-books to choose from, which have been matched to their specific reading level. Phonics Home Learning is set every week in Reception class and from Years 1 to 6, a Reading Comprehension task is set every fortnight.

Reading Gladiators

We choose a group of More Able readers in Year 5 and 6 to become Reading Gladiators. As well as meeting to read carefully selected books each week, they also promote reading and share their enthusiasm with others.

Spoken Language

This underpins the development of reading and writing. Teachers will ensure the continual development of pupils' confidence and competence in spoken language and listening skills. Pupils should be able to explain their understanding of texts, summarise what they have understood and articulate their thoughts clearly. They must make their thinking clear before they write; discussions and debates will aid this further.

Impact - What difference is the curriculum making?

Pupils value reading and love reading all types of genres. This has a positive impact on reading books and accessing the whole curriculum. They are able to discuss reading maturely and develop a wide range of vocabulary to help them express themselves. They are able to retrieve information, compare texts, infer meaning and reflect on their own experiences, thereby broadening their knowledge and understanding of the world around them.

Pupils are able to recite and perform some important poetry and plays and have an excellent understanding of important poetry, non-fiction and fiction texts that develop their cultural capital.

Reading will promote British Values by contributing to the culture of the nation.

Reading will help pupils develop a Growth Mindset by encouraging the children to take risks, become resourceful, innovative and imaginative.

Pupils and teachers understand that reciprocal reading is an important part of the whole school curriculum and should be embedded throughout all subjects.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy reflects the requirements of the [National Curriculum programmes of study](#), which all Voluntary Aided schools in England must teach.

It also reflects requirements for inclusion and equality as set out in the [Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice 2014](#) and [Equality Act 2010](#), and refers to curriculum-related expectations of governing boards set out in the Department for Education's [Governance Handbook](#).

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In addition, this policy acknowledges the requirements for promoting the learning and development of children set out in the [Early Years Foundation Stage \(EYFS\) statutory framework](#).

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing body

The governing body will monitor the effectiveness of this policy and hold the headteacher to account for its implementation.

The governing board will also ensure that:

A robust framework is in place for setting curriculum priorities and aspirational targets

Enough teaching time is provided for pupils to cover the National Curriculum and other statutory requirements

At least 10% of the curriculum is dedicated to Religious Education

Provision is made for pupils with different abilities and needs, including children with special educational needs (SEN)

The school implements the relevant statutory assessment arrangements

It participates actively in decision-making about the breadth and balance of the curriculum

It fulfils its role in processes to disapply pupils from all or part of the National Curriculum, where appropriate, and in any subsequent appeals

3.2 Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring that this policy is adhered to, and that:

All required elements of the curriculum, and those subjects which the school chooses to offer, have aims and objectives which reflect the aims of the school and indicate how the needs of individual pupils will be met

The amount of time provided for teaching the required elements of the curriculum is adequate and is reviewed by the governing board

Where appropriate, the individual needs of some pupils are met by permanent or temporary disapplication from all or part of the National Curriculum

They manage requests to withdraw children from curriculum subjects, where appropriate

The school's procedures for assessment meet all legal requirements

The governing board is fully involved in decision-making processes that relate to the breadth and balance of the curriculum

The governing board is advised on whole-school targets in order to make informed decisions

Proper provision is in place for pupils with different abilities and needs, including children with SEN

3.3 Subject Leader

The subject leader is responsible for leading and managing their subject. They will ensure that:

They create a Subject Leader Action Plan, which forms part of the School Improvement Plan. The Subject Leader Action Plan outlines the key actions and success criteria for each academic year.

The Subject Leader Action Plan is shared with governors once a year so that they have the opportunity to scrutinise subject leaders.

The attainment and progress of the pupils across the school are analysed at least three times a year and feedback to governors is given once a year.

Staff are confident in teaching their subject across the school. They will offer support, guidance and arrange training when needed.

Resources to support teaching, learning and assessment are in place for their subject. They will need to manage their allocated budget so that the actions set out in the Subject Leader Action Plan and School Improvement Plan can be met.

Other staff

Other staff will ensure that the school curriculum is implemented in accordance with this policy.

4. Inclusion

Teachers set high expectations for all pupils. They will use appropriate assessment to set ambitious goals and plan challenging work for all groups, including:

More able pupils

Pupils with low prior attainment

Pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds

Pupils with SEN

Pupils with English as an additional language (EAL)

Teachers will plan lessons so that pupils with SEN and/or disabilities can study every National Curriculum subject, wherever possible, and ensure that there are no barriers to every pupil achieving.

Teachers will also take account of the needs of pupils whose first language is not English. Lessons will be planned so that teaching opportunities help pupils to develop their English, and to support pupils to take part in all subjects.

Further information can be found in our statement of equality information and objectives, and in our SEN policy and information report.

5. Monitoring arrangements

Governors monitor coverage of National Curriculum subjects and compliance with other statutory requirements through:

- *Meeting with subject leaders*
- *Monitoring books*

- *Interviewing pupils*
- *Scrutinising parent, staff and pupil surveys*
- *Visiting the school to monitor the quality of teaching and audit the books*
- *Attending the School Improvement Evening where all subject leaders share their subject action plans*

Subject leaders monitor the way their subject is taught throughout the school by:

- *Scrutinising planning & books*
- *Conducting learning walks*
- *Observing lessons*
- *Professional dialogue with staff*
- *Interviewing the pupils*
- *Ensuring that staff are trained*

Subject leaders monitor the way their subject is taught throughout the school by also have responsibility for monitoring the way in which resources are stored and managed.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the subject leader. At every review, the policy will be shared with the full governing board

6.Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- EYFS policy
- Feedback and Assessment Policy
- SEND policy
- Home Learning Policy
- Writing