



English Curriculum: Early Reading

Headteacher: Mrs S Pittendreigh
Deputy Headteacher: Mr M Hillam
Assistant Headteacher: Mrs L Fulster

Early Reading Intent

In line with our English policy, the intent of early reading at St. Catharine's is to ensure that all pupils learn to read fluently and confidently as early as possible. As a school we prioritise early reading as we know these skills support future success. We recognise that early reading success depends on systematic synthetic phonics, taught explicitly and consistently. Our priority is that pupils quickly develop secure decoding skills, enabling them to access the wider curriculum and develop a love of reading.

We aim to:

- Ensure all pupils can decode accurately and fluently.
- Identify and address gaps early to help children to keep up.
- Provide equity of access for disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND
- Lay strong foundations for comprehension and reading for pleasure.
- Prepare children to become fluent, confident readers.

Early Reading Implementation

As outlined in our English policy, early reading is taught through quality first teaching of Read Write Inc. (RWI), our chosen DFE approved systematic synthetic phonics programme.

Key features of implementation include:

- Daily phonics lessons, taught with fidelity to the RWI programme. Reception follow the 'Making a Strong Start' guidance from RWI in the Autumn term to ensure children make a strong and well paced start to their early reading journey. Children are taught phonics in differentiated groupings so that the content of phonics lessons closely matches the ability of children in the group.
- Clear progression through phoneme–grapheme correspondence, blending, and segmenting.
- Explicit teaching of decoding, supported by repetition and practice. By the end of Reception most children will read words and simple sentences accurately. Then by the end of the phonics programme, children will have been taught all the sounds and alternative sounds in order to read words, this also includes common exception words. By the end of the programme, we aim for our children to be accurate, fluent and confident readers with a passion for reading.
- Fully decodable books closely matched to pupils' phonic knowledge. On entry to reception children are provided with picture books to take home weekly in order to start their reading journey.

Once children can read sounds and begin to orally blend they then take home Green words and 'sound blending' books. These books are consistent with each child's developing phonic knowledge. This means that children can practice their reading outside of the school day using a fully decodable text (Read Write Inc. book) so that they experience success in reading.

- Frequent assessment is undertaken to identify gaps and monitor progress. This ensures that pupils can move between groups flexibly according to ability.
- Immediate intervention for pupils at risk of falling behind. Where children fall behind targeted support is put in place to help them keep up or catch up quickly.
- In Reception, children will explore a range of phonological awareness activities to help them to build the foundations. Children with strong skills can better decode words and spell.

Teaching is consistent across EYFS and KS1, with staff trained in RWI methods to ensure common language, routines, and expectations.

This approach reflects EEF evidence that systematic phonics instruction is essential for early reading.

Early Reading Impact

As a result of our early reading provision:

- Pupils decode quickly and accurately.
- Pupils can read words and simple captions and sentences at the end of Reception.
- Reading fluency develops early, allowing pupils to focus on comprehension.
- Gaps are identified and closed swiftly through targeted intervention.
- Disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND make strong progress from their starting points.
- Year 1 children will pass the statutory Phonics Screening Test to assess their phonic knowledge. We Children who do not achieve the required standard are reassessed in Year 2 with the aim for them to pass.

Assessment outcomes, book scrutiny, and pupil voice demonstrate that pupils:

- Read books that closely match their phonics knowledge
- Develop confidence and enjoyment in reading
- Are well prepared to transition from phonics to wider reading and comprehension

The consistent and evidence-informed delivery of RWI ensures that early reading outcomes are strong and sustained.