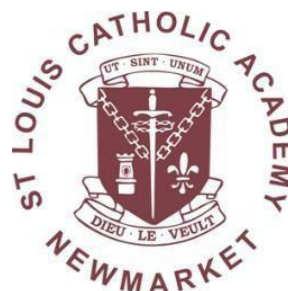



**St Louis Catholic Academy, Newmarket**  
**Part of Our Lady of Walsingham Catholic Multi Academy**  
**Trust**

*Christ at the Centre: Children at the Heart*

*Loving to Learn: Learning to Love*



**Phonics and Reading Policy**

Approved by the Committee/Governing Body	15 <sup>th</sup> January 2025
Signature of Chair of Governors	Bethan Byrne/Marc Walker
Signature of CEO OLOW	
Review date	January 2026

## HELPING YOU TO DEVELOP YOUR CHILD'S READING SKILLS HOME:

Parent and carers have free access to a bank of Little Wandle resources to help encourage progress in each child's learning: <https://www.littlewandlelettersandsounds.org.uk/resources/for-parents/>

### Teaching Phonics and Reading: The context of our school

At St Louis Catholic Academy School, we are passionate about reading. We aim to create confident, successful and engaged readers with a love of literature. In order to do this, an enjoyment of letters and phonics is imperative. We understand that phonics impacts many other areas of the curriculum, which is why we put such a big emphasis on it. We work with Wensum English Hub as a Partner School and receive bespoke support from one of their trained Literacy Specialists to help us, as a school, to provide excellent teaching in phonics and early language. We encourage our children to be inquisitive about books, enjoy sharing stories and ask questions.

#### Intent

Phonics (reading and spelling)

At St Louis, 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. Children in our Nursery are introduced to phonics through the Little Wandle Letter and Sounds Revised Foundations for Phonics. Foundations for Phonics develops our children's awareness of sound, through activities that develop focused listening and attention, including oral blending. The programme supports our children to be well prepared to begin grapheme-phoneme correspondence and blending at the start of Reception.

In Reception we continue to 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, all our children are able to tackle any unfamiliar words as they read. At St Louis, we also model the application of the alphabetic code through phonics in shared reading and writing, 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.

We use the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised SEND (special educational needs and disabilities) programme with identified children. It is a complete programme that mirrors the main Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised phonics programme but with adaptations and support in place that make it possible to meet the needs of all our learners. This is taught by fully trained staff.

#### Comprehension

At St Louis, we value reading as a crucial life skill. By the time children leave us, they read confidently for meaning and regularly enjoy reading for pleasure. Our readers are equipped with the tools to tackle unfamiliar vocabulary. We encourage our children to see themselves as readers for both pleasure and purpose.

Because we believe teaching every child to read is so important, we have two Reading

Leaders, Mrs Baldwin and Mrs White, who drive the Early Reading programme in our school. These teachers are highly skilled at teaching phonics and reading, and they monitor and support our reading team across the whole school, so everyone teaches with fidelity to the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised programme.

## **Implementation**

Daily phonics lessons in Reception and Year 1

We teach phonics for up to 30 minutes a day, building on the previous experiences of our children which have helped them to develop focused listening and attention, including oral blending skills.

- In Reception, we build from 10-minute lessons, with additional daily oral blending games, to the 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 Grapheme - Phoneme Correspondence (GPC), 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.
- Assessments are carried out at the end of every half term.
- In Year 2 children review Phase 5 teaching and progress to Bridge to Spelling. Assessments are carried out to identify gaps in learning and Rapid Catch-Up intervention is implemented for groups of children to support their learning at an appropriate level.

## **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 any child in Year 2 or 3 who is not fully fluent at reading or has 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 use the Little Wandle Rapid Catch Up programme to address specific reading/writing gaps. These short, sharp lessons 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 children;
- use books matched to the children's secure phonic knowledge using the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised assessments and book matching grids;

- 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 above, we continue to teach reading in this way for any children who still need to practise reading with decodable books.
- Children will continue to read Phase 5 books during Year 2. When children are able to read at 60-70+ words per minute with an accuracy rate of 90% they will progress to read Little Wandle Fluency books.

### **Home reading**

- The decodable reading practice book is taken home to ensure success is shared with the family.
- Reading for pleasure books also go home for parents to share and read to children.
- 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 in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 who are receiving additional phonics Keep-up sessions read their reading practice book to an adult daily.

### **Ensuring consistency and pace of progress**

- Every teacher in our school undertakes Little Wandle training at least annually 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.
- The phonics lead delivers weekly coaching for staff involved in teaching and delivering interventions.
- 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 Leaders 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 St Louis and our local Newmarket 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 in KS1 and EYFS also take home a story book to share with their families.
- 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.
- As the children progress through the school, they are encouraged to write their own comments and keep a list of the books/authors that they have read.
  - Our young readers visit Newmarket Library
  - Our school library is open weekly after school for families to visit with their child
  - Our Nursery offers a book loan scheme
  - In Spring Term to Autumn Term, we open our playground library
  - We hold our annual reading at bedtime event
  - We regularly welcome authors into our school
  - Nursery and Reception parents are invited into class for stay and read sessions each half term

## 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 our Senior Leadership Team (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.
- The Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised placement assessment is used: with any child new to the school to quickly identify any gaps in their phonic knowledge and plan 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 keep-up and catch-up**

- Children in Reception to Year 6 are assessed through:
  - their teacher's ongoing formative assessment
  - the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds placement assessment
  - regular, planned assessments relevant to the keep-up or catch-up programme
  - the appropriate half-termly assessments