



St. Cuthbert's Catholic Primary School

Reading Rationale



Reading

Intent

At St Cuthbert's, we believe reading is the foundation of all learning and a vital life skill that opens doors to future opportunities. We are committed to developing confident, fluent and enthusiastic readers who read widely, think deeply and develop a genuine love of reading that lasts a lifetime.

We recognise that many of our children begin school with limited language experiences and vocabulary. Therefore, from the earliest stages of their education, we place oracy at the heart of our curriculum. We believe that developing children's spoken language, vocabulary and comprehension is fundamental to becoming successful readers and writers. Through rich talk, high-quality texts and purposeful adult interactions, children develop the language they need to access the full curriculum and communicate confidently.

Our reading curriculum is ambitious, inclusive and carefully sequenced to ensure every child, regardless of their starting point, becomes a successful reader. We aim to develop both the technical skills of reading and a deep understanding of what is read. Children are taught to read fluently, comprehend increasingly complex texts, discuss their ideas using precise vocabulary and appreciate the power of language. Reading is not viewed solely as an English skill but as the key that unlocks learning across the entire curriculum.

Reading for pleasure lies at the heart of our curriculum. Through carefully selected, high-quality literature, children encounter diverse authors, cultures, experiences and viewpoints, broadening their understanding of themselves and the wider world. We believe every child deserves to experience the joy, wonder and escapism that reading can provide while developing culturally, emotionally, intellectually, socially and spiritually.

Implementation

Reading is taught through a carefully planned and progressive curriculum that develops fluency, comprehension, vocabulary and a lifelong enjoyment of books.

Early reading begins in Nursery through the systematic teaching of phonological awareness before children move into the Read Write Inc. phonics programme. Phonics is taught with fidelity through daily, well-paced lessons delivered by highly trained staff. Ongoing assessment ensures children receive targeted support or challenge so that they become accurate, automatic and fluent readers as quickly as possible.

Alongside phonics, children are immersed in a language-rich environment where high-quality texts drive learning across the curriculum. Vocabulary is explicitly taught and revisited, enabling children to understand increasingly sophisticated language and apply it confidently in both discussion and writing.

In Love with Christ: Be the Best I can. Be Kind to One Another. Amen.



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As children become fluent readers, the emphasis shifts towards developing comprehension through high-quality whole-class reading lessons. Children are taught to retrieve information, infer meaning, predict, summarise, clarify and evaluate texts while justifying their opinions using evidence. Skilled questioning and purposeful discussion develop children's oracy, allowing them to articulate their thinking, debate ideas and deepen their understanding.

Reading aloud remains a central feature of our curriculum. Every year group follows a carefully chosen reading spine that exposes children to classic and contemporary fiction, poetry and high-quality non-fiction. Listening to expertly modelled reading develops fluency, comprehension, vocabulary and a love of literature while broadening children's knowledge of the wider world.

Reading extends beyond discrete lessons. Carefully selected texts enrich learning across the wider curriculum, allowing children to make meaningful connections between subjects while developing disciplinary vocabulary. Class reading areas are welcoming, well-stocked and regularly refreshed to encourage independent reading and discussion.

We recognise that parents and carers are crucial partners in developing successful readers. Through home reading, reading records, workshops and regular communication, families are supported to develop positive reading habits at home. Decodable books closely match children's phonics knowledge in the early stages before progressing to a broad range of high-quality literature that encourages independent reading for pleasure.

Reading is celebrated throughout school life through author visits, library visits, reading events, competitions and national celebrations such as World Book Day and National Poetry Day, helping to create a vibrant reading culture where books are valued and enjoyed.

Impact

By the time children leave St Cuthbert's, they are confident, fluent readers who understand that reading is both a source of knowledge and enjoyment.

Children make strong progress from their individual starting points and develop the skills needed to access the full curriculum successfully. They read with increasing fluency, accuracy and expression, applying a range of comprehension strategies to understand, interpret and evaluate increasingly challenging texts. Children confidently discuss books, recommend authors, explain their ideas using rich vocabulary and justify their opinions with evidence. They develop curiosity about the world, empathy towards others and an appreciation of diverse experiences through the literature they encounter.

Our children choose to read because they enjoy it. They leave our schools as enthusiastic, independent readers who recognise the value of reading in their education, their future careers and their everyday lives, fully equipped for the next stage of their learning.

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