

St John Fisher Catholic Primary School

Kale Road, Erith, Kent DA18 4BA

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When you love to learn, you learn to love



Headteacher: Mrs K Garrett BA (Hons) NPQH

Monday, 14th September, 2026

RE: Our Reading Approach at St John Fisher Catholic Primary School

Dear Parents and Carers,

As we begin the new academic year, I would like to share with you how we teach reading at St John Fisher Catholic Primary School and, importantly, how you can support your child's reading at home.

"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path."

Psalm 119:105

This verse beautifully reflects our belief that reading opens up a world of knowledge, imagination and discovery for our children. As a Catholic school community, our mission is to stand united in faith, with the courage to build a loving world grounded in truth, justice, peace and wisdom. Our vision is to grow together in faith and learning, guided by light and courage. Reading plays an important part in this, giving children the skills and confidence they need to learn, communicate and make sense of the world around them.

At St John Fisher, we want every child to become a confident, fluent and enthusiastic reader who develops a genuine love of books and reading. Our approach is carefully structured so that children develop the three essential aspects of reading: decoding, reading words accurately using their phonics knowledge; prosody, reading with appropriate expression, phrasing and rhythm; and comprehension, understanding, interpreting and responding to what they read.

Our Approach to Reading at St John Fisher

To ensure that every child develops as a reader, we use high-quality, systematic phonics, early reading and fluency programmes that are carefully matched to each stage of their development. Our teaching builds progressively from learning to decode words accurately, towards developing automaticity, fluency and a deep understanding of increasingly challenging texts.

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We also place a strong emphasis on reading for pleasure. Alongside the books children read as part of their reading development, we want every child to experience the joy of listening to, sharing and choosing books. Our school library, class reading areas and Book Spine provide opportunities for children to discover new authors, genres and stories and to develop their own interests as readers.

What Your Child Will Bring Home

We know that regular reading at home makes a significant difference to children's progress. The books your child brings home are therefore carefully selected to support their reading development while also helping them to develop confidence and a love of reading.

Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 - Phonics and Early Reading

Children take part in small-group reading practice sessions three times a week with a trained adult. These sessions focus on decoding, prosody and comprehension.

Your child will bring home the same Little Wandle decodable phonics book that they have practised in school throughout the week. This is intentional. Having read the book three times in school, your child should be able to read it at home with increasing fluency and confidence. The purpose of bringing this book home is to allow your child to celebrate their reading success with you.

Your child will also bring home a Reading for Pleasure book chosen from our class reading area or school library. This book may be more challenging than the book they are reading independently and is intended to be shared with you. Please read it to or with your child, talk about the story and pictures, and enjoy the experience of reading together.

Year 2 - Developing Fluency

Year 2 is an important transition point in children's reading development. Once children have completed the core phonics programme, they move into Little Wandle Fluency lessons. These sessions focus on developing reading speed, accuracy, automaticity, expression and comprehension, helping children to become increasingly fluent and independent readers.

Children will bring home a Little Wandle fluency-levelled chapter book to read alongside their fluency teaching in school. Each book contains six chapters. As children in Year 2 have three fluency sessions each week, the book is kept for two weeks, giving

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children the opportunity to read and revisit each chapter as they develop their accuracy, fluency and understanding of the text.

Teachers assess children's fluency levels approximately every six to twelve weeks to ensure that the books they are reading continue to be appropriately matched to their reading development.

Year 2 children will also continue to choose a Reading for Pleasure book from their class reading area or school library. This is a book to enjoy together at home and does not need to be read independently by your child. We want children to continue to experience the pleasure of choosing books and sharing stories alongside their developing independent reading.

Years 3 and 4 - Developing Fluency Further

In Years 3 and 4, children continue to develop their fluency through three Little Wandle Fluency sessions each week. These sessions focus on reading with increasing accuracy, automaticity, speed, expression and understanding.

Children will bring home a Little Wandle fluency-levelled chapter book to read alongside their fluency teaching in school. Each book contains six chapters and is kept for two weeks, with one chapter covered during each fluency session. This gives children the opportunity to revisit the text and build their fluency while developing a deeper understanding of what they have read. Teachers assess children's fluency levels approximately every six to twelve weeks to ensure that their books remain appropriately matched to their needs.

Alongside their fluency book, children will choose a book from our Book Spine to read for pleasure at home. The Book Spine is a carefully selected collection of 100 high-quality books that we would like every child to experience before they leave St John Fisher. These books provide opportunities for children to discover a wide range of authors, genres and stories and to develop their own interests as readers.

Years 5 and 6 - Developing Comprehension

Children in Years 5 and 6 take part in daily whole-class Steps to Read comprehension lessons, engaging with rich, ambitious and age-appropriate texts. These lessons develop children's ability to understand, interpret, discuss and respond thoughtfully to what they read.

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At home, children will read Collins fluency-levelled books, with their reading monitored regularly to support the continued development of accuracy, speed and expression.

Children also have access to our Book Spine, a curated collection of 100 high-quality books that we would like every child to experience before they leave St John Fisher. Regular school library visits provide further opportunities for children to explore books, discover new authors and develop their own reading preferences.

How You Can Support Your Child's Reading at Home

There are many simple ways in which you can support your child's reading journey at home. Most importantly, we want reading to be a positive and enjoyable part of family life.

For children in Reception and Year 1, please celebrate their success when they read their Little Wandle decodable book to you. They have already practised the book in school, so they should be able to read it with increasing accuracy and fluency. Praise their efforts, expression and growing independence rather than expecting them to struggle with words they have not yet been taught.

For children in Year 2 and beyond, please encourage them to read their fluency book regularly and talk about what they have read. As children become more fluent, it is important that reading remains about more than simply saying the words accurately. Talk about characters, events, vocabulary and ideas, and encourage your child to explain their thinking.

Please also continue to read aloud to your child, even as they become increasingly independent. Hearing an adult read exposes children to ambitious vocabulary, more complex sentence structures and stories that may be beyond their current independent reading level. It also helps to develop a lifelong enjoyment of books.

Talk about what you read together. You might discuss the meaning of a new word, ask your child what they think might happen next, talk about how a character is feeling or ask them what they enjoyed about the book. These conversations help children to develop their understanding and become thoughtful, engaged readers.

Where possible, try to establish a regular reading routine at home. Ten to fifteen minutes of focused reading each evening can make a real difference. It does not need

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to be a long or complicated activity; regular opportunities to read and talk about books are what matter most.

Finally, model positive reading behaviours. Let your child see you reading books, newspapers, magazines or other things that interest you. When children see reading valued and enjoyed by the adults around them, they are more likely to see themselves as readers too.

Thank you for your continued support and partnership in helping us to develop confident, fluent and enthusiastic readers. Together, we can ensure that every child at St John Fisher has the opportunity to discover the joy of reading and to use reading as a source of knowledge, imagination and enjoyment throughout their lives.

If you have any questions about your child's reading provision, please do not hesitate to speak with their class teacher.

Yours in faith and partnership,

Mrs K Garrett
Headteacher