



SSMJ Reading Policy

Our Vision

Through a positive caring environment, we provide the opportunity for every child to reach their full potential. We embrace Catholic values by living out our school mission:

Working together with God to achieve a better future for everyone.

“The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you'll go.” — Dr. Seuss

“If you don't have time to read, you don't have the time (or the tools) to write. Simple as that.” — Stephen King

Aims and Principles

Our Vision for Reading at SS Mary and John Catholic Primary School

At SS Mary and John Catholic Primary School, we are committed to nurturing confident, fluent readers who develop a lifelong love of reading. Our approach to reading is grounded in the belief that reading is the foundation of learning and opens doors to all areas of the curriculum and beyond.

We aim for all children to:

- Develop a **secure understanding of phonics** to enable fluent, confident and accurate reading.
- Foster a **lifelong enjoyment of reading**, finding pleasure in books and the stories they tell.
- Acquire the **reading skills necessary to access all areas of the curriculum** independently.
- Be able to read a **wide range of age-appropriate texts**, both fiction and non-fiction.
- **Understand and interpret** what they read and what is read to them.
- **Respond thoughtfully** to texts, expressing opinions and justifying their ideas.

- Become immersed in a variety of texts that allow them to explore both **real and imagined worlds**.

A School Community of Readers

At SS Mary and John, we consider ourselves a **community of readers**, where reading is actively promoted and celebrated across the whole school. We believe that adults play a vital role in modelling positive reading behaviours and inspiring children to read for both purpose and pleasure.

All staff members are expected to support this ethos by:

- **Planning regular story time sessions** and designated quiet reading times, where all members of the class enjoy books together.
- Delivering **engaging shared and guided reading sessions** that develop key reading skills and reinforce the school's commitment to reading for enjoyment.
- Organising and encouraging participation in a range of **school-wide and national literacy events**, such as World Book Day, Roald Dahl Day, Poetry Week, and storytelling festivals.

By fostering a rich reading culture within our school, we aim to equip every child with the tools, confidence, and passion to become a successful reader for life.

Our English Curriculum

At SS Mary and John Catholic Primary School, our English curriculum is built around **high-quality, age-appropriate texts** chosen to engage, inspire and challenge our pupils. These carefully selected books form the foundation for the teaching of reading, writing and spoken language across the school.

Each year group explores a diverse range of **fiction, non-fiction and poetry**, using these texts as models to support the development of a wide variety of writing genres. Through exposure to rich and meaningful literature, children are encouraged to become confident communicators, imaginative writers and thoughtful readers.

The initial structure of our book-based curriculum was designed by the English Lead and continues to evolve through ongoing collaboration with teaching staff. At the end of each academic year, class teachers review and refine the text selections to ensure they remain relevant and impactful. As a result, our curriculum now includes books that explore important contemporary themes such as the **refugee crisis, climate change, and human rights**—themes that directly support our commitment to **Catholic Social Teaching** and promote values of compassion, justice, and global awareness.

To further develop a love of reading and expose pupils to a wider range of literature, we offer a variety of **reading engagement activities** throughout the year. These experiences are designed to create a vibrant reading culture across the school and to foster a deeper connection with literature that extends beyond the classroom.

Phonics teaching

At SS Mary and John, we follow the Read Write Inc. (RWI) phonics scheme throughout EYFS and Key Stage One. RWI is a method of learning based upon letter sounds and phonics, and we use it to aid children in their reading and writing. Read Write Inc. Phonics teaches children to read accurately and fluently with good comprehension. They learn to form each letter, spell correctly, and compose their ideas step-by-step.

Phonics is taught twice a day in Key Stage One to prepare children for the phonics screening and to ensure they can read fluently with confidence.

Children are taught phonics from the first full day in Reception. Reception and Key Stage One children are assessed each half-term and grouped accordingly. Daily interventions are put into place where there is a need.

Guided Reading at SS Mary and John Primary School

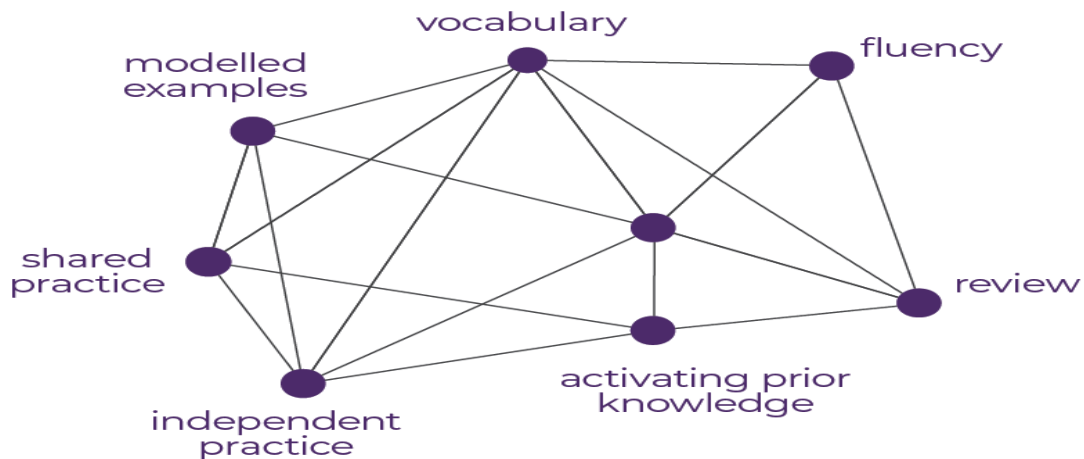
At SS Mary and John, once children have completed the **Read Write Inc. (RWI) Phonics programme**, they move on to our **Guided Reading** approach, which supports them in developing deeper reading fluency, understanding, and enjoyment of texts. This is taught daily, for a minimum

From **Year 2 onwards**, we follow the **Grammarsaurus Comprehension Crusher** scheme. This high-quality programme is designed to build on children's phonics foundations and move them towards more advanced reading comprehension skills.

Guided reading is taught as a whole-class lesson in the majority of year groups with both the class teacher and teaching assistant supporting groups of learners. SEN learners are differentiated for appropriately and are given suitable scaffolding and support to ensure they can access the learning.

What is Comprehension Crusher?

The Comprehension Crusher scheme uses **engaging and carefully selected texts** — many of which are linked to topics in the wider curriculum, such as history, geography and science. This ensures that children not only become more skilled readers but also make meaningful connections across their learning.



Each week, pupils take part in focused, structured reading sessions using a variety of strategies to improve both **fluency** and **comprehension**. These include:

- **Fluency grids** – to help children practise reading at an appropriate pace and with expression
- **Choral reading** – reading together as a group to build confidence and accuracy
- **Echo reading** – where the teacher reads a passage and pupils repeat it, improving intonation and phrasing
- **Targeted comprehension questions** – covering a range of skills such as retrieval, inference, vocabulary, prediction and summarising

This approach ensures that children are not only able to **read texts fluently**, but also understand and discuss them in depth. We aim to develop children who are confident, curious readers with a genuine love for reading.

A Cross-Curricular Approach

By linking reading texts to our wider curriculum, children have the opportunity to reinforce subject knowledge while exploring high-quality fiction and non-fiction. This makes reading more purposeful and enriching, while supporting vocabulary development across all subjects.

Promoting a Love of Reading at SS Mary and John Catholic Primary School

At SS Mary and John Catholic Primary School, we are passionate about fostering a **lifelong love of reading** in every child. We believe that reading should be a joyful and enriching experience, and we are committed to ensuring that all pupils—regardless of age, background, language or reading ability—can discover the pleasure and power of books.

We provide our children with access to a wide range of **high-quality, diverse and engaging texts** that reflect different experiences, cultures, and genres. This helps children explore their interests and encourages them to make independent reading choices. Our message is clear: **there is a book out there for everyone**.

A Shared Reading Culture

As a community of readers, we recognise that the love of reading starts at school but grows at home. That's why we actively promote reading beyond the classroom, working in partnership with families to create a reading culture that extends into everyday life.

Whole-School Reading Initiatives

Throughout the academic year, we run a variety of reading initiatives designed to celebrate reading and engage children across all year groups:

- **Termly Reading Newsletters** – Packed with reading tips for families, book recommendations from staff and pupils, and exciting reading challenges.
- **Reading Competitions** – Regular themed competitions with book prizes to keep reading exciting and engaging.
- **Book Prizes and Gifts** – Books are awarded to children as part of reading competitions and special occasions.
- **EYFS & KS1 Bedtime Story Bags** – Children take home a special bag including a book of their choice, their class reading buddy (a teddy), hot chocolate, and a treat to promote cosy shared reading at home.
- **KS2 Poetry Bags** – Sent home weekly to spark an interest in poetry and encourage children to read and share poems with their families.
- **Daily Storytime** – Every class enjoys a daily story session focused on poetry, fiction, and occasional non-fiction, building children's exposure to a wide variety of texts.
- **Visiting Readers** – Teachers, phase leaders, and members of the senior leadership team regularly visit other classes to share a story, helping to build a sense of community and model a love of reading.
- **Lunchtime Library Access** –
 - **KS1:** Children are encouraged to use the library at lunchtime to independently explore and enjoy books.
 - **KS2:** Our KS2 library is also open during lunchtime, allowing children to borrow books and read independently.

- **Book Clubs** Celebrating the joy of reading and sharing new stories; children review and recommend books to their peers.
- **Reading Assemblies** – Held to raise the profile of reading across the school. Staff and pupils share favourite books, recommend new titles, and celebrate reading achievements.
- **Special Events** –
 - *EYFS "Share a Story"* sessions and *Teddy Bear Picnics* celebrate reading with families and promote the joy of shared storytelling.
 - *Reading Days & Workshops* – Themed days such as Roald Dahl Day, Refugee Week, and Poetry Week include immersive workshops and activities linked to global themes and storytelling.
- **Digital Reading Platforms** – Pupils have access to *Serial Mash* on Purple Mash, providing age-appropriate online books to support reading for pleasure and comprehension at home and in school.

By embedding reading in all aspects of school life, we aim to develop confident, enthusiastic readers who carry a love of books with them throughout their lives.

Our Home Reading Offer

At SS Mary and John Catholic Primary School, we believe that **regular reading at home is key** to developing confident, fluent and enthusiastic readers. We are committed to supporting families in fostering a love of reading and building strong reading habits from the earliest stages. Our home reading offer is carefully tailored to each key stage to ensure children are reading books matched to their ability while also enjoying stories for pleasure.

Reception (EYFS)

In Reception, children begin bringing home a **phonic-based reading book** once they have learned the first few sounds in the Autumn term. These books contain simple **CVC (consonant-vowel-consonant)** words and are **closely matched to each child's phonic knowledge**. As children progress through the year, they will take home more complex books that allow them to practise newly learned sounds at home. Please be aware that initially, children may have photocopied resources which focus on CVC words – this is in line with RWI Phonic teaching.

Families can also access additional **phonics, reading and storytime resources** via the EYFS class pages on our school website to support reading at home.

Key Stage 1 (Years 1 & 2)

Children in Key Stage 1 take home **two reading books each week**:

- One book is carefully matched to their **phonic ability**, designed to be read more than once to build **fluency and confidence**.
- The second book is a '**reading for pleasure**' text to be shared with a family member. These books are intended to develop **comprehension skills** through discussion and questioning.

Books are changed weekly, and we ask that parents **sign and comment in their child's reading record** to show the book has been read and to share how their child managed with it. Teachers and teaching assistants are available to discuss reading progress with parents

informally as needed.

Key Stage 2 (Years 3–6)

In Key Stage 2, children are assigned books based on their assessed **reading level**. They choose their book from a curated selection and are supported in making appropriate reading choices. Teaching assistants listen to pupils read regularly to assess **fluency and understanding**, and children take their books home to continue reading with family support.

Parents are encouraged to **record reading progress in the reading record**, including any comments or observations.

Upper Key Stage 2 – Free Readers

Children in Years 5 and 6 who demonstrate strong reading skills may become '**Free Readers**'. This means they are no longer reading from levelled schemes and instead **choose their own books** from the class library based on personal interests. These pupils are expected to read independently and continue to share books with an adult at home. They will be asked to read extracts aloud in school to ensure they are selecting texts they can read **fluently and with understanding**.

Reading for Pleasure and Library Use

In addition to their reading scheme books, all children are encouraged to borrow a '**reading for pleasure**' book from the school library. These books can be taken home and should be returned within a week to give others the opportunity to enjoy them.

Online Reading – Serial Mash (Purple Mash)

All children in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 have access to the **Serial Mash** section on our Purple Mash homework platform. Each week, they are assigned a short story or chapter to read, followed by **comprehension activities**. Teachers monitor participation and provide feedback to support reading development at home.

We greatly value the support of our families in developing confident readers. By working together, we can ensure every child enjoys reading and reaches their full potential.

Opportunities for reading across the curriculum

Reading is a priority across the school and teachers should take every opportunity to develop reading skills in the wider curriculum. Our wider curriculum allows link texts to be explored both in English lessons and during thematic lessons to allow children to draw upon their reading and to further develop their reading skills.

Focus days linked to our Catholic faith and current world issues allow opportunities for children to access a range of texts linking to our world today: the refugee crisis, climate change and pollution.

Each science unit has linked texts which help children to not only develop their reading skills but also their scientific knowledge and vocabulary. Regular comprehension tasks and reading to find information is encouraged in both science and thematic lessons.

During RE and Prayer and Liturgy lessons, children are encouraged to read scripture for themselves and access bibles to develop their understanding of key stories and biblical quotes.

Supporting SEN learners with reading

The lowest 20% of readers in each class are identified at the beginning of each half term and targeted intervention are put into place involving a range of strategies: 1:1 reading, small focus group for guided reading, speedy reading interventions, 1:1 phonics etc. SEN learners are each assigned ITP reading targets which are taken from their continuums each half term; these allow teacher and teaching assistants to focus on targets which are personal to the children including phonics, reading fluency, comprehension and vocabulary. Children work on these targets each week both within reading lessons, interventions and English lessons and when a target has been met they move up to the next band and are assigned a new target.

Children who have been identified as having a Special Educational Need are supported to develop their reading skills through differentiation within reading lessons and appropriate scaffolding and support within all areas of the curriculum.

Online platform Lexia is used to support SEND learners with reading and this is accessed daily with progress being monitored by class teachers and Senco.

Supporting EAL learners with reading

Children who speak English as an additional language (EAL) are supported in a number of ways within the reading curriculum: EAL continuums are tracked and targets identified and worked on to support children with their understanding of texts; EAL interventions include racing to English support children with understanding new and key vocabulary; communication in print is used as a resource to support with vocabulary and as part of guided reading practice to allow children to access the learning and 1:1 reading takes place to support children with fluency and understanding. EAL children are planned for within English lessons and their learning scaffolded to ensure they can progress within the lesson; where language is a barrier, children are supported by teaching staff within lessons and are provided with a text at an appropriate level to challenge them. Children who speak English as an additional language are often paired with a peer who can support them with language and vocabulary to help model language and reading skills. Where appropriate, phonics interventions are implanted to support early reading in the English language.

Assessment of reading

Phonics

Year one children are screened in Summer term for the statutory phonics screening. This involves children being tested on a list of 40 words, half real words and half nonsense words. The nonsense words will be shown to the child with a picture of an alien; this provides the child with a context for the nonsense word which is independent from any existing vocabulary they may have. Each child will sit the test once with a familiar adult – this is often their current class teacher.

Results are submitted and, once the pass mark is released, these are then shared with parents.

At SS Mary and John, we regularly assess children in Reception, Year One and those children in Year Two who did not pass their phonics screening the previous year. We assess all children half-termly in order to group them accordingly and ensure they are reading the correct level of phonic book.

Year one children also complete a half-termly phonics screening (from previous years) in order to assess their current ability and to ensure progress is being made.

Statutory reading assessments

All children Year 6 complete SATs assessments in the Summer term. These assessments are sent to be marked externally. Each child receives a scaled score of between 80-120, with 100 being the expected standard for children to achieve the national standard for reading. Assessment results are reported to parents within the end of year school report.

Informal reading assessments

At SS Mary and John, we assess reading termly through the use of the Testbase reading test. These test a range of reading skills including inference, retrieval and vocabulary.

Teacher continually assess children's reading daily through AfL (Assessment for Learning) and KPI grids (Key Performance Indicators) are used in Years 1, 3, 4 and 5 to support with teacher assessment of reading. When reading with children, adults complete observation sheets with comments on fluency, accuracy and comprehension.

Year Six pupils are assessed half-termly using previous years' SATs papers in order to prepare them for the statutory assessments at the end of the key stage. Progress is tracked and monitored; this is then discussed at regular pupil progress meetings to ensure good progress and attainment in reading.