



Reading Policy

1. Curriculum Purpose and Rationale

At Laddingford St Mary's, reading is at the heart of our curriculum because it underpins all learning and unlocks children's potential. We aim to ensure that every child becomes a confident, fluent reader with a love of literature.

In Early Years and Key Stage 1, we prioritise early reading and phonics, following Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised, ensuring children develop the skills to decode, blend, and recognise high-frequency words.

In Key Stage 2, we focus on developing reading comprehension, vocabulary, and critical thinking, using EdShed + VIPERS, exposing children to a balance of classic texts and contemporary literature, including a range of diverse authors.

Across the school, we foster reading for pleasure, providing children with opportunities to read widely, explore different genres, and make personal reading choices. Reading is treated as a core life skill and a gateway to lifelong learning, reflecting the Ofsted emphasis on a knowledge-rich curriculum and the EEF's guidance on structured early reading.

2. Curriculum Ambition

Our ambition is for all children to:

- Achieve fluency and confidence in decoding by the end of KS1, with tailored support for those who need catch-up or keep-up interventions.
- Develop comprehension, inference, and critical thinking skills across KS2.
- Enjoy reading for pleasure and demonstrate a lifelong love of reading.
- Access a diverse and inclusive range of texts reflecting different cultures, perspectives, and experiences.
- Use reading as a tool to support academic progress across all subjects, enabling access to a broad and balanced curriculum.

We recognise that children learn at different paces, and our ambition includes ensuring equity of access to reading support, particularly for vulnerable groups including SEN, disadvantaged pupils, and those identified as needing additional support.

3. Curriculum Structure and Progression

Our reading curriculum is carefully sequenced to ensure all children progress from early decoding to fluent, independent reading and advanced comprehension, aligned with the National Curriculum, Little Wandle, EEF guidance, and National Literacy Trust recommendations.

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

- Early Language Development: Daily story times, nursery rhymes, songs, and rich talk build vocabulary, listening skills, and narrative understanding.
- Phonics: Daily Little Wandle Letters and Sounds sessions focus on phonemic awareness, letter-sound correspondence, blending, segmenting, and high-frequency word recognition.

- Reading Practice: Children take home decodable books matched to their phonic stage as a celebration read to reinforce school learning.
- Library Visits & Reading for Pleasure: Weekly visits introduce children to a wide variety of texts, fostering curiosity, choice, and enjoyment.
- ERIC (Everyone Reads in Class): Short daily sessions provide opportunities for independent or guided reading, allowing children to consolidate phonics and early comprehension skills.

Key Stage 1 (Years 1–2)

- Phonics Progression: Daily Little Wandle sessions continue, with keep-up interventions for children who need additional support, ensuring all children meet or exceed the Phonics Screening Check standard by Year 1.
- Guided Reading: Regular guided reading sessions develop fluency, comprehension, vocabulary, and discussion skills. Mixed-age groupings enable peer modelling of reading strategies.
- Text Exposure: Children read a range of fiction and non-fiction texts, including classic authors and contemporary works suitable for their age.
- Reading for Pleasure: Daily whole-class story time immerses children in longer texts, promoting listening comprehension and enjoyment.
- Library Access & Home Reading: Weekly library visits and daily reading at home cultivate independence and confidence.
- Whole-Class Story Time: Provides opportunities to experience complex narratives, diverse voices, and rich vocabulary, fostering discussion, reflection, and emotional engagement with texts

Key Stage 2 (Years 3 – 6)

- Comprehension Skills: Weekly VIPERS lessons develop inference, prediction, summarising, retrieval, vocabulary, and evaluation skills. Texts are carefully chosen to include one well-known author and one newer or diverse author per term.
- Reading Fluency and Independence: Daily ERIC sessions and dedicated reading time support sustained engagement and stamina.
- Whole-Class Story Time: Provides opportunities to experience complex narratives, diverse voices, and rich vocabulary, fostering discussion, reflection, and emotional engagement with texts.
- Library Use: Children choose their own reading-for-pleasure books to develop autonomy, preference, and exploration of new genres.

Children who are not meeting age-related expectations, or who are identified as vulnerable—including those with SEND, Pupil Premium, or making less than expected progress—receive regular, structured support tailored to their needs. This includes being listened to read at least once a week, and in most cases daily, to ensure consistent practice and confidence-building. Interventions are evidence-informed and carefully targeted to address specific areas, such as decoding, fluency, comprehension, or vocabulary development, providing focused support to help every child make accelerated progress.

4. Teaching and Learning Approach

At Laddingford St Mary's, reading is taught through a combination of systematic instruction, guided practice, and opportunities for independent engagement, ensuring that all children develop the skills, strategies, and enjoyment needed to become confident readers. In EYFS and Key Stage 1, this begins with daily, structured phonics lessons using Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised, where children are explicitly taught letter-sound correspondence, blending, segmenting, and high-frequency words. Phonics teaching is supplemented by carefully matched decodable texts, allowing children to immediately apply their learning in reading practice. Teachers model fluent, expressive reading, demonstrating decoding strategies and prosody, while guided reading sessions provide small-group support to develop comprehension, vocabulary, and discussion skills.

Across the school, we embed reading for pleasure as a core part of the curriculum. Daily whole-class story time allows children to become immersed in texts that are rich in language, narrative structure, and cultural diversity.

Library visits, book choice, and daily ERIC (Everyone Reads in Class) sessions encourage children to read independently, explore new genres, and develop personal preferences, fostering lifelong engagement with reading. These routines ensure that reading is both a skill to be taught and a joy to be experienced.

In Key Stage 2, teaching shifts to a greater focus on comprehension and critical thinking, while continuing to reinforce fluency. Weekly VIPERS lessons teach children to apply comprehension strategies including inference, prediction, summarising, vocabulary, and evaluation. Texts are carefully selected to balance the study of classic, renowned authors with contemporary and diverse writers, including both fiction and non-fiction. This approach broadens children's perspectives and exposes them to a variety of voices and experiences. Teachers model analytical thinking through guided reading and discussion, gradually releasing responsibility to pupils to read independently, reflect on meaning, and engage critically with texts.

Teachers use formative assessment to inform teaching at every stage. Questioning, discussion, observation during ERIC sessions, and one-to-one reading allow staff to identify gaps in knowledge, misconceptions, or areas requiring additional support. Feedback is immediate and targeted, helping children to consolidate strategies for decoding, comprehension, and vocabulary acquisition. Where needed, children receive structured interventions, ensuring those who are vulnerable or falling behind receive daily or weekly support tailored to their specific reading needs.

Overall, our teaching and learning approach balances systematic skill development, rich exposure to high-quality texts, and sustained opportunities for independent reading, reflecting research evidence on effective literacy instruction. This ensures that children develop not only the technical skills of reading but also the confidence, curiosity, and enthusiasm to become lifelong readers.

5. Assessment, Feedback and Monitoring

- Phonics assessments: Little Wandle termly assessments identify children needing catch-up or keep-up support.
- Reading fluency and comprehension: Assessed through guided reading records, VIPERS activities, and one-to-one reading.
- Formative assessment: Teachers use questioning, discussion, and ERIC observation to track engagement and understanding.
- Summative assessment: End-of-term reading benchmarks and national curriculum assessments inform progress reporting.
- Monitoring: Senior leaders review reading progress, intervention impact, and library engagement. Observations ensure reading is taught consistently across classes.
- Feedback: Immediate, specific feedback is given during reading sessions, with regular communication with parents to support reading at home.
- Assessment is designed to identify gaps early, inform targeted support, and ensure all children meet age-related expectations.

6. Curriculum Impact

Our reading curriculum is designed to ensure that all children become fluent, confident, and independent readers by the time they leave primary school, with the skills and strategies to access a broad range of texts and subjects. Through a combination of systematic phonics, targeted interventions, comprehension teaching, and daily reading for pleasure, children develop strong decoding, vocabulary, and comprehension skills, enabling them to think critically and engage deeply with texts. They experience a rich and diverse range of literature, fostering curiosity, empathy, and a lifelong love of reading. Vulnerable children, including those with SEND or Pupil Premium, receive tailored support to ensure they make accelerated progress, while regular monitoring and feedback ensure that teaching is responsive and effective. The impact of our reading curriculum is evident in children's attainment, engagement, and confidence as readers, their ability to articulate understanding and inference, and their sustained enthusiasm for reading both at school and at home, preparing them fully for the demands of secondary education and beyond.