



Joy Lane Primary School

Reading Policy

2026

Rationale

At Joy Lane, we believe fluent reading is fundamental to all learning, equipping children with the skills they need to succeed in the wider world. When pupils are unable to read fluently at an age-appropriate level, their access to the wider curriculum is limited and they risk falling behind. For this reason, reading is a clear priority: we prioritise early reading, maximise opportunities for children to read across the curriculum and provide timely, targeted phonics support where needed. Our practice is informed by current research, which strengthens our reading culture and practice.

The will to read influences the skill and vice versa (OECD, 2010)

Research by Teresa Cremin at the [Open University](#) underpins our balanced approach to reading instruction and reading for pleasure. We recognise that, without embedding a strong culture of reading for pleasure, pupils cannot fully develop the knowledge, skills and motivation required for deep reading comprehension. Our ambition is for every child to become a lifelong reader—one who chooses to read widely and often, not out of obligation, but for genuine enjoyment.

As a result, our curriculum has been designed with reading for pleasure at its core. By providing a range of text types and genres in our reading nooks and library areas, choosing a varied and inspiring core of reading material for Guided Reading and read aloud texts, and regularly engaging in informal book talk, our children are able to talk about reading with confidence. Our English curriculum is also hooked onto rich and exciting texts, which act as models to inspire our children's growing skillset in writing.

Learning to Read

To be a successful reader, there are four key areas that children need to master:

- 1) **Phonics** – which gives children the ability to decode words.
- 2) **Vocabulary** – which helps understanding.
- 3) **Fluency** – acts as a bridge between phonics and comprehension.
- 4) **Comprehension** – the understanding of what has been read.

Phonics

At Joy Lane, we teach early reading and phonics through Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised, which is a systematic and synthetic phonics programme. Children are introduced to Phonics in Nursery through rhyming and word games. We then teach phonics in Reception and 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. Alongside our phonics programme, we expose our youngest children to rich and challenging vocabulary, recognising that strong language foundations are essential for effective speaking and listening.

We continually monitor and track our pupils' progress in phonics and reading fluency and comprehension so that children 'keep up'.

The pedagogical approach embedded through our Little Wandle scheme is rooted in consistent routines and the careful removal of unnecessary distractions, ensuring that cognitive load remains low for pupils. The approach emphasises repeated, structured practice, enabling children to secure learning in their long-term memory and orthographic store—where practice truly becomes permanent. The pacy, highly repetitive nature of the programme builds confidence in blending and segmenting within a supportive group context. Through learning alongside their peers, children develop the confidence and automaticity needed to successfully tackle unfamiliar, decodable words when reading independently.

Phonics is prioritised for those children in Year 2 and Year 3 who did not pass the Phonics Screener, as well as others in Key Stage 2 who cannot read at age-related expectations. The Little Wandle Rapid Catch Up programme ensures that these children are provided with regular, targeted support so they can access the curriculum and enjoy reading as soon as possible.

For further information on how to support your child at home with Phonics please click [here](#).

Guided Reading

Our Guided Reading journey starts with Little Wandle in Reception and Year 1. It is important children are given regular opportunities to apply the phonics they have learned by reading fully decodable books. At Joy Lane we use ‘Collins Big Cat for Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised’ fully decodable books to match the programme’s progression.

Each reading practice session is designed to focus on one of the three key reading skills:

- Decoding
- Prosody – reading with meaning, stress and intonation
- Comprehension – understanding the text

Our Guided Reading sessions have a clear structure beginning with ‘Revisit and Review’, where children are supported in bringing the GCPs they have learned to the forefront of their memory, revise tricky words that appear in the book and are taught the meaning of any unfamiliar vocabulary. ‘Practise and apply’ is the main part of the reading sessions and focuses on the key skill being taught: decoding, fluency or comprehension. When children are reading independently, the trained adult ‘taps in’ to listen to each child. The sessions are finished with a ‘Review’ opportunity where misconceptions are addressed and key learning is recapped. All children take home the Collins Big Cat book used in Guided Reading for repeated reading practice.

From Year 2, children are taught reading comprehension skills in a whole-class setting for Guided Reading.

Comprehension is an outcome, not a skill to practise (The Reading Framework July 2023)

In line with The Reading Framework (July 2023) guidance, our Guided Reading approach supports our children to ‘construct a mental model’ to develop their comprehension. Teacher modelling and fluency practice feature highly in our Guided Reading sequence, alongside quality discussion and targeted questioning.

We follow a Guided Reading model as follows:

- 1: Teacher reading and thinking aloud to create a 'mental model'
- 2: 'Readers' Theatre' – children reading aloud to develop fluency and prosody
- 3: 'Quick Questions' based on the text to develop comprehension and vocabulary
- 4: 'Big Question' to explore open questions that prompt deeper thinking, reading talk and develop inference skills

Our reading framework matches the National Curriculum requirements to ensure both coverage and progression of skills in comprehension development.

Reading Books

Children in both Year R and 1, as well as those accessing Rapid Catch Up groups across the school, have access to the Collins Big Cat book used in Guided Reading, which they can share with parents and carers at home to further develop their fluency.

Children in Years 4 – 6 are assessed using Renaissance Star Reading, which produces highly detailed information about our children's reading achievement, comprehension, and growth. This includes their Lexile level, which is a measure of their reading ability. This measure aligns with our Lexile colour-coded library book stock, which ensures children are accessing a wide range of texts suited to their level.

All children are encouraged to borrow 'sharing books' from our well-stocked reading nooks and library areas. These texts are not restricted by Lexile range or phonics stage; instead, they are chosen to be enjoyed and shared, both at school and at home. We actively promote reading for pleasure beyond the classroom and warmly encourage children to bring in and share books from home that reflect their personal interests. Through regular, informal reading conversations, we take great pride in getting to know our children as readers and celebrating the texts they enjoy.

We believe that our children become fluent and confident readers when they are supported by both the school and at home. It is a whole school expectation that parents and carers hear their children read a little every evening or read aloud to their child, as well as talking about the books they are reading in a more informal way.

Assessment

We use a carefully balanced approach to both formative and summative assessment to build a precise understanding of pupils' reading. Formative assessment is embedded within daily practice through Guided Reading and one-to-one reading, enabling teachers to respond swiftly to pupils' needs. This is complemented by Renaissance Star Reading assessments three times a year for pupils in Years 4 to 6, which provide standardised insights into fluency and comprehension. Together, these approaches enable us to make accurate judgements, adapt teaching with precision and implement timely, targeted interventions to ensure all pupils make strong progress.

Our 'Lowest 20% Trackers' identify those not meeting age-related expectations and band them into three categories to prioritise and target support appropriately: *Urgent Intervention*, *Intervention*, *On Watch*. These working documents continually track the provision in place for these children and are updated in line with our three-yearly assessment snapshots and discussed twice yearly in pupil progress meetings.

At Joy Lane, we are passionate about understanding the whole reader. Whether it is through discussions with adults in Book Banter sessions, participation in daily Guided Reading sessions or 1:1 reading, we actively encourage our staff to explore their children's reading identities.

Reading for Pleasure and 'Book Banter'

Our pedagogical approach to reading for pleasure is firmly informed by research from the Open University. This highlights four key practices essential for fostering a strong reading culture: reading aloud, informal book talk and recommendations, and dedicated time for independent reading within a highly social reading environment. This evidence underpins our Book Banter sessions and our wider approach to reading for pleasure.

Each Friday, from Reception to Year 6, we prioritise Book Banter sessions, where children engage in rich, informal discussions about their reading habits, preferences and recommendations. These sessions not only nurture a genuine love of reading but also broaden pupils' exposure to a diverse range of high-quality texts. Watch [this video](#) for more information about informal book talk.

We recognise that, without a securely embedded culture of reading for pleasure—where children are motivated, inspired and eager to read—we cannot fully develop the knowledge and skills required for fluency and deep comprehension. Ultimately, our ambition is for every child to become a lifelong reader.