



Saint Norbert's  
Catholic Voluntary Academy



Reading: our approach





Welcome to Saint Norbert's  
Catholic Voluntary Academy

## Reading: our approach

At Saint Norbert's, we believe that reading is the key to unlocking exciting experiences and powerful knowledge for all; it is the vehicle through which children access many other areas of the curriculum and subsequently can open the door to many other aspects of the wider world.

Reading is fundamental to our pupils becoming successful and independent learners and we are excited to be a part of their reading journey.

Throughout their time at with us at Saint Norbert's, our ambition is for children to experience and discuss a wide range of texts including poetry, non-fiction and fiction. This reading journey – and the texts within it – has been carefully planned and sequenced to ensure the intentional and cohesive building of cultural capital.

Reading is a priority for me and it is my mission to ensure that every child at Saint Norbert's becomes a fluent reader.

*Headteacher: Alex Dawson*

# An early start



Reading is necessary for learning, so instilling a love of reading at an early age is the key that unlocks the door to lifelong learning.

Children who attend our Nursery will begin to experience single-letter sounds and some blending of sounds during the summer term. This is good preparation for the start of more formal phonics lessons from the beginning of the Reception year.

Upon entry into the Reception class, we ensure that daily, high-quality systematic phonics teaching is delivered consistently across our setting. We use the ReadWriteInc. approach and deliver a daily phonics lesson to all early readers, with half-termly assessments ensuring that children are being taught at the appropriate level. We may use assessments more frequently as needed.

Reading aloud presents books as sources of exciting experiences for children to remember. We also aim to give children a head-start on expanding their vocabulary, building independence and self-confidence. It helps children learn to make sense of the world and people around them, develop social and emotional skills as well as feed their imagination.

# Reading at home

At St Norbert's, and where children are still being taught phonics through our Read Write Inc. programme, they will each bring home:

1. A ReadWriteInc. book bag book which matches their current learning in school.
2. A ReadWriteInc. e-book – shared via Oxford Owl – of the same level which studied in class.
3. A 'sharing' book from a selection of age-appropriate books to read with an adult at home. These books should be read by the adult and enjoyed together during 'story time' to develop a love of reading.

The national curriculum says that pupils should be taught to:

... read aloud accurately books that are consistent with their developing phonic knowledge and that do not require them to use other strategies to work out words.

With this in mind, our aim is to ensure that reading books connect closely to the phonics knowledge that pupils are taught when they are learning to read.

The books we send home are designed to celebrate and acknowledge your child's classroom learning. Children should be able to decode these books with enthusiasm and fluency, using the skills they have acquired. Our aim is for all children to be able to read without having to rely on adult intervention.

We have invested in books that have been carefully structured in cumulative steps for children learning to read, so that they can decode every word as their knowledge of the alphabetic code increases. These books are referred to simply as 'decodable' books.

'Decodable' books and other texts make children feel successful from the very beginning. They do not encounter words that they cannot decode. If an adult is not present, they are not forced to guess from pictures, the context, the first letters of a word or its shape.

# Your sharing book

Before your child even encounters a book for the first time, you can help them to become fluent, skilled and attentive readers from the earliest stages; this is partly driven by the quality of your talking with them that expands their vocabulary.

All talk is useful, especially when directed to your child specifically. For instance, children expand their language and vocabulary when they listen to or join in with a story or rhymes in a well-scripted children's television programme, but an adult talking about it with them adds benefits.

Talking about books brings particular advantages. Firstly, parents who engage their children in books prepare them to become committed and enthusiastic readers: they can transform their attitudes to reading. Their children learn to focus and share the enjoyment of the story; they learn how stories start and finish, and how a plot unravels and is resolved; they learn that books can transport them elsewhere.

Secondly, book-related talk introduces children to language that they might not hear in ordinary conversation, especially the vocabulary of the book itself. This primes them to understand what they read later, in both their leisure reading and across the curriculum.

# After phonics

In addition to our school library, our Key Stage One and Key Stage Two classes have their own library of books, containing a wide range of genres and text types.

When children have achieved the required level of fluency and decoding ability, they will leave the ReadWriteInc. phonics programme and begin to make more independent choices about what they read.

Teachers at Saint Norbert's ensure that their class libraries are well-stocked with age-appropriate texts designed to stretch and challenge, as well as broaden children's reading diet and improve their cultural capital.

Children will always be asked to discuss book changes with their Class Teacher, who will either direct them to a particular book or guide them towards a specific genre or collection of texts.