



Phonics

At St Eanswythe's, we aim for all our children to become fluent, confident readers who are passionate about reading. Children who read regularly—or are read to regularly—have the opportunity to open the doors to so many different worlds. Reading gives your child the tools to become an independent, life-long learner.

We achieve this together through:

- **Little Wandle Letters and Sounds**, our systematic synthetic phonics programme.
- Encouraging children to develop a love of books by reading to them daily, both at home and at school.
- Giving children access to a wide range of high-quality books at school and at home.

We teach phonics through Little Wandle in Reception and Year 1 (and through rapid catch-up in Year 2 and beyond) to give your child the best possible start. Mrs Page is our Phonics and Early Reading Lead; if you have any questions, contact the school office and they will put you in touch.

What is Little Wandle Letters and Sounds?

Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised is a complete, government-validated systematic synthetic phonics programme (SSP). It provides a structured, consistent approach to ensure every child learns to decode rapidly and fluently, freeing up working memory so they can focus on comprehension, vocabulary, and confident writing.

Children are assessed regularly by class teachers and the Phonics Lead to monitor their progress. Any child who needs extra support receives prompt, targeted **Keep-up** sessions so that no child is left behind.

Phonics Progression

Little Wandle follows a structured progression through the phonics phases:

- **Reception (Phase 2, Phase 3, and Phase 4):** Children learn single-letter sounds, simple digraphs, and tricky words. They learn to blend sounds for reading, segment sounds for spelling, and read short decodable captions and books. In Summer term (Phase 4), they consolidate their learning and tackle words with adjacent consonants (e.g., *s-p-o-n-g-e*).
- **Year 1 (Phase 5):** Children learn alternative graphemes for known sounds (e.g., *ay*, *ai*, and *a-e* all making the /ai/ sound) and alternative pronunciations for graphemes. They build fluency and confidence reading longer, more complex decodable texts.
- **Year 2 and Beyond:** Children who have completed Phase 5 move onto fluency and spelling programmes. Any child who needs additional reading practice continues to receive targeted Little Wandle intervention.

Reading at School: The Three-Session Approach

In addition to daily discrete phonics lessons, children take part in three **Reading Practice Sessions** each week in small groups using books matched precisely to their phonic knowledge:

1. **Decoding:** Reading the graphemes, blending the sounds, and reading the tricky words.
2. **Prosody:** Teaching children to read with expression, tone, and phrasing so reading sounds like spoken language.
3. **Comprehension:** Deepening understanding of the text through targeted questioning and discussion.

Reading at Home

Children take home two types of books each week:

- **Their Decodable Practice Book:** This is the book they have already mastered in their three school sessions. Because it is matched to their secure phonic knowledge, they should be able to read this with 95% fluency and independence. Please celebrate their success—this book is designed for confidence and fluency, not struggle.
- **A Sharing Book:** A book chosen by your child from our school or class library to share together. This is for you to read **to** your child to foster a love of language, rich vocabulary, and storytelling.

Key Terms and Techniques

- **Pure Sounds:** We always use pure sounds (saying 'm' rather than 'muh', 's' rather than 'suh') so words blend smoothly (e.g., *c-a-t* blends to *cat*, whereas *cuh-a-tuh* becomes *cuhatuh*).
- **Tricky Words:** Words that have letter combinations children have not yet learned, or unusual spellings (such as *the*, *was*, *said*). We teach children to spot the regular parts and identify the "tricky" part.
- **Segmenting for Spelling (Finger Tapping):** To spell a word, children say the word aloud, hold up their fingers to count how many sounds (phonemes) are in the word, tap each finger as they say the sound, and then write the corresponding letters (graphemes).
- **Alien / Pseudo Words:** Nonsense words (like *vap*, *throg*, or *zoid*) are used occasionally to check that children are genuinely decoding graphemes rather than reading words from visual memory. They are a tool for assessing phonics mechanics and feature in the national Year 1 Phonics Screening Check.

Parent Resources

You can watch videos showing how to pronounce each sound, how we teach blending, and how reading sessions work by visiting the [Little Wandle Parents Section](#).