

Reading Intent

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

At XII Apostles, books and reading are at the heart of our curriculum. We believe that reading opens doors – to knowledge and understanding, to new worlds and experiences, to diverse cultures and beliefs, and to the past and the future. Through reading, children expand their vocabulary, internalise grammatical structures, develop empathy, and ignite their imagination.

At the heart of our approach is the belief that every child is a reader. We want all children to take pride in their reading journey, to value their ideas and responses to texts, and to understand that reading is a powerful tool for learning, connection, and self-expression.

Our intent is to provide every child with a rich, inclusive and carefully structured reading curriculum that develops their substantive and disciplinary knowledge and nurtures fluent, enthusiastic and confident readers. We aim to develop a life-long love of reading so that children choose to read for pleasure, for learning, and for personal growth.

Our Aims:

Through a rich and inspiring reading curriculum, we aim for children to leave our school with a deep love of literature, the confidence to explore a wide range of texts, and the understanding that reading opens doors to countless opportunities—across education, imagination, and future careers.

- To inspire all children—regardless of background or ability—to develop a love of reading.
- To foster curiosity about words, their meanings, and how language works across a wide range of texts and genres.
- To encourage children to read for enjoyment and to confidently express preferences and opinions about what they read.
- To ensure children can read fluently, accurately, and with secure understanding.
- To equip children with a range of reading strategies—phonic, graphic, syntactic and contextual—so they can independently make sense of and monitor their reading.
- To build a rich reading vocabulary and a shared language to discuss and explore texts.

- To integrate reading and writing development, enabling children to become literate and articulate members of society.
- To create reading-rich environments across all subject areas, making reading meaningful, purposeful and relevant.
- To enable children to use reading as a tool for learning about the world and deepening their understanding.
- To celebrate and promote reading through a wide variety of quality texts in school, libraries, online, and at home.

Reading Implementation

Reading development begins with two key strands: word recognition and language comprehension. In the early stages, particularly in EYFS and Key Stage 1, the focus is on developing strong word recognition skills through daily, systematic phonics teaching. We use the Supersonic Phonic Friends programme—a comprehensive and structured synthetic phonics scheme.

Alongside this, we ensure that language comprehension is developed from the beginning by explicitly teaching a range of strategies, including:

- Phonic knowledge (decoding words using visual information)
- Grammatical knowledge (understanding sentence structure and function)
- Word recognition and graphic knowledge (identifying familiar words and letter patterns)
- Contextual understanding (using meaning and prior knowledge to support comprehension)

Teaching of Reading

Reading is taught discretely and explicitly as well as being embedded across the wider curriculum. Reading is adapted to meet the needs of individual children taking into account their primary need, making reasonable adjustments and through adaptive teaching.

Key Stage 1

In Key Stage 1, decoding is the primary focus. As children become more confident in segmenting and blending sounds, their fluency improves, allowing them to read with increasing accuracy, speed, and expression. Repeated reading and targeted practice support this development, helping to embed automatic word recognition and freeing up

cognitive capacity for understanding what is read. Once fluency is secure, the focus gradually shifts towards developing comprehension skills.

This progression is carefully supported through a balanced and structured reading curriculum.

- Daily phonics sessions, using *Supersonic Phonic Friends*, ensure systematic teaching of word recognition skills.
- Discrete guided reading takes place at least twice a week, providing targeted opportunities for children to apply decoding strategies, build fluency, and begin to explore meaning within texts.
- Regular shared reading during English and lessons across the curriculum enables teachers to model fluent reading, develop vocabulary, and introduce key comprehension strategies.

This layered approach ensures that children make strong progress from decoding to fluent, meaningful reading, laying a firm foundation for future success.

Key Stage 2

In Key Stage 2, the effective teaching of reading focuses on developing both fluent word reading and strong language comprehension. Skilled reading depends on pupils being able to read accurately and with speed, while also understanding increasingly complex texts.

All pupils are taught through a broad and balanced curriculum that supports their ability to comprehend more challenging texts over time. This is achieved by focusing on the three key elements that underpin comprehension:

- Knowledge (vocabulary, context, syntax, narrative structure)
- Processes (such as inferring and monitoring meaning)
- General cognitive resources (like memory and attention)

Reading comprehension develops as pupils build a broad vocabulary, understand sentence structures, and recognise how texts are constructed. Most vocabulary is learned through repeated exposure to a wide range of carefully chosen, ambitious texts. To support comprehension, teachers provide explicit contextual knowledge and ensure pupils read widely across the curriculum, building background knowledge and a deeper understanding of the world. Familiarity with varied text types and structures further strengthens pupils' ability to interpret and understand what they read.

Discrete reading instruction happens at least once a week through guided reading in small groups, larger class VIPERS sessions, or within a reading carousel model—tailored to pupil needs and curriculum objectives. VIPERS sessions target specific

comprehension skills (Vocabulary, Inference, Prediction, Explanation, Retrieval, Summarising/Sequencing) with children being gradually introduced to more challenging questions and structures.

A Reading Culture

At XII Apostles, reading is much more than a lesson—it's a valued part of our school culture. We carefully plan opportunities to develop not only reading skills but also a genuine love of reading. Our curriculum is often built around high-quality, engaging texts that act as a springboard for cross-curricular exploration.

Reading opportunities include:

- Daily independent reading time
- Daily story time, where adults read aloud to children
- Weekly visits to school libraries
- Book clubs and reading groups
- Whole class and small group reading discussions
- Reading across the whole curriculum
- Discussions about favourite books, characters, themes and recommendations

Through these meaningful and varied experiences, children come to see reading as a powerful, joyful and lifelong skill that connects them to the wider world.

Reading and Phonics Schemes Used in School

At XII Apostles, phonics is taught daily in Key Stage 1 using the Supersonic Phonic Friends programme, aligned with the National Curriculum. Children apply their phonics knowledge through decodable texts and common exception word practice. Progress is closely tracked using Phonics Tracker, enabling immediate intervention through targeted phonics 'bursts' where needed.

As decoding skills develop, pupils access a broader range of reading materials. The school uses a variety of reading schemes across KS1 and KS2 for guided reading, including:

- *Oxford Reading Tree*
- *Bug Club* (Pearson)
- *Bluebird, Big Cat, Dandelion, Oxford Literacy Web*

- *Book Band* levelled books

To support reading for meaning and enjoyment, high-quality real books, chapter books, and carefully selected texts are available from KS1 onwards, chosen to challenge and extend comprehension.

For KS2 pupils who require ongoing phonics support, the following are used:

- *Oxford Jackdaw* and *More Jackdaw*
- *Fuzz Buzz*
- *Dockside* and *Vampires Inc* (Rising Stars)
- *Talisman* and *Totem* series (Phonics Books) – high-interest, low-ability texts

For non-fiction reading, we use both *Ginn Science* and *Star Science* schemes, alongside a wide selection of individual non-fiction texts across a range of topics.