SJP Reading Strategy 2026

“The word of God is living and active…”

Hebrews 4:12

1. Vision and purpose

At St John Plessington, we recognise the spiritual power of words. Access to Scripture begins with access to the written word. Reading is therefore fundamental not only to pupils’ academic development, but also to their spiritual development.

Our reading strategy reflects our vision of **excellence in all we do** and our mission to build **an inclusive Catholic community founded on Gospel Values**. We want every pupil, whatever their starting point or background, to experience high-quality reading and develop the confidence and skill to read widely.

Aim: All pupils at SJP make sufficient progress to meet or exceed age-related expectations, with particular attention to pupils who need the most support.

	Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Year 7	Below national	Below national	Below national
Year 8	Close to national	Below national	Below national
Year 9	Below national	Below national	Below national
Year 10	Close to national	Below national	Below national
Year 11	No data due to Covid	No data due to Covid	No data due to Covid

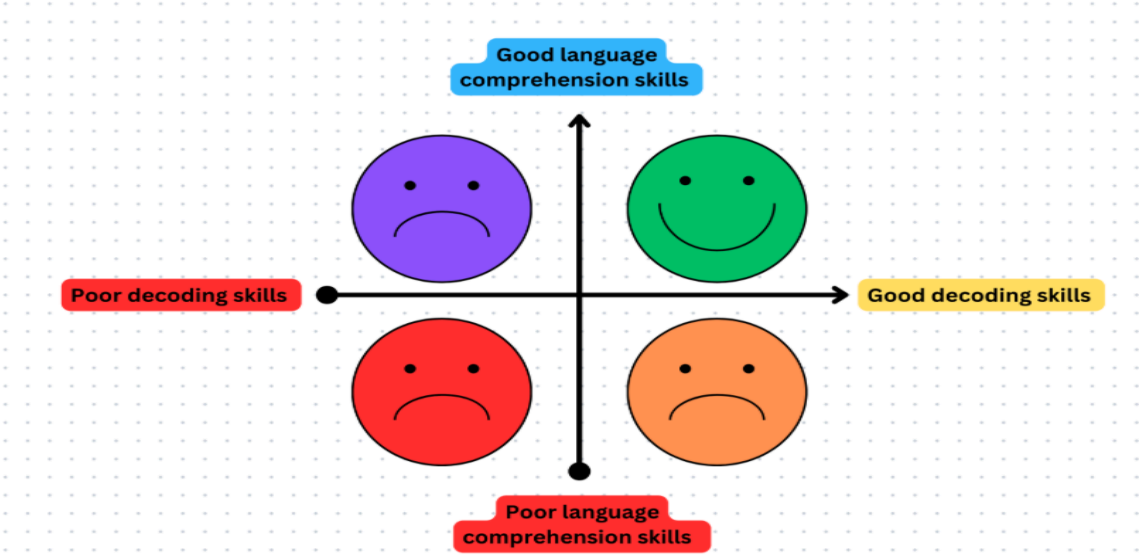
2. Why reading is a priority

Reading supports learning across every subject. Pupils need fluent word reading, a strong vocabulary and the language comprehension to make sense of increasingly complex texts. Reading also helps pupils develop knowledge, communicate effectively and access future opportunities.

SJP's approach combines:

- strong classroom teaching that develops reading across the curriculum;
- targeted, regularly reviewed support for pupils who need help with decoding, fluency or comprehension;
- opportunities to read widely and for pleasure;
- partnership with families and the wider community.

3. How reading develops at SJP



The **Simple View of Reading** highlights two essential elements: **decoding** and **language comprehension**. Teaching and support should address the aspect that is limiting a pupil's progress.

- **Pupils who cannot decode fluently** need explicit, systematic teaching of phonics and word reading.
- **Pupils who can decode but struggle to understand a text** need support to build vocabulary, background knowledge and comprehension.
- **All pupils** need regular opportunities to read, listen, discuss texts and develop subject-specific literacy.

[Retain existing graphic here: “The Simple View of Reading”]

4. Reading in everyday teaching

Reading is the responsibility of every subject. Teachers should make the reading demands of their subject clear and teach pupils how to manage them. This is particularly important for pupils who are still developing their reading skills, including pupils with SEND and pupils learning English as an additional language.

Classroom practice

Across subjects, teachers will:

- read aloud regularly where this supports pupils’ understanding and engagement;
- select diverse, engaging, age-appropriate stories, poems and non-fiction;
- choose texts that build knowledge, vocabulary and discussion;
- pre-teach important vocabulary, including Tier 2 and subject-specific Tier 3 vocabulary;
- use unit vocabulary lists, shared with pupils and families where appropriate;
- check pupils’ understanding through questions, discussion and other formative assessment;
- address misconceptions before moving on to new learning;
- adapt teaching when checks show that pupils have not understood.

Reading should be purposeful and connected to the curriculum. In secondary subjects, pupils need support to read in different ways—for example, evaluating evidence and perspective in history, interpreting mathematical language and symbols, or analysing data and claims in science.

5. Targeted support for developing readers

Identification

Pupils’ reading needs are identified and reviewed using a range of information:

1. At entry to SJP, Year 7 pupils’ KS2 reading scores are analysed and all pupils complete the NGRT.
2. NGRT results, KS2 reading scores and school assessment information are considered together to identify and prioritise pupils for support.
3. KS3 assessment information is used alongside NGRT and KS2 data to review progress and inform decisions about support.

Pupils may need help with decoding, fluency, vocabulary or comprehension. Support should match the identified need rather than assume that every struggling reader needs the same programme.

Phonics and word-reading programmes

Systematic phonics teaching is used for pupils who need support with decoding. Teaching is explicit and consistent, with pupils assessed so that they start at the point that is right for them.

Programme	Focus and delivery
Lexonik Leap	Supports older struggling readers, particularly pupils in Years 7–8. Sessions are typically 30 minutes, three times a week, with pupils taught individually or in small groups at their challenge point. The programme uses age-appropriate decodable resources and develops phonological awareness, decoding, word recognition, spelling, word building and high-frequency word knowledge. The length of support depends on the pupil's starting point and progress.
Lexonik Advance	A six-week programme delivered for one hour each week. It develops vocabulary, word meaning, spelling and reading fluency and automaticity. It draws on Tier 3 vocabulary across the curriculum and supports comprehension.

Pupils in the early stages of acquiring English may receive bespoke Lexonik Leap support delivered by the EAL HLTA. Families of pupils enrolled in Lexonik are given practical activities to support reading at home, such as using subtitles when watching films or asking pupils to read recipes while cooking.

The expected length and frequency of support should follow the pupil's assessed need and the programme being used. Progress should be reviewed regularly, and support adjusted or ended when it is no longer needed.

Programme lead: Lauren Dakers
Staff: Krissie Garnett, Nadine Jamieson and Maxine Stuart (EAL)
Training: Lexonik

Comprehension and curriculum reading

For pupils who can decode but struggle to understand what they read, reciprocal reading and high-quality classroom teaching support comprehension.

In Years 7–9, pupils have a timetabled reading lesson **once a fortnight**, delivered by an English specialist teacher. Lessons use reciprocal reading techniques and a range of texts—including topical short stories, non-fiction articles and poetry—chosen to work alongside each year group's medium-term plans.

Reciprocal reading techniques give pupils structured opportunities to make sense of texts through discussion and the use of reading strategies. It supports comprehension.

6. Reading for pleasure and engagement

SJP aims to make reading a visible, shared and enjoyable part of school life. Reading for pleasure is supported through our belong curriculum- one day a week teacher read-alouds and informal conversations about books, library use and dedicated opportunities to read.

SJP Routes to Reading

Initially for pupils in Years 7 and 8, the Routes to Reading programme invites pupils to choose a book each term from one of nine routes or genres:

- Comedy
- Inspiration
- Read the Movies
- Horror
- Autobiography
- Sport
- Graphic Novel
- Fantasy

SJP provides the books free of charge. Pupils read and return each book at the end of the term.

Other opportunities include book fairs, author visits, book clubs, World Book Day activities and competitions, and a comfortable, welcoming library environment. Reading events and resources should encourage participation from pupils with different interests, reading abilities and backgrounds.

7. Working with families and the community

Families are partners in developing pupils' reading. SJP will:

- share reading texts and reading lists with families each term, linked to curriculum mapping;
- provide families of pupils receiving Lexonik support with practical strategies for reading at home;
- include a weekly reading feature in the SJP newsletter, such as a featured read or “What is Mrs X reading and why?”;
- organise book fairs, author visits, book clubs and other reading events;
- work with local libraries and community organisations;
- gather pupil and parent voice twice each year.

8. Staff development and leadership

All teachers and teaching assistants should have access to professional development that helps them support reading effectively. Training will draw on DfE guidance, EEF evidence and relevant literacy research.

Professional development will focus on:

- how reading develops and how to support pupils who are not yet fluent;
- explicit teaching of Tier 2 and Tier 3 vocabulary;
- disciplinary literacy: how pupils read and interpret texts in different subjects;
- reciprocal reading techniques and the teaching of comprehension;
- selecting and using appropriate academic texts;
- using assessment to identify misunderstanding and adapt teaching.

Departments will consider what these approaches look like in their subject. SLT and heads of department will use learning walks and lesson visits to support this work and identify where further guidance or development is needed.

9. Assessment, monitoring and review

Assessment should inform teaching and support, rather than simply label pupils. Teachers will use ongoing observations, discussion and checks for understanding to assess pupils’ decoding, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension and engagement. Where a pupil has difficulty, teaching or support should be adapted.

Review activity	**How it informs provision**

NGRT	Completed for all pupils at the agreed assessment points, including at least annually and before discharge from phonics support where appropriate.
Exercise books and KS3 assessment information	Triangulated with reading assessment data to consider how pupils are applying reading skills in their learning.
AIM review meeting	Held monthly with key staff to review provision and the effectiveness of the reading framework.
Learning walks and lesson visits	Used to review reading lessons and the development of reading across the curriculum.
Termly summary	A one-page review is shared with governors and SLT, including progress, feedback and any changes to provision.

Success will be indicated by improved reading assessment results; stronger application of reading skills in lessons; increased pupil confidence and engagement; participation in reading activities; and positive pupil and family feedback. Library borrowing and participation in the Routes to Reading programme and reading events will also be reviewed.

The strategy will be adjusted in response to assessment, pupil and family feedback, staff reflection and review of the impact of provision.