Peer Assisted Learning Strategies (PALS)

Parent & Carer Information Leaflet

Children supporting children – growing confident readers together

What is PALS?

Peer Assisted Learning Strategies (PALS) is a structured, research-informed reading programme that develops reading **fluency, confidence and comprehension**. Developed at Vanderbilt University in the USA, it has been adapted for UK schools as PALS-UK. Its central principle is simple: **children supporting children**.

Research evaluated by the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) reported an average of **two additional months of reading progress** for pupils in the evaluated PALS-UK programme. This is an average research finding, not a guarantee for every child.

How does it work in school?

PALS is a **whole-class approach**, not a withdrawal group. Sessions typically take place **three times a week for 30–35 minutes**. Teachers use reading information to match partners, who take turns as the **Reader** and **Coach**. Children practise reading, listening, explaining and encouraging one another.

The four PALS reading activities

1. Partner Reading	Children take turns reading aloud. The Coach listens carefully and helps positively when needed.
2. Retell	The Reader summarises what happened, supported by prompts from their partner.
3. Paragraph Shrinking	Children identify the main idea of a short section and explain it in a few words.
4. Prediction Relay	Children predict what might happen next, read on and check their predictions.

How can you help at home?

Talk about books: Ask “What do you think will happen next?” or “Can you tell me the main idea in ten words?” Encourage conversation rather than testing.

Celebrate trying: Allow a few seconds for your child to work out a tricky word, then offer calm help. Mistakes are part of learning.

Read together: Take turns reading a page or paragraph. Practise being both a confident Reader and a supportive Coach.