



Phonics and Early Reading
Curriculum Handbook
2024-25

Intent

The teaching of Phonics and Early Reading has a high priority throughout Early Years, Key Stage 1 and into Key Stage 2 across our Federation. In January 2020, we researched which of the DfE validated phonics programmes to adopt. We chose Little Wandle.

Little Wandle has been devised so that children are taught a cumulative progression of GPCs that they can immediately practise through oral blending, reading and spelling words and sentences.

The progression of Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised has been devised so that children are taught a cumulative progression of GPCs that they immediately practise through oral blending, reading and spelling words and sentences, and, later on, reading fully decodable books. Children review and revise GPCs and words daily, weekly and across terms and years in order to move this knowledge into their long-term memory.

This momentum of progress is aspirational yet achievable, when all staff ensure pace, practice and participation by all children. How you organise your teaching is central to this. The spiralling curriculum, which includes periods of review, ensures that all children have adequate time to learn new GPCs, then practise, retrieve and apply their learning so it moves into the long-term memory and reading becomes automatic and fluent.

The programme lends itself to a mastery approach to teaching phonics. This means that all children in the class learn the same content at the same time and it applies the principle of all the children keeping up.

- Children can review and revise GPCs and words daily, weekly and across terms and years in order to move this knowledge into their long term memory.
- This momentum of progress is aspirational yet achievable, if schools maintain pace, practice and participation by all children.
- The spiralling curriculum, which includes periods of review, ensures that all children have adequate time to learn new GPCs, then practise, retrieve and apply their learning so that it moves into the long term memory and reading becomes automatic and fluent.
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We value reading as a key life skill, and are dedicated to enabling our pupils to become lifelong readers. We acknowledge that children need to be taught the key skills in segmenting and blending to be equipped with the knowledge to be able to complete the phonics check at the end of Year 1.

We also value and encourage the pupils to read for enjoyment and recognise that this starts with the foundations of acquiring letter sounds, segmenting and blending skills.

Impact

Following the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds programme children are taught the essential skills needed for reading. Phonics is taught daily to all children in Reception and KS1. Extra support is provided to those in Year 2 who have not passed phonics screening in Year 1 and interventions are planned for those children who are working below expected levels.

Assessments are ongoing and take place within Phonics lessons. Children who require immediate support are provided with daily Keep Up sessions to address any gaps in learning.

Formal assessments are carried out after every 5 week block of teaching. Children who require Keep Up sessions are identified and work with a trained adult on a daily basis.

Group Reading sessions take place in Reception, Year 1 and 2. Children work with a trained adult in ability groups and access a book containing GPCs and tricky words that they have been taught. Children read this book three times per week and take this home after their third read.

Across our schools, Reception and KS1 and KS2 classrooms will display the relevant and appropriate Little Wandle resources (e.g. grow the code chart; grapheme mats) for the children to access in Phonics lessons and when reading and writing in other lessons.

Children in Reception and KS1 classrooms have access to a range of high quality fiction and non-fiction books in provision and through a daily story time. Classrooms provide children with a literacy rich environment where text is celebrated.

Implementation

Children will enjoy Phonics lessons and Group Reading sessions and will take pride in their achievements when sharing their learning at home.

Children feel confident in using their phonic knowledge and the strategies that they have been taught to read words. This helps them to access a range of material and, in turn, fosters a love of reading.

Children will develop a life-long love of reading where they read widely and often, with fluency and comprehension.

Children will achieve well at EYFS, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 assessment points, including the Year 1 Phonics Screening Check.

Parents will feel confident in supporting their children with their skills in Phonics and Early Reading.

Daily Phonics Lessons

We teach phonics daily for at least 30 minutes. In Reception, we build from 10 minute lessons with additional daily oral blending games, to the full length lesson as quickly as possible. Each Friday, we review the week's teaching to help children become fluent readers.

Children make a strong start in Reception and teaching begins in the first full week of the Autumn term. We follow the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised expectations of progress;

*Children in Reception are taught to read and spell words using Phase 2 and 3 GPCs, and words with adjacent consonants (Phase 4) with fluency and accuracy.

*Children in Year 1 review Phase 3 and 4 and are taught to read and spell words using Phase 5 GPCs with fluency and accuracy.

Daily Keep-up lessons to ensure every child learns to read

Within Reception and Year One, any child who needs additional practice has daily keep-up support, taught by a fully trained adult. Keep-up lessons match the structure of class teaching, and use the same procedures, resources and mantras, but in smaller steps with more repetition, so that every child secures the learning.

We timetable 'Rapid Catch Up' phonic sessions for children in Year 2 and 3 who are not fully fluent at reading or have not passed the Phonic Screening Check. These children urgently need to catch up, so the gap between themselves and their peers does not widen. We use the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised assessment to identify gaps in their phonic knowledge and teach these using the Keep-up resources – at pace.

If any child in Year 3 to 6 has gaps in their phonic knowledge when reading and writing, we plan phonics 'Rapid Catch up' lessons to address specific gaps. These short, sharp lessons last 10 minutes and take place at least three times a week.

Teaching Reading

The National Curriculum for English aims to ensure that all pupils;

- Read easily, fluently and with good understanding.
- Develop the habit of reading widely and often, for both pleasure and information.
- Acquire a wide vocabulary, and understanding of grammar and knowledge of linguistic conventions for reading, writing and spoken language.

Reading underpins children's access to the curriculum and it clearly impacts of their

achievement. To be able to read, children need to be taught an efficient strategy to decode words. We feel that it is essential that children are actively taught and supported to use phonics as the only approach to decoding. Phonic skills must be practised until children become automatic and fluent reading is established.

Fluent reading is only one component of reading. Comprehension skills need to be taught to enable children to make sense of what they have read, build on what they already know and give them a desire to read.

Reading increase children's vocabulary because they encounter words they would

rarely hear or use in everyday speech. Furthermore, children who read widely and frequently also have more secure general knowledge.

We teach children to read through reading practice sessions three times a week. These;

- Are taught by a fully trained adult to small groups of approximately six children.
- We use books matched to children's secure phonic knowledge using the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised assessments and book matching grids.
- Are monitored by the class teacher, who rotates and works with each group on a regular basis.

Each reading session has a clear focus, so that the demands of the session do not overload the children's working memory. The reading practice sessions have been designed to focus on three key reading skills:

Decoding – word reading


Prosody – teaching children to read with understanding and expression.

Comprehension – teaching children to understand the text.

In Reception these reading sessions start in Week 4. Children who are not yet decoding have daily additional blending practice in small groups, so that they quickly learn to blend and can begin to read books.

In Year 2 and Year 3, we continue to teach reading in this way for any children who still need to practise reading with decodable books (in our school this is any child who is not reading fluently at Turquoise Book Band)

Each set of reading books has lesson guidance information eg:




Little Wandle Reading
Practice decoding

Book Name: A Dip

Vocabulary check:
dips – paddle in the sea
Pads – armbands to help you swim
Page 14/15 play I spy with words beginning with d

Little Wandle Reading
Practice prosody

Pages to focus on:
Model reading each page with expression and ask the children to copy you.



Little Wandle Reading
Practice comprehension

Book Name: A Dip

Questions 1:
Does Tim get wet? How?

Question 2:
What is the weather like? How do you know?

Question 3:
Who is wearing pads?

Question 4:
How does everyone feel at the end of the story?

Question 5:
Have you ever been in the sea? What was it like?

Content and Structure of Reading Sessions

Children need to be given regular opportunities to apply the phonics they have learned to reading fully decodable books. These reading sessions need to take place at least three times a week. Each reading session needs to have a clear focus so that the demands of the sessions do not overload the children's working memory.

These sessions need to be well -planned and executed to enable to children to become confident readers who read with understanding. In Reception and Year 1, these reading practise sessions will be timetabled and the same book will be used over the three sessions.

The reading practice sessions will have a clear structure:

- Pre-read – Revisit and Review
- Reading Practice – Practise and Apply
- Review – Pacey review of any misconceptions and explanation of what is expected for home reading.

Pre-read: Revisit and Review

It is important to start every reading session with a 'revisit and review.' This will enable children to bring the GPCs they have learned to the forefront of their memory. This will make it easier for them to automatically recall the words and set them up to succeed when they read the book.

This part of the session should be short and pacy.

It provides the ideal opportunity to:

- Revise the graphemes the children already know.
- Practise fluently reading three or four words from the book, applying their phonic knowledge.
- Revise the tricky words that appear in the book.
- Teach the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary.

Reading Practise: Practise and Apply

'Practise and apply' is the main part of the reading sessions. The specific content will vary according to the key reading skill being taught.

When the focus of the lesson is decoding, each child reads the book independently, applying their phonic skills, The session which focuses on prosody should begin with an opportunity for the children to read the book independently to practise their fluency, followed by the teacher/TA working with the reading group on how to develop prosody and practice this skill. In the third session the focus will be on comprehension. When children are reading independently, the teacher/TA should move around the group, 'tapping in' to listen to each child read for 2 or 3 pages, depending on the length of the text.

Review

At the end of the reading session, it is important to leave a few minutes to pick up on any misconceptions and explain the home reading practice

We will follow this programme of reading until Year Two Term One for pupils who are on track. Children who are on track will then read **Turquoise Book Band** and beyond from our reading scheme independently.

Home Reading – EYFS and Year One

The decodable reading book can be taken home to ensure that the success is shared at home. Phonically decodable books that go home have been carefully matched to the children's phonic ability using Little Wandle guidance.

We use the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised parents' resources* to engage our families and share information about phonics, the benefits of sharing books, how children learn to blend and other aspects of our provision, both online and through workshops.

Ensuring Consistency and Pace of Progress

- Every teacher and teaching assistant in our school has been trained to teach reading, so we have the same expectations of progress. We all use the same language, routines and resources to teach children to read so that we lower children's cognitive load.
- Weekly content grids map each element of new learning to each day, week and term for the duration of the programme.
- Lesson templates, prompt cards and How to videos ensure that all staff have a consistent approach and structure for each lesson.
- The Reading Leader and the English team use the Audit and Prompt cards to regularly monitor and observe teaching; they use the summative data to identify children who need additional support and gaps in learning.

Little Wandle Mantras

Hand To Ear	Teaching strategy for chn to repeat after Teacher.
Speedy Sounds	Process of recapping previously taught GPCS.
Pronunciation Phrase	A memorable phrase used to support the children in saying phonemes correctly.
Formation Phrase	A memorable phrase used to support the children in forming the letter correctly using directional vocabulary.
Shuffle Time	Used to shuffle GPCs during teaching.
Copy Me	Teacher instructs children to copy them.
Watch Me	Teacher instructs children to watch them.
Segmenting Fingers	Teaching strategy to use fingers to segment a word.
Sound Talk	Teaching strategy used for oral blending.
Tricky Bit	Used to identify tricky part of a tricky word (the part that cannot be decoded).
Grapheme Spotter	Used to identify new GPC amongst previously taught GPCS.

Whisper Blending	Teaching strategy to support children to bridge the gap between sounding and blending aloud and doing the process silently 'in their head'.

Little Wandle Mantras	
Chunk it Up	To break up a longer word and read it one part (chunk) at a time, to avoid being overwhelmed and to ease the process of blending
2/3 letters – 1 sound	Teaching strategy used to explain digraphs and trigraphs.
Catchphrase	A type of mnemonic in the form of a memorable (often funny) phrase. Generally used in some of the later GPCs learned, where a picture alone might not give enough of a 'hook'.

Little Wandle Resources

To ensure consistency and fidelity to the programme and to Support the teaching of Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised SSP programme, we only use agreed resources in teaching, in classroom displays and for support in EYFS and Key Stage One classrooms.

Grow the code grapheme mat Phase 2, 3 and 5

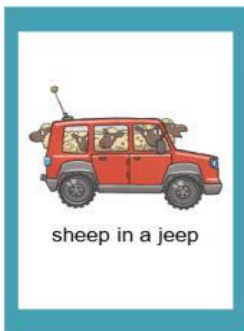
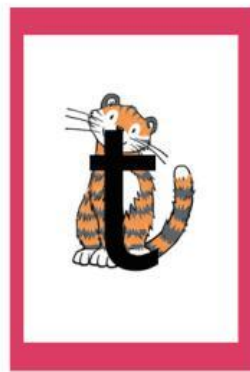
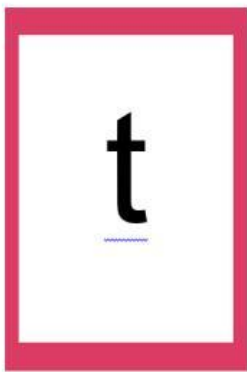
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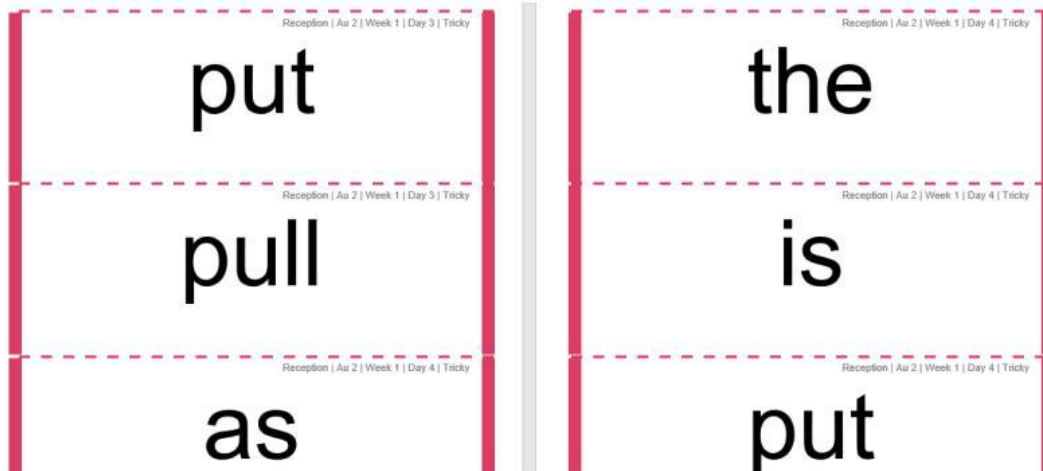
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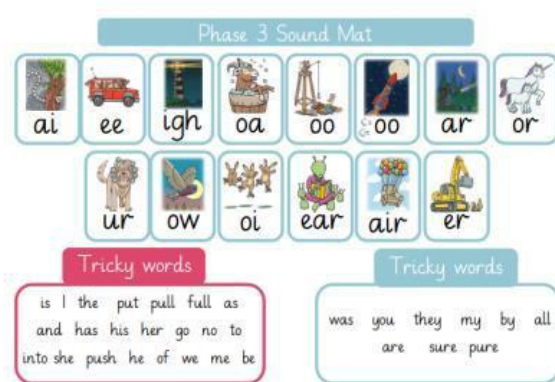
Grapheme Cards



Teaching resources



Support in Class



Assessments and Record Keeping

Our assessments are designed to be used every six weeks of the teaching cycle to help you keep track of pupils' progress, to inform next steps for teaching and to identify pupils for [Keep-up](#). These assessments should be carried out by the Reading Leader or class teacher. These are one-to-one assessments that give you a clear indication of the progress of each child.

What do we do during Assessment and Review Week?

We are still teaching during Assess and Review week. During the week, continue whole -class teaching to secure fluency of words and GPCs taught in week 5, and continue to teach longer words.

Fluency

The Reading Framework - Developing Fluency – Fluent decoding allows us to understand what we read. Because the reader has gained accuracy and automaticity in word reading, the brain's resources are available to focus on lifting the meaning from the page: connecting the words, sentences and text. As children gain fluency, their motivation increases: they start to enjoy reading more and are willing to do more of it.

Fluency: speed and accuracy

Researchers generally define and measure fluency in terms of the number of words read correctly per minute. Accuracy as well as speed influences fluency; it is not just about the speed at which a child reads. The national curriculum refers to pupils

reading words comprising the year 1 GPCs 'accurately and speedily', reflecting this concept of fluency.

Fluency gives the reader the choice to read at a speed that allows for comprehension and can be adapted to the purpose of the reading. Beginner readers, however, do not have a choice about speed because they are still engaged in decoding the words on the page.

Children do not pass through a magic barrier and suddenly become fluent. There is no point in children reading speedily if the words they read are wrong – for example, if they read 'place' for 'palace'. Equally, accuracy on its own is not useful, unless they can read at a speed that allows them to see beyond the word as consisting of a series of letters to decode and can focus on what it means.

However, practising to gain automaticity in decoding needs to focus on accuracy. This means children must first work out a word by sounding and blending. Most of them have to do this several times before they can read it accurately 'at a glance'. Re-reading a text, therefore, gradually increases the number of words in it that they can read 'at a glance'. Urging children to read at speed will not increase their

fluency: they can read only at the speed they can decode.

Recognising familiar words 'at a glance'

Some children can decode a word by sounding and blending once; later, whenever they come across the same word, they read it 'at a glance'. Most children, however, have to decode a word several times in different contexts before it becomes familiar enough to read 'at a glance'. Children with poor short-term memories need to practise decoding a word many more times before they can read it 'at a glance'. Children learn to read words 'at a glance' more easily if, when they first decode a word by saying the sounds and blending them, they know what it means: the written word is a label for what the spoken word represents. A child therefore might be more likely to read 'dog' 'at a glance' than 'cog', and 'splash' rather than 'stash'. The more words children can read 'at a glance', the sooner they see beyond the word as consisting of a series of letters to decode and can focus on what it means.

Fluency Rubric				
	1	2	3	4
Expression and Volume	Reads in a quiet voice as if to get words out. The reading does not sound natural like talking to a friend.	Reads in a quiet voice. The reading sounds natural in part of the text, but the reader does not always sound like they are talking to a friend.	Reads with volume and expression. However, sometimes the reader slips into expressionless reading and does not sound like they are talking to a friend.	Reads with varied volume and expression. The reader sounds like they are talking to a friend with their voice matching the interpretation of the passage.
Phrasing	Reads word-by-word in a monotone voice.	Reads in two or three word phrases, not adhering to punctuation, stress and intonation.	Reads with a mixture of run-ons, <u>mid sentence</u> pauses for breath, and some choppiness. There is reasonable stress and intonation.	Reads with good phrasing; adhering to punctuation, stress and intonation.
Smoothness	Frequently hesitates while reading, sounds out words, and repeats words or phrases. The reader makes multiple attempts to read the same passage.	Reads with extended pauses or hesitations. The reader has many "rough spots."	Reads with occasional breaks in rhythm. The reader has difficulty with specific words and/or sentence structures.	Reads smoothly with some breaks, but self-corrects with difficult words and/ or sentence structures.
Pace	Reads slowly and laboriously.	Reads moderately slowly.	Reads generally at an appropriate rate throughout reading.	Reads at an appropriate conversational pace throughout the reading.

Agreed Key Features of Effective Phonics Teaching

Seven features of effective phonics practice Through the English Hubs Programme, seven key features have been identified as characterising phonics teaching in highly successful schools, no matter which validated programme is being used. These are:

- direct teaching in frequent, short bursts
- consistency of approach
- secure, systematic progression in phonics learning
- maintaining pace of learning
- providing repeated practice
- application of phonics using matched decodable books
- early identification of children at risk of falling behind, linked to the provision of effective keep-up support.

Impact and Keep Up

How do we ensure progress in Reception?

Autumn Term

- All children to learn at the same time.
- Phonics lessons to start in the second week of the Autumn Term to help establish
- routines and set up behaviours for learning.
- All children should progress though the GPCs in order. Some children may take longer to learn to blend. They should not be deprived of learning new GPCs. Instead, every effort should be put into place to give these children additional daily blending practice.

(See the 'Individual and group Keeping up teacher's guides')

How do we ensure progress in Reception?

Spring Term

- If there are children who are not blending, they will need additional daily blending practice and may benefit from a small step based lesson as they start the Phase 3 GPCs.
- This means that each step of the reading process is fully secured before moving on and children always get the teacher-led blending practice before reading any words independently. (Use the 'Keep up guide prompt cards' and 'How to' videos for 'Blending and reading words: super supported and whisper methods' to help you to do this.

This is when you may want to divide the class, so the most skilled teacher teaches these children.

We still expect this group to follow the same progression and content as their peers, but with more practice and support to ensure that children can read the words in every lesson.

Keeping up in the lesson

Another way of ensuring that focus children get extra practice within the class is to use another adult.

They will need to:

- Be fully trained.
- Use exactly the same resources as used in the lesson, such as grapheme cards, word cards etc.
- Use the same methods, mantras and routines as the teacher.

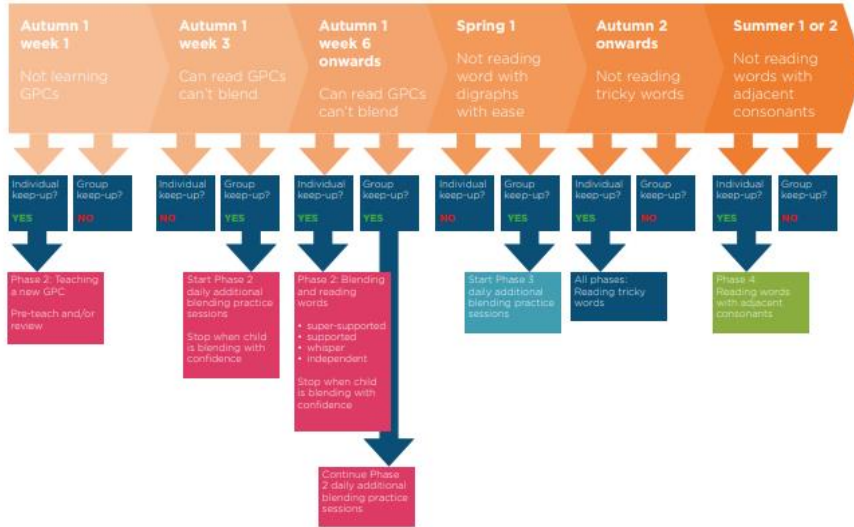
**Ensure that focus children are part of the main lesson and involved in the reading/writing of the sentence or spelling activities.

Reception Keep Up Model

What to do - identifying the children for daily individual support sessions

Use the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* assessments (every six weeks), as well as assessment within the daily lesson to identify children who need either individual or group keep-up. Do not let children fall behind - take action as soon as possible.

Use the assessment again after three weeks to check that these children have filled their gaps.



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