



*Train up a child in the way they should go and  
when they are old, they will not depart from it*  
**Proverbs 22:6**



## Phonics and early reading policy

### The context of our school

At Wharton CE Primary School, Phonics is a high priority and it is essential that our approach to teaching phonics and reading is accessible to all learners, regardless of background and that it promotes and fosters a life-long love of reading from the very beginning of their school journey. By following a rigorous phonics programme for teaching and interventions to 'Keep Up not Catch', all groups of learners (SEND, PP, EAL) are able to make accelerated progress from their individual starting point.

Our school is an inclusive Christian community, committed to building futures for all children. A safe environment, where everyone is valued, we nurture strong relationships, underpinned by our Christian values and the Church of England's vision for education, that children experience life in all its fullness.

### Intent

#### Phonics (reading and spelling)

We believe that all our children can become fluent readers and writers. This is why we teach reading through *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised*, which is a systematic and synthetic phonics programme. We start teaching phonics in Reception and follow the [Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised progression](#), which ensures children build on their growing knowledge of the alphabetic code, mastering phonics to read and spell as they move through school.

As a result, we aim for most of our children to be able to tackle any unfamiliar words as they read. At Wharton CE Primary School, we also model the application of the alphabetic code through phonics in shared reading and writing, both inside the phonics lesson and throughout the school day. We have a strong focus on language development, which begins in Reception, because we know that speaking and listening are crucial skills for reading and writing in all subjects.

### Implementation

#### Daily phonics lessons in Reception and Year 1

- We teach phonics for 25 minutes a day. 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: teaching begins in Week 2 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 Phases 3 and 4 and are taught to read and spell words using Phase 5 GPCs with fluency and accuracy.



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

- 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 their learning.
- We timetable daily phonics lessons for any child in Year 2 and above who is not fully fluent at reading or has not passed the Phonics screening check. These children urgently need to catch up, so the gap between themselves and their peers does not widen. These 'Rapid Catch-up' sessions are planned to address specific reading/writing gaps to enable pupils to catch up to age-related expectations in reading as quickly as possible

### **Teaching reading: Reading practice sessions three times a week**

- We teach children to read through reading practice sessions three times a week.  
These:
  - are taught by a fully trained adult to groups of approximately 6 children
  - use fully phonetically decodable books matched to the children's secure phonic knowledge
  - are monitored by the class teacher
- Each reading practice 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 (session 1)
  - Prosody: teaching children to read with understanding and expression (session 2)
  - Comprehension: teaching children to understand the text (session 3)
- In Reception these 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 Years 2 and above, we continue to teach reading in this way for any children who still need to practise reading with decodable books.

### **Home reading**

Children take home two books each week; a decodable reading book which they will have read in school, and a reading for pleasure book, which should be read to the child by an adult at home to foster a love of reading.

Children will read their reading scheme book in school for three days during their reading practice sessions. On a Friday they will take this book home to ensure success is shared with their family, and be returned to school on Tuesday of the following week. A new decodable book will then be introduced on Wednesday, which will go home on the Friday.

We use the [littliewandlelettersandsounds.org.uk/resources/for-parents](https://littliewandlelettersandsounds.org.uk/resources/for-parents) 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.



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### **Additional reading support for vulnerable children**

- Children in Reception and Year 1 who are receiving additional phonics Keep-up sessions read their reading practice book to an adult daily.

### **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 teachers all have a consistent approach and structure for each lesson.
- The Reading Leader and SLT use the Audit and Prompt cards to regularly monitor and observe teaching.
- The Reading Leader supports staff to use the summative data to identify children who need additional support and gaps in learning.

### **Impact**

#### **Assessment**

Assessment is used to monitor progress and to identify any child needing additional support as soon as they need it.

- **Assessment for learning** is used:
  - daily within class to identify children needing Keep-up support
  - weekly in the Review lesson to assess gaps, address these immediately and secure fluency of GPCs, words and spellings.
- **Summative assessment** for Reception and Year 1 (and those in Years 2 and above who have not yet exited the phonics programme) is used every six weeks to assess progress, to identify gaps in learning that need to be addressed, to identify any children needing additional support and to plan the Keep-up support that they need.
- **Phonics Screening Materials** from previous years are used to track pupils' progress in Year 1 (and those in Year 2 and above who have not yet exited the phonics programme).

#### **Statutory assessment**

- Children in Year 1 sit the Phonics screening check. Any child not passing the check re-sits it in Year 2.

#### **Ongoing assessment for Rapid Catch-up**

- Children in Year 2 to 6 are assessed through:
  - their teacher's ongoing formative assessment
  - the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds placement assessment
  - the appropriate half-termly assessments