

Phonics and early reading policy

Intent

At Primet Primary School, our curriculum fosters resilient, confident, healthy, happy individuals guided by our core values of kindness, respect and trust. Through our enriched, bespoke curriculum and strong community links, pupils develop high aspirations, celebrate diversity, build cultural and moral awareness, and gain the literacy, numeracy and skills needed for future success. They become active, creative critical thinkers who make connections, embrace challenges with a growth mindset, see mistakes as learning opportunities, and approach difficulties positively.

For phonics, we recognise it as the foundation of reading and writing. Using Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised, we deliver a systematic synthetic phonics programme to build secure letter-sound knowledge, blending and segmenting skills. Through consistent high-quality teaching and regular assessment, we ensure every child becomes a fluent, confident reader who loves reading and is fully equipped to access the wider curriculum.

Aims and Principles

At Primet Primary, we value reading as a crucial life skill. By the time children leave us, they read confidently for meaning and regularly enjoy reading for pleasure. Our readers are equipped with the tools to tackle unfamiliar vocabulary. We encourage our children to see themselves as readers for both pleasure and purpose

Because we believe teaching every child to read is so important, we have a Reading Leader who drives the early reading programme in our school. This person is highly skilled at teaching phonics and reading, and they monitor and support our reading team, so everyone teaches with fidelity to the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* programme.

As a result, all our children can tackle any unfamiliar words as they read. At Primet Primary, we also model the application of the alphabetic code through phonics in shared reading and writing, both inside and outside of the phonics lesson and across the curriculum. We have a strong focus on language development for our children because we know that speaking and listening are crucial skills for reading and writing in all subjects.

Non-Negotiables Procedures and Practice

Daily phonics lessons in Reception and Year 1

- We teach phonics for 30 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 Phase 3 and 4 and are taught to read and spell words using Phase 5 GPCs with fluency and accuracy.

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 or 3 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. We use the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* assessments to identify the gaps in their phonic knowledge and teach to these using the Keep-up resources – at pace.
- If any child in Year 3 to 6 has gaps in their phonic knowledge when reading or writing, we plan phonics ‘catch-up’ lessons to address specific reading/writing gaps. These short, sharp lessons last 10 minutes and take place at least three times a week.

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 small groups of approximately six children
 - use books matched to the child’s secure phonic knowledge using the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* assessments and book matching grids on pages 11–20 of ‘Application of phonics to reading’
 - are monitored by the class teacher, who rotates and works with each group on a regular basis.
- 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
 - prosody: teaching children to read with understanding and expression
 - comprehension: teaching children to understand the text.
- 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 Year 2 and 3, we continue to teach reading in this way for any children who still need to practise reading with decodable books.

Home reading

- The decodable reading practice book is taken home to ensure success is shared with the family.
 - Reading for pleasure books also go home for parents to share and read to children.
 - 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.

Oracy

- At Primet Primary School, spoken language is central to early reading; our Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised programme builds purposeful talk into every phonics stage.
- From Reception, daily oral blending and sound-talk activities develop listening, sound discrimination, and clear pronunciation using consistent Little Wandle prompts and vocabulary.

- In phonics lessons, children practise and repeat sounds, words and sentences; teachers model accurate pronunciation and build confidence through mantras, shared responses and partner talk, using precise phonics terminology.
- Oracy features in reading practice sessions: children read aloud with expression, discuss vocabulary, answer comprehension questions, and explain their thinking.
- Strong spoken language skills, developed through phonics, underpin literacy and help children become confident, articulate learners who read for meaning and pleasure.

Fluency

- Every teacher 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; they use the summative data to identify children who need additional support and gaps in learning.

Cross-Curricular Phonics

'Reading for pleasure is the single most important indicator of a child's success.' (OECD 2002)

'The will influences the skill and vice versa.' (OECD 2010)

- Reading for Pleasure is a core priority; we embed consistent pedagogy to nurture lifelong reading engagement. Staff read aloud daily, choosing texts that reflect our school and local community and open windows to wider worlds and cultures.
- Inviting, curated classroom book corners promote broad reading; Reception children enjoy daily access during continuous provision with regularly refreshed collections.
- All pupils use a home-school reading record from Reception: parents and staff communicate regularly, with older pupils also recording their own responses and reading history.
- Classes visit the local library each half term; the school library is bookable via the central system for protected timetabled sessions.
- Pupils engage in a varied programme of events including book fairs, author workshops and national reading initiatives.

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 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.
- by SLT and scrutinised through the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* assessment tracker, to narrow attainment gaps between different groups of children and so that any additional support for teachers can be put into place.

Statutory assessment

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

Roles and Responsibilities

The subject leader is responsible for improving the standards of teaching in Phonics through:

- Pupil progress
- Provision of phonics (including intervention and support programmes)
- The quality of the learning environment/phonics displays
- Auditing and supporting colleagues in their CPD
- Purchasing and organising resources
- Keeping up to date with recent developments/changes

Monitoring and Evaluation

- Children in Year 2 to 6 are assessed through their teacher's ongoing formative assessment as well as through the half-termly *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* summative assessments.
- Whole Class Phonics lessons will be monitored through informal learning walks and formal observations to ensure high-quality teaching and learning is taking place.
- Team teaching and a lesson study approach will allow good teaching practices to be developed through peer planning and evaluation.
- Pupil interviews will also be conducted to gain a child's perspective of their Phonics learning.

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