



Phonics and early reading policy

Our philosophy

Phonics reading will develop your child's overall reading skills. Phonics is a fundamental literary element that provides a solid foundation for any child to learn how to read. Without learning this crucial principle, a child would never successfully be able to master speaking and reading words fluently. It is therefore essential that our approach to teaching phonics and reading is accessible to all learners, regardless of background. Early reading also ignites creativity, sparks curiosity, and stimulates the imagination in young children.

Intent

Phonics (reading and spelling)

At Bearwood Primary and Nursery School, we believe that all of 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 Nursery/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, all our children are able to tackle any unfamiliar words as they read. At Bearwood Primary and Nursery School, 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.

Comprehension

At Bearwood Primary and Nursery School, 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 monitors and supports our reading team, so everyone teaches with fidelity to the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* programme.



Implementation

Foundations for phonics in Nursery

- We provide a balance of child-led and adult-led experiences for all children that meet the curriculum expectations for 'Communication and language' and 'Literacy'. These include:
 - sharing high-quality stories and poems
 - learning a range of nursery rhymes and action rhymes
 - activities that develop focused listening and attention, including oral blending
 - attention to high-quality language.
- We ensure Nursery children are well prepared to begin learning grapheme-phoneme correspondences (GPCs) and blending in Reception.

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 right away in 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 regular phonics lessons for any child in Year 2 who is not fully fluent at reading or has not passed the Phonics screening check, in order to support them to catch up. 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 interventions to address specific reading/writing gaps.



Teaching reading: Reading practice sessions three times a week

- We teach children to read through reading practice sessions three times a week in Reception and Year 1. These:
 - are taught by a fully trained adult to small groups of children
 - use books matched to the 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 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 Year 2, we continue to teach reading in this way for children who still need to practise reading with decodable books.

Home reading

- The decodable reading practice book is assigned to the children on Collins Ebook library for children to read at home to ensure success is shared with the family.
- Reading for pleasure books also go home for parents to share and read to children, including bedtime stories in Reception and library books.

Ensuring consistency and pace of progress

- 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 regularly monitor and observe teaching. They also use data to identify children who need additional support due to gaps in learning.

Ensuring reading for pleasure

'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).

- We read to children on a regular basis. We choose these books carefully as we want children to experience a wide range of books, including books that reflect the children



at Bearwood Primary and Nursery School and our local community, as well as books that open windows into other worlds and cultures.

- Every classroom has an inviting book corner that encourages a love for reading. We also teach reading skills through engaging activities in our book corners.
- In Nursery/Reception, children have access to the reading corner every day in their free flow time and the books are regularly refreshed.
- Children have a home reading record. The parent/carer records comments to share with the adults in school and the adults will write in this on a regular basis to ensure communication between home and school.
- As the children progress through the school, they are encouraged to write their own comments and keep a list of the books/authors that they have read.
- The school library is made available for classes to use for weekly sessions. Children across the school also have regular opportunities to engage with a range of Reading for Pleasure events such as book fairs, author visits and workshops.

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** 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.
- The *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* placement assessment is used:
 - with any child new to the school to quickly identify any gaps in their phonic knowledge and plan provide appropriate extra teaching.

Statutory assessment

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

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Ongoing assessment for 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.