



# Whittonstall and Broomley First Schools Phonics and Early Reading policy 2023-2024

Reading is a vital skill that will support children's learning across the whole curriculum. At Whittonstall and Broomley First Schools, we will ensure that our children are taught to read with fluency, accuracy and understanding through a variety of discreet and cross-curricular learning opportunities.

Above all, we want children in our school to become enthusiastic, independent and reflective readers. Essentially, we want children to enjoy reading and to use the skill to become independent learning citizens in our society.

At Whittonstall and Broomley First Schools, we aspire for all of our children to become successful, fluent readers by the end of Key Stage One and believe this is achievable through a combination of strong, high quality, discrete phonics teaching combined with a whole language approach that promotes a 'love of reading' culture.

## Our Teaching Philosophy:

The development of reading cannot be seen in isolation from writing, speaking and listening/drama. The best readers are the best writers - we read as writers and write as readers. Strategies for writing, speaking and listening/drama therefore form an integral part of this reading policy.

In our schools, we will strive to give pupils a stimulating environment, where reading materials are presented in an attractive and inviting way. Teachers will act as role models in their enthusiasm for both reading and writing by keeping up to date with current children's literature.

## Intent

### Phonics (reading and spelling)

At **Whittonstall and Broomley First Schools** 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 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 **Whittonstall and Broomley First Schools** 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 **Whittonstall and Broomley First Schools** 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.

## 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:
  - o sharing high-quality stories and poems
  - o learning a range of nursery rhymes and action rhymes
  - o activities that develop focused listening and attention, including oral blending
  - o 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 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.
- For children in Year 3 or 4 who have 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 in Reception and Year 1: Reading practice sessions

- 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 children'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.

### Home reading



- Children in Reception and Year 1 take home their Little Wandle Reading book each week. Sounds in the book match the sounds children have been taught and can read with a 95% fluency rate.
  - Children access our school library weekly and are encouraged to take home a book for pleasure to share at home
  - 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 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 (see monitoring schedule); they use the summative data to identify children who need additional support and 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 value reading for pleasure highly and work hard as a school to grow our Reading for Pleasure pedagogy.

- We read to children every day. We choose these books carefully using our story time reads and reading spine as we want children to experience a wide range of books, including books that reflect the children at **Whittonstall and Broomley First Schools** 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 curate these books and talk about them to entice children to read a wide range of books.
- In Nursery/Reception, children have access to the reading corner every day as part of their continuous provision and the books are continually refreshed.
- Children from Reception onwards 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 at protected times. Children across the school have regular opportunities to engage with a wide range of Reading for Pleasure events (book fairs, author visits and workshops, national events etc).

## 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.

### Ongoing assessment for catch-up

- Children in Year 2 to 4 are assessed through:
  - their teacher's ongoing formative assessment
  - the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds* placement assessment
  - the appropriate half-termly assessments.