



Clifton-upon-Teme Primary School Phonics and Early Reading Policy

Intent

At Clifton-upon-Teme Primary School we strive for all of our children to become confident, engaged, and fluent readers. To do this, children are supported to develop their competence in word reading and language comprehension, and to engage with a range of high-quality texts, stories and experiences which aim to nurture a strong reading culture in our school. We encourage our children to see themselves as readers for both pleasure and purpose and we believe in the importance of teaching children systematic, synthetic phonics as a firm foundation for reading because being able to read most words 'at a glance' leaves children more free to focus on the meaning of what has been read.

We strive to ensure that all children achieve to their full potential in Phonics and Early Reading by:

- Following a rigorous systematic, synthetic phonics programme
- Ensuring that all children participate in high-quality phonics sessions delivered by a trained professional
- Monitoring of all children from the start to ensure that no child falls behind
- Providing keep-up support for all children identified as being at risk of reading failure
- Ensuring all staff are trained and supported in the teaching of Phonics and Reading
- Appointing a designated Early Reading Lead to monitor and develop provision
- Developing strong reading relationships between home and school
- Providing high-quality, fully-decodable reading books that are matched to children's phonetic stage and do not require them to use other strategies to work out words
- Promoting a love of reading and developing a strong reading culture in our school
- Providing a speech, language and communication rich environment and curriculum for pupils which supports their comprehension skills
- Ensuring that children apply their phonic knowledge in across the curriculum

Children are taught using the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* Phonics programme from Reception, with whole class lessons in Reception and Year One. Children in Year 2 receive whole class teaching of the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* Spelling programme. Group and individual keep-up provision is provided for any child not keeping up with the programme within these year bands, and for any children who have not completed the Phonics part of the programme by the end of Year One, for as long as this is needed. Regular and structured assessment allows us to identify quickly who these children are, and which specific aspects of reading they need support with.

We selected the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* programme for the delivery of Phonics and keep-up support across school because it is a comprehensive systematic, synthetic approach which utilises a whole-class teaching approach. This is something we believe in at Clifton-upon-Teme Primary School; which works well with our smaller class-sizes, and which we continue into Key Stage 2 with whole-class reading lessons. Learning follows the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* progression, which ensures children build on their growing



knowledge of the alphabetic code in a structured way, mastering the phonics skills they need to read and spell as they move through school. The programme also supports children's word reading, prosody and comprehension skills through regular reading practice of phonetically decodable books which are inviting, engaging and matched to pupils' phonetic level. In addition, *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* utilises an 'over-learning' approach which we find suits and supports our children of all abilities, but particularly those in need of additional support, to retain and embed new knowledge, and there is a clear and research-informed rationale underpinning the way in which keep-up teaching and learning is planned, structured and resourced. We feel that the programme also provides high-quality resources, clear planning and expectations, and in-depth initial and continuing CPD for all staff delivering phonics or engaging in reading with pupils. This helps us to develop consistency in approach and the language used across school, provides clarity in expectation for staff, and helps us to ensure that the knowledge and skills of all adults working with children in a reading capacity is up to date. This includes current staff, new staff and volunteers.

Implementation

Daily phonics lessons in Reception and Year 1

- Children in Years Reception and 1 have a daily Phonics lesson. Phonics teaching begins in the second week of Reception. Sessions begin at 10 minutes in Reception and build to between 20 and 30 minutes, in line with the scheme. Phonics lessons are timetabled and are protected time. The Early Reading Lead has a copy of class timetables. If a Phonics lesson is missed due to a trip, visit or other exceptional circumstances, efforts must be made to catch up this time as soon as possible to prevent falling behind the programme.
- Review sessions are taught on Friday, revising and consolidating the week's taught content.
- Children in Reception are taught to read and spell words by completing the Phases 2, 3 and 4 from the *Little Wandle* Programme. This includes CVC words, adjacent consonants and tricky words. Children in Year 1 then review Phases 3 and 4, and complete Phase 5.
- In addition to daily taught sessions, children in Reception also engage with regular oral blending games and with phonics-focussed continuous provision resources and activities.
- Children in Years R and 1 engage in three times weekly Reading Practice sessions in line with the scheme. These focus on decoding, prosody and comprehension, to support children's fluency and understanding when reading. Sessions are led by trained adults.
- Additional keep-up support is provided at all points for any pupil at-risk of falling behind or with high levels of absence.

Daily Spelling sessions are taught in Year 2, following the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* Spelling programme which explicitly teaches common spelling patterns in the English Language.

Classroom resources and displays

Reception and Year 1/2 classrooms will both display the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* large frieze containing all Phase 2 and 3 GPCs. This will be referenced in lessons and children are encouraged to use this resource to support them in their own reading and writing. Years 1-6 classrooms will also display the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* 'Grow the Code' resource. This must be on the classroom wall in Year/2 but may be on the wall or as a



table-top resource in Years 3-6. In Year 1, 'Grow the Code' will be referenced in lessons to support all children, whereas in later years it will be available for all children who feel they need it, but specifically referenced and used to support those who are still accessing the phonics programme and receiving 'Keep-up' support. Children in Reception and Year 1, and later if needed, will also have access to A4 sound mats containing with the taught GPCs or the Grow the Code grid (depending on their current phonetic stage). These will support children in their learning and will be part of Reception's continuous provision resources. Children will be encouraged to access these independently as needed to support their own learning.

Regular Keep-up lessons ensure every child learns to read

- Children are assessed regularly using the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* assessment materials. This continues until they have completed the programme which may not be at the end of Year 1. These assessments allow early identification and action to be taken for any child at-risk of falling behind.
- Children with periods of absence are supported to catch-up any missed sessions with one-to-one support and teaching of missed GPCs.
- Any child who needs additional practice has regular 'Keep-up' support, taught by a trained adult. This may be in a group, or one-to-one. 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.
- Any pupils in Year 2 and above who did not pass the Phonics Check and/or complete the Little Wandle programme are identified and specific support put in place, dependent on their specific needs. When this need is phonetic, children access Rapid Catch-Up interventions, which take place regularly in Key Stage Two. Children who have specific areas for development which are not Phonics, will be supported in other ways, agreed between the class teacher, head and Early Reading Lead. This might include Precision teaching, reading to an adult with a specific goal, or completing a spelling/language programme.

Children in Year 2 will access the taught sessions in Robins class and receive individual Catch-Up sessions as needed and until they are at a level which shows they have completed the Little Wandle programme. Regular assessments allow us to identify the specific gaps in pupils' phonic knowledge so that we can tailor our support to these, using the *Little Wandle Rapid Catch Up* resource.

Reading Practice Sessions

In line with *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised*, children in Years R and 1 experience reading practice sessions three times a week. In Reception, these sessions begin in Week 4. In these sessions, staff aim to support children to move towards 'blending in their head' and being able to read most words at a class, rather than audibly decoding each one. This develops fluency, understanding and a love of reading. Each session is planned with a clear focus on one of the session types so that children's working memories are not over-loaded. The three session-types are:

- Decoding: using phonetic knowledge to read the words
- Prosody: reading with understanding and expression
- Comprehension: understanding the text



To support high-quality and effective reading learning experiences in these sessions, we ensure:

- All sessions are run by a trained adult
- Groups are kept small – approximately six children
- The books shared are matched to the children's secure phonic knowledge using the *Little Wandle Letters and Sound Revised* assessments and book-matching grids.
- Children's reading is monitored by the class-teacher who rotates and works with each group on a regular basis and observes support staff running sessions
- The Early Reading Lead monitors these groups and observes teaching and support staff running these sessions

Children in Year 2 will take part in whole-class Guided Reading from the Literacy Tree scheme but may still continue to read Little Wandle books individually and as home readers where these are appropriate. When readers are fluent and competent with the Phase 5 books and ready to exit the scheme, they move onto staged reader books for individual and home reading. Some children may move onto these books before the end of Year 1 if they are fluent, competent and have passed the Little Wandle exit assessments. This will be at the discretion of the class teacher and Phonics Lead who can individually assess the skill and comprehension of individual children.

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 regularly. If staff are absent, there is a catch-up plan to ensure these opportunities are not missed.

Ensuring consistency

- Every adult engaging with pupils in a reading capacity in our school has been trained to use the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* approach so that we have the same expectations of progress. This includes training on using the same terminology, mantras, routines and resources in order to reduce children's cognitive load.
- New members of staff, trainee teachers or reading volunteers are provided with time to complete the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* training programme and wherever any staff feel they need more support, this will be provided by the Early Reading Lead.
- Weekly content grids map each element of new learning to each day, week and term for the programme's duration, ensuring coverage, progression and fidelity to the scheme.
- Lesson templates, prompt cards and 'How to' videos ensure teachers all have a consistent approach and structure for each lesson. These are also used by the Headteacher and Early Reading Leader to monitor and observe teaching.
- The Headteacher and Early Reading leader also moderate assessments, hear pupils read and track those pupils accessing 'keep-up' support, with a specific focus on the lowest 20%.
- The Early Reading Leader has a clear Action Plan which is updated regularly to ensure that teaching and learning is being effectively monitored and developed within school.



Terminology

To reduce unnecessary cognitive load, we aim to ensure that all staff are using correct and consistent terminology when supporting the teaching of reading. In line with the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* approach, children are introduced to, and use correct phonological terminology from the start of the programme, as well as a range of mantras and routines which are repeated, predictable and allow children to focus on the learning, rather than the activity. A full list of the correct terminology has been provided to all classes, but the key vocabulary, mantras and definitions used with pupils are listed below:

Terminology	Definition
Phoneme	The smallest unit of sound that can be identified within a word – a sound
Grapheme	A letter or group of letters used to represent a phoneme
Digraph	A grapheme using two letters to represent one phoneme
Trigraph	A grapheme using three letters to represent one phoneme
Split vowel digraph	A digraph representing a vowel where its two letters are split by an intervening consonant a_e, e_e, i_e, o_e, u_e
Blend	To combine individual phoneme into a whole word when reading
Orally blend	To combine individual phoneme spoken aloud to you into a whole word that is said aloud. Oral blending may be referred to as 'sound talk'
Segment	To identify each of the individual phonemes in a word being read, working all the way through from left to right.
Orally segment	To identify each of the individual phonemes in a word that is spoken aloud, working from the beginning to the end
Tricky Words	High-frequency words that, although decodable in themselves, cannot be decoded by children using the GPCs they have been taught up to that point. Some tricky words cease to be tricky in later phases
Prefix	A recognisable unit of language added at the beginning of a word to change its meaning
Suffix	A recognisable unit of language added at the end of a word to change its form.
Sound buttons	A graphic device used to help children the separate phonemes in a printed word. A dot is placed under any single-letter grapheme, a line under the group of letters that form a digraph or a trigraph, and a curve above split vowel digraphs

Mantra	Use
'Point and sweep'	A technique for reinforcing the process of sounding and blending involving pointing to each phoneme in a word, in sequence from left to right, and then sweeping a finger below the word, again from left to right, to indicate blending.
'Speedy sounds'	The rapid recall of previously taught GPCs
'Speedy words'	The fluent reading of previously read words containing known GPCs that are read without blending
'Chunk it up'	To break up a longer word and read it one part at a time



'Shuffle time'	The phrase used when an adult shuffles and re-orders cards within an activity
'Blend in your head'	The wording used when children are encouraged not to blend sounds aloud but to blend without speaking if they cannot read a word on-sight
'1, 2, 3, show me'	The wording used to signal to child that it is time to stop their writing and show the leading adults
'Segmenting fingers'	A technique in which staff and pupils put up one finger for each phoneme they identify in a word that they are spelling. This allows them to identify how many phonemes are in a word and therefore how many they will need to include when writing it
'Whisper blending'	An intermediary stage that can help children bridge the gap between sound and blending aloud and doing the process silently 'in their head.'
'Two letters, one sound'	Used to describe digraphs
'Three letters, one sound'	Used to describe trigraphs
Hand to ear (not spoken)	Signals to children it is their turn to speak or answer
'Copy me'	Signals to children to repeat after the teacher
'Check yours looks like mine'	Signals to children to check their answer against a modelled example

Class teachers are responsible for monitoring that support staff understand and are using the correct terminology and mantras when working with pupils. The Headteacher and Early Reading Lead will also monitor terminology and mantra use when observing teaching and support staff throughout the year.

Home Reading

At Clifton, we recognise and nurture the importance of children reading at home as well as in school. This not only provides additional practice opportunities for our children but also builds a valuable link between home and school in which books and reading experiences are valued and celebrated, thus supporting pupils to develop a love of books and reading.

Children in Years R and 1 take home one decodable phonics practice book each week. This book will be matched to their phonetic stage and be a book they have engaged with in class the previous week to ensure that their successes are shared with adults who listen to them read at home. For most children, this will be the book they have read in their reading practice sessions. For some children who are accessing 'keep-up' support, this may have been adjusted to ensure that the text is matched to the sounds they are already secure with so as to be a successful reading experience. They may have read the text with an adult one-to-one before it is sent home, rather than in a group session. Children in Years 2-6 who have not completed the phonics programme will continue to take home matched phonics practice books. Once pupils have completed these books, they move onto staged readers before reading freely. There is no set age requirements for these transitions and students will remain on decodable or staged books until they are skilled, competent and confident to move on.



We support our families with hearing their child read by inviting them to a Reading Workshop in the first half term of their child being in Reception, by including *Little Wandle* resources in their induction packs, and by providing and sign-posting them to the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* resources for parents. Families are also invited to communicate with staff through conversation, by writing in their child's reading record or making a note in their homeschool communication book of any specific support they need or things they have noticed when hearing their child read. These are checked by staff regularly.

In addition to their phonics practice book, children will also take home class library books. These are high-quality fiction, non-fiction and poetry books that promote reading for pleasure and are to be shared with an adult. Children are not expected to be able to read these themselves. Children are able to choose these books for themselves, as opposed to their Phonics books, which are selected by an adult. To support parents with engaging in these texts with their children, reading for pleasure support forms part of the Reading workshops offered in Reception, and Reception parents are invited to a weekly Story Club after school, and to a Bedtime Stories evening event with their children, during their Reception Year. Home Links packs to support reading are also provided throughout the year.

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 and develop a reading culture in our school.

- Staff in all year bands read to children every day. Story time is timetabled in and is protected time in all classes.
- Staff select high-quality and diverse 'Reading for Pleasure' texts to share with pupils from our Core 'Read Aloud' Reading Spine. These books have been selected and purchased for all classes to ensure that pupils receive a diet of high-quality, engaging and diverse literature. Staff may also select additional books which links with class topics, which link with pupils' interests or which they themselves enjoy, as seeing staff enthuse about the books they share is really valuable for our pupils. We want our staff to be reading role-models.
- Every classroom has an inviting book corner that encourages a love for reading. Children are invited to spend time in these areas and to browse the books and make their own choices about what they would like to read. The books in our book corners are audited and curated by staff, and will a range of diverse and inclusive fiction, non-fiction and poetry.
- In Reception, children have access to the indoor and outdoor reading and storytelling areas every day in their 'Choosing Time' and the books are continually refreshed. Books are also available in other areas of the classroom to promote reading for pleasure and purpose e.g. books about construction vehicles in the Construction Area, counting stories in the Maths Area.
- Children from Reception onwards have a home reading record. Families record comments to share with the adults in school about how pupils are doing with their reading at home,

and classroom adults respond and record their own comments too. Older pupils are encouraged to write in their reading records themselves also, recording what they thought about books and keeping a list of books/authors they have enjoyed. This communication between home and school provides a valuable opportunity to celebrate pupils'



successes, provide tips and ideas to support children, to identify specific targets and opportunities and for both parties to find out how the child is engaging with their reading in the different contexts of home and school. It provides a valuable insight into children as readers.

- In Reception and Year 1 all Guided Reading done in class is recorded in reading records to support parents to know where their child is with their learning and what to support them with at home. From Year 2 any one-to-one reading is recorded and those children accessing additional support with reading have regular reads recorded in their reading records.
- From Year 2, reading records are checked by staff weekly and this is signalled to parents visibly in the records.
- The school library has been renovated and its book selection audited and developed. Classes have access to the library during the school day and is made available for class activities at protected times, which are booked via the school booking system.
- 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, Bedtime Story evenings, Reading focused home learning and home links packs, Bookthemed assemblies).
- We have a Reading Buddy system in school where our younger children are paired with older pupils to enjoy books and stories together. This aims to build a relationship with others based on books, provide a different voice to hear stories from and to keep books and stories at the heart of our school culture.

Impact

Our data shows that children acquire the code well and that our interventions help children to make progress. Disadvantaged children and pupils with SEND are identified and interventions are put in place to address this (daily readers, communication and language work etc). Pupils' work shows that children are applying their phonics knowledge and knowledge of common exception words and lesson observation have shown pupils using phonics skills and resources to help them apply the phonic code where needed.

Assessment

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

Formative assessment is used daily when working with children in any reading or writing capacity to assess progress and identify any children at risk of falling behind. This is achieved through activities including looking at the children, not the resources, when teaching phonics; checking in with children during sessions; targeting specific pupils with questions; listening to pupils in their continuous provision play and hearing the children read. The weekly review lessons also provide a valuable opportunities to assess progress, identify and address gaps, and strengthen pupils' fluency of GPCs, words and spellings.

Summative assessment also takes place regularly to track progress, support monitoring, identify gaps and ensure that 'Keep-up' sessions are targeted and effective. Class teachers will complete the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* assessments with pupils every six weeks. These will be moderated by the Early Reading Letter and Headteacher at points throughout the year. The data from these assessments will be used by the class teacher, Early Reading



Leader and Headteacher to identify any gaps in learning that need to be addressed, to identify any children needing additional support and to plan the 'Keep-up' sessions which should be running. The data across terms will be scrutinised by the Early Reading Leader and Headteacher to identify trends and narrow any attainment gaps between groups of children.

Any child who has not completed the phonics programme by the end of Year One will continue to be assessed and supported using the half-termly *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* summative assessments. This will be used to tailor the 'Keep-up' provision they need.

The lowest 20% of readers will be identified in all year bands and tracked by class teachers. For each of these children, their specific needs and barriers will be identified, and specific provision planned for and recorded, to support them. This provision will be monitored by the Early Reading Lead and the Headteacher who will also hear these children read across the academic year.

Statutory assessment

- Children in Reception will complete the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) during their first half term in Reception. This will give the class teacher some information on their blending and segmenting class as well as their general speaking, listening and language skills, which will impact on their ability to thrive in Phonics.
- Children in Year 1 sit the Phonics Screening Check. Any child not passing the check resits it in Year 2.
- Children in Year 2 currently sit the Year 2 Reading SATs paper. Whilst these are no longer compulsory, we feel that they provide an additional source of useful data which supports our teacher assessments and the plans we put in place for pupils' transitions to Key Stage 2.

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