

Phonics and early reading at Wootton Primary School



Intent

Phonics

At Wootton Primary School, 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. We intend for all our children to be able to apply their phonic learning to tackle any unfamiliar words as they read. We 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 also focus on language development for our children, promoting speaking and listening as crucial skills for reading and writing in all subjects.

Comprehension

At Wootton, we value reading as a crucial life skill and one of our commonly used phrases is that **Reading is the Key!** By the time children leave us, we want them to be able to read confidently for meaning and regularly enjoy reading for pleasure. We wish to ensure that our readers are equipped with the tools they need to tackle unfamiliar vocabulary, and encourage our children to see themselves as readers for both pleasure and purpose.

We believe teaching every child to read is vital, which is why we use the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised programme in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2, with the Rapid Catch programme continuing into KS2 for some pupils.

Implementation

Foundations for phonics in Reception

We provide a range of experiences to ensure that children are ready for specific phonic learning as soon as possible in Reception. 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.

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.

We follow the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised progression:

- 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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Keep-up support

We implement structured Keep-up support for children who need additional practice. Keep-up support matches the structure of class teaching, and use the same procedures, resources and mantras, but in smaller steps with more repetition, with the aim that every child secures their learning.

We also timetable additional 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. We use the Rapid Catchup assessments to identify the gaps in their phonic knowledge and teach to these using the Rapid Catch-up resources – at pace.

These short, sharp lessons have been designed to ensure children quickly catch up to age-related expectations in reading.

Teaching reading: Reading practice sessions in Reception and Year 1

We teach children to read through reading practice sessions These:

- are taught to small groups of approximately six children
- use books matched to the children's secure phonic knowledge using the Little Wandle assessments and book matching grids
- are monitored by the class teacher, who rotates and works with each group on a regular basis.

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.

Children who are not yet decoding have additional blending practice in small groups, so that they quickly learn to blend and can begin to read books. In Year 2 and into KS2, we continue to teach reading in this way for any children who still need to practise reading with decodable books.

Home reading

A decodable reading practice book is taken home to ensure success is shared with the family. The decodable reading scheme currently includes books from: - Little Wandle Letters and Sounds revised - Collins Big Cat Phonics - Songbirds Phonics. These have been matched to the Little Wandle progression. The reading scheme is being updated termly to build a wider bank of Little Wandle books.

Reading for pleasure books also go home for parents to share and read to children.

We plan reading sessions for parents to help share the importance and impact of sharing quality children's books, and how children learn to blend accurately.

Ensuring consistency and pace of progress

All teachers are trained to use the same language, routines and resources to teach children to read so that we lower children's cognitive load and have the same expectations of progress.

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 English Leader and SLT monitor and observe teaching and use 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)

We value reading for pleasure highly and are working hard as a school to grow our Reading for Pleasure pedagogy.

We aim to read to children every day using a range of books, including those that reflect the children at Wootton and in our local community as well as books that open windows into other worlds and cultures.

Every classroom has a book corner which is refreshed frequently from our school library to entice children to read a range of different books.

The school library is also visited by each class frequently to select new books for home reading or class book corners. We aim to provide additional opportunities to engage with different Reading for Pleasure events regularly (e.g. book fairs, author visits, 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 for Reception and Year 1 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. It is also scrutinised through the Little Wandle assessment tracker, in order to begin to narrow attainment gaps between different groups of children and so that any additional support for teachers can be put into place.

Fluency assessments from Phase 5 set 3 onwards are be used to measure children's accuracy and reading speed in short one-minute assessments.

- In Year 1, they will be used when children are reading Phase 5 set 3+ books.
- Children in Years 2-6 who are following the Rapid Catch-up programme are assessed using these at the same phase.
- The fluency assessments are also designed to assess when children are ready to exit their programme. For Year 1 children, this is when they read the final fluency assessment at 60–70+ words per minute. Older children can exit the Rapid Catch-up programme when they read the final fluency assessment at 90+ words per minute. At these levels, children should have sufficient fluency to tackle any book at age-related expectations.

A placement assessment is used with any child new to the school in Reception and Year 1 to quickly identify any gaps in their phonic knowledge and plan and provide appropriate extra support.

A Rapid Catch-up assessment is used with any child new to the school in Year 2 and above to quickly identify any gaps in their phonic knowledge and plan and provide appropriate extra support.

Statutory assessment

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