

Phonics and early reading policy

The context of our school

Herrick Primary School work to ensure that the teaching of phonics and reading is accessible to all learners, regardless of background, EAL, SEND and Pupil Premium etc.

Intent

Phonics (reading and spelling)

At Herrick 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 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, our children are able to tackle any unfamiliar words as they read. At Herrick Primary 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 Herrick Primary 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 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:
 - 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.

Within the nursery we teach seven aspects of phonics which lays the ground work for phonic work through encouraging children to become attuned to the sounds around them, so they are ready to begin developing oral blending and segmenting skills.

These seven aspects are:



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- environmental sounds
- Instrumental sounds
- body sounds
- rhythm and rhyme
- alliteration, voice sounds
- oral blending and segmenting

We work through these aspects ensuring the children are secure and ready to move on. Within our teaching, we use a variety of fun and active activities, which include animal noises, music and movement, nursery rhymes and much more.

Daily phonics lessons in Nursery and Reception

We read a story each day. Through using constructive questioning and discussion and through reading the same story over a few days, the children are able to develop a deeper understanding of how a story works. The children are supported in story retelling, understanding characters and their feelings, learning new vocabulary in context, and to use their developed understanding to form their own ideas for stories through role play and small word activities.

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 Phases 3 and 4 and are taught to read and spell words using Phase 5 GPCs with fluency and accuracy.

Keep-up lessons ensure every child learns to read

- Target children who require additional practice have Keep-up support, taught by a fully trained adult. Keep-up lessons match the structure of class teaching, and use the same



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procedures, resources and mantras, but in smaller steps with more repetition, so that every child secures their learning.

- We timetable Keep-up support for Year 2 who have not passed the Phonics screening check. These children urgently need to catch up, so the gap between themselves and their peers does not widen.

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 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 on pages 11–20 of 'Application of phonics to reading'.
- 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 Reception, in addition to Phonics, we also teach Talk for Writing. Talk is vital at all parts of a young writer's process. Firstly, talking with peers helps children generate ideas for what it is they want to write about. Talk also supports pupils to plan what it is they want to write down. It helps them draft fluently, to revise, and to proofread with a readership in mind. The Talk for Writing approach enables children to read and write independently for a variety of areas and purposes within different subjects. A key feature is that children learn the language structures needed to write through 'talking the text', as well as close reading. The Talk for Writing scheme enhances the children's language and the children's love of reading.

The Talk for Writing is built on three stages of teaching:

- Imitation - the children learn a text and the language they need.



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- Innovation - the children adapt the model text with ideas of their own.
- Invention - the children create their own text using the language and skills that the model taught them.

Ensuring consistency and pace of progress

- Staff members teaching phonics and guided reading have been fully trained, ensuring that 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 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 as we want children to experience a wide range of books, including books that open windows into other worlds and cultures.
- Every classroom has books on display to encourage a love for reading. This is to ensure that children read a wide range of books.
- Children from Reception to Year 6 have a reading record. In Key Stage One, the parent/carer records comments to share with the adults in school. This ensures communication between home and school.
- As the children progress through the school, they are encouraged to write their own comments.



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- The school library is made available for children.

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.
 - 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 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.