



Phonics and early reading policy

The context of our school

Otterham Primary School is a smaller than average sized primary school. Pupils are organised into three mixed-age classes. It is essential that our approach to teaching phonics and reading is accessible to all learners, regardless of background.

Intent

Phonics (reading and spelling)

At Otterham 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.

As a result, all our children are able to tackle any unfamiliar words as they read. At Otterham 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 Otterham 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.

Implementation

Daily phonics lessons in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2

- 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, the children in Reception review the week's teaching to help children become fluent readers.
- Children make a strong start in Reception: teaching begins in the first week 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.
- Children in Year 2 review Phase 5 alternative graphemes for each phoneme, which they are taught to both read and write 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 any child in Year 2 who is not fully fluent at reading or has not passed the Phonics screening check will revisit any phases and sounds that have been identified through assessment procedures.
- These children urgently need to catch up, so the gap between themselves and their peers does not widen. We use the Rapid Catch-up 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 last 15-20 minutes daily and have been designed to ensure children quickly catch up to age-related expectations in reading.

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 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.
 - 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 the first term. 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 Years 2, we continue to teach reading in this way for any children who still need to practise reading with decodable books.

Home reading

- Fully decodable phased home reading books are taken home to ensure success is shared with the family and children have additional practise of GPCs that have been taught in school.
- Reception books are changed when the child has read the whole book either at home, school or both. Children in Years 1 and 2 have their books changed twice a week to enable them to re-read and embed their learning.

- Library books also go home for parents to share and read to children in Reception.
- 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.

Additional reading support for vulnerable children

- Children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 who are receiving additional phonics Keep-up sessions read their reading practice book to an adult daily where possible and complete Precision Teach, which is targeted to their needs.

Ensuring consistency and pace of progress

- Every member of staff in Class 3 has been trained to teach reading through Little Wandle, 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.
- Lesson templates, Prompt cards and 'How to' videos ensure teachers all have a consistent approach and structure for each lesson.
- Class 3 teachers regularly monitor learning and 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 reflect the children at Otterham School and our local community, as well as books that open windows into other worlds and cultures.
- Class 3 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 Reception, children have access to the reading corner every day in their free flow time and the books are continually refreshed.
- Children from Class 3 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.
- The NCLT provide and update the top ten recommended readers for all children every term. These are easily accessible and shared
- 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** for Reception 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.
 - Class teachers in Class 3 scrutinise 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.
- **Summative assessment** for Year 1 is used:
 - Six times a year 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. We alternate between the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* assessment tracker and Year One Phonics Screening past papers.
- **Summative assessment** for Year 2 is used:
 - Three times a year, using NFER reading comprehension papers. This focuses on inference and deduction, as well as fluency.
- 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 teaching.
- The **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 teaching.

Statutory assessment

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

2022/23 Y1 Phonics Screening – 100% pass rate

Y2 (1 child) 100% pass rate