



# Phonics and early reading policy

## Intent

At Hunton CEP School, we believe that all our children can become fluent readers and writers. 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.

We teach reading through *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised*, which is a systematic synthetic phonics programme. From Reception, we 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. 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.

## Implementation

### Language and nursery rhymes in Reception

- Research tells us that nursery rhymes can support children to develop their language, their awareness of sounds within words and even their later reading ([Bryant et al. 1989](#)).
- We use the Little Wandle Rhyme time films and accompanying phonological awareness planning to complement and reinforce our Phase 2 teaching.

### Daily phonics lessons in Reception and Year 1

- 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.
- We teach phonics for 30 minutes a day. In Reception, teaching begins in Week 3 of the Autumn term and we build from 10-minute lessons, with additional daily oral blending games, to full-length lessons as quickly as possible. Each Friday, we review the week's teaching to help children become fluent readers.

### Daily Keep-up lessons ensure every child learns to read

- Any child in Reception and Year 1 who needs additional practice has Daily Keep-up support and is taught by a fully trained adult.
- Daily Keep-up lessons follow the Little Wandle progression and use the same procedures, resources and mantras, but in smaller steps with more repetition so that every child secures their learning.



### **Daily phonics and spelling in Year 2**

- Year 2 begins by using the Phase 5 review assessment to identify any children who may need more support when teaching. Any gaps in teaching are addressed through daily phonics lessons until the programme is completed.
- Once all the Year 1 content has been taught and assessed, we teach a five-week Phase 5 review. This ensures that children secure the trickier elements of Phase 5 and can apply this alphabetic knowledge in both reading and spelling.
- Once the Phase 5 review is secure, we teach the Bridge to Spelling before moving to the Spelling units.

### **Children in Year 2 to Year 6: Rapid Catch-up**

- We timetable daily phonics lessons for any child in Year 2 and above who is not at age-related expectations for 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.
- These short, sharp lessons last 15 to 20 minutes daily and have been designed to ensure children quickly catch up to age-related expectations in reading.
- We use the Rapid Catch-up assessments to assess children who are new to our school, new to the country or new to English to quickly identify their needs.
- Rapid Catch-up assessments are also used to identify the gaps in children's phonic knowledge and teach these using the Rapid Catch-up resources – at pace.
- We assess children every four weeks using the Rapid Catch-up summative assessments to assess progress and inform teaching.

### **Teaching reading: Reading practice sessions**

- We teach reading practice sessions three times a week in EYFS and Year 1. These:
  - use books matched to the children's secure phonic knowledge
  - 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 based on three key reading skills:
  - decoding: teaching children to use phonic knowledge to read words
  - prosody: teaching children to read with understanding and expression
  - comprehension: using dialogic talk to help children to understand the text.
- In Reception, these sessions start in Week 5 of teaching. Initially, children will read wordless books where children review GPCS and are taught blending using teacher-led blending. Once children can blend, they progress onto decodable books matched to their secure phonic knowledge.
- Children read each book three times to develop phonemic awareness, vocabulary and comprehension as well as book behaviours.
- Reading in Rapid Catch-up lessons mirrors the core programme. Children following the Rapid Catch-up programme are taught to read using the 7+ fully decodable books. These follow the same progression as the core programme but are more appropriate for older readers.

### **Teaching reading: Fluency programme**

- We teach reading to children in Year 2 and above who have exited the core programme using Little Wandle Fluency. To exit the programme, teachers will use their professional judgement to



ensure children can read with adequate speed and accuracy:  
approximately 60 words per minute with 90%+ accuracy.

- Each Fluency reading lesson is 25 to 30 minutes. The structure of every lesson is the same:
  - A pre-read to practise reading words and to support vocabulary
  - Children read aloud for ten minutes and the teacher 'taps in' to hear every child read
  - Focussed teaching of prosody, repeated reading and comprehension through discussion.
- Comprehension is primarily taught through dialogic talk and teachers use their AfL to quickly address misconceptions and develop children's curiosity and engagement with each book.

### Home reading

- Home Books are matched to each child's specific ability using Hunton's own, internal scheme.
- Reading for pleasure books also go home for parents to share and read to children.
- 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.

### Additional reading support for vulnerable children

- Children in Reception and Year 1 who are receiving additional phonics Daily Keep-up sessions read their reading practice book regularly to an adult in school.
- We prioritise children who may not have reading support at home or who may not have access to books. We ensure that they have individual reading times with volunteers and staff to share quality children's literature to promote a love of reading.

### 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.
- Hunton uses Little Wandle's lesson templates, prompt cards and 'How to' videos to map out new learning and to ensure all teachers have a consistent approach and structure for each lesson.
- Hunton uses its Reading Progression of skills booklet so that teachers can ensure teaching and learning of reading is progressive and systematic from EYFS to Year 6.

### 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 highly value reading for pleasure and work hard as a school to grow our reading for pleasure pedagogy.

- We read aloud to children every day. These books are chosen carefully as we want children to experience a wide range of books, including those that reflect the children at Hunton and our local community as well as books that open windows into other worlds and cultures.
- We have a school library and 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.



- Children choose from our range of carefully chosen books to take home and share with an adult.
- As children progress through school, we take time to get to know them as readers and ensure that we engage in meaningful conversations about the books that they have read. By doing this we can recommend authors and genres of books to expand their interests.
- Each class visits the local library and has their own library card to find books related to their termly topics.
- 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 (AfL)** is used:
  - daily within class to identify children who require Daily Keep-up support, as well as words and GPCs that need additional teaching
  - to plan repeated practice throughout the day to ensure all children secure learning
  - weekly in the Friday review lesson to assess gaps, address these immediately and secure fluency of GPCs, words and spellings.
  - Alongside our professional judgement to assess each child's progress in reading, so we can ensure that they have the right books to meet their needs.
- **Summative assessments** are uploaded onto the Assessments tracker for Reception and Year 1. These are used:
  - to generate visual reports (pupil heatmaps, pupil trends and books levels, and a summary analysis) for individual children, classes and whole year groups
  - by SLT to scrutinise and plan how to narrow the attainment gaps between different groups of children and to put in place any additional support for teachers.

We assess:

- every **six weeks** to assess progress and to identify gaps in learning that need to be reviewed or retaught
- to establish if learning is secure for more than 70% of children before new content is taught
- to identify any children needing additional support and to plan the Keep-up support that they need (SEN and catch-up programmes, for those children who have not yet completed the Little Wandle Programme).

We reassess every **three weeks** every child who is not on track.

- **Fluency assessments** are used so that teachers can accurately measure the lowest 20% of readers so that these children make expected progress with their reading.

## A COMPLETE PHONICS RESOURCE TO SUPPORT CHILDREN



**Hunton**  
C of E Primary School  
Life in all its fullness - John 10:10



- During our school assessment weeks, we assess reading ability and use these assessments to monitor progress.
- 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 to plan and provide appropriate extra teaching.

### Statutory assessment

- Children in Year 1 sit the Phonics Screening Check. Any child not passing the check resits it in Year 2.