



Phonics and Early Reading

Southville Primary School



A COMPLETE PHONICS RESOURCE TO SUPPORT CHILDREN

Intent

It is essential that our approach to teaching phonics and reading is accessible to all learners, regardless of background.

Phonics (reading and spelling)

At Southville 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 Little Wandle Foundations in our Nursery and then, 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.

At Southville 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 Southville Primary, 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 early 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.

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.
- Little Wandle Foundations is aligned to the non-statutory guidance on Development Matters and Birth to 5 Matters as well as the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework. We use it as part of our wider provision for Communication and Language, and Literacy. It supports children to:
 - develop their phonological awareness, including rhyme, alliteration, syllables, initial and voice sounds, and oral blending
 - love stories and rhymes, and learn by heart a bank of familiar favourites
 - increase their vocabulary and confidence to talk
 - improve their listening and ability to take part in back-and-forth conversations.
- We believe that the priority in Nursery should be to build the foundations for phonics for all children. Research tells us that disadvantaged children start Nursery behind their more fortunate peers. By leaving formal phonics teaching to Reception, Foundations allows us to devote more time to working with children who need extra help to develop the skills and behaviours that underpin successful reading

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

Key Features

There are certain key features which characterise the phonics teaching at the school:

- direct teaching in frequent, short bursts
- consistency of approach
- secure, systematic progression in phonics learning
- maintaining pace of learning
- providing repeated practice

- application of phonics using matched decodable books
- early identification of children at risk of falling behind, linked to the provision of effective keep-up support.

Daily “Keep-up” or “Catch-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.
- We timetable daily phonics lessons for any child in Year 2 or 3 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 *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* assessments to identify the gaps in their phonic knowledge and teach to these using the Keep-up resources – at pace.
- If any child in Year 3 to 6 has gaps in their phonic knowledge when reading or writing, we plan phonics ‘catch-up’ lessons to address specific reading/writing gaps. These short, sharp lessons last between 10-20 minutes and take place at least three times a week.
- We assess children who are new to our school, new to the country or new to English using the Rapid Catch-up assessments to quickly identify their needs.
- We use the Rapid Catch-up assessments 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.

Daily phonics and spelling in Year 2

- Year 2 begins by looking at the end of Year 1 assessments to ensure that children have completed the Little Wandle Year 1 progression and to identify any children who may need more support when teaching.
- Once all 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.
- After review, we teach the Bridge to spelling before moving to the Spelling units.
- Children with larger gaps in their phonic knowledge than their peers have daily phonics teaching and follow the Rapid Catch-up programme.

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 and book matching grids on pages 11–20 of [‘Application of phonics to reading’](#)
 - are monitored by the class teacher, who checks in with adults working 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: teaching children to use phonic knowledge to read words
 - 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 Year 2 and 3, we continue to teach reading in this way for any children who still need to practise reading with decodable books.

Home reading

We encourage and assist parents and carers to support their children to read at home as this can have a huge impact on their reading journey. There are three types of reading book that the children bring home:

- A "Little Wandle" online reading practice book - this book is matched to the text shared in the child's reading session
- A reading practice book - this is a fully decodable book that is matched to their secure phonic knowledge and will help develop fluency and confidence in reading
- A sharing book - to enjoy with somebody at home (this can be read with, or to, the child). To discuss the pictures, enjoy the story, predict what might happen next, use different voices for the characters, explore the facts in a non-fiction book and, most importantly, have fun!

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.
- Across the 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.
- 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 use the Audit and Prompt cards to 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 reflect the children at Southville Primary School and our local community as well as books that open windows into other worlds and cultures.

- In Pre-school and Reception, children have access to the reading corner every day in their free flow time and the books are continually refreshed.
- Children from Reception onwards have a home reading record. The parent/carer records comments to share with the adults in school.
- As the children progress through the school, they are encouraged to write their own comments and keep a list of the books/authors that they have read.
- The school has a library which children can read in during break times and lunch. Classes wishing to use it book 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 etc).

Transition into Year 2

Any children in Year 2 who have not 'met the necessary phonic standard in Year 1' are part of an intervention group to boost their phonic knowledge and word building skills. They also have Little Wandle reading practice sessions that are delivered at least three times a week. This is taught by a trained member of staff using phonetically decodable books at their instructional level.

After children secure their ability to read phonically decodable texts and develop as independent readers, we widen their understanding of reading by teaching the use of a wider range of reading skills to support comprehension. Children at this stage have daily reading sessions in Year 2 using aspects of the KS2 whole-class reading model. All reading sessions have a specific teaching point based on the content domain along with a focus on improving children's reading fluency. Teachers choose the books which children read in the sessions carefully, and in advance, so that they reflect the teaching point, as well as being current, inspirational, reflect diversity and are of an appropriate level. Teachers also consider the book's 'reading age' and assess the stamina needed to read that book.

Year 2 Home Reading (and beyond)

Once children have reached Phase 5, they then take a Oxford Reading Tree / levelled book according to their reading ability. Children's progress is continually reviewed to ensure they are quickly moved onto the next level when their fluency and comprehension show that they are ready. Teachers use benchmarking materials to assist them with this. Additionally, children are encouraged to continue to take home a book to enjoy reading with an adult to increase their enjoyment of reading and exposure to a wide range of authors.

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:**
 - This is used daily within class to identify children needing Keep-up support
 - This is used weekly in the Review lesson to assess gaps, address these immediately and secure fluency of GPCs, words and spellings.
- **Summative assessment:**
 - They are uploaded onto the Assessment tracker for Reception and Year 1 to generate visual reports (pupil heatmaps, pupil trends and books levels, and a summary analysis) for individual children, classes and whole year groups
 - They are used by teachers who drill down and look at the data at GPC, word, tricky word and sentence level
 - They are used by the Reading Leader and 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 for teachers can be put into place.

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 Daily Keep-up support that they need.
- The [Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised placement assessment](#) is used:
 - with any child new to the school to quickly identify any gaps in their phonic knowledge and plan provide appropriate extra teaching.

Statutory assessment

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

Ongoing assessment for catch-up

- Children in Year 2 to 6 are assessed through:
 - their teacher's ongoing formative assessment
 - the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds* placement assessment
 - the appropriate half-termly assessments.

Governors

- There is a link governor who meets with the phonics and early reader and/or senior leaders three times a year to check on progress, ask questions and provide challenge.