



Phonics Policy

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Phonics is a way of teaching children to read quickly and skilfully. They are taught how to recognise the sounds that each individual letter makes; identify the sounds that different combinations of letters make such as /sh/ or /ee/ and blend these sounds together from left to right to make a word. The children are taught phonics through the use of the Little Wandle Phonics scheme, a Synthetic Phonics Programme endorsed by the government.

Intent

Phonics (Reading and Spelling)

At Mundella Primary School, we believe that all our children can become fluent readers and writers. To support our children with phonics, we have adopted the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* scheme, which is a systematic and synthetic phonics programme. We start teaching Little Wandle Foundations in our Pre-School 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, our children are able to tackle unfamiliar words as they read.

At Mundella 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 Mundella Primary School, we value reading as a crucial life skill. By the time children leave us, we endeavour that they will be able to 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

Foundations for Phonics in Pre-School

- 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 Pre-School 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 Pre-School should be to build the foundations for phonics for all children. Research tells us that disadvantaged children start Pre-School 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.

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 videos and accompanying phonological awareness planning to complement and reinforce our Phase 2 teaching alongside BBC Teach nursery rhymes.

Daily phonics lessons in Reception and Year 1

- We teach phonics daily in both Reception and Year 1 classes.
- In Reception, we build from 10-minute lessons, with additional daily oral blending games, to the full-length lesson (30 minutes) 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 the first full 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 Phase 3 and 4 and are taught to read and spell words using Phase 5 GPCs with fluency and accuracy.

Daily phonics and spelling in Year 2

- Year 2 begins by using assessment to ensure that children have completed the Little Wandle Year 1 progression. Any gaps in teaching are addressed through daily phonics lessons until the programme is completed. Corresponding summative assessments are carried out to ensure this content is secure.
- 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.
- We use the Phase 5 review assessment before teaching in Year 2 to identify any children who may need more support when teaching. We reassess after teaching the Phase 5 review.

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

- We timetable regular 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 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 term using the Rapid Catch-up summative assessments to assess progress and inform teaching.

Teaching reading.

- In KS1, we teach children to read through reading practice sessions three times a week. These sessions:
 - are taught by a fully trained adult to small groups of approximately six children
 - 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, 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 of teaching at the latest. Initially, children will read wordless books. In these sessions, 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.
- In Year 2, we ensure children complete reading the core programme decodable books (up to Phase 5 Set 5). To exit the programme, we complete the final fluency assessment to ensure children can read with adequate speed and accuracy: approximately 60 words per minute with 90%+ accuracy.
- Reading in Rapid Catch-up lessons mirrors the core programme.
- In Years 2 and 3, we continue to teach reading in this way for any children who still need to practise reading with decodable books.
- Additional class reading sessions are taught in Year 2 and beyond, through the use of class texts which are of high quality literature. The books are selected to support the children’s vocabulary development, specific words are taught each term and these are mapped out based on the teacher’s knowledge of the needs of the class. (See Reading Policy).

Home reading

In EYFS and Year 1 children take home decodable books matched to their developing phonemic knowledge. Children in Year 2 and beyond who are proficient decoders, move on to Accelerated Reader. Children who are still developing their phonetic knowledge continue with decodable books matched to their developing phonemic knowledge. Phonics books are supplemented with additional reading for pleasure books that the children take home for their parents to read to

them. We also send home additional weekly support letters with the week's phonics information to enable parents to support us at home. Additional resources can be found on the Little Wandle website.

<https://www.littlewandlelettersandsounds.org.uk/resources/for-parents/>

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 book to an adult regularly.

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 Mundella Primary School and our local community as well as books that open windows into other worlds and cultures. Each class has a set class text for each term which the children share with their teacher on a daily basis. Children are taught vocabulary linked to the text and use the reading gem questioning approach to support comprehension.
- In Key Stage 1, we have inviting book corners 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 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.
- 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 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.
- **Summative assessments** are uploaded onto the Assessment 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 teachers, the Reading Leader and SLT who analyse the data at GPC, word, tricky word and sentence level
 - 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 Daily Keep-up support that they need.
- 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 undertake 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
 - use of the Rapid Catch Up tracker to identify gaps in children's knowledge.
 - the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds* assessments

Inclusion

All children have equal access to the curriculum as expressed in our Equal Opportunities Policy. We will ensure that phonics is accessible to pupils by:

- Setting suitable learning objectives
- Responding to the variety of learning styles
- Overcoming potential barriers of individuals and groups.

This is monitored by analysing pupil performance throughout the school to ensure that there is no disparity between groups.