



West View Primary School

Phonics and Early Reading Policy

Policy approved by Local Academy Committee: October 2024
Date for Review: October 2026

Rationale

This policy outlines the teaching and organisation of phonics at West View Primary School.

We ensure a consistent and systematic approach to the teaching and learning of phonics across the school through the implementation of the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* programme. It is essential that our approach to teaching phonics and reading is accessible to all learners, regardless of background.



Aims

- Provide an integrated programme of phonics through speaking and listening, reading and writing
- Encourage children to implement their phonic knowledge into the wider curriculum
- Conduct daily phonics teaching sessions from Early Years- KS1
- Provide phonics teaching in KS2 for those children who are not yet at age-related expectations for their reading

The Curriculum

Phonics (reading and spelling)

At West View Primary School, we believe that all of 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 that is validated by the DfE. We start teaching 'Foundations to phonics' in Nursery and then the main *Little Wandle Letters and Sound Revised* programme in Reception.

[Programme Overview_Reception and Year 1.indd \(littlewandlelettersandsounds.org.uk\)](http://littlewandlelettersandsounds.org.uk)

At West View, 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 West View Primary School, we value reading as a crucial life skill. By the time children leave us, we aim for them to be reading 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 (Miss Tailford) who drives the phonics and 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 that everyone teaches with consistency and 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 that 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.

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

We teach phonics for 30 minutes a day. In Reception, we build up from 10-minute lessons 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.

Daily 'Keep-up' lessons ensure that every child learns to read

Any child in Reception and Year 1 who needs additional practice has daily 'Keep-up' support, 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 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 of 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. 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.

Once the Phase 5 review is secure, we teach *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.

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 at the end of Year 1 (or the resit at the end of Year 2). These children urgently need to catch up so that 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 also use these 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.

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 to 20 of 'Application of phonics to reading'
- 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 a child'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 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 that 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. 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

We teach reading to children in Year 2 and above who have exited the core programme using Little Wandle Fluency.

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

We assess reading speed and accuracy every 12 weeks and use these assessments to monitor progress and allocate books. We also use Assessment for Learning (AfL) and our professional judgement to assess each child's progress in reading so that we can ensure that they have the right books to meet their needs.

We review children's prosody by using the prosody grid. This gives us a picture of how well the child is reading aloud.

Comprehension is 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

A decodable reading practice book is taken home to ensure success is shared with the family.

Reading for pleasure books also go home for parents to share and read to children. We share the research behind the importance and impact of sharing quality children's books with parents and carers through workshops, leaflets, letters and the [Everybody read!](#) resources - information can also be found on our school website as well as on social media.

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.

We send home weekly home learning sheets linked to the progression of *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* to allow parents and carers to see the sounds and words their children are learning at school and support them with these at home - *see appendix 2 for an example*.

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 staff to share quality children's literature to promote a love of reading.

Ensuring consistency and pace of progress

Every teacher and member of support staff in our school has been trained to teach reading so that we have the same expectations of progress, consistency and complete fidelity to the programme. All staff use the same language, routines and resources to teach children to read - this lowers children's cognitive load. To ensure consistency across school, we have also created a staff mantra sheet to allow for the correct use of terminology and hand gestures when teaching phonics - *see appendix 3*.

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 that teachers all have a consistent approach and structure for each lesson.

The Reading Leader and SLT use checklists and templates provided by Little Wandle in order to regularly monitor and observe teaching. Summative data is used to identify children who need additional support and have 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 culture and pedagogy.

- We read aloud to children for 20 minutes 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 West View and our local community as well as books that open windows into other worlds and cultures.
- We have a progressive reading spine and core story time text document in school which runs from Nursery to Year 6. This ensures children gain a varied diet to their reading.
- Every classroom has an inviting book corner that encourages a love for reading. We have organised books and talk about them to entice children to read a wide range of books.

- In Early Years and Year 1, children have access to the reading corner every day in their discovery time and the books are continually refreshed.
- Children choose from our range of carefully chosen books to take home and share with an adult. We keep a record of the children's choices, so that we get to know them as readers.
- Children from Reception onwards use [BoomReader – The Digital Reading Record](#). The parent/carer records comments when their children read at home using this app. Engagement of this is monitored closely within school and is celebrated in a range of ways.
- 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).
- We use the [Everybody read!](#) Little Wandle resources to grow our teachers' knowledge of current books, the most recent research and to grow our own Reading for Pleasure practice.



Phonics across the curriculum

Children are encouraged to use and apply their phonics skills across the curriculum in all subjects and not just in their discrete phonic sessions. All staff in school will correctly model the articulation of the phonemes throughout the school day. The school reading book system in Early Years and KS1 is also matched to the phonic phases that the children are learning in order to further embed their phonics understanding.



Assessment

Assessments are 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, as well as words and GPC's that need additional teaching
- To plan repeated practise throughout the day to ensure that 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 book levels, and a summary analysis) for individual children, classes and whole year groups
- By teachers, the Reading Lead and the Senior Leadership Team who drill down and look at the data for GPC, word, tricky word and sentence level
- By the Senior Leadership Team (including the SENDCO) to scrutinise and plan how to narrow the attainment gaps between different groups of children and to put in place appropriate intervention

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

Fluency assessments measure children's accuracy and reading speed in short one-minute assessments. They are used:

- In Year 1 and Year 2, when children are reading the Phase 5 set 3, 4 and 5 books
- With children following the Rapid Catch-Up programme in Years 2 to 6, when they are reading the Phase 5 set 3, 4 and 5 books
- To assess when they are ready to exit their programme*
- For children in Year 2 and above who are taught Little Wandle Fluency. These assessments identify the best Fluency book level for each child. We assess the children every term (every 12 weeks or so).

**Year 2 children can exit the Rapid Catch-up programme when they can read the final fluency assessment at 60 to 70+ words per minute. Older children can exit the Rapid Catch-up programme when they read the final fluency assessment at 90+ words per minute. At these levels, children should have sufficient fluency to tackle any book at age related expectations. After exiting the programme, children do not need to read any more fully decodable books.*

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.

All assessments are completed by the Reading Lead in school to ensure consistency and to enable them to have a clear overview of phonics and early reading across the whole school.

Statutory assessment

Children in Year 1 sit the Phonics Screening Check: [Phonics screening check: structure and content of the check - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/phonics-screening-check-structure-and-content-of-the-check). Any child not passing the check re-sits it in Year 2.

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years by Miss Tailford (Reading Lead) with support from the Headteacher.

The next scheduled review date for this policy is October 2025. A review will take place sooner if there are updates to the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* scheme or government guidance.

All changes to this policy will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders following approval by the Local Academy Committee.

Appendix 1 - Formation Mantra Sheets

Phase 2 grapheme information sheet

Autumn 1

Grapheme and mnemonic	Picture card	Pronunciation phrase	Formation phrase
 S	 snake	Show your teeth and let the s hiss out ssssss	Down the snake from head to tail.
 a	 astronaut	Open your mouth wide and make the a sound at the back of your mouth aaa	Around the astronaut's helmet and down into space.
 t	 tiger	Open your lips; put the tip of your tongue behind your teeth and press ttt	Down the tiger and across its neck.
 p	 penguin	Bring your lips together, push them open and say ppp	Down the penguin's back, up and around its head.
 i	 iguana	Pull your lips back and make the i sound at the back of your mouth iii	Down the iguana and dot the leaf.
 n	 net	Open your lips a bit, put your tongue behind your teeth and make the nnnnn sound nnnnn	Down, up and over the net.
 m	 mouse	Put your lips together and make the mmmmm sound mmmmm	Down, up and over the mouse's ears.

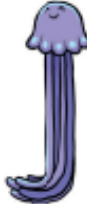


Grapheme and mnemonic	Picture card	Pronunciation phrase	Formation phrase
 d	 duck	Put your tongue to the top and front of your mouth and make a quick d sound d d d	Round the duck's body, up to its head and down to its feet.
 g	 goat	Give me a big smile that shows your teeth; press the middle of your tongue to the top and back of your mouth; push your tongue down and forward to make the g sound g g g	Round the goat's face and curl under its chin.
 o	 octopus	Make your mouth into round shape and say o o o	All around the octopus.
 c	 cat	Open your mouth into a little smile; make your tongue flat and move it up towards the top of your mouth to say c c c	Curl around the cat.
 k	 kite	Open your mouth into a little smile; make your tongue flat and move it up towards the top of your mouth to say k k k	Down the kite, up to the top corner and down to the bottom corner.
 ck	 sock	Open your mouth into a little smile; make your tongue flat and move it up towards the top of your mouth to say c c c	c Curl around the heel of the sock. k Down the sock, up and back down to the toe. Catchphrase: Rock that sock!
 e	 elephant	Open your mouth wide and say e e e	Around the elephant's eye and curl down its trunk.

Grapheme and mnemonic	Picture card	Pronunciation phrase	Formation phrase
 u	 umbrella	Open your mouth wide and say u u u	Down and around the umbrella, and back to the ground.
 r	 rainbow	Show me your teeth to make a rrrrr sound rrrrr rrrrr	From the cloud to the ground and over the rainbow.
 h	 helicopter	Open your mouth and breathe out sharply h h h	Down, up and over the helicopter.
 b	 bear	Put your lips together and say b as you open them b b b	Down the bear's back, up and round its tummy.
 f	 flamingo	Open your lips a little; put your teeth on your bottom lip and push the air out to make the sound fffff fffff	Down the flamingo to its foot and across its wings.
 l	 lollipop	Open your mouth a little; put your tongue up to the top of your mouth, behind your teeth, and press lllll lllll	Down the lollipop stick.

Phase 2 grapheme information sheet

Autumn 2

Grapheme and mnemonic	Picture card	Pronunciation phrase	Formation phrase
	 jellyfish	Pucker your lips and show your teeth use your tongue as you say j j j	Down the jellyfish and dot its head.
	 volcano	Put your teeth against your bottom lip and make a buzzing v v v v v v v v v v	Down to the bottom of the volcano and back up to the top.
	 wave	Pucker your lips and keep them small as you say w w w w	Down and up and down and up the waves.
	 box	Mouth open, then push the cs/x sound through as you close your mouth cs cs cs (x x x)	From the top, across the box to the bottom. From the top again across the box to the bottom.
	 yo-yo	Smile, tongue to the top of your mouth, say y without opening your mouth yyy	Down, around the yo-yo and curl round the string.
	 zebra	Show me your teeth and buzz the z sound zzzzz zzzzz	Across the top of the zebra's head, zig-zag down its neck and along.

Grapheme and mnemonic	Picture card	Pronunciation phrase	Formation phrase / Catchphrase
 qu qu	 queen	Pucker your mouth, then open it as you say qu qu qu	q Round the queen's face, down her robe and a flick at the end. qu Quick, it's the queen!
 ch ch	 cherries	Pucker your lips and show your teeth; use your tongue as you say ch ch ch	ch Chew the cherries, children.
 sh sh	 shells	Pucker your lips and show your teeth; push the air out shshshshsh shshshshsh	sh Share the shells.
 th th	 thumb	Voiced: Tongue on your teeth, teeth almost closed to make a 'buzzing' th th th Unvoiced: Tongue on your teeth; push the air out th th th	th Thumbs up, we're having fun.
 ng ng	 ring	Open your mouth a bit and then use your tongue at the back of your mouth to say ng ng ng	ng Bling on a ring.
 nk nk	 pink panda	Open your mouth a bit and then use your tongue at the back of your mouth to say ngk ngk ngk	nk I think I am pink.

Appendix 2- Example of Home Learning Sheet

	Little Wandle - Letters and Sounds Year 1 Phonics Home Learning	
	Phase 5 – Autumn 2 Week 2	

Please support your child to practise and reinforce the phonemes and graphemes we are learning in school. More information and support can be found on the Little Wandle website - <https://www.littlewandlelettersandsounds.org.uk/resources/for-parents/>

Phonemes we will be revising this week in school -					
oa	oy	ea	ir	ie	oo
u	igh	ai	ay	i	ee
o	a	e			

We will be reading and writing words. Can you spot this week's phonemes?

no so go open most post child tiger spider find wild
kind paper later chasing basic baking acorn fever
secret being spider

We will be reading sentences. Can you spot any tricky words?

"I can open the most post", boasted the otter.
I found a spider in my post!
The wild tiger was chasing an acorn.
She likes to read in secret.

We will be practising tricky words. Can you spot the tricky part of the word?

your people their oh Mr Mrs Ms ask

We will be practising spelling these words.

both go child kind basic acorn fever me
post paper

Appendix 3- Staff Mantra Sheet

Key Mantras of Little Wandle

Mantra	Explanation/ Example
Digraph – two letters, one sound	Use to highlight that a sound is represented by two letters. E.g. 'ai'
Trigraph – three letters, one sound	Use to highlight that a sound is represented by three letters. E.g. 'igh'
Spot the digraph/trigraph	When READING Identify any sounds which are represented by more than one letter in the word before reading the word. E.g. 'ai' in train
Sound talk	When READING Sound out the word before attempting to blend. E.g. t-r-ai-n
Blend	When READING Blend the word together e.g. 'train'
Whisper blend	When READING Child whispers the letters to help them blend when reading as a stage between overtly blending out loud and blending in their head.
Blend in your head	When READING Child is encouraged to blend in their head rather than out loud.
Chunk it up	When READING Split longer words into parts to make them easier to read. E.g. train/ing ladd/er e/vent/ful This may be done by covering part of the word with your hand or the child may use their finger when in a book.
Copy me	To prompt the children to repeat after you.
Altogether	Everybody say something out loud together
Shuffle time	Mix up / shuffle the cards (GPCs, tricky words, words) this is done during a phonics lesson not during reading practice.
Segmenting fingers	When SPELLING Ask children to hold up their hand ready to count the sounds – use the hand they DO NOT write with.
How many sounds?	When SPELLING Break the word down into sounds and put a finger up for each sound to count them. This helps children to not miss any graphemes when writing (although they may not always choose the correct grapheme it should be phonetically plausible – e.g. selecting 'ay' instead of 'ai'). E.g. train – t-r-ai-n (4 fingers would be up)
One, two, three, show me!	When SPELLING Teacher says this to indicate to children they need to show their boards with their work on to the teacher.