



Phonics Policy

Introduction

At Oakhill Primary School we strive to ensure that all children become successful, fluent readers by the end of Key Stage One. We believe that this is achievable through a combination of strong, high quality, discrete phonics teaching combined with a whole language approach that promotes a 'Reading for Pleasure' culture. It is essential that our approach to teaching phonics and reading is accessible to all learners, regardless of background. The Rose Report (2006) emphasised high quality phonics as an important part of the word decoding skills required by children to develop higher level whole language and comprehension skills. This approach is in alignment with our belief that we first 'learn to read' and then 'read to learn'.

Phonics (reading and spelling)

At Oakhill, 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. This programme ensures that children build on their growing knowledge of the alphabetic code, mastering phonics to read and spell as they move through the school.

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

Foundations for phonics in Nursery

Phonics is taught through 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 rhyme.
- Activities that develop focused listening and attention, including oral blending.
- Attention to high-quality language.
- A 10-minute phonics activity in a small group

We ensure Nursery children are well prepared to begin learning the grapheme-phoneme correspondences (GPCs) and blending in Reception.

Daily phonics lessons in Reception and Year 1

In Reception and Year 1 phonics is taught for 30 minutes each day. In Reception, this builds from 10-minute lessons, with additional daily oral blending games, to the full-length lessons as quickly as possible. Each Friday, teaching from the week is reviewed to help children to become fluent readers. Teaching in Reception begins in Week 2 of the autumn term, following 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.

Teaching reading: Reading practice sessions three times a week

Children are taught 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. Books are matched to the children's secure phonic knowledge using the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* assessments and book matching grids and 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 reading practice 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.

Home reading

- In Reception a decodable reading practice book is taken home that matches the child's phonics ability.
- In Nursery and Reception reading for pleasure books also go home for parents to share and read to children.
- The Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised parents' resources are used to engage 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 children falling behind

- Children in Reception and Year 1 who are receiving additional phonics keep-up sessions read their reading practice book to an adult.

Ensuring consistency and pace of progress

- Every teacher has been trained to teach reading. This ensures that all teaching staff have the same expectations of progress and use the same language, routines and resources to teach children to read.
- 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.

Assessment

Assessment is used to monitor progress and to identify any child needing additional support as soon as they need it.

Formative assessment is used:

- Daily within classes 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 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 keep-up support that children may need.

REVIEW & AMEND AS NECESSARY ANNUALLY – SEPTEMBER 2024 (MOST RECENT REVISION SEPT 2023)