



## Policy for Phonics and Early Reading

### **Rationale/context:**

The ability to read fluently is an essential aspect of the National Curriculum and unlocks opportunities for children. At Hudson Road Primary School we aim to foster in children a love of reading, providing children with the skills that they need to become life-long readers.

In our school, we have a high level of EAL learners and often have new arrivals mid-year. Our pupil premium percentage is higher than national average. We also have a significant number of pupils with SEND. It is therefore essential that our approach to teaching phonics and reading is accessible to all learners, regardless of background.

### **Intent:**

#### Phonics (reading and spelling)

At Hudson Road 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 by teaching Little Wandle Foundations in our Nursery and then, from Reception onwards, we follow the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised progression. This 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 can decode unfamiliar words as they read.

At Hudson Road Primary School, we also model the application of the alphabetic code through phonics in shared reading and writing across the curriculum. We have a strong focus on oracy and language development for our children because we know that speaking and listening are crucial skills for reading and writing in all subjects.

#### Comprehension

At Hudson Road Primary School, we value reading as a crucial life skill. By the time children leave us, we aim for them to 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 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 their understanding of 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 their 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.

### **Language and nursery rhymes in Nursery and 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 phonics teaching.

### **Daily phonics lessons in Reception and Year 1**

- We teach phonics for 20 - 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, with lesson routines being introduced and used throughout the year.

- We follow the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised expectations of progress. Children in Reception are taught to read 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 then taught to read words using Phase 5 GPCs with fluency and accuracy.

### Daily phonics and spelling in Year 2

At Hudson Road, we know that passing the phonics screening check does not mean a child is a fluent reader with complete phonic knowledge. Year 2 therefore begins by using assessment to ensure that children have completed and secured 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.

Once the Phase 5 review is secure, we teach the Bridge to spelling before moving to the Little Wandle Year 2 Spelling units.

Children with larger gaps in their phonic knowledge than their peers continue to have daily phonics teaching.

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

- Any child who needs additional practice has 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.
- In Year 2 and Year 3, when appropriate, we timetable continued phonics sessions for those children who have not yet passed their phonics screening or are not yet secure with the alphabetic code. Where appropriate, these interventions may target automaticity or fluency rather than GPC knowledge.

### Teaching reading: Reading practice sessions three times a week

We teach children to read through reading practice sessions that take place a minimum of three times a week. These:

- are taught by a fully trained adult to small groups of approximately four to six children
- use books matched to the children's secure phonic knowledge using the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised assessments
- 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: 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 from Week 4 onwards. 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, we continue to teach reading in this way for any children who still need to practise reading with decodable books.

Year 2 children who have completed the phonics programme read the Little Wandle Fluency books, focusing on a similar sequence of: decoding, prosody and comprehension. Children continue to read Little Wandle Fluency books in Years 3 and 4 which supports transition to the next key stage.

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
- Focused teaching of prosody, repeated reading and comprehension through discussion.

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

The decodable reading practice book is sent home via an eBook system to ensure success is shared with the family. In Reception, a physical copy of the book is also sent home.

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 through regular workshops.

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.

Children from Reception onwards have a home reading record. The parent/carer records comments to share with the adults in school. As 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.

#### 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 regularly monitors and observes teaching; they use the summative data to identify children who need additional support and gaps in learning.

Ongoing CPD and updates, for example in staff meeting time, ensure that all staff are fully trained and skilled in the teaching of phonics and early reading.

#### 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 in our daily story time. We choose the books we read carefully to ensure children experience a wide range of books, including books that reflect the children at Hudson Road Primary School and our local community as well as books that open windows into other worlds and cultures.

Every classroom has an inviting reading area 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 Nursery/Reception, children have access to the reading area every day in their free flow time and the books are continually refreshed. Children in Year 1 and 2 also have regular access to their reading areas and have free time to read for pleasure.

Our EYFS curriculum has been planned in such a way that reading habits, such as how to turn pages correctly or read text from left to right, are included. Children have regular opportunities to engage in 'book talk'.

The school library is made available for classes to use at protected times. Children visit the library once a week and take a book home to share with parents.

Children across the school have regular opportunities to engage with a wide range of Reading for Pleasure events (library visits, whole school reading 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 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 for Reception and Year 1 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 the Keep-up support that they need.
- 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.

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

- assess when children are ready to exit their programme. For Year 1 children, this is when they read the final fluency assessment at 60–70+ words per minute. Older children can exit the 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 their 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.
- with any new arrival to the school to assess their current phonic knowledge and identify any teaching/support needed

Statutory assessment

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

### Monitoring and review:

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.

The Reading Leader regularly monitors phonics and early reading teaching, focusing on a range of aspects. For example, one half term they might observe phonics sessions, then in the next they might monitor reading records. CPD and coaching is then planned accordingly.

The Reading Leader is also responsible for ensuring staff new to teaching phonics receive full training and induction support.

In addition to the Reading Leader, the school's English team and SLT also take responsibility for monitoring and reviewing progress.