

“Every child is a unique child of God.”

WHINMOOR



ST. PAUL'S
C of E Primary School

Phonics

at

Whinmoor St Paul's C of E Primary School

Information for Parents and Carers

Phonics is the precursor to reading, writing and spelling. It provides a key foundation for children to develop crucial literacy skills that will carry them through life.



Introduction

At Whinmoor St Paul's Primary, we want our children to have a love for reading that remains with them all of their life. The teaching of early reading and phonics is key to forming that love of reading. At Whinmoor St Paul's Primary we have a staff team who are passionate about the teaching of phonics and supporting our all children to achieve their full potential and develop the skills of early reading that will allow them to access the wider curriculum. We have chosen to work with Little Wandle, who Ofsted have identified as having supported schools to develop a love of reading, ensuring decodable texts are well-matched to children's developing phonetical knowledge and to ensure that early reading is prioritised, amongst other things!

Our phonics sessions are taught daily in Nursery, Reception and Year 1 and are vital to ensure the children develop the skills needed to become confident readers and writers. The teaching of phonics is central to our curriculum at this early stage of our children's educational journey.

Focused attention in our short, daily lessons achieves a precise focus on what needs to be learned without any unnecessary activity or distractions. As recommended in the Reading Framework (2023) the teaching of phonics is delivered in a calm and quiet space that allows all children to focus on the key learning with resources that support the children's understanding, and are consistent across school. The children focus on each new sound and understand that it means they can read more words.

Active engagement is achieved through the continual expectation of children to take part in chorus and individual oral response. This is immediately followed up by the activity of reading and writing words and sentences to apply new sounds learned as well as to practise previously learned ones.

Little Wandle Foundations for Phonics

“Reading floats on a sea of talk.” James Britton

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.

Phonics in Reception and Year 1

When children enter Reception they robustly follow the Little Wandle systematic synthetic phonics (SSP) scheme. This is followed until Year 2 and is taught progressively and with fidelity daily sessions. These phonics sessions build on the learning from Nursery, with the the resources and vocabulary being consistent; this removes cognitive load from the children and allows them to focus without distraction.

Children, who are within Reception and Key Stage 1, are taught each day in whole class teacher-led sessions to learn sounds and reading skills that follow the order of sounds in the Little Wandle scheme. To ensure pupils retain their knowledge of phonemes and graphemes, they spend between 30 minutes and 45 minutes on this Systematic Synthetic Phonics Programme, as well as revisiting sounds through additional quick-fire 'Speed Sounds' sessions. Pupils who are not keeping up with their peers undertake keep-up sessions that provide further practise and support the phonic development.

Any child who needs additional practise 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.

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

Daily Keep-Up lessons ensure every child learns to read

- Any child who needs additional practise 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.
- We timetable phonics lessons for any child in Year 2 and above who is not fully fluent at reading or has not passed the Phonics Screening Check. These children receive catch up, so the gap between themselves and their peers does not widen. We use the Rapid Catch-up assessments to identify the gaps in their phonic knowledge and teach to these using the Rapid Catch-up resources – at pace.
- These short, sharp lessons last 15-20 minutes and have been designed to ensure children catch up quickly to age-related expectations in reading.

Reading

Reading is taught alongside the phonics sessions

- We teach children to read through reading practise sessions two 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
 - are monitored by the class teacher, who rotates and works with each group on a regular basis.
- Each Reading Practise 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 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. Children who are not yet decoding have daily additional blending practise in small groups, so that they quickly learn to blend and can begin to read books.
- 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.

For children in Key Stage 2 who have not developed a complete understanding of the alphabetic code the Little Wandle Rapid catch sessions are used to support their progress and they will receive reading sessions with the 7+ books that match their phonics assessment level but are aimed at older children.