



Seamer and Irton CP School

Phonics and Early Reading Policy



Policy name	Phonics and Early Reading Policy
Frequency of review	Biennial
Governor Lead	Mrs Hannah Griffiths
Lead member of staff	Mrs Julie Stewart
Reviewed by	Governing Board
Date of review	May 2025
Next review	May 2027

Intent

‘Books and doors are the same thing. You open them, and you go through into another world.’

Jeanette Winterson

Seamer and Irton School is a ‘reading school’. We believe that the teaching of reading is integral to a child’s understanding and appreciation of the world around them, allowing them to explore possibilities both imagined and real and develop the vocabulary needed to express themselves effectively. Our reading curriculum strives to foster a love of reading in all pupils. We cultivate the reading behaviours and teach the techniques needed for pupils to access, understand and discuss texts fully. Our curriculum is delivered through synthetic phonics, systematic whole class and guided group reading sessions, reading across other curriculum subjects, home reading and opportunities to hear texts read aloud every day. As a staff, we model what effective reading looks like and share our enthusiasm about texts. We maintain a well-stocked, current, welcoming school library in order to enhance pupils’ reading for pleasure opportunities.

Phonics (reading and spelling)

We teach reading through the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* scheme, which is a systematic, synthetic phonics programme. We model the application of the alphabetic code through phonics in shared reading and writing, both in and outside of the phonics lesson and across the curriculum. We have a strong focus on oral language development for our pupils because we know that speaking and listening are crucial skills for reading and writing in all subjects.

Comprehension

Reading is a crucial life skill. By the time pupils leave us, they read confidently for meaning and enjoy reading for pleasure. Our readers are equipped with the tools to tackle unfamiliar vocabulary across a range of genres. We encourage pupils to see themselves as readers for both pleasure and purpose. As a reading school, we are always seeking new ways to engage pupils with reading and to sustain their interest in wanting to read more and explore the wide variety of texts available to them.

Because we believe teaching every child to read is so important, we have an Early Reading and Phonics Lead who drives the early reading programme in our school. This person is Mrs Julie Stewart. Mrs Stewart is responsible for the implementation of this policy and monitoring and supporting the staff at Seamer and Irton CP School so everyone teaches with fidelity to the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* programme.

Implementation

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.

Daily phonics lessons in Reception and Year 1

- We teach phonics daily. We undertake daily and weekly reviews to help pupils apply the knowledge and skills taught.
- Children make a strong start in Reception: teaching begins early in the Autumn term.
- We follow the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* expectations of progress:
 - Reception pupils are taught to read and spell words using Phase 2 and 3 GPCs, and words with adjacent consonants (Phase 4) with fluency and accuracy.
 - Year 1 pupils 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 every child learns to read

- Any child in Reception and Year 1 who needs additional practice has Daily Keep-up support and is 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 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 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. 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 four weeks using the Rapid Catch-up summative assessments to assess progress and inform teaching.

Teaching reading: Reading practice sessions two times a week

- We teach reading practice sessions at least two times a week. These sessions:
 - are taught by a fully trained adult to small groups of approximately eight 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 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 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.

Home reading

- The decodable reading practice book (Show off book) is taken home to ensure success is shared with the family.
- Library 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 workshops, leaflets and the [Everybody read!](#) resources.
- 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.

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

Ensuring consistency and pace of progress

- Every teacher and teaching assistant 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 checklists and templates to regularly monitor and observe teaching; they use the summative data 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 pedagogy.

- We share stories and other texts with children every day. We choose these books carefully as we want our pupils to experience a wide range of books, including books that reflect the children in our school and local community as well as books that open windows into other worlds and cultures.
- Every classroom has an inviting book 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.
- Home/school reading records are used to ensure communication with parents. We share learning to read/reading to learn objectives linked to each colour band with pupils and parents.
- As pupils progress through the school, they are encouraged to write their own comments and keep a list of the books/authors that they have read.
- Our school library is open for classes to visit at least once a week. Pupil librarians influence the organisation and resourcing of the library. We organise Reading for Pleasure events (book fairs, author visits and workshops, national events etc).
- We maintain links with our local library.

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 (AfL)** 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, Reading Leaders and SLT who drill down and look at 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.

Every three weeks, we reassess every child who is not on track.

- **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 children are ready to exit their programme*

*Year 2 children can exit the Rapid-Catch-up programme when they can read the final fluency assessment at 60-70+ 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 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 to plan and provide appropriate extra teaching.

Statutory assessment

- Children in Year 1 sit the Phonics Screening Check. Any child not passing the check resits it in Year 2.