.

St Wulfram's National Church of England Primary School, Grantham

LINCOLN ANGLICAN ACADEMY TRUST
DIOCESE OF LINCOLN

Phonics and Early Reading Policy

September 2024

Intent

Fluency

At St Wulfram's National Primary, 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 teaching phonics in Reception and follow the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* progression, which 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, all our children are able to tackle any unfamiliar words as they read.

At St Wulfram's National 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.

Comprehension

At St Wulfram's National Primary, we value reading as a crucial life skill. By the time children leave us, they 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.

Enjoyment

At St Wulfram's National Primary, reading is at the very heart of our learning. We strongly believe that children should be encouraged to foster a love of reading for pleasure, and we provide children with the skills to be able to do this. Our main aim is to ensure that every child becomes a confident, fluent reader who can apply their reading skills throughout the whole of the curriculum.

All children will be exposed to a variety of literature, genres and authors and develop the self-awareness to understand the kind of reader they are. It is essential that our approach to teaching phonics and early reading ensures that all learners, regardless of their background, needs or abilities, becomes an enthusiastic reader.

Story time is a very special time of day in both EYFS and KS1. The children always enjoy being read aloud to and discussing the stories or text with their friends and their class teacher.

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.

Implementation

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.

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 11–20 of 'Application of Phonics to Reading' document.
- 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 these 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.

We continue to teach reading in this way for any children who still need to practise reading with decodable books.

Home reading

The decodable reading practice book, that is appropriate for their reading ability, is taken home to ensure success is shared with the family. The level of book that your child receives will be reviewed regularly by the class teacher and Reading Leader. We ask that parents and/or carers read at least three times a week with their child to support them in their reading journey. This is to be recorded in their Reading Record.

'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 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 via Tapestry and through invitation-only workshops.

Reading at the heart of our curriculum

At St Wulfram's National Primary, our carefully researched Reading Canon includes texts which we read to provide a wealth of exciting learning opportunities across the curriculum, acting as mirrors and windows to reflect British values, cultures and experiences. The children will be fully immersed in vocabulary-rich and language-heavy texts, intertwining key reading skills with fluent writing skills and developing their love of reading beyond their phonics learning.

Fluent readers

Children are ready to exit the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* programme, and do not need to read any more fully decodable books, when they are able to read automatically and fluently.

The automaticity and fluency of readers is assessed using the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* fluency assessment in Year 1 summer term. Feedback from the fluency assessment is also considered alongside the Phonics Screening Check and teacher formative assessment.

When children exit the phonics programme, they follow our school's reading curriculum which includes Exploration Reading sessions, independent reading and accelerated reader. If children are not ready to exit the programme, reading instruction will continue to ensure fluency and enable children to become readers for life – see below.

Inclusion: ensuring every child learns to read

In Reception and Year 1, any child who needs additional practice has 'Daily Keep-up' support, taught by a fully trained adult. 'Daily 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 daily phonics lessons for any child in Year 2 (and above) who are not yet able to read automatically and fluently. These children urgently need to catch up, so the gap between themselves and their peers does not widen. We use the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* 'Rapid Catch-up' assessments to measure fluency and identify the gaps in their phonic knowledge which we then use to inform the targeted teaching to small groups using the 'Rapid Catch-up' programme – at pace. These short, sharp lessons last 15-20 minutes daily and have been designed to ensure children quickly catch up to age-related expectations in reading.

Children with SEND that require adaptations and a slower learning pace, due to cognitive function or other disabilities, follow the Little Wandle SEND pathway which is a complete programme that mirrors the main phonics programme. This pathway allows trained teachers to use a graduated approach if needed, making varying changes to pace and progression to best meet a child's more complex needs.

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 and SLT use the audit and prompt cards to regularly monitor and observe teaching; they use the summative data to identify children who need additional support and gaps in learning.

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. We choose these books carefully as we want children to experience a wide range of books, including books that reflect the children at St Wulfram's National Primary and our local community as well as books that open windows into other worlds and cultures.
- Carefully chosen texts are embedded throughout our curriculum that inspire learning opportunities and expose children to different genres, including poetry and non-fiction, themes and authors.
- Every classroom has an inviting book corner 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 Reception, children have access to the reading corner every day in their choosing time and the books are continually refreshed.
- Children in EYFS and KS1 have a Reading Record. The parent/carer records comments to share with the adults in school and the adults will write in this on a regular basis to celebrate reading and share targets with home.
- As the 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.
- The school library is made available for classes to use at protected times. 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.).
- Reading Ambassadors are chosen from each year group who have a passion for reading and an excellent attitude. They can help promote reading throughout the school in a variety of ways, such as reading with children in other classes, reading aloud to other classes, running reading themed worships and recommending books.
- We use the Everybody read! resources to grow our teachers' knowledge of current books, the most recent research and to grow our own Reading for Pleasure practice.

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 'Daily Keep-up' support that they need.
  - by SLT and scrutinized 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:
  - in Year 1, 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. For Year 1 children, this is when they 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 plan and provide appropriate extra teaching.
- The 'Rapid Catch-up' assessment is used
  - with any child new to the school in Year 2 and above to quickly identify any gaps in their phonic knowledge and plan and provide appropriate extra teaching.
- **SEND assessments** are used:
  - with any child following the SEND programme.
  - every five weeks summative assessment is completed to assess progress, to identify gaps in learning that need to be addressed and/or to make further adaptations.
  - to assess fluency when children are reading the final stages of Phase 5.

Statutory assessment

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

Ongoing assessment for 'Rapid Catch-up' in Years 2 to 6

Children in Year 2 to 6 are assessed through:

- the 'Rapid Catch-up' initial assessment to quickly identify any gaps in their phonic knowledge and plan appropriate teaching;
- the 'Rapid Catch-up' summative assessments to assess progress and inform teaching; and
- the 'Rapid Catch-up' fluency assessments when children are reading the Phase 5 set 3, 4 and 5 books for age 7+. The fluency assessments measure children's accuracy and reading speed in short one-minute assessments. They also assess when children are ready to exit the 'Rapid Catch-up' programme, which is when they read the final fluency assessment at 90+ words per minute.

Through the teaching of systematic phonics, our aim is for children to become fluent and confident word readers by the end of Key Stage 1, ready to access and enjoy the Key Stage 2 curriculum.

As a Year 6 reader, transitioning into secondary school, we aspire that children are fluent, confident and able readers, who can access a range of texts for pleasure and enjoyment, as well as use their reading skills to unlock learning and all areas of the curriculum. We firmly believe that reading is the key to all learning and so the impact of our early reading curriculum goes beyond the results of the statutory assessments.