



## Phonics and Early Reading Policy

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## Intent vision statement

At Swavesey Primary School we aim to provide a broad, balanced and challenging curriculum which delivers varied and exciting learning opportunities. This enables us to motivate all pupils to 'leap into their learning' and make progress not only academically but to also grow a thirst for knowledge, instill a love of learning and become proficient independent learners throughout life.

It is essential that our approach to teaching phonics and reading is accessible to all learners, regardless of background.

### **Intent**

#### ***Phonics (reading and spelling)***

At Swavesey 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 teaching phonics in Pre-school/ 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 Swavesey Primary School, 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 Swavesey Primary School, 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.

Because we believe teaching every child to read is so important, we have a Phonics 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 staff, so everyone teaches with fidelity to the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* programme.

### **Implementation**

#### ***Foundations for phonics in Pre-school***

- 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 Pre-school children are well prepared to begin learning grapheme-phoneme correspondences (GPCs) and blending in Reception.

#### ***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 or 3 of the Autumn term, dependent on children's start date.
- 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 practice has daily Keep-up support where possible, 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 urgently need to 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 quickly catch up to age-related expectations in reading.

### **Teaching reading: Reading practice sessions**

- We teach children to read through reading practice sessions.  
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'.
  - are monitored by in-phase phonics supervisors, who liaise with the class teachers and school phonics lead 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 of the phonics programme. 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 Years 2 and 3, 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 is taken home to ensure success is shared with the family.
  - Reading for pleasure books also go home for parents to share and read to children.
  - 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.

### **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 Phonics Leader and SLT will monitor and observe teaching.

### **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 aim to 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 Swavesey Primary School and our local community as well as books that open windows into other worlds and cultures.
- Every classroom has an inviting book corner that encourages a love for reading. We talk about books and make book recommendations to entice children to read a wide range of books.
- In Pre-school/Reception, children have access to the reading corner every day in their free flow time and the books are refreshed.
- Children from Reception onwards have a home 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 ensure communication between home and school.
- Each class visits the school library on a regular basis.
- 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).

## 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 Phonics Lead and SLT which is 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:
  - 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.
- 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:
  - to quickly identify any gaps in children's phonic knowledge and plan and provide appropriate extra teaching.

### 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
  - 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.

### Subject leaders are expected to:

- Offer help and support to all members of staff in their teaching, planning and assessment of phonics.
- Maintain resources and advise staff on their use.
- In conversation with the school finance manager and Head teacher, manage their curriculum budget.
- Lead staff training on new initiatives.
- Attend appropriate in-service training and keep staff up to date with relevant information and developments.
- Help staff to use assessment to inform future planning.
- Track teacher assessment and discuss how judgements were made

The subject leader completes book looks, moderations, blinks and pupil voice to monitor and evaluate the procedures in place are positively impacting outcomes for all children.

This policy should be read alongside:

SEND policy, Equality and Diversity Policy, Homework policy, Early Years Policy, Marking and Feedback policy, English Policy