

West Park Academy



Phonics & Early Reading Curriculum

Approved by Board of Trustees:

October 2023

To be reviewed:

October 2025



Our Aims and Intent

At West Park Academy we strive to ensure that all children become successful, fluent readers by the end of Key Stage One and believe this is achievable through a combination of strong, high quality, discrete phonics teaching combined with a whole language approach that promotes a 'Reading for Pleasure' culture. At West Park Academy, we are determined that every pupil will learn to read, regardless of their background, needs or abilities.

Phonics (reading and spelling)

At **West Park Academy**, 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 Nursery 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 **West Park Academy**, 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.

In order to ensure that all staff are able to deliver phonics teaching to a high standard, all staff who join West Park Academy receive phonics training as part of their induction package: all teachers need a firm foundation in early reading skills to support struggling readers at all ages. 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. Staff are regularly given the opportunity to observe each other delivering phonics sessions to ensure consistency is achieved across the school.

In our school, as much as practicably possible, children move through the order of sounds together: children who need extra support to catch up are prioritised between sessions to ensure that learning gaps do not appear, or widen over time. Phonics is taught as a whole class by the class teacher and is supported by well-qualified teaching assistants within lessons and through intervention. On rare occasions, the pace of the phonics sessions is unachievable for some pupils. These pupils will have the same programme delivered to them in a smaller group and at a slower pace, allowing for more opportunities to recap previous learning. They may also have additional resources to support them. Decisions around which pupils who are not taught whole class are taken by the Reading Leader, SENCO and class teacher. In addition to this, any child who needs additional practice has daily 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 daily phonics lessons for any child in Year 2 or 3 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. If any child in Year 3 to 6 has gaps in their phonic knowledge when reading or writing, we plan phonics 'keep-up' lessons to address specific reading/writing gaps. These short, sharp lessons last 10 minutes and take place at least three times a week.

Phonics knowledge is closely assessed and tracked, away from the point of teaching, to ensure that staff know children's strengths and areas for development. With few exceptions, all children reach the expected standard in Year 1 phonics, with word reading fluency being the primary driver of the Year 1 reading curriculum so they are ready to gain greater reading comprehension skills as their decoding secures. We use the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised assessments to identify the gaps in their phonic knowledge and teach to these using the Keep-up resources – at pace.

Comprehension

At **West Park Academy**, 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 Reading Leader, Jenna Ford, 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.

Book Type	Rationale
Reading practice books. These are decodable phonics book that includes phonemes that have recently been learned	These books reinforce the current learning in school. This follows the Little Wandle recommendations following phonics assessments. This decodable reading practice book is taken home to ensure success is shared with the family following the three reading practice sessions in school.
Care and Share Books	These books are to be read to children by adults at home. These books aim to develop children's love of reading and have been selected by the children in our school library

We expect all children to read at least 3 times per week at home. Children who do not read at home and are falling behind will be afforded additional reading opportunities with adults in school. This is recorded in children's reading records.

Children's books are sent home following their three reading practice sessions in school. Phonics learning is strongest when parents are true partners. At West Park Academy, parents are strongly encouraged to attend phonics workshops to help them to understand how phonics is taught and enable them to support their child's learning at home. To ensure maximum attendance, in Reception, we deliver these workshops in conjunction with a 'come and have breakfast with your child' session, where they can observe their child participating in a phonics session. In Year 1, we invite parents in prior to the phonics screening check so they can observe a lesson on 'nonsense words' (often a source of confusion for parents) being delivered. In addition to this, we have also created our own videos showing how to pronounce each phoneme and videos of teachers reading with pupils.



Our intent is achieved through the aims detailed below:

- To teach children aural discrimination, phonemic awareness and rhyme to aid reading, writing and spelling development.
- To encourage the use of segmenting and blending so that decoding skills provide a sound foundation for reading, writing and spelling.
- To ensure the teaching of phonics is lively, interactive and investigative.
- To enable children to use phonic awareness across the curriculum.
- To ensure that children know the 44 phonemes within the English language.
- To teach children to recognise the graphemes within words and associate them with the appropriate phoneme when reading.
- To provide children with strategies to identify and decode 'tricky words.'

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** 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 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.
 - To achieve the Early Learning Goal pupils must be fluent in reading Phase 3 Set 2 books and have achieved at least 75% on the Summer 1 assessments.
- The assessment tool is used:
 - with any child new to the school to quickly identify any gaps in their phonic knowledge and plan provide appropriate extra teaching.

Phonics Screening Check

All Year One children take the 'Phonics Screening Check' - a statutory assessment required by legislation. Those who do not meet the pass mark will be given support and intervention programmes in Year Two, to provide them with sufficient knowledge and understanding to re-take the 'Phonics Screening Check' and obtain a pass mark. Those children who still do not obtain the required level set by the 'Phonics Screening Check' in Year 2 will receive phonics teaching in the first term of Year 3 – which will be further supported throughout the year and across Key Stage Two with a phonics and/or spelling intervention programme. Phonics interventions are not based solely on the Phonics Screening Check result. Careful assessment and staff CPD ensures that teachers are well equipped to identify any problem areas in phonics, even if children have secured a pass on the Phonics Screening Check. Interventions are carefully monitored and assessed to ensure they are having the desired impact and that the children are progressing, rather than just accessing a range of phonics activities.



Previous Phonics Screening Check Results:

Year 1	Phonics Screening Check	Boys	Girls	SEND	Disadvantaged	National %	National SEND	National Disadvantaged
2023	89%	93%	83%	75%	100%	78%	Not yet available	67%
2022	75%	83%	65%	20%	76%	75%	44%	62%
2019	81.7	75.8	88.9	80%	79%	82%	43%	71%
2018	91.5	84.0	97.1	73%	91%	82%	44%	70%

Sitting in Y2	Results
2020	81%
2021	58%
2022	40%
2023	79%



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 (see below)
 - 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.

Daily phonics lessons in Reception and Year 1

- We teach phonics and reading for 1 hour a day (over split sessions). 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 3 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 Phase 3 and 4 and are taught to read and spell words using Phase 5 GPCs with fluency and accuracy.

Structure of our phonics lessons (Reception and Year 1)

Revising GPCs:

1st time – remind the children of thinking time. Hold the cards against body and push forward, expecting children to say the phoneme when shown the grapheme – target rows, groups, individuals.

2nd time – shuffle cards, and say speedy sounds and work through the cards quickly. Do not hold the cards against your body this time.

Revising words:

Thinking time, push forward – no sound buttons (unless struggling then turn around and use sound buttons and actions).

Tricky words:

1st time – remind children of thinking time hold against body and push forward – target rows, groups, individuals.

2nd time – shuffle cards and say speedy words and work through cards quickly. Do not hold the cards against your body this time.



New GPCs:

Today we will be learning/ revising a new phoneme. Model how it should be pronounced and show items beginning with that phoneme.

Oral Blending:

Teacher to say the phonemes in the word, pupils repeat the phonemes then blend the word.

New Words:

Point and sweep when it is time to read the whole word.

New Tricky Word:

We have a new tricky word today. Read the word phonetically first – why is it tricky? Say what the word actually says – then the children repeat – push forward.

Read/ Write:

Read:

When it is time to read the sentence, it is already on the flipchart paper (handwritten) – what can they spot in the sentence? Digraphs? Trigraphs? Tricky words? Punctuation? What can they see? How do they know it is a sentence?

Wiggly line = tricky word

Dash underneath = digraphs/ trigraphs.

Write:

Individual graphemes, words and sentences to be written in books daily from the beginning of Reception.

Other opportunities to be taken throughout the week for sentence writing e.g. topic, register work, English lessons, continuous provision.

Daily Keep-up lessons ensure every child learns to read

- Any child who needs additional practice has daily 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 daily phonics lessons for any child in Year 2 or 3 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 Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised assessments to identify the gaps in their phonic knowledge and teach to these using the Keep-up resources – at pace.
- If any child in Year 3 to 6 has gaps in their phonic knowledge when reading or writing, we plan phonics 'catch-up' lessons to address specific reading/writing gaps. These short, sharp lessons last 10 minutes and take place at least three times a week.



Teaching reading: Reading practice sessions three times a week

- We teach children to read through reading practice sessions three times a week. These sessions:
 - are taught by a fully trained adult to small groups of approximately six children
 - use books matched to the children's secure phonic knowledge
 - 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.

The children read the same book three times to develop a clear understanding of what they have read as well as working on their fluency.



Terminology

During phonics lessons from nursery onwards, the correct technical terminology is used with the children. These terms are fundamental to phonics teaching and are taught explicitly.

The table below shows the terminology most commonly used within phonics lessons at West Park Academy:



Phoneme	The smallest unit of sound in a word.
Grapheme	A letter or group of letters representing one sound (phoneme) E.g. ck, igh, t, sh
Blending	The process of using phonics for reading. Children identify and synthesise/blend the phonemes in order to make a word. E.g. <i>s-n-a-p</i> , blended together, reads <i>snap</i> .
Segmenting	The process of using phonics for writing. Children listen to the whole word and break it down into the constituent phonemes, choosing an appropriate grapheme to represent each phoneme. E.g. <i>ship</i> can be segmented as <i>sh-i-p</i> .
CVC, CCVCC etc.	The abbreviations used for consonant-vowel-consonant and consonant-consonant-vowel-consonant-consonant words, used to describe the order of sounds. E.g. <i>cat</i> , <i>ship</i> and <i>sheep</i> are all CVC words. <i>Black</i> and <i>prize</i> could be described as CCVC words.
Digraph	Two letters which together make one sound. There are different types of digraph – vowel, consonant and split.
Trigraph	Three letters which together make one sound. E.g. <i>dge</i> , <i>igh</i>
Consonant digraph	Two consonants which make one sound. E.g. sh, ch, th, ph
Vowel digraph	A digraph in which at least one of the letters is a vowel E.g. <i>ea</i> , <i>ay</i> , <i>ai</i> , <i>ar</i>
Split digraph	Two letters, which work as a pair to make one sound, but are separated within the word. E.g. <i>a-e</i> as in <i>make</i> or <i>late</i> ; <i>i-e</i> as in <i>size</i> or <i>write</i> .
Adjacent consonants	Two (or three) letters making two (or three) sounds. E.g. the first three letters of <i>strap</i> are adjacent consonants. Previously known as a <i>consonant cluster</i> .



Roles and Responsibilities:

The Phonics lead is responsible for:

- 🍎 Ensuring continuity and progression from year group to year group
- 🍎 Providing all members of staff with guidelines and a scheme of work
- 🍎 Advising on external training to staff where appropriate and within the confines of the school budget.
- 🍎 Advising and supporting colleagues in the implementation and assessment of phonics throughout the school
- 🍎 Assisting with the requisition and maintenance of resources required for the teaching of phonics, within the confines of the school budget
- 🍎 Monitoring the quality of teaching and learning in phonics across the school
- 🍎 Tracking data, identifying gaps and supporting staff in developing interventions



The class teacher is responsible for:

- 🍎 Ensuring progression in the acquisition of phonic knowledge and skills with due regard to the National Curriculum for English
- 🍎 Developing and updating skills, knowledge and understanding of phonics
- 🍎 Identifying needs in phonics and taking advantage of training opportunities
- 🍎 Keeping appropriate on-going assessment records
- 🍎 Planning effectively for phonics, liaising with phonics leader when necessary
- 🍎 Informing pupils and parents of their progress, achievements and attainment

Progression in Fluency

Reception	Year 1
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Read and understand simple sentences.- Use phonic knowledge to decode regular words and read them aloud accurately.- Read some common exception or 'tricky' words.- Demonstrate an understanding when talking with others about what they have read.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Apply phonic knowledge to decode word.- Speedily read all 40+ letters/groups for 40+ phonemes.- Read accurately by blending taught CPD.- Read common exception words.- Read common suffixes (-s, -es, -ing, -ed, etc.).- Read multisyllable words containing taught GPCs.- Read contractions and understanding use of apostrophe.- Read aloud phonically-decodable texts.