Reepham C of E Primary
Phonics and Early Reading Policy

School Vision

Be Known. Be Loved. Belong.

"Who you are is God's gift to you. Who you become is your gift to God."

At Reepham Church of England Primary School, our Christian vision, 'Be Known. Be Loved. Belong.' underpins everything we do. We believe every child is uniquely created and valued by God. Through our commitment to ensuring every child learns to read, we enable children to flourish academically, socially, emotionally and spiritually.

We strive to create an inclusive learning community where every child is known as an individual, loved unconditionally and experiences a true sense of belonging. Reading is central to this vision. Through high-quality phonics and early reading provision, we equip children with the skills, confidence and opportunities to become lifelong readers, who can access the wider curriculum, develop a love of literature and fulfil their God-given potential.

Policy Statement

At Reepham Church of England Primary School, we are committed to ensuring that every child becomes a successful reader. Reading is the gateway to learning and underpins achievement across the curriculum. We recognise that secure early reading skills have a profound impact on children's future educational outcomes, wellbeing and life chances.

Our approach is informed by:

- The **Department for Education's Reading Framework (2023)**
- The **Early Years Foundation Stage Framework**
- The **National Curriculum for English**
- The **Education Inspection Framework (EIF)**
- Current research into reading development, including the findings of the **Education Endowment Foundation (EEF)** and cognitive science research into how children learn to read.

We teach reading through **Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised**, a systematic synthetic phonics (SSP) programme validated by the Department for Education. We teach the programme with fidelity and consistency across the school to ensure that every child develops the knowledge and skills necessary to become a fluent reader.

Intent - Why We Teach Phonics

We believe that all children can learn to read successfully when they receive high-quality, systematic instruction.

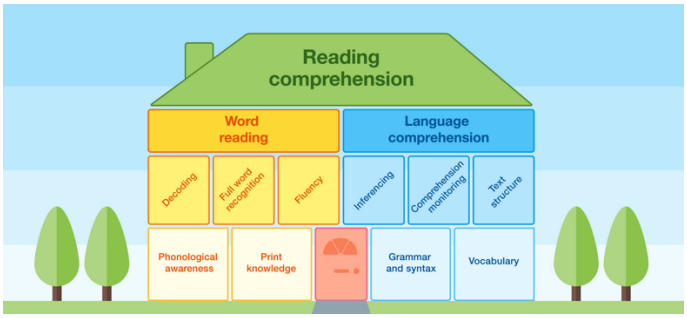
Our phonics curriculum aims to:

- Ensure all children learn to read accurately and fluently.
- Develop automatic word recognition so that cognitive capacity can be devoted to understanding and enjoying texts.
- Enable children to become confident writers through secure phonics and spelling knowledge.
- Close attainment gaps quickly and effectively.
- Foster a love of reading and literature.

- Ensure that every child, regardless of background or starting point, can access the full curriculum.

Research demonstrates that skilled reading depends upon:

1. **Word recognition** (decoding and fluency).
2. **Language comprehension**.



This reflects the Simple View of Reading, which informs our approach to early reading. We therefore prioritise both systematic phonics teaching and rich language development.

Statutory Requirements and Guidance

The school ensures compliance with statutory requirements relating to:

- Early reading
- Phonics teaching
- Assessment
- The Year 1 Phonics Screening Check
- Inclusion and accessibility

Leadership and Management

The Role of the Early Reading Leader

Because we believe teaching every child to read is so important, we have an **Early Reading Leader** who drives the early reading programme throughout the school.

The Early Reading Leader:

- Is highly skilled in the teaching of phonics and reading.
- Leads and develops staff expertise through training and coaching.
- Monitors teaching and learning.
- Supports colleagues to deliver the Little Wandle programme with fidelity.
- Tracks pupil progress and identifies children requiring additional support.
- Evaluates the effectiveness of interventions.
- Ensures consistency in the use of routines, resources, terminology and assessment procedures.
- Reports to senior leaders and governors regarding standards and progress in early reading.

The Early Reading Leader works closely with the Headteacher, SENDCo and teaching staff to ensure all children achieve success.

Implementation

We teach phonics using **Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised**, a complete systematic synthetic phonics programme.

The programme:

- Teaches grapheme-phoneme correspondences in a carefully sequenced progression.
- Develops blending and segmenting skills.
- Supports reading and spelling development.
- Provides consistent routines and language.
- Includes matched decodable reading books.
- Enables children to become fluent readers through repeated practice.

Teaching follows the programme to ensure consistency and maximise outcomes for all children, whilst making adaptations to secure children's learning and progress when required.

Teaching and Learning

Daily Phonics Lessons in Reception and Year 1

Phonics teaching begins in the first full week of the **Reception Autumn Term.**

Reception

- Daily phonics lessons begin at approximately 20 minutes and increase to 30 minutes as quickly as possible.
- Daily oral blending activities develop early decoding skills.
- Weekly review sessions consolidate learning and support fluency.

Children are taught to:

- Recognise and recall Phase 2 and Phase 3 grapheme-phoneme correspondences.
- Blend sounds to read words.
- Segment sounds to spell words.
- Read and spell words containing adjacent consonants (Phase 4).
- Apply their phonics knowledge accurately and automatically.

Year 1

Children:

- Review and secure Phase 3 and Phase 4 learning.
- Learn all Phase 5 grapheme-phoneme correspondences.
- Apply phonics knowledge to increasingly complex words.
- Develop fluency, automaticity and accuracy in reading and spelling.

Whole-Class Teaching

We use a whole-class teaching model because evidence demonstrates that all children benefit from high-quality first teaching and ambitious expectations.

Most children learn together and receive:

- Explicit instruction.
- Frequent practice.

- Immediate feedback.
- Opportunities for rehearsal and retrieval.

Early Reading

Reading Practice Sessions

Children participate in three weekly Reading Practice sessions using fully decodable books carefully matched to their secure phonics knowledge.

Each session focuses on:

1. Decoding
2. Prosody (expression and phrasing)
3. Comprehension

This repeated reading approach supports:

- Accuracy
- Automaticity
- Fluency
- Confidence
- Understanding

Children only read books containing phonics knowledge they have already been taught, ensuring success and promoting positive reading behaviours. But to inspire the love of reading, the Reception and Year 1 children can take an additional book for their parents to read to them.

Reading for Pleasure

Developing a love of reading is central to our vision.

Children experience:

- Daily story time.
- High-quality class texts.
- Poetry, fiction and non-fiction.
- Author studies.
- Reading-rich classroom environments.
- Opportunities to discuss and recommend books.

Adults model enthusiastic reading and promote positive reading identities throughout the school.

Assessment

Assessment is ongoing and used to inform teaching.

Assessment includes:

- Daily formative assessment.
- Weekly review sessions.
- Little Wandle assessment materials.
- Reading Practice assessments.
- Fluency assessments.
- Prosody assessments.

- The Year 1 Phonics Screening Check.
- Rapid Catch-up assessments.

Assessment information is used to:

- Identify gaps quickly.
- Plan intervention.
- Monitor progress.
- Evaluate provision.
- Ensure children remain on track.

Keeping Up, Not Catching Up

Daily Keep-up Lessons

Any child in Reception or Year 1 requiring additional support receives Daily Keep-up lessons delivered by a fully trained adult.

These sessions:

- Follow Little Wandle progression.
- Use the same routines, language and resources.
- Include smaller learning steps.
- Provide increased repetition and practice.
- Enable children to keep pace with their peers.

Frequent Keep-up Lessons

Children requiring further support receive additional Keep-up lessons.

These:

- Run up to five times weekly.
- Mirror whole-class teaching.
- Follow Little Wandle routines and mantras.
- Provide further repetition and overlearning.

The aim is to secure learning quickly and prevent children from falling behind.

SEND and Inclusion

At Reepham Church of England Primary School, inclusion is at the heart of our practice.
All children are entitled to high-quality phonics teaching regardless of need, background or starting point.
Some children with additional needs may benefit from the **Little Wandle SEND Programme**.

This programme:

- Reduces sensory and cognitive demands.
- Uses carefully adapted teaching approaches.
- Allows learning to progress at an appropriate pace.
- Provides greater opportunities for repetition and consolidation.

Our intention is always for children to access whole-class learning wherever possible and ultimately re-join the main programme when ready.

Reasonable adjustments are made to ensure all children can participate successfully.

Year 2 Provision

At the beginning of Year 2:

- Children revisit Year 1 Summer Term learning.
- Phase 5 Set 5 sounds are consolidated.
- Three Reading Practice sessions continue each week.

At October half term:

Children complete the Little Wandle Phase 5 Review Assessment.

Children Secure in Phase 5

Children who demonstrate secure knowledge:

- Complete the Phase 5 Set 5 Fluency Assessment.
- Move to three weekly Fluency Lessons.

Fluency lessons:

- Include fiction, poetry and non-fiction.
- Use Fluency Level 1–5 texts.
- Develop pace, expression and understanding.
- teacher modelling of fluent reading
- repeated reading of selected sections
- echo reading
- oral discussion and comprehension activities
- explicit vocabulary instruction

Children are assessed every twelve weeks using:

- Fluency assessments.
- Prosody grids.
- Reading accuracy measures.

Children Requiring Further Consolidation

Children who are not yet secure:

- Continue Reading Practice sessions.
- Receive additional Phase 5 teaching.
- Are reassessed when ready.

Throughout Year 2:

- Oral comprehension is explicitly taught.
- Vocabulary development is prioritised.
- Children learn how to discuss and understand increasingly complex texts.

Our goal is that every child leaves Key Stage 1 as a fluent reader who can comprehend age-appropriate texts confidently.

Rapid Catch-up (Years 2–6)

Children in Years 2–6 who are not yet reading at age-related expectations participate in the **Little Wandle Rapid Catch-up Programme**.

Provision includes:

- Daily 15–20 minute sessions.
- Explicit teaching of identified gaps.
- High levels of practice and repetition.
- Small-group or individual instruction as appropriate.

Children new to:

- The school
- The country
- English language learning

are assessed using Rapid Catch-up assessments to establish precise next steps.
Progress is monitored every four weeks through Little Wandle summative assessments.
The programme aims to accelerate progress and close gaps rapidly.

Partnership with Parents and Carers

Parents and carers play a vital role in supporting reading development.

We support families by:

- Sharing information about phonics and reading.
- Providing guidance on pure sound pronunciation.
- Offering workshops and information sessions.
- Sending home fully decodable books.
- Communicating regularly about progress.

We encourage families to read with their children daily and celebrate reading achievements together.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Quality Assurance

The effectiveness of phonics and early reading provision is monitored through:

- Learning walks
- Lesson observations
- Coaching and mentoring
- Assessment analysis
- Reading Practice observations
- Pupil voice
- Book scrutiny
- Intervention monitoring
- Governor monitoring visits

Monitoring focuses on:

- Fidelity to Little Wandle

- Consistency of teaching
- Progress and attainment
- Inclusion and equity
- Staff subject knowledge

Findings inform ongoing school improvement and professional development.

Equality of Opportunity

We are committed to providing equal opportunities for all pupils.

We ensure:

- High expectations for every child.
- Inclusive teaching approaches.
- Appropriate adaptations where required.
- Removal of barriers to participation and achievement.
- Compliance with the Equality Act 2010.

All children are supported to access and succeed within the phonics curriculum.

Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Early Reading Leader, English Lead and Senior Leadership Team, or sooner in response to changes in legislation, national guidance or school priorities.

Date Approved: _____

Review Date: _____