



# Phonics and early reading policy

## The context of our school

Barford St. Peter's is a very special place to be; the school has a strong and distinctively Christian ethos and adults and children subscribe to our school vision of:

'Together we love; together we learn'.

We aim to provide children with an outstanding educational experience in a nurturing environment, in which we value all God's children. Children at Barford St. Peter's care for each other deeply and demonstrate these values both inside and outside of school.

We place a strong emphasis on our collaborative relationship with parents and work closely together to ensure the very best for the children. Our school serves, and is at the heart of, the Barford community. We value our close links with organisations and individuals in the village and beyond. 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 Barford St Peter's C of E Primary School (VA), 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 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 Barford St Peter's C of E Primary School (VA), 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.

## 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 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.

## Keep-up lessons ensure every child learns to read

- Any child who needs additional practice has Keep-up support, taught by a fully trained adult. Keep-up lessons use the same resources and mantras as whole class lessons but the content is tailored to the needs of the individual children
- 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.
- These short, sharp lessons last 15-20 minutes and have been designed to ensure children quickly catch up to age-related expectations in reading.

## 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.

## Additional reading support for vulnerable children

- Children in Reception and Year 1 who are receiving additional phonics Keep-up sessions read their reading books regularly to an adult.

## 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.

## 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 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 Barford St Peter's C of E Primary School (VA) 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 curate these books and talk about them to entice children to read a wide range of books.
- In Pre-School and Reception, children have access to the reading corner every day in their free flow time and the books are continually refreshed.
- Children in Pre-School have access to their class library as well as regular visits from a mobile library
- 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.
- 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 in KS1 is made available for classes to use. 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).
- 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 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.
- 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.

## 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.