



## **Pentland Infant and Nursery School Phonics and Early Reading Policy**

### **Our School Context**

At Pentland Infant and Nursery School we have high expectations in phonics and reading for all of our children. The majority of pupils at Pentland are EAL. However, this does not alter our expectations of these pupils. Through dedicated, targeted teaching, alongside the support of staff who speak heritage language we strive for every child in our school to reach their full potential in phonics and reading and meet the end of year expectations for their year group, if not exceed them. Currently we have an above average percentage of children on the SEN Register with a small group of children either having an IEPs or EHCPs. Once again, we match the teaching and learning of phonics and reading to the needs of these children to ensure they make good progress and develop an enjoyment in reading. It is essential that our approach to teaching phonics and reading is accessible to all learners, regardless of their background and learning needs.

### **Intent**

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

At Pentland Infant and Nursery 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 Phase One phonics in Nursery. This is then reviewed and continued in Reception where children 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 Pentland Infant and Nursery 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 Pentland, we value reading as a crucial life skill. By the time children leave us at the end of Year Two, 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 who drives the early reading programme in our school. This person is highly skilled at teaching phonics and reading, and they monitor and support staff, so everyone teaches with fidelity to the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* programme.

# 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
  - 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.
- Little Wandle Foundations is aligned to the non-statutory guidance on Development Matters and Birth to 5 Matters as well as the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework. We use it as part of our wider provision for Communication and Language, and Literacy. It supports children to:
  - develop their phonological awareness, including rhyme, alliteration, syllables, initial and voice sounds, and oral blending
  - love stories and rhymes, and learn by heart a bank of familiar favourites
  - increase their vocabulary and confidence to talk
  - improve their listening and ability to take part in back-and-forth conversations.
- We believe that the priority in Nursery should be to build the foundations for phonics for all children. Research tells us that disadvantaged children start Nursery behind their more fortunate peers. By leaving formal phonics teaching to Reception, Foundations allows us to devote more time to working with children who need extra help to develop the skills and behaviours that underpin successful reading.

## Language and nursery rhymes in Reception

- Research tells us that nursery rhymes can support children to develop their language, their awareness of sounds within words and even their later reading ([Bryant et al. 1989](#)).
- We use the Little Wandle Rhyme time videos and accompanying phonological awareness planning to complement and reinforce our Phase 2 teaching.

## 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 Phase 3 and 4 and are taught to read and spell words using Phase 5 GPCs with fluency and accuracy.

## Daily phonics and spelling in Year 2

- Year 2 begins by using assessment to ensure that children have completed the Little Wandle Year 1 progression. Any gaps in teaching are addressed through daily phonics lessons until the programme is completed. Corresponding summative assessments are carried out to ensure this content is secure.

- Once all Year 1 content has been taught and assessed, we teach a five-week Phase 5 review. This ensures that children secure the trickier elements of Phase 5 and can apply this alphabetic knowledge in both reading and spelling.
- We use the Phase 5 review assessment before teaching in Year 2 to identify any children who may need more support when teaching. We reassess after teaching the Phase 5 review.
- Once the Phase 5 review is secure, we teach the Bridge to spelling before moving to the Spelling units.
- Children with larger gaps in their phonic knowledge than their peers have daily phonics teaching and follow the Rapid Catch-up programme.

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

Any child who needs additional practice in Reception and Year One 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.

### **Children in Year 2: Rapid Catch-up**

- We timetable daily phonics lessons for any child in Year 2 and above who is not at age-related expectations for 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 to 20 minutes daily and have been designed to ensure children quickly catch up to age-related expectations in reading.
- We assess children who are new to our school, new to the country or new to English using the Rapid Catch-up assessments to quickly identify their needs.
- We use the Rapid Catch-up assessments to identify the gaps in children's phonic knowledge and teach these using the Rapid Catch-up resources – at pace.
- We assess children every four weeks using the Rapid Catch-up summative assessments to assess progress and inform teaching.

### **Teaching reading: Reading practice sessions three times a week**

We teach children to read through reading practice sessions three times a week. These reading sessions are taught by a fully trained adult who will work with a small group of approximately six children at a time. The books children read are matched to their secure phonic knowledge, using the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* assessments and book matching grids created by Little Wandle (p11–20 of *'Application of phonics to reading'*). Reading is 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:

- Session One: decoding
- Session Two: prosody: teaching children to read with understanding and expression
- Session Three: comprehension: teaching children to understand the text.

In Reception, these sessions start in week 4 of teaching at the latest. Initially, children will read wordless books. In these sessions, children review GPCs and are taught blending using teacher-

led blending. Once children can blend, they progress onto decodable books matched to their secure phonic knowledge.

Children read each book three times to develop phonemic awareness, vocabulary and comprehension as well as book behaviours.

In Year 2, we ensure children complete reading the core programme decodable books (up to Phase 5 Set 5). To exit the programme, we complete the final fluency assessment to ensure children can read with adequate speed and accuracy: approximately 60 words per minute with 90%+ accuracy. They then graduate onto the Little Wandle Fluency books.

### **Teaching reading: Fluency programme**

We teach reading to children in Year 2 and above who have exited the core programme using Little Wandle Fluency.

Each Fluency reading lesson is 25 to 30 minutes. The structure of every lesson is the same:

- A pre-read to practise reading words and to support vocabulary
- Children read aloud for ten minutes and the teacher 'taps in' to hear every child read
- Focused teaching of prosody, repeated reading and comprehension through discussion.

We assess reading speed and accuracy every 12 weeks and use these assessments to monitor progress and allocate books. We also use Assessment for Learning (AfL) and our professional judgement to assess each child's progress in reading, so we can ensure that they have the right books to meet their needs.

We review children's prosody by using the Prosody grid. This gives us a picture of how well the child is reading aloud. Comprehension is taught through dialogic talk and teachers use their AfL to quickly address misconceptions and develop children's curiosity and engagement with each book.

### **Home reading**

After reading the text three times in school, the decodable reading practice book is taken home to ensure success is shared with the family. Reading for Pleasure (RfP) 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 strive towards encouraging reading for pleasure and children are allocated time to peruse and select a book, discussing with their teachers why they have made their choices. We ensure that parent engagement with reading is a key driver for our school. We share information about phonics, offer workshops about phonics and reading, and aim to inform parents about how children learn to blend and the benefits of reading.

### **Additional reading support for vulnerable children**

Children in Reception, Year One and Year Two who are receiving additional phonics Keep-up sessions read their reading practice book to an adult regularly. We prioritise children who may not have reading support at home or who may not have access to books. We ensure that they have individual reading times with volunteers/ Reading Friends and staff to share quality children's literature to promote a love of reading.

### **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 checklists and templates to regularly monitor and observe teaching; they use the summative data to identify children who need additional support and have gaps in learning.

### Ensuring reading for pleasure

*'Reading for pleasure is the single most important indicator of a child's success.'* (OECD 2002)

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 Pentland Infant and Nursery 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. Children have access to these throughout the day in EYFS and during independent learning time in Key Stage One. We curate these books and talk about them to entice children to read a wide range of books.

In the Reading Area are the key texts which are read regularly to the children who can then access the books independently in the Reading Area. By having these repeated texts, we are ensuring the children familiarise themselves in depth with books and it becomes part of their reading repertoire. These are mainly fiction texts in Reception and Year 1, then move on to include poetry and non-fiction texts in Year 2.

Children from Nursery upwards onwards have a home reading record. The parent/carer records a comment 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 children progress through school, we take time to get to know them as readers and ensure that we engage in meaningful conversations about the books that they have read. By doing this we can recommend authors and genres of books to expand their interests.

The school library is made available for classes to use at allocated times within the weekly timetable. Regular opportunities are made available to engage the children in reading with a wide range of Reading for Pleasure events. This includes: book fairs, author visits and workshops, reading challenges, nursery rhyme week, national events, such as World Book Day etc.

We use the Everybody read! resources to grow our teachers' knowledge of current books, the most recent research and to grow our own RfP 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, as well as words and GPCs that need additional teaching. AFL is also used to plan repeated practice throughout the day to ensure all children secure learning. In addition, it is used weekly in

the Friday review lesson to assess gaps, address these immediately and secure fluency of GPCs, words and spellings.

**Summative assessment** are uploaded onto the Assessment tracker for Reception and Year 1 every six weeks. These are used to generate visual reports (pupil heatmaps, pupil trends and books levels, and a summary analysis) for individual children, classes and whole year groups. The data is used by teachers, Reading Leaders and SLT who drill down and look at the data at GPC, word, tricky word and sentence level. The data is analysed and used to plan how to narrow the attainment gaps between different groups of children and to put in place any additional support for teachers.

These assessments take place every six weeks to assess progress and to identify gaps in learning that need to be reviewed or retaught. It also establishes if learning is secure for more than 70% of children before new content is taught. Furthermore, it identifies if any children need additional support and enables targeted plans for Daily Keep-up support to be created. Every three weeks, we reassess every child who is not on track.

**Fluency assessments** measure children's accuracy and reading speed in short one-minute assessments. They are used:

- in Year 1 and Year 2, when children are reading the Phase 5 Set 3, 4 and 5 books
- with children following the Rapid Catch-up programme in Years 2 when they are reading the Phase 5 Set 3, 4 and 5 books
- to assess when children are ready to exit their programme
- for children in Year 2 and above who are taught Little Wandle Fluency. These assessments identify the best Fluency book level for each child. We assess the children every term (every 12 weeks or so).

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 to plan and provide appropriate extra teaching.

### **Statutory assessment**

Children in Year 1 sit the Phonics Screening Check in the Summer Term. Any child not passing the check re-sits it in Year 2. These children also take part in daily keep up lessons to address the gaps in their phonic knowledge.

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