

# Phonics and Early Reading Policy

‘Together we unlock potential and learn for life’



Chair of Governors

Print: ..... Sign: .....

Head Teacher:

Print: ..... Sign: .....

Subject Leader:

Print: ..... Sign: .....

Review Frequency

Every 3 years

Next review

May 2028

Version	Date	Reason for change
Version 1	June 2022	New Policy
Version 2	August 2024	Revision VA - fluency
Version 3	May 2026	Review and updated – removal of online reading subscription. Inclusion of Salford reading assessments. Updated to reflect Little Wandle Fluency CPD. Inclusion of Stoke Speaks Out and Time to Talk for 2 year olds.



## Intent

### Phonics (reading)

At Moor First, we believe that all our children have the potential to become fluent readers and writers. This is why we teach reading and phonics through *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* scheme, which is a systematic and synthetic phonics programme. We start teaching phonics in Nursery with the Foundations for Phonics and from Reception we 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 Moor First 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 Moor First 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 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 our reading team, 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.

### Daily phonics lessons in Reception and Year 1

- We teach phonics for 30 minutes a day. 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.

### 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 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 daily and have been designed to ensure children quickly catch up to age-related expectations in reading.

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

- We teach children to read through guided reading practice sessions three times a week. These:
  - are taught by a fully trained adult to small groups of approximately six-eight 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'.

- 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. 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, 3 and 4 we continue to teach reading in this way for any children who still need to practise reading with decodable books.
- Additional reading sessions are delivered within English lessons through whole-class texts, developing pupils' understanding of authorial intent, vocabulary and comprehension skills.
- Children are taught reading through explicit vocabulary development and supported fluency strategies (e.g. assisted, echo and choral reading), alongside text marking and performance techniques, in line with Little Wandle approaches.

### **Home reading**

- The decodable reading practice book is taken home to ensure success is shared with the family.
- Reading for pleasure books, which are chosen by the children from our library, 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 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/disadvantaged/SEND children**

- Children in Reception and Year 1 who are receiving additional phonics Keep-up sessions read their reading practice book to an adult daily.
- Where appropriate, pre-teaching sessions are used to introduce key vocabulary and concepts ahead of whole-class reading, enabling pupils to access and engage more confidently with the text.
- Where needed, the Little Wandle SEND programme is used to provide targeted, structured support for individual pupils, ensuring teaching is closely matched to their specific reading needs.
- Where needed, we also use Stoke Speaks Out and Time to Talk. Stoke Speaks Out and Time to Talk are early language-development programmes designed to strengthen children's speech, communication and vocabulary from the very start of their learning journey. While Little Wandle provides a strong foundation in phonics,

these programmes go further by targeting the essential oral-language skills that underpin successful reading. They help staff identify early speech and language needs, model high-quality interactions, and create language-rich environments where children can develop the confidence and communication skills needed to access phonics, understand stories, and become fluent, enthusiastic readers.

### Ensuring consistency and pace of progress

- Every teacher in our school has been trained to teach reading and continues to receive external guidance from Little Sutton English Hub, so we have the same excellent 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 (Ofsted 2025)

- 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 our 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 curate these books and talk about them to entice children to read a wide range of books including Pie Corbett and Little Wandle recommended reads.
- In Nursery/Reception, children have access to the reading corner every day in their free flow time and the books are continually refreshed.
- Children from Nursery/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.
- If a child has 3 home reads a week recorded in their reading diary – they earn a sticker on their bookmark. When this is full, they also received a prize. Children who do not have access to read at home are supported through additional school reading sessions so they can still win prizes.

- Each class visits the school library weekly and can also read with the librarians at lunchtimes.
- 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 on the Little Wandle Site 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 five to 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. Data is shared with our Little Sutton Advisor and mentor.
  - Salford reading tests are used to find our children's reading age and comprehension age for children either not on track, being monitored as part of SEND or PP.
- **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. For Year 1 children, this is when they read the final fluency assessment at 60–70+ words per minute. Older children can exit the Rapid Catch-up programme when they read the final fluency assessment at 90+ words per minute and once completed level 10 texts. At these levels, children should have sufficient fluency to tackle any book at age-related

expectations. After exiting their programme, children do not need to read any more fully decodable books.

- 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 4

- 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.

**CPD:** A regular cycle of staff training is in place to ensure consistency in delivery and to stay up to date with developments/initiatives which will have a measured outcome for our pupils.