

# Bellfield Primary School



## Phonics and Early Reading Policy

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## Introduction

Bellfield Primary School is a small, friendly school with a real family feel. There is one class per each year group and a 52 place nursery. 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 **Bellfield Primary 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 teach daily phonological awareness from the start of Nursery and follow the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* progression when the children start in Reception, 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 **Bellfield Primary 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 **Bellfield Primary 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 and Phonics leader, they drive 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.

Through teaching a progression of skills based on phonological awareness we ensure the 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. 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 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.
- In Year 2 in the Autumn term, Phase 5 is recapped dependent on the children's specific needs.
- We timetable daily phonics lessons for any child in Year 2 or 3 and 4 who are not reading fluently. These children urgently need to catch up, so the gap between themselves and their peers does not widen.

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

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

### Home reading

- The decodable reading practice book is taken home to ensure success is shared with the family.
  - Reading for pleasure books (Terrific Texts) 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.
  - A weekly task is sent home to show parents what children have been learning in school for parents to support phonics development if they wish.

### 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/Phonics Leader and SLT 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

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 **Bellfield Primary School** and our local community as well as books that open windows into other worlds and cultures.
- Our school has a range of inviting book corners 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 Nursery/Reception, children have access to the reading corner every day in their free flow time and the books are continually refreshed.
- Children from Reception onwards have a home reading record. The parent/carer records comments to share with the adult.
- 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 reading areas are made available for classes to use regularly. Children across the school have regular opportunities to engage with a wide range of Reading for Pleasure events (book awards, books celebration days, author visits etc).

## 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** 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/Phonics leader 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.
- The *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* placement assessment is used:
  - with any child new to the school to quickly identify any gaps in their phonic knowledge and plan 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 catch-up

- Children in Year 2 to 6 are assessed through:
  - their teacher's ongoing formative assessment
  - the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds* placement assessment
  - the appropriate half-termly assessments.

Reviewer: Literacy Lead