



Working together to be the best that we can be

Russells Hall Primary School

Phonics and Early Reading Policy

Intent

Phonics (Reading and Spelling)

At Russells Hall 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 start teaching phonics in Reception 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 Russells Hall Primary School, we also model the application of the alphabetic code through phonic 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 Russells Hall 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 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

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' as appropriate alongside our phonics teaching in Reception.

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.

Daily Phonics Lessons in Reception and Year 1

We teach phonics for at least 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. We timetable daily phonics lessons for any child in Year 2 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 Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised assessments to identify the gaps in their phonic knowledge and teach to these using the Keep-Up resources at pace. If any child in Year 3 to 6 has gaps in their phonic knowledge when reading or writing, we plan phonics 'Catch-Up' sessions to address specific reading/writing gaps. These short, sharp lessons last 20 minutes, are taught by a fully trained adult and take place four times a week.

Teaching Reading: Reading Practice Sessions Three Times a Week

We teach children to read through reading practice sessions three times a week. These are group sessions with fully trained adults in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 as appropriate. We use books matched to the children's secure phonic knowledge using the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised assessments and book matching grids, these are monitored by the Reading Leader and the class teacher, who rotates and works with all pupils 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:

- 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 Key Stage 2, we continue to teach reading in this way for any children who still need to practise reading with decodable books.

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, Year 1 and Year 2 who are receiving additional phonics Keep-up sessions read their reading practice book to an adult at least three times a week. Children accessing phonics in Key Stage 2 also have additional one-to-one reading sessions throughout the week with trained adults.

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 Russells Hall 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 Reception and Year 1 children have access to the reading corner every day as part of their continuous provision and the books are continually refreshed.

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 and 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. It is also used by SLT, who scrutinise the 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.

Statutory Assessment

Children in Year 1 sit the statutory Phonics Screening Check (PSC) in the Summer term of Year 1. Any child not passing the check re-sits it in the Summer term Year 2.

Ongoing Assessment for Catch-Up

Children in Year 2 to 6 are assessed through their teacher's ongoing formative assessment as well as through the half-termly Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised summative assessments.