



Phonics and early reading policy

The context of our school

As a school we are immensely proud of our dedicated subject leads and teachers who constantly strive to develop in their expertise, maximising pupil outcomes across our curriculum-academically, socially and emotionally. 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 Cusgarne 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 Cusgarne, 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 Cusgarne, 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 Phonics Lead who drives the early reading programme in our school. This person is a qualified teacher and is also our English Lead, who 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

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



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quickly as possible. Each Friday, we review the week's teaching to help children become fluent readers.

Children make a strong start in Reception: formal teaching begins in Week 2 of the Autumn term, with phonics games daily during our Reception children's staggered start in Week 1.

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.

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.'
- Are 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 and 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 1 and 2, we continue to teach reading in this way for any children who still need to practice reading with decodable books.



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Home reading

Decodable phonics books are sent home for children to practice the application of taught phonemes when reading and to ensure their success is shared with the family.

Reading for pleasure 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 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 who are within our lowest 20% have additional support and will read daily to an adult at school.

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. The weekly content grids map each element of new learning to each day, week and term for the duration of the programme and lesson templates, prompt cards and 'How to' videos ensure teachers all have a consistent approach and structure for each lesson.

The Phonics Lead uses 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 by:

- Reading 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 Cusgarne 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 KS1, children have access to the reading corner every day in their independent learning time and the books are continually



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refreshed.

- Children having 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 is made available for all 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).
- Using 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

A range of assessments are 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 Phonic Lead and HOS 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.

Fluency assessments measure children's accuracy and reading speed in short one-minute assessments.

A placement assessment is used:

- With any child new to the school in Reception and KS1, 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 and any child not passing the check re-sits it in Year 2.